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Editorial

We are very happy to bring out the second issue of *Literary Vibes*, a refereed national journal, for researchers and students of English Literature, with ISSN. This journal is a product of scrupulous understanding of the relevance of a journal geared to cater to the research activities of teachers, scholars and students English Literature.

Most of the articles address the contemporary issues thus making it possible to have a full length research on the discussed writers.

We hope this journal will help teaching and research community in their research endeavour. On behalf of the members associated with this journal, we extend our gratitude to all those writers who have shared their creative taste and encouraging advice.

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The Base and Root of Black Feminism: A Study of the Blues

- S. Kanakaraj

What gives the Blues such fascinating possibilities of sustaining emergent feminist consciousness is the way they (the Blues) often construct seemingly antagonistic relationships as non-contradictory oppositions. A female narrator in a women's Blues song who represents as entirely subservient to male desire might simultaneously express autonomous desire and a refusal to allow her mistreating lover to drive her to psychic despair ...¹

This paper carefully and methodically explores how the signal contribution of Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday have created a strong consciousness of femininity against a backdrop of the domineering patriarchal constructions of gender discriminations.

In fact, the corpus of Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday has served as a rich terrain for examining the historical tradition of Black Feminism.

Yet again, the songs to Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday have not only divulged Black Feminist consciousness, and traditions concerning Black Feminist consciousness-raising, but also have immeasurably enriched Black Feminist Think Tank.

Moreover, Black woman writers such as Arna Bontemps, Alice More Dunbar Nelson, Pauline E. Hopkins, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Lorraine Hansberry, Maya Angelou, Toni Cade Bambara, Rita Dove, Ntozake Shange, Valerie Bapp, and Audre Lorde to quote a few have richly benefited from the leads in Black Feminism offered by Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday.

It should be underscored here that Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday are fully conscious of the spirit and substance of the definition of the Blues as projected by Ralph Ellison:

The Blues is an impulse to keep the painful detail; and

episodes of a brutal existence alive in one's aching consciousness to finger its jazzed grain, and to transcend it, not by the consolation of philosophy but by squeezing for it a near-tragic, near comic lyricism. As a form, the Blues is an autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically ...²

The tenor and overtone of this observation in the literary lineage of Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday have been richly and painfully captured by Rita Dove in the following poem, which is quoted in full here:

Parsley

1. The Cane Fields

There is a parrot imitating spring
in the palace, its feathers parsley green.
Out of the swamp the cane appears
to haunt us, and we cut it down, El General searches for a word;
he is all the world
there is. Like a parrot imitating spring,
we lie down screaming as rain punches through and we come
up green.
We cannot speak an R out of the swamp, the cane appears
and then the mountain we call in whispers Katalina.
The children gnaw their teeth to arrowheads.
There is a parrot imitating spring.

El General has found his word: perejil.
Who says it, lives. He laughs, teeth shining
out of the swamp. The cane appears
in our dreams, lashed by wind and streaming
And we lie down. For every drop of blood
there is a parrot imitating spring.
Out of the swamp the cane appears [*Italics as in the Original*].

3***
..

[*** On October 2, 1937, Rafael Trujillo (1891-1961), dictator of the Dominican Republic, ordered 20,000 Blacks killed because they could not pronounce the letter "r" perejil the Spanish word for parsley (Dove's

note).]

Yet again, there is a great deal to be learned about Black Feminism from the bodies of work of Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday for they throw light on the quotidian expressions of Black Feminist consciousness. This Black Feminist Consciousness is what is accentuated in the paper. In this context, Angela. Y Davis makes a pointed observation, which is worth quoting here:

In the contemporary period, which is marked by a popular recognition of the politicalization of sexuality, the Blues constitute an exceptionally rich site for feminist investigation. The overarching sexual themes that define the content of the Blues from point the way toward consideration of the historical politics of Black Sexuality. Considering the stringent taboos on representation of sexuality that characterized most dominant discourses of the time, the Blues constitute a privileged discursive site...⁴

Once again, the significant, relevant and consequential argument of Daphne Duval Harrison is worth mentioning here and examining it in conjunction with the assertion of Angela Y. Davis adduced above:

[Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday are] the pivotal figures in the assertion of Black women's ideas and ideals from the standpoint of the working class and the poor. It reveals their dynamic role as spokespersons and interpreters of the dreams, harsh realities, and tragic- comedies of the Black experience in the first three decades of this century; their role in the continuation and development of Black music in America; their contributions to Blues poetry and performance. Further, it expands the base of knowledge about the role of Black women in the creation and development of American popular culture; illustrates their modes and means for coping successfully with gender-related discrimination and exploitation; and demonstrates an emerging model for the working woman - one who sexually independent, self-sufficient,

creative and trend-setting. [My Emphasis] ...⁵

Furthermore, it ought to be emphasized that Alice Walker has taken the cue from Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday for developing her concept of womanism, which is worth the consideration at this point. Alice Walker prefers the term, womanism, to the feminism, on the grounds that womanism sounds stronger and more comprehensive and all inclusive.

In fact, the definition of the term, womanist, locates the Black woman first as a Black feminist. Then it celebrates the sensuality and spirituality of the Black woman. Then it identifies her as the variegated flower in the garden of humanity.

Alice Walker argues that the term, womanism, says more than that they (women) could choose women over men. Yet again, women could choose to live separate from men. In fact, to be consistent with Black cultural values still have considerable worth. In this context, the pointed observation of Alice Walker runs thus:

I [Alice Walker] believe that the truth about any subject comes when all the sides of the story are put together, and all their different meanings make one new one. Each writer writes the missing parts to the other writes' story. And the whole story is what I'am after ...⁶

Alice Walker insists upon searching through both cultural and psychological pasts for a meaningful synthesis in the lives of women.

At this juncture Alice Walker's definition of the term, womanist, is so very pertinent, significant, relevant and consequential and hence it is worth quoting here:

The word, lesbian, may not ... be suitable (or comfortable) for Black women ... Indeed I (Alice Walker) can imagine Black women who love women (sexually or not) ... referring to themselves as whole women, from wholly, or holy, or as round women - women who love other women, yes, but women who also have concern, in a culture that oppresses all Black people (and this would go back far), for their fathers,

brothers, and sons, and no matter how they fell about them as males. My own term for such women would be womanist...⁷

The Blues forming the base and root of Black Feminism argues how Black women have been caught in the web of domesticity and how they have been abused and abandoned. Early women's Blues contain few uninflected references to marriage. Evocations of traditional female domesticity, whether associated with marriage or no, are equally rare. When women are portrayed as having fulfilled the domestic requirements socially expected of women in relationships with men, it is often to make the point that the women have been abandoned and abused. In Bessie Smith's "Weeping Willow Blues", the narrator proclaims thus:

Folks, I love my man, I kiss morning, noon, and night
I wash his clothes and keep him clean and try to treat
him right Now he's gone and left me after all I've tried
to do ...⁸

These lines proclaim how Black women suffer subordination. Yet again, these lines debunk the notion that the fulfillment of conventional female domestic responsibility is the basis for happiness.

Moreover, Bessie Smith in the following lines ironically refers to domesticity and implicitly criticizes the stultifying household work Black women are compelled to do for their men. The lines makes interesting reading and they are quoted below:

I don't have to do no work except to wash his clothes
And dam his socks and press his pants and scrub the
kitchen floor ...⁹

In the following lines Bessie Smith introduces an inverted image of domesticity, in which the man is compelled by the woman to take on what are assumed to be female household chores as punishment for his sexual behaviour in the relationship. The lines makes interesting reading and they run thus:

So wait awhile, I'll show you, child, just how to treat a
no-good man Make him stay at home, wash and iron

Tell all the neighbors he done lost his mind ...¹⁰

It ought to be stressed that the manner in which Bessie Smith create this caricature of domesticity reveals the beginnings of an oppositional attitude towards patriarchal ideology. Bessie Smith in the following song, entitled, "Outside of That", bilaterally presents an abusive but a superb lover. This has a clear bearing on domestic violence, which persists even in the contemporary world. On a close examination of the song, "Outside of That", points to the fact that the protagonist enthusiastically proclaims her love for a man who batters her, and who becomes especially violent in response to her announcement that she longer loves him. The song runs thus:

I love him as stars above
He beats me up but how he can love
I never loved like that since the day I was born.

I said for fun I don't want you no more
And when I said that I made sweet papa sore
He blacked my eye, I couldn't see
Then he pawned the things he gave to me
But outside of that, he's all right with me
I said for fund I don't want you no more
And when I said that I made sweet papa sore
When he pawned my things, I said you dirty old thief
Child, then he turned around and knocked out both of my teeth
Outside of that, he's all right with me ...¹¹

I ought to be mentioned that the omnipresent secrecy and silence regarding male violence is linked to its social construction as a private problem sequestered behind impermeable domestic walls rather than a social problem deserving political attention. In such a context, Bessie Smith's song, "Outside of That", effectively presents violence against women as a problem to be reckoned with publicly.

The song names the problem of domestic voice captured by the narrator in the following passages:

He blackened my eyes...
He blackened my eye, I couldn't see....

He turned round and knocked out both of my
teeth ...***

[*** These bear reiteration]

The song names domestic violence where the women become the targets of the battering, in the collective context of Blues performance and therefore defines it as a problem worthy of public discourse. Hearing, this song, women who were victims of such abuse consequently could perceive it as a shared and thus a social condition.

There is a song of Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, which graphically captures the scene of domestic violence This song is the graphic evocation of domestic violence and goes farthest in revealing women's contradictory attitudes toward violent relationships. The song, entitled, "Sweet Rough Man", runs thus:

I woke up this morning, my head was sore as a boil
I woke up this morning, my head was sore as a boil
My man beat me last night with five feet of copper coil
He keeps my lips split, my eyes black as jet
He keeps my lips slit, my eyes black as jet
But the way he love me makes me soon forget

Every night for five years, I've got a beating from my man
Every night for five years, I've got a beating' from any man
People says I'm crazy, I'll explain and you'll understand

Lord, it ain't to may be 'bout my man bein' tough
Lord, it ain't no maybe 'bout my man bein' tough
But when it comes to lovin', he sure can strut his stuff ...¹²

Angela Y. Davis makes pointed observation concerning the song, entitled, "Sweet Rough Man", and it is worth quoting here:

The women in the song assumes a stance, which is at once "normal" and pathological. It is pathological to desire to continue a relationship in which one is being systematically abused, but given the prevailing presumptions of female acquiescence to male superiority, it is "normal" for women to harbor self-

deprecatory ideas...¹³

And Billie Holiday's sing, entitled, "You Let me Down", exposes the futility of masculinist notions of romantic love. She transforms the song, which is full of clichéd images conjuring up propagandist idealizations of spurned love, into a critique of its own content, a rupture exposing Black people's status in a culture infused with the attitudes expressed in the song, which runs thus:

You told me that I was like angel
Told me I was fit to wear a crown
So that you could get a thrill
You put me on a pedestal
And then you let me down, let me down.
You told me that I'd be wearing diamonds
I would have the smartest car in town
Made me think that I'm the top
And then you let the ladder drop
You know you let me down, let me down.
I walked upon a rainbow I clung on to a star
You had me up in heaven That's why I had to fall so far
I was even looking for a cottage
I was measured for a wedding gown That's how I got cynical
You put me on a pinnacle
And then you let me down, let me down. How you let me down ...¹⁴

In the following song, entitled, "Wild Women Don't have the Blue", introduces a new, different model of Black Women - more assertive, sexy, sexually aware, independent, realistic, complex, and alive.

The woman of the song, "Wild Women Don't Have the Blues", is the most famous portrait of the non-conforming, independent woman, free from dependent complex, and fear psychosis. The song makes interesting reading and it is worth quoting here:

I've got disposition and a way of my own
When my man starts kicking, I let him find another home

I get full of good liquor and walk the street all night
Go home and put my man out if don't treat me right
Wild women don't worry, wild women don't have the Blues.
You never get nothing by being an angle child
You'd better charge your ways and get real wild
I want to tell you something, I wouldn't tell you no lie
Wild women are the only kind that really get by
'Cause wild women don't worry, wild women don't have the
Blues...¹⁵

Thus, it is established that Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday through their songs have given significance, relevance, and consequence to Black Feminism and have enriched the Black Feminist Think Tank.

These three women have served as the role models to their Black sisters in defying the male dominance encouraged by mainstream culture. They have underscored the value of the tough, resilient and independent women, who are not afraid of either their own vulnerability or of defending their right to be respected as autonomous human beings.

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Elucidating Unimaginable Vicissitudes in M.G. Vassanji's *The Gunny Sack & No New Land*

- P. Raja Sekhar

Among the Diasporic literatures, South East Asian Literature stands out to be significant as it conjures the visions of past, space and temporal existence. M;G. Vasanji is well known as a popular writer of diaspora. His reputed two sequel novels *Gunny Sack & No New Land* are concerned with memory and nostalgia, place and displacement.

Among the post-colonial narratives, M.G. Vasanji's *The Gunny Sack* and *No New Land* are examined in the light of post-colonial critical insights. *The Gunny Sack* celebrates the spirit of Asian pioneers, Muslims from India who moved to East Africa in the early 20th century. Living under German colonial rule, the family of Dhanji Govindji become permanent residents of Africa while witnessing historical events that result in the birth of African Nationalism. Vassanji has created a family memoir, a coming of age story that looks at the past with affection and understanding. He shows that he hopes and dreams of immigrants are essentially the same as those of Europeans who pass through Ellis Island seeking education for their children and prosperous future for the next generation. The perfect sequel *No New Land* portrays the expatriated situation of the protagonist of Indian origin. The novel is a tragedy of bicultural experience in its gruesome aspects. These novels are written in the light of post-colonial perspectives. Vasanji has a clear cut vision in etching his characters to be part of the post-colonial intrigues.

The narrative structure of these novels obviously reflect the history of immigration experienced by Vasanji. Moyez G. Vasanji was born in Nairobi, Kenya in 1950 and raised in Tanzania. His family was part of a community of Indians wh had emigrated to Africa. Vasanji's family had become a victim of the resentment of the Indigenous Africans against the Indians in the aftermath of economic recession. The anti-colonial struggle and the well-known Mau Mau movement created an atmosphere that persecuted Indians settled in Kenya. As a result of these circumstances, Vasanji left for MIT in 1970 on scholarship. After completing Ph.D in Physics in the University of Pennsylvania and

working as writer in Residence at the University of Iowa, he migrated to Canada and settled in Toronto in 1980 accepting Canadian citizenship. During this traumatic experience of immigration, Vasanji has developed a sense of detachment which forms the centrality of *Gunny Sack* and *No New Land*. The characters in these novels are racially, culturally and politically excluded from the host societies. The characters belong to the people that live on the fringes of host society oscillating in between intimate memories and emotional affiliations. The narrator in *Gunny Sack* provides an insight on the lives of the Indian traders: “Governments may come and go, but the immigrant’s only concern is the security of their families, their trade and their savings” (52). The saga of the self-survival of the countless lives are never mapped as the history of any nation. The intimate and emotional domestic experience developed by immigrants finds no place in nationalistic politics and public memory.

The Gunny Sack begins with the narrator’s address to the Gunny sack, an object that embodies the past and legacy from grandmother Ji Bai. The past is retrieved and reconstructed only through the backward gaze upon the gunny sack. Kala Juma, the narrator fortuitously meets Grandmother Ji Bai. She conjures from the people of past, times and places and brings in the effective narration of the past “Well, listen, son of Juma, you listen to me and I shall give you your father Juma and his father and his father Huseni and his father... (135). She speaks like a prophet and creates that the search for the origins of the past is a moral responsibility towards the posterity and future. This is taught as a necessity for self-knowledge and survival on the part of the Diasporic self. Kala Juma muses on the great genealogical tree that starts from Dhanji Govindji who came to Zanzibar as a trader from Junapur in the Gujarat in the late 19th century and then settled in Matamu. Govindji takes Bibi Taratibu, a discarded African slave for comfort in the cold African nights. Here, the narration shows ruptures and missing links as Govindji sets up with two women. Owing to the pressure of the community, the slave woman Taratibu, upon whom Govindji has sired his son Huseni, cannot claim the status of the wife, Huseni too has to bear the stigma of being half caste and suffer racial contempt. In a bid to appropriate his son into the community, Govindji prevents him from having any truck with his mother. But the patriarchal claim is rebuffed

as Huseni runs away from home. This recounting of the search for the roots, exposes Kala Juma's legacy of miscegenation from his grandfather and assigns him hybridized identity. This leaves the characters burdened with troubled self-consciousness and an agonized collective memory.

The second novel *No New Land* is a sequel to *Gunny Sack* not in the literary sense of following the same characters in the later stage of life but in following the members of Ishmaeli community in Toronto, which eventually leads to the discussion of the problems faced by the immigrants in Canada. This time the Arabian Nights aura of romance to mask harsh realism is absent. The new immigrants are regarded as 'visible', which increases the difficulty of settling among people of different manners and conventions. The structure of the novel is circular. Vasanji throws his immigrant characters to the harsh realities of *No New Land* from the dream world Canada. Despite the difficulties, the immigrants have no option but to keep on living. Vasanji creates a broader canvass to unfurl the general descriptions of Canada as well as the lives of close knit families. The protagonist in *No New Land* is Nurdin Lalani whose family is a double immigrant family which travels from Asia to Africa and eventually to Canada. Nurdin Lalani's father Haji LaLani went to Tanganyika as a young man of sixteen in 1906, when the German Govt. was recruiting British India's citizens to build German empire in Africa. Germans had built a beautiful city Dar-es-Salaam, known as Darr. The rest of the theme deals with how Nurdin Lalani confronts Nationalisation and Africanisation.

No New Land explicitly projected the disadvantaged situations of immigrants in Canadian society. For instance, in one of the incidents, Nurdin and his family were invited for a gathering and were asked to pay money for snacks and drinks. In the process of familiarizing with the Canadian ambience, despite the difficulties of first generation of immigrants, the second generation are successful in adapting the assimilation into Canadian culture. It is from this perspective, the novel proposes that success is what counts in the new competitive world and emphasizes on the confidence to brazen out all marginalizing tactics and demands one's rights.

No New Land follows the direction of most South Asian

Canadian writers in gradually taking on Canadian subjects in their works. If Canadian literature is defined as literature written about Canada, most South Asian Canadian writers tend to become more Canadian the longer they stay in Canada. Neil Bissoondath reviewing *No New Land* takes the author to task for what he sees as a need to present the whole and his desire to be a kind of ring master for the community circus. He argues that Vasanji's attempt to portray the whole Ishmaeli community in Toronto to prevent him from creating fully individualized characters. If critical insights are to be put aside, things aplenty appreciable include that Vassanji does create brilliant character sketches even if his chief aim is to provide a cross section view of the East African Ishmaeli community in Toronto. If a wholly Canadian analogy may be used, *No New Land* is more like sunshine sketches of a little town than any other popular Canadian novel.

To elucidate these two novels as Vasanji's best craft, it is pertinent to observe that Vasanji's most skilful narrative style is a mesmerizing attraction to the readers. His reader arresting power synthesizing the historical facts with various literary genres is poised to be the singular contribution for the enrichment of Diasporic Canadian literature. His gripping story telling style stands out to be special niche exclusively developed by him as it is incomparably as natural as his life reflecting characters. His readers tend to love his works for those works are the imposingly textured mosaics of sorrows and hopes of a community circumstantially and forcibly displaced across the transcontinental wilderness.

The cognizable intention of Vassanji in producing such wealth of immigration literature on the Canadian literary hemisphere is to let the world identity a victimized community's historic past, journey into present and uncertain future. His self-imposed accountability towards his own community settled either by chance or choice in the New World is proven by his literary works. And these works are part and parcel of Canadian literature-proving it that a Diaspora is really a possibility in Multiculturalism. In the multiculturalism of Canada, voices of different solitudes find prominence. Writers like Vassanji are encouraged by the spirit of Canadianness with which they are identified. The Diasporeans could make a mark on the literary scene as a whole, within the

circumscription of Canadian identity. Here, Vassanji becomes an equal representative of Canadian ‘Multiple Solitudes’ (British, French, Jewish, South Asian, Native Solitudes).

His serious concern is the problems encountered by immigrant community in their exile and alienation. He is more concerned with the enormous influence of migration on the lives and identities of characters. This has become his intimate mission and is emotionally and psychologically led by the sense of origin understanding the roots of India deep inside him. Vassanji’s contribution to Canadian literature in articulating the problems of Indian immigrants in Canada speaks of his post-colonial perspectives in the light of immigration and multiculturalism. In the contemporary situation, multiculturalism has become a buzzword that influences every sphere of culture particularly literature.

Vassanji through his narratives proves that it is of significant necessity, to examine the ground realities in the lives of immigrants across the globe. His presentation of the past is never crystal clear. Speaking about the visibly dreary past, Vassanji says : “ the past in (*The Gunny Sack*” is deliberately murky to some degree. I do not see, not wanted to give the impression of a simple, linear, historical truth emerging. Not all the mysteries of the past are resolved in the book. That is deliberate. It’s is the only way”. And from the past to the present- in other words, from trans-Arabian continental voyage of life to trans-Atlantic movement- things might to some extent have bettered, but battered the lives of immigrants psychologically as they experience in their day-to-day life the concealed colonial hatred which stands reflected in *No New Land*.

In the domain of post-colonial and postmodern literary works, Vassanji’s role is characteristically well set, and he proves himself that he is the one whose postcolonial and postmodern mentorship vents voice against this veiled colonial mindset and takes up the guardianship in favour of the immigrant community. A personality like Vassanji in the world of letters in a multicultural society like Canada is highly aspired for the better reasons to know like how life’s nuances in an alien land be experienced for good or bad and how muted émigrés live in ‘existing solitudes’. These two novels *The Gunny Sack* and *No New Land* stand

out to be everlasting exams of unimaginable vicissitudes in the imaginary homelands.

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An Interpretation of the Interpreter- A Reading of Wole Soyinka

- S. Venkateswaran

Wole Soyinka, a critic of the Nigerian society has always been concerned with the issues associated with colonialism, naturalism, high versus low culture, European versus others national society, the relationship of the past to the present and national versus personal identity. The ideas in his works are not essentially African, they are universal. His concern has been man on earth, the quality of man's personality, his capacity for creation and destruction that makes him a potential victim of his own ingenuity.

The first ever Nobel Laureate in the African continent lives by his 'mantra' or belief:

I believe there is no reason why human beings should not enjoy maximum freedom. In living together in society we agree to lose some of our freedom. To detract from the maximum freedom socially possible, to me, is treacherous. "I don't believe in dictatorship benevolent or malevolent ". (The writer, p22)

As a dramatist, play wright, poet, novelist and a critic Soyinka has long been preoccupied with the process of apprehending (my) his own world in its full complexity. Also through its contemporary progression and distortions" (myth, pix) and has been using his talent to encapsulate his understanding of the metaphysical world and its reflection in Yoruba (the culture to which he belongs) contemporary social psyche. His plays, poems and essays are elaborations of his convictions and his central concern to transmit through analysis of myth and ritual the self-apprehension of the African world. His belief "Man exists however in a comprehensive world of myth, history and mores: in such a total context, the African world like any other world is unique. It possesses, however in common with the other cultures, the virtues of complementarity. To ignore this simple route to common humanity and pursue the alternative route of negation is, for whatever motives, an attempt to perpetuate the external subjugation of the black continent" may be real in the African spirit but has a universal appeal and validity.

These beliefs strongly held find an expression in the works of Wole Soyinka.

The Ogun myth “Ogun is god of creativity ‘guardian of the road, god of metallic lore and artistry, explorer, hunter and god of war and custodian sacred oath of the. Obatala, is the God of creation , essence of the serene arts, moulds the forms but the breath of life is administered by Edumare, the Supreme deity. The art of Obatala is thus essentially plastic and formal.

Ogun for his part is best understood in Hellenic values as a totality of the Dionysan Apollonian and Promothean virtues, protector of orphans, roof over the homeless , stands for a transcendental humane but rigidly restorative justice, Ogun is the creative urge and instinct the essence of creativity. In his invocation to ogun Soyinka observes

He ventures forth, refuge of the down trodden
To rescue slaves he unleashed the judgement of war
Because of the blind, plunged into forests
Of curative herbs, beautiful one
Who stands bulwark to off springs of the deed of heaven.
Salutations, O lone being, who swims in the rivers of blood.

Yoruba tragic art, says Soyinka, belongs in the mysteries of Ogun it plunges straight into the ‘ethhonic realm’ the seething cauldron of the dark world will and psyche and becoming. Into this universal womb once plunged and emerged Ogun, the first actor disintegrating within the abyss”, says Soyinka

For the Yoruba the gods are the facial measure of eternity as humans are of transience. For the Yoruba, the gods are the final means of eternity as humans are of earthly transience. The Yoruba is not like European man, concerned with the purely conceptual aspects of time, they are too concretely realised in his own life, religion, sensitivity to be mere tags for explaining the metaphysical order of his world. This implies that life, present life contains within its manifestations of the ancestral, the living and unborn. All are vitally within the intimations and affectiveness of life beyond mere abstract conceptualization.

Soyinka’s understanding of the Ogun myth even turned him to be a vocal critic of negritude accusing politicians of using it as a mark

of autocracy.

The traditions in which Soyinka placed his works are needless to mention, rooted in Yoruba mythology and to him practice of drama is the story of Ogun who created the art of pre-primordial chaos of passage between gods and men. The story of Ogun is the first rite of passage. Drama to Soyinka represents the passage rites of hero gods a projection of mans conflict with forces which challenges his efforts to harmonize with his environment. Ogun, like Soyinka himself has taught to build a bridge between the philosophy of the West and the Yoruba religion and cosmology in order to demonstrate the latter's universality.

‘Human life has meaning only to that degree and as long as it is lived in the essence of humanity’, (Man Died, p 86) This clearly reveals the personality of Wole Soyinka who is besides, being an outspoken critic of the African political environment and tireless crusade against the tyranny the conscience (1965) of Africa. This gets further gets illustrated in his novel *The Interpreters* in which with a better ferocity Soyinka attaches the incompetent hacks who runs universities, the civil service and the media (the newspaper). In the novel his attack on the ruling elites is not based on any demand for radical transformation of African society.

The Interpreters shows us how vulgar, degraded and incompetent the present rulers are in the important sector of the Nigerian society. In his well known play *A Dance of the forests* a kind of African *MidSummer Night Dream* the speaker is non other than the creator of the universe the poet and the play wright whose purpose is indeed to pierce the encrustations of soul deadening habit and to hold the mirror of their original nakedness upto his readers and spectators . Similar is the tone and purpose of his yet another play “kongis harvest” which also grew out of Soyinka’s concern with human rights, political liberties, out of his perception of the role of political activists as an important and honourable one. The plays and the novel mentioned above have in them, Soyinka’s concern for humanity rooted in Yoruba philosophy that gets manifested through the Ogun myth. Further, “the novel is reflections of the gradual awareness of the impact of the political system on the individual aspect. This fits into Soyinka’s definition of drama (tragedy and comedy) – ‘a reflection of reality that

everything has a tragic and comic phase at one end and at the same time trying to entrap these two extremes of pathos and hilarity is what makes for sanity’.

To Soyinka the past exits, though he rejects preoccupation with the past he is aware of his relevance – the real African consciousness establishes these the past is co-existent in the present awareness; the past, the present and the future are a continuum. To him the past is present as a significant instrumentalist interpretative frame. So, it can be said that as an “interpreter” of the society at large, Soyinka’s affinity for the past African consciousness is highly relevant, for it is going to help the human being either appreciate the past or condemn it in relation to the present or ‘likely present’ (failure). As an interpreter, his mind is pre occupied with the analysis and re reading of the tradition and modernity- this process of interpretation does not seem to have found an end. Deep in him, he seems to be arguing for the restoration of the tradition, culture and values of the past with a significant accommodation of the current trend without eroding the past, for, past to him is more real and meaningful and certain than the unpredictable present though present is observable that keeps shifting with the erosion of values and systems.

This is what he seems to work for- “Restoration of the past” through regeneration and rejuvenation so that the past and the present co-exist. His plays and novels are a pointer to this. For instance, in the play *Kongis Harvest*, what he observes, is that the corrupt leadership may start off as a minor laughable eccentricity but can hatch into a monstrous cannibalism. Likewise in his novel *Interpreters* (1965) he presents how a current post-colonial culture can sap the zeal and energy of its best potential leaders. The novel focuses on a group of young Nigerians of intellectuals who have just returned from overseas study, full of hope and enthusiasm for the development of their country. However it soon dawns on them that the society to which they have returned is rotten to the core and that any hope of standing above it all is not only unrealistic, but quite dangerous. “The novel, questions the validity of those aspects of existentialist philosophy that emphasize the acceptance of the human condition with all its suffering, without providing the means of its transcendence”. (Mpalive p-31) Does

Soyinka provide an alternative? The answer maybe ‘yes’ and or ‘no’. However, from a ‘protestor’, his development has been towards being a “constructor” of a meaningful society by not only being a critic but as an onlooker from being outside, by being inside it and not alienated or being indifferent. In short, as an interpreter he argues for the need to be aware of the past and realise the present not by forgetting the past- but by living in the present realising the past by a process called ‘mutual accommodation and adaptability’. As an interpreter, he amalgamates history with the present and encounters it with the knowledge of the past for a significant and meaningful ‘living’ tomorrow which will be true to his dictum that the past must address its present.

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Anita Desai's *Diamond Dust* and *Gates at Twilight* – An Overview

- M. A. K. Sukumar

Anita Desai was born in 1935 to a German mother and a Bengali father. She grew up speaking German at home and Bengali, Urdu, Hindi and English at school and in the city streets. She grew up surrounded by Western literature and music, not realizing until she was older that this was an anomaly in her world where she also learned the Eastern culture and customs. She once wrote: "I see India through my mother's eyes, as an outsider, but my feelings for India are my father's, of someone born here"

Anita Desai's first collection of short stories *Gates at Twilight* was published in 1978. Her short stories which are humorous, redolent, gentle and insightful expose her skill in handling this genre. She uses all her creative techniques and talents as she works with the same material as in her fiction but on a small scale. In her short stories, she has taken up themes such as the disjunction between convention and exploration, family unity and individualism, social requirements and the impersonal factors like death and art. In these stories, one finds the vividness of India. Her sense of observation, her extraordinary style of telling a story emphatically, precise characterization and gentle sarcasm with a tinge of wit create a new dimension to her art of writing short stories. She has also dealt with the temperamental dissimilarities between husband and wife, pragmatic relationships, psychological complications, and social conditions. Speaking of her novels, Anita Desai once observed: "My novels are no reflection on Indian society, politics or character. They are part of my private effort to seize upon the raw-material of life, and do mould it and impose on it a design...."

The title story of the first volume of short stories, *Games at Twilight* is an in-depth study of psychology of children at play. When the children decide to play, 'hide-n-seek', Ravi, in an attempt to come victorious in the game hides in a dark lumber room for hours together suppressing his fear. As he anticipates his victory over others, his fear dissipates. When he comes out to declare himself victorious, nobody recognizes his victory as the children have left the old game and now playing a new game 'funeral game'. In this story Desai has successfully

developed and depicted the struggle between Ravi's 'self-assertion and desire for recognition'. Desai chooses the subjective mode and adopts the strategy of sustained use of imagery.

In the story, *Studies in the Park*, we find a kind of withdrawal from material pursuits, from participation in the rat race, Suno, in a bid to get first in his examination, finds a suitable place in a park and sticks to his books. But books are 'like parasites and like parasites they suck him dry'. Under the overwhelming pressure of study, he gradually loses his ability to function suitably, both physically and psychologically.

In the story *The Accompanist*, Desai delineates the emotional state of a Tanpura player. The company of Ustad Rahim Khan makes a street urchin an accompanist. The alchemic touch of the master turned the crude and base boy into a noble and gentle accompanist. All other famous stories like '*Private Tution by Mr. Bose*', '*Surface Textures*', '*Sale*', '*A Devoted Son*' and '*Pigeons at Daybreak*' depict beautifully and faithfully the life of Indian middle class families.

Desai's second volume of short stories *Diamond Dust* (2000) is not as successful as her first collection, *Games at Twilight and Other Stories* (1978). The earlier stories were set entirely in India, but three of the nine stories here are about life in the USA, while one is set in Mexico.

The first story *Royalty* deals with Raja, Sarla and Ravi. Story starts with Sarla's declaration that Raja has come: 'He is in the south. He wants to visit us next week'. Very beautifully Desai portrays the reaction of Ravi: 'A great shiver ran through the house like a wind blowing that was not a wind so much as a stream of shining Light, shimmering and undulating through the still, shadowy house, a radiant serpent, not without menace, some threat of danger. Whether it liked it or not, the house became the one chosen by Raja for a visitation, a house in waiting.' The second story *Winterscape* also abounds in food imagery. *Winterscape* is a touching story about the deep love between two sisters, offering a strong, contrast to the antagonism between the sisters in *Royalty*.

The title story, *Diamond Dust* depicts the theme of unusually intimate relationship between man and animal, between Mr Das, the

protagonist and his pet dog called Diamond. The dog is a terror to the neighbours. People who are scared of it try to avoid going to Mr Das's compound. The postman tries to avoid it by throwing the mail into the hedge. The dog breaks its chain and goes out for mating bouts with stray bitches and comes back with bloodstains on its genitalia. Mr Das heaves a sigh of relief on its arrival after the first outing. When it goes out for the second time, it is caught by the police and taken away in the police van. Mr Das grows anxious about its absence from home and begins to search for it at every possible corner of the city. But when he finds it in the police van, he climbs the rear side of the van and dies when he is jerked back by the vehicle. His deep attachment for the pet dog makes him reckless and costs him his life. Anita Desai seems to teach the lesson that all over -whether of man, or woman, bird or beast-requires some kind of sacrifice. Desai narrates:

‘Diamond, who had been badly bitten and probably thrashed or stoned in the course of his latest affair, seemed to have quietened down a bit; at least there was a fairly long spell of obedience lethargy, comparative meekness. Mr. Das felt somewhat concerned about his health, but seeing him slip vitamin pills down the dog's throat, Mrs. Das grimaced, now what? He is too quiet for you? You need to give him strength to go back to his badmashi?’ (Diamond Dust, 61-62)

Next story, *Underground* is an intensively emotional love story between a husband and wife – Bob and Helen. Bob, an engineer had done lots of traveling and a scene from one of his trips was deeply embedded in his heart. He had seen a close family scene -the mother nursing a babe at her breast, the father clapping and the daughter dancing. He feels that this is how he'd love to love his life. So, when Helen falls ill with a strange disease, he seeks out a faraway seaside spot and makes it into a hotel. Now he would always be with her, not traveling out on official tours. Helen is looked after by her husband; she deteriorates and finally dies. The couple's evening hours passed sitting out on the verandah, throwing out scraps for the badgers to come out and eat. Desai further narrates:

‘Bob and Helen were not deceived; they knew they were being watched as keenly as they themselves watched, and sometimes one of them gave a shiver at the closeness of these dark, furtive creatures, the

close sharing of the silent evening with the badgers.’ (Daimond Dust, 77- 78)

The next story *The Man Who Saw Himself Drown* is a story of a businessman on tour, who finds his look-alike drowned and dead. He hides and pretends to be dead and tries to escape from his own life. But this plan does not help him. The story is philosophical in theme, exploring the illusive nature of man’s quest for freedom. When freedom is achieved, man realises that he feels disillusioned. The story is deeply symbolic. The man realises that by dying his double had not gifted him life instead ‘by arriving at death, life had been closed to me’.

Roof Top Dwellers deals with the modern women's desire for independence. Moyna comes from a small town and lives first in a hostel. She works for the literary magazine. She faces many problems of stay, food and water crisis, landlords problems, thrift, ill-health and job crisis, yet she is content to live alone and exults in her independence and self-sufficiency. Ultimately with her mother's letter of a marriage proposal and joy in her heart the story comes to an end.

In *Tepoztlan Tomorrow*, Anita Desai highlights the generation gap between the old and the young, one's nostalgic attachment to one's native city and the progressive deterioration of the city. Louis, son of Teresa, who is the protagonist of this story goes to Tepoztlan and meets Dona Celia. While having his dinner, he inadvertently refers to Pedro and spoils Dona Celia's mood. It is very unpleasant for Dona Celia to remember Pedro who was her suitor but whose family she had disliked. Next morning Dona Celia and her daughter Nadya complain to Louis about a neighbour who is a professional garbage picker and who disturbs them with the stinking smell and the loud music of radio and TV and by her other dirty habits.

Louis meets his friend Arturo and talks about the past very nostalgically. Arturo invites him to the golf club for having some fun. Then he meets Don Beto who enquires about his thesis and study at the University of Houston and advises him to write polemical articles and to oppose the golf club. Later Louis goes to the golf club where he sees Alessandro playing guitar and Arturo. Then he sees some parts of the city, returns to Dona Celia’s home and takes his leave with the pretext of continuing his research. The story, thus, shows a picture of

decadence of the city in various ways as part of global decadence.

On the whole, the stories in *Diamond Dust* are written from an omniscient point of view. Out of the nine stories, five are set in Canada and England and four in India. They are conspicuous for their remarkable and microscopic description, evocation of relevant mood and atmosphere and insight into the subtle working of the human mind. Sometimes her virtues become her vices in that the abundance of descriptive element tends to slacken the pace of the stories.

Thus, we see old relationships stir up buried resentments, a beloved dog causes havoc, a businessman away from house sees his own death, and freedom springs in surprising ways. This is a 'brilliant collection of funny, sad, compassionate and charming stories'. She creates unforgettable moments in the stories both visual and emotional.

Desai uses Indian words in her stories to evoke local colour. She uses them more sparingly than any other contemporary write. Moreover, Desai neither uses Indian phrases nor literally translates Indian expressions into English. Her use of Indian words is restricted mostly to nouns -names of Indian dishes, dresses, musical instruments, games, and certain other things which cannot be expressed with precision by using their English equivalents. She relies more on the technique of paying attention to details to achieve realism and to create the necessary atmosphere in her stories. Her short stories reflect to her Indian sensibility in themes, characterization, settings and language. As the usual narrative mode is inadequate for her purpose, she chooses the subjective mode and adopts the strategy of sustained use of imagery. She feels that this mode gives her ample scope for introspection, analysis, reflection and reverie.

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Gandhian Ideologies in the Novels of Bhabani Bhattacharya

- B. Bala Nagendra Prasad

In his novels, Bhabani Bhattacharya deals with some contemporary problem or the other because he believes that a novelist can find abundant material in the happenings of the day. This is particularly true of our country which has passed through a very significant phase, the freedom struggle, in her history. Bhattacharya says that an immediate and acute problems society does bring about a spontaneous reaction in the creative artist and this may result in a realistic piece of fiction, emanating from inner compulsion. Bhabani Bhattacharya was heir to the cultural riches of two worlds – East and West. As a writer, he was greatly influenced by Tagore and Gandhi as well as by Shakespeare and Steinbeck. Bhattacharya's deep interest in Gandhiji and his ideology is evident in his all his novels and his book, *Gandhi the Writer* (1969).

Bhabani Bhattacharya's first novel, *So Many Hungers* (1947) was published two months after India attained freedom. The hunger for food and for freedom is the main theme of the novel. There are two main strands of plot—the young scientist Rahoul and his family, representing in miniature the Struggle for Freedom and the poor Kajoli and her family, depicting the sad tale of millions of people who became victims of man-made hunger.

Though Rahoul wants to join the Struggle for Freedom, he refrains from active participation and gives the impression to the British of working on some phenomenal discovery. His brother, Kunal, joins the army and is declared missing in the end. His father, Samarendra Basu, is a greedy hoarder His grandfather, Devesh Basu, is a Gandhian character in the real sense of the term. He is a true patriot and has immense love for the common man. Rahoul is deeply influenced by him and had consulted him when his father wanted to send him to Cambridge to avoid his getting involved in the Struggle for Freedom. His grandfather had unhesitatingly told him that the call of the country came first. Rahoul had explained that his stay in Cambridge would enable him to know the English and then he would be able to fight them

better on his return to India. In the true Gandhian spirit Devesh Basu had told him to remember that their quarrel was with the British rulers and not with the British people.

Bhattacharya is very critical of the British administration and their apathetic attitude to the common people. Devata tells Rahoul how the school run by him at Baruni has come under suspicion. Gandhi who commands a huge following is imprisoned because he has protested against the policy of the foreign rulers. Referring to Gandhi's arrest, Bhattacharya makes a bitter comment, "A noble hearted person must share the lot of gangsters for speaking out his true faith in democracy." Bhattacharya truly reflects the impact of Gandhian ideology when he makes a clear distinction between the British rulers and the British people.

Bhattacharya reveals his admiration for Gandhi and Nehru and approves of some of the values upheld by the Indian National Congress. Like a good novelist he does not assign a direct role to Gandhi, though he always hovers in the background through his representative Devata. References show Nehru, about to speak to the U.S.A. on an American radio link and Gandhi, about to write a letter to His Excellency, the Viceroy, at New Delhi. Gandhi is all-pervading in his unassailable principle of non-violence. 'Ahimsa' finds expression in Kishore's words when he tells Rahoul how "Devata has laid the 'ahimsa' spell on Baruni. The people burnt down 'dhak ghar' in the heat of great anger, and then they remembered his teaching and the anger cooled off.

Bhattacharya's second novel, *Music for Mohini* (1952), depicts the emotional and intellectual growth of Mohini, the heroine, from the uninhibited, carefree and frolicsome maidenhood to the status of a responsible and mature wife of a thoughtful idealist who is the master of the Big House. The Big House is much more than a residence. It stands for "a way of living, a stern discipline and iron tradition." It is even symbolic of free India which has to go through a process of regeneration if it is to attain freedom in the real sense.

The impact of Gandhian ideology is felt throughout the novel though we do not come across a direct reference either to Gandhi or his ideology. Like Gandhi, Jayadev, the master of the Big House, feels that mere political freedom is not enough. Political freedom does not mean

much to the common man who can benefit only if a reawakening is brought about in social life. Jayadev does not find the adoption of western ideology to be solution to the problem and like Gandhi feels that delving into India's remote past can be of great help. He is pained to see that rural society "was sick with taboos and inhibitions of its own making: the iniquities of caste and untouchability, the ritualism that passed for religion; the wide-flung cobweb of superstitious faith." He finds that the dignity of man has been compromised and the purity of ancient thought has been ignored because of the selfishness of the people at the helm of affairs. He aims at bringing out the true meaning of ancient thought exactly the same way as Gandhi wanted to clear the misinterpretation of Hindu religion.

Jayadev, however, does not want to be "a spiritless copy of ancient Hindu man" He feels that every social value has to be reconsidered and spiritual energy has to be released in every individual if India is to be free in the real sense. All types of slavery, including the slavery of the spirit, have to end because we cannot afford to be half-slave and half-free.

Jayadev and a group of other enlightened youth of the village want to bring about regeneration. Below the placid surface a simmering discontent is visible. They decide to reform the existing order. They feel that "our political freedom is worth little without social uplift." They want to popularize widow remarriage and condemn child marriage. They succeed in preventing the seventy years old money-lender's fourth marriage with young Paru and ask him to marry a widow instead. They also want to eradicate untouchability, ignorance and superstition. Jayadev tells Mohini that they should not be the slaves of the stars and asserts,

"There is no room in the Big House for crazy beliefs. The village looks to us for ideals and a way of living. The pattern we set is not our private affair; it carries the strongest social sanction."

He Who Rides a Tiger (1955) is the story of Kalo a blacksmith of Jharna which has become, in the words of his friend. Biten, "a legend of freedom, a legend to inspire and awaken" Thematically, it has something common with *So Many Hungers*. It deals with the aftermath

of Quit India Movement of 1942 and the havoc wrought by the Bengal famine of 1943. The author hits the hardest at the pre-conceived, inborn and deeply ingrained notions of superiority and inferiority, based just on the accident of birth. Kalo sends his charming and intelligent daughter Chandra Lekha, to the local English school where she is made to feel unwelcome by the girls belonging to the higher castes.

The author deliberately exposes the ruthlessness of the religious system which demands the throwing away of the milk, collected after Shiva's milk-bath, instead of distribution it among the hundreds of children dying of starvation. Gandhian concept of fearlessness is highlighted when talking of Viswanath, the destitute blacksmith, Biten observes, "A man who has struggled and overcome fear can never be crushed."

Shadow from Ladakh (1966), which won the Sahitya Akadami award for 1967, is the last of the novels so far written by Bhattacharya. Set against the menacing background of the Chinese aggression against India starting in October, 1962, the novel is a study of Gandhian ethics, reassessing their validity and relevance in the post-independence India—an India faced with problems and challenges of the changing times. It preaches by implication that India needs a blending of divergent sets of values if she is to cope with the challenge of new times—a plea for a meeting point between Gandhian social ethics and the tremendous forces of science and technology. Satyajit and Bhaskar represent the contrasting contemporary attitudes to life in India. While Satyajit, the exponent of Gandhian philosophy and the guiding spirit of Gandhigram, a model of rural India as envisaged by Gandhi, regards Indian village life as an ideal life, Bhaskar, the Westernised American-trained engineer in a steel plant stands for modern industrialism. In such a situation when different points of views and attitudes are adhered to and practised by persons, with a strong belief of their being in the right, the only possible solution is synthesis—choosing the path of sympathetic understanding, of reconciliation of readjustment. At the end of the novel, we find synthesis on three planes: Synthesis of turbine and spinning-wheel on the economic plane, of Gandhian asceticism and Tagorean aestheticism on the physical plane and of violence and non-violence on the plane of international understanding. Such and only

such type of synthesis—finding a suitable meeting ground—alone would ensure the maximum happiness of the maximum. Bhattacharya records the type of synthesis, he envisages thus: “Let there be a meeting ground of the two extremes: let each one shed some of its contents and yet remain true to itself”.

Shadow from Ladakh is full of quotations, pertaining to various aspects of Gandhian ideology as depicted in many of Gandhi’s writings or speeches. Satyajit realizes, “Freedom in Gandhi’s reckoning, was only the means with which to reach targets further away. Those targets were now as remote as ever before.” There are many other biographical touches as well. Satyajit is Gandhi’s shadow and tries to mould his life accordingly. His wife, Suruchi, in her suffering, is a shadow of Kasturba. Gandhigram is a village, reflecting Sevagram, founded by Gandhi on the lines of a model village of his dreams. The opposite poles which in the beginning seem to be incapable of meeting each other are represented in the novel by Gandhigram and Steeltown. Whereas Satyajit’s Gandhigram is distinctly patterned after Gandhiji’s Sevagram, Bhashkar’s Steeltown could be one of the dream edifices of Nehru. The writer suggests that the Steeltown with its emphasis on industrialization should be able to co-exist with Gandhigram and its preference for the spinning wheel which is symbolic of slow tempo of life.

During Gandhi’s visit to Santiniketan when Satyajit was still teaching there, Gandhi had been impressed by the sincerity and simplicity of his devotion. He had suggested to Satyajit to come and help run Sevagram so that it could set an example for the rest of the country. Satyajit, therefore, decided to shift to Gandhigram with a few simple possessions as there is no room for material possessions in Sevagram. Thus he voluntarily opts for simple living. His wife, Suruchi, whom he had met in Santiniketan only, and infant daughter, Sumita, accompany him. He even discards his surname Sen, denoting caste affiliation, before entering the newly founded village, Gandhigram.

One of the basic principles of Gandhi’s gospel of non-violence is absence of hatred for the opponent. Sumita quotes Satyajit to Bhashkar in order to elaborate it, “To give hate for hate is only to make the evil grow stronger. To hate is to be defeated in the moral struggle.” Satyajit,

like a true Gandhian, believes that the rulers and not the people are to blame for all the unpleasantness between India and China.

A review of Bhabani Bhattacharya's novels thus amply proves that he has had a tremendous influence of Gandhian ideology. He has, in fact, created mini-Gandhis in the characters of Devesh Basil, Jayadev, Satyajit and Bhaskhar. If Gandhi is the "Mahatma", Devesh Basu is "Devata" for the people. Bhabani Bahattacharya seems to have had a sound grounding in Gandhian thought, culminating in his scholarly masterpiece, *Gandhi the Writer*, published in 1969 at the time Gandhi's Centenary Celebrations. This special, conscious study of Gandhi has given him an added advantage over other novelists. Being thoroughly familiar with Gandhi's views on varied subject, Bhabani Bhattacharya has been able to touch upon almost all the aspects of Gandhian ideology and in the right perspective too.

Bhattacharya protests against the evils of untouchability, superstitions, blind rituals, backwardness, orthodoxy, tradition-bound practices, slavery, caste system and all types of exploitation. He also refers to the uselessness of 'brahmacharya' and leading a life of asceticism. He believes that human beings are given to bodily desires and be tempted by the weakness of the flesh. Repression of natural instincts in unhealthy facts and other rigidities of self-control are illogical and irrelevant in the present context. Howsoever one may try to justify a celibate life in the name of self-restraint, it is merely an escape and curbing of human emotions and normal impulses does not necessarily lead to sublimation. Bhabani Bhattacharya suggests an amalgamation of rural and urban values and a sort of path for the growth of economy. Small scale industries are to be encouraged and industrialization and mass production have to stay in the face of population explosion.

Some of the Gandhian principles Bhabani Bhattacharya strongly advocates are love for and identification with the common man and humanity are large, equity, simplicity, humanity, magnanimity, charity austerly, equal status for women, widow remarriage, fearlessness, fellow-feeling, social uplift, universal love, self-help, faith in the motto of 'work is worship, voluntary poverty, indifference to riches and power, 'ahimsa', fight with the rulers of England, absence of hatred,

understanding, generosity and friendship, united conscience for resolving international issues, victory of truth and spiritual force and above all, non-violence in human relationships.

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Struggle for Justice in Campus Novels: A Study of Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe*

- R. Rushula Devi

The Groves of Academe (1952) by Mary McCarthy is considered one of the first academic novels. In English, "Campus novel" is a term used to designate a work of fiction whose action takes place mainly in a college or university, and which is mainly concerned with the lives of University Professors and Junior teachers – "faculty" as they are collectively known in America. The emphasis on the teachers rather than on their students is a distinctive feature of the campus novel, which emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. An alternative name for the campus novel is "academic novel". The application of the Latin word, 'campus', meaning "Field" to the physical space occupied by a college or university, was originally an American usage.

In both America and Britain the period after the Second World War saw great expansion in university education. Many new universities were built, and old ones expanded. There were plenty of job opportunities in Arts Faculties.

Mary McCarthy's novel takes its title from a line by the Latin poet Horace, which serves as an epigraph: "Atque inter Silvas academic quaerere verum": "And go seek for truth in '*The Groves of Academe*'". But the novel suggests that the truth is the last thing you will find in an American liberal Arts College. The main spring of the plot – as of so many campus novels that followed, including Nabokov's *Pnin*, Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim* – is tenure, the question whether a temporary appointment will be converted into a permanent, secure one. But whereas in most of novels the central character is the hero or heroine, and sympathy is generated by putting their hopes of achieving tenure in Jeopardy, in *The Groves of Academe* the central character is an antihero, a thoroughly unsympathetic and undeserving character who unscrupulously manipulates all the others for his own ends.

The Groves of Academe is McCarthy's satiric foray against the administrations and the faculties of liberal higher education. The novel

is intended as a satire of academics based on the author's teaching experiences at Bard and Sarah Lawrence Colleges. Its setting is a progressive college campus in Pennsylvania during the McCarthy era; its characters are College Faculty, Administration, and Students. It is a little world made cunningly, complete with a twelve-year history in which McCarthy satirizes progressive education. The action in the novel takes place within a four-month period, beginning in January with Henry Mulcahy's "amazed, really amazed" reaction to a letter from President Maynard Hoar informing him that he will not be reappointed as Literature Instructor for the coming academic year and ending with Hoar's announcement to a member of his faculty that he has resigned from his job. The thirteen chapters detail the relentlessly logical sequence of events by which Mulcahy ousts Hoar. The background to the novel is the campaign of Senator Joe McCarthy in the late 1940s and early 1950s against alleged communists in public life.

Henry Mulcahy, called hen by his friends, forty one years old, the only Ph.D in the Literature Department, contributor to the *Nation* and the *Kenyon Review*, father of four children, fifteen years' teaching experience, salary and rank of instructor, but in the opinion of number of his colleagues the cleverest man at Jocelyn and the victim, here as elsewhere, of that ferocious envy of mediocrity for excellence that is the ruling passion of all system of jobholders (GA, p.5) convinced he is disliked by the President of Jocelyn because of his abilities as a teacher and his independence of mass opinion, Mulcahy believes he is being made the victim of a witch hunt, plotting vengeance, Mulcahy battles to fight for justice and in the process, reveals his true ethical nature. Mary McCarthy explores the role of the self-justified liar and the self-deceived sympathizer in the quest for justice.

After the abating of his first flush of annoyance at the letter of dismissal, he decides to approach Hoar privately through faculty petition rather than to threaten the President with exposure as an anti-liberal before the American Association of University Professors Grievance Committee. 'Live and let live', he finally opined, was the most politic motto for the occasion (p.15).

In order to keep his job, Mulcahy need the support of his colleagues. He embroils the other members of the faculty with each

other in an elaborate maze of lies. The women probably will be won to his side by the threat of Cathy's health, but the men may more readily defend him on grounds of academic freedom. Mulcahy seeks out Domna as his first ally. Domna Rejnev was the youngest member of the Literature Department, a Radcliffe B.A., twenty-three years old, teaching Russian Literature and French (p.37). Mulcahy tells her a whole story of the dismissal, of an unwritten promise that his appointment would be made permanent when he comes to Jocelyn, of Hoar's knowledge of Cathy's grave condition and therefore his culpability in jeopardizing her life by firing Mulcahy, and finally and carefully, of his membership in the communist party as "One of those unfortunate prisoners" of the party, persecuted alike by communists, who know that he is their enemy – and by anti-communists who do not know that. Mulcahy tells Domna, obviously that Hoar has found out about the old affiliation and is firing him for it.

Barbara McKenzie states that "Mulcahy proves himself adept at judging both the proclivity of institutions to foster gossip and the fondness of intellectuals to champion causes in the name of justice".

Mulcahy has a student following. They admire Cathy as she dances in her wedding dress, enjoying what they see as her triumph over child – rearing and poverty. As the instigation of Domna, members of the Literature Department convene to draft a petition in support of Mulcahy. Furness, a cynic who does not trust Mulcahy anyway, refuses to participate in the effort to have him retained. Partly because he is department Chairman, he is aware of Mulcahy's shortcomings.

Domna, although deeply concerned for Cathy, insists that Mulcahy is both competent and brilliant, a particular effort should be made on behalf of anyone in his unfortunate circumstances. The like minded Alma Fortune, widowed and spinsterish, in support of Mulcahy writes her letter of resignation. John Bentkoop supports Mulcahy on the grounds that the college needs a theist. Van Tour, worries the question of academic freedom. Aristide Poncy tries to be judicious as a non voting emissary from the French Department.

In The poetry Conference, Mulcahy makes a new friend in the department, Ellison. They both set about undercutting Domna's standing in the department by scheming to exclude her from the

planning of the symposium. When Domna and Alma hear rumors that Mulcahy is plotting to sabotage the symposium, they are alarmed at the possibility that the college will be disgraced. Thus they report the rumors to Furness, who is always ready to believe the worst, and once again Mulcahy is the centre of departmental agitation. When Furness confronts Mulcahy, Ellison intervenes to say that he has inspired some of the rumors in order to create interest in the symposium. Despite apprehensions, the Conference comes off reasonably well. In the Conference Mulcahy's colleagues came to know the fact that Mulcahy was never a Communist. After this incident Domna felt that she had been hay consciously gulling herself.

The president had a shattering experience, Henry Mulcahy without knocking, brushing by the Secretary, had burst into the President's private office, white faced, malendent, trembling and demanded to know what the President had meant by interrogating a visiting poet about Mulcahy's political affiliations. Mulcahy literally shook his fist and threatened to expose him to the A.A.U.P., and to every liberal magazine and newspaper in the country. Mulcahy even threatened Maynard that he was going to write a sequel to the President's magazine article that would reveal to the whole world the true story of a professional liberal: a story of personal molestation, spying, surveillance, corruption of students by faculty stool-pigeons (p.299). Maynard's idea, naturally was to throw Mulcahy bodily out of his office. But he hesitated as the campus was full of outsiders – poets, teachers, publishers, parents. He can't fire him as Mulcahy has a contract, and he must show proper cause. The defeated President finally asks Mulcahy, "Are you a conscious liar or a self deluded hypocrite? Mulcahy replies, "A Cretan says, all cretans are liars". (p.301).

Mary McCarthy states what is justice for the unemployable person? That was conceived from the beginning as a plot: the whole idea of the reversal at the end, when Mulcahy is triumphant and the President is about to loose his job or quit, when the worm turns and is triumphant.

Mulcahy frankly declares, "I am not concerned with truth.... I'm concerned with justice. Justice for myself as a superior individual and for my family" (p.301). The novel ends with Hoar's "noble voice"

declaiming from Cicero's oration, "How far at length, O Catiline, will you abuse our patience?"

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A Comparative Study of *Pygmalion* and *A Doll's House*

- G. Reddissekhar Reddy

This paper brings to light the important characteristic features of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* and Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* in a comparative approach. Various distinctive features have been discussed. Some opposing characteristic features are also discussed in their realistic nature. It's quite interesting to have a comparative study of the two plays.

Liberation from the known: In *Pygmalion*, the central character Eliza Doolittle, a flower girl is seen as an ordinary girl with all the fallacies of a poor class. Her customs and her way of dealing with people are entirely different. But in six months, there is a sea-change in the nuances of the language, which metamorphosed into a young lady of different quality. On the other hand in *A Doll's House*, the protagonist Mrs. Nora Helmer depicts as a woman who looks after her domestic cores in full-length and finds that at the end she had to forsake everything and leave the place, to find more meaning in her life and in understanding herself.

It can be compared and contrasted with Eliza who finds some meaning in her life in order to achieve something and get more from life. She left Prof. Higgins, who was her mentor for betterment. But in *A Doll's House*, there is a sense of dissatisfaction prevailing in her mind when she has left home. There is no particular sense of direction or ulterior motive, that a reader can understand and evaluate what will happen to her after abandoning her husband and children of that stature. Though she is a frivolous and submissive wife, her husband Torvald Helmer is not in a position to accept her weaknesses, due to which a deep wound in her heart has directed her not to yield henceforth to the bounds of her family. Here one can find Ibsen, portraying the character of the men, in the then Norwegian Society.

Breaking the established conventions: In *Pygmalion*, Eliza slams the door even after Higgins has educated her in all ways. George Bernard Shaw through his characters educates the common man, the ways and the customs that are followed. It is a harsh, disciplined and a

continuous training for Eliza Doolittle for six months that creates a sort of confidence in her inner self. In fact, George Bernard Shaw's tone is didactic in their delivery and its dramatization. He was a man of multi-talents. Ibsen too, tried his level best to show the middle class moralities through Nora Helmer and Torvald Helmer. Nora leads a double life, on one side totally submissive and the other side; she borrows money and forges her father's signature. There was a paradox hidden and involved in her. Though fair and dutiful to her husband and children, she had to stoop down to that level for her survival and benefit of her family. She leads her life by wearing mask. At the end, Ibsen tears her mask by liberating herself from the guilt that she has committed earlier. She too slams the door and departs her house, stating as if it is a strong revolt against the ordinary conventions laid down by the society.

Alfred Doolittle, the father of Eliza who was a dustman in *Pygmalion* shows the depiction of Shaw's ingenuity. The man, who has inherited a large sum but is not ready to fulfill his duties, shows the ways of the world. Shaw exposes the philosophical attitude of certain people. He also surfaced the original ideas through the character of Alfred who made the play comic and revealed that people who did little and were poor, and those who did equally little, but happened to be rich because of their unearned income.

Shaw envisages the ideas and through his plays his ideas are given life and are infused into the characters of different origins and from various strata of society. In his play *Pygmalion*, Shaw could achieve this by communicating in a rational way. Shaw was neither a skeptic nor a cynic, because he saw and understood life in a perspective different from the average individual who was responsible for paving the way of "the New Drama" characterized with an intense energy, revealed through the fascinating expression of genius, communicating his commitment to the public.

Archibald Henderson believes:

"Pygmalion, though Shaw put it no higher in point of purpose that an advertisement of the science of Phonetics, which was one of his hobbies, presents one side of his Socialist Philosophy, the view that the only hope for the future of society and the race is the breaking down of the barriers between the

classes.”¹

Romantic approach: The quality of sex appeal is lacking in *Pygmalion*, as Prof. Higgins is too attached to his mother and her ways. All his energy has sublimed and transmuted for some different purposes and his way of life is a live example of this phenomenon. Learning about varied dialects, investigating, experimenting, recording and teaching Phonetics is his prime concern in his life. He could have the romantic touch at least to a smaller extent as the original Pygmalion-Galatea had so. But in *A Doll's House*, it can be find Torvald Helmer having certain amorous exchanges and calling her by names to arouse sympathy and a feeling of love which is predominant in marital relationships.

The theme of Oedipus complex can be viewed on upper layers as Prof. Higgins has a biased mind with regards to his mother and her ways which he doesn't want to replace with another irrespective of her captivating beauty and charm. This is the psychological threat subconsciously faces by Eliza Doolittle to harp upon Freddy as he is younger and an eligible bachelor in twenties and is a man who responds rightly to her womanhood which is lacking apparently at all levels in Prof. Higgins. He is like a stone-hearted machine unable to understand the feelings of woman as he is not exposed much to the woman and her ways.

Ibsen's *A Doll's House* didn't lack this quality of love though at the end there happened to be a strained relationship. It could be find that Torvald Helmer calling her affectionately as his 'little lark', 'little squirrel' and the like. The secret love of Dr. Rank towards Nora Helmer revealed prior to his death and in the third act, we can also find Christine, the friend of Nora and Krogstad, the man who blackmailed Nora coming to terms.

Women as Protagonists: In both the plays, women are given utmost importance, though the reasons may be different for their departing at the end from their respective positions and places both the protagonists (i.e.) Eliza in *Pygmalion* and Nora in *A Doll's House* are totally in need of self-esteem which is supposed to be lacking in their male counterparts. In *A Doll's House*, Nora Helmer remarked that her husband and her father both thought of her as a doll. Her husband,

Torvald Helmer even passed a scathing remark that she was not even fit enough to be a good mother to their children.

In *Pygmalion*, also Prof. Higgins didn't give her the deserved identity. He ill-treated her and his only wish was to prove his talent and acumen. She hankered for self-respect and Prof. Higgins denied it to her to the core. He didn't take her feelings into account until or unless, he was interested to mend her speech and behavior for making his promise successful or winning his bet with Colonel Pickering.

“It can be argued that Higgins doesn't really transform Eliza. He doesn't create a woman out of a statue, but simply changed one puppet (a flower girl) into another (a fashionable lady). It is Eliza's own resentment at being treated as an experiment, a soulless object that leads her to transformation”.²

Prof. Higgins' importance for Phonetics: Shaw advocated a forty letter phonetic alphabet in which every character would represent one sound only. Spelling would thus become an exact notation for speech and children could be taught much more easily to avoid the 'detestable' mutilation of the tongue exemplified in Eliza's speech – “A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere....”³

“Throughout the action, Higgins concentrates upon Eliza as a speech phenomenon and ignores her as a woman. Upon achieving his phonetic triumph he is astonished to discover that Eliza is not simply a beautiful statue capable of exquisite speech. In fact Eliza's new outlook on life is of greater significance than her new mode of speaking, and she finally feels free to turn her back on her mentor”.⁴

Institute of Marriage and its implications: In *A Doll's House*, the falsity of Romantic love as illustrates in the broken matrimony of Nora Helmer and Torvald Helmer is predominant in the play. The institution of marriage might have brought the couple together to reproduce and carry their family heritage, but not multiplying their marital bliss of living together and understanding one another taking their growth into higher helms in the society. There is no proper understanding though living together (physically) for more than 8 years but the mental

chemistry appears to be questionable. So, the modern drama enlightened the relationships of the then society and the vacuum in the woman's heart and soul. The dilemma faced by them was exposed to the outer world. This could happen only if a male gender could enter into the shoes of the woman and experience and share the empathy. So, Ibsen is a master craft and a great diagnostician of relationships showing the inner recesses of human minds and their participation with their fellow human beings. While Shaw is direct in his approach and delivery, Ibsen's dialogues unfolds the mystery underlying beneath in a new angle demanding our minds to be psychologically into the past and the apprehensions of the future.

In *Pygmalion*, Shaw worried more of the words and their implications in and out of the play where as in *A Doll's House*, Ibsen communicated more than words. So it had high visual effects knitted into the play which impress more than the words.

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African American Literature: A Study

- Mallikarjun Patil

Slavery is a human condition because of subordination. This may be legal or customary. Slavery is associated with every type of society, and in all places and times. Franklin Knight thinks men have enslaved one another for two main reasons: first, as a form of punishment, either for transgressors in social behavior or for vanquished warriors; second, as a response to man's requirement. Most organized religions and even kingships accepted slavery as if with a belief in some men's superiority. This was upto the 18th century when the European philosophers like Montesquieu began to question it.

As per archeological study, slavery existed before 2000 BC in the Sumerians of Mesopotamia (Babylonian empire). Hammurabi, the Babylonian king of the 18th century BC passed some codes for slaves. He allowed slaves a right for freedom because of master's will, or by purchase. The ancient Hebrews and Africans had slavery. Among the populations and cultures of the pre-Greek era, including the Sumerian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Assyrian, and Mycenaean, chattel slavery, as the modern term is understood, did not exist. Nor was there individual freedom in the modern sense either. Both chattel slavery and individual freedom were the creations of the Greek city-states.

Realism, Naturalism, Modernism 1940-1960:

Modern black writers could not live by their pen so easily, because serious white papers excluded them and they avoided popular literature, which the blacks cultivated. Some important events were

Truman's creation of the Commission on Civil Rights in 1947, the fall of colonialism which ended European domination of Africa and resulted in the establishment of numerous independent republics like Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Algeria. The U.S. Supreme Court's may 1954 ruling on *Brown V. the Topeka Board of Education*, desegregated public schools; and ironically, in the Cradle of the Confederacy, the Montgomery, Alabama, Bus Boycott in December 1955 ushered in what came to be called the nonviolent protest movement. Led by the young Martin Luther King Jr., the movement succeeded in tumbling the

walls of the U.S. system of apartheid and the ‘separate by equal’ laws that buttressed it.

At least in strictly literary terms, Wright’s novel *Native Son* christened the decade in 1940. Book-of-the Month Club selection *Native Son* made Wright the first African American writer to receive both critical acclaim and commercial success. Close on the heels of Wright’s success, other African American writers garnered recognition and prestige from a predominantly white literary world that had historically been stingy in awarding its favors to black writers. Margaret Walker won the Yale Younger Poets Award for *My People* in 1942; Gwendolyn Brooks, the Pulitzer Prize for *Annie Allen* in 1950; Ralph Ellison, the National Book Award for *Invisible Man* in 1952; and Lorraine Hansberry won New York Drama Critics Circle Award for *A Raisin in the Sun* in 1959.

Wright helped Baldwin win a Rosenwald Fellowship; read and encouraged the poetry of Walker; favorably reviewed Himes’s first novel *If He Hollers Let Him Go*; and helped Brooks to place her first volume of poetry *A Street in Bronzeville*. But critics such as Irving Howe have claimed for Wright much more than this. Invoking the rhetoric of millennialism, Howe proclaimed: ‘The day *Native Son* appeared, American culture was changed forever... It made impossible a repetition of the old lie... brought out into the open, as no one ever had before, the hatred, the fear and violence that have crippled and may yet destroy our culture.’ The new critics viewed that the blacks had to be more aggressive now. They cannot be contended with little success as in the times of Harlem renaissance. Wright’s essay *Blueprint Negro Writing* marked this. Alain Locke in his book *Spiritual Truancy* described Harlem Renaissance writers as ‘aesthetic wastrels,’ given to a decadent and ‘exhibitionist flair.’ While they should have addressed themselves to the ‘people themselves,’ he continued, they played to a ‘gallery of faddist negrophiles.’ To the ‘present younger generation of Negro writers,’ Locke issued the vague challenge to discover the ‘undiscovered and dormant’ group soul.’ Reinforcing Wright’s manifesto, Locke called for black writers to forsake bourgeois privilege and comfort for the larger reward-literary and social alike –of the collective good.

What we understand is that Wright suggested that black art and social protest must go hand in hand. The ‘Wright school’ writers William Attaway, Chester Himes, Frank Yearby and Ann Petry followed Wright’s ideology. Attaway’s *Blood on the Forge* (1941) depicted the black migration. *Blood on the Forge* was rated one of the most complex treatments of the exploitation of the black American workers caught in the northern steel mills and locked in a losing competition with white and immigrant labor in a market that pitted each group against the other. Himes’s *The Lonely Crusade* (1947) is an account of a labor organizer who fights against racial discrimination. His work *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1945) is the story of an educated, northern Negro set against poor Southern whites in a Los Angeles shipyard during World War II. Accused of raping a white woman, the protagonist is finally defeated. Petry’s *The Street* (1946) is likened to *Native Son*.

Due largely to the effects of the Depression many black writers found the brutal realism and naturalism that quickened Wright’s socially conscious art essential to their own literary goals and philosophies. Many critics attribute the turn away from Wright’s brand of urban realism as a turn toward a vision of integration as a social ideal. Indeed, as the 1940s drew to a close, writers-among them, Petry, Hurtson, Willard Motley-who came of age during the Depression demonstrated this ‘integrationist’ temper by turning to what some critics have inadequately termed ‘non-Negro’ or nonracial subject matter. The publication of Baldwin’s essay *Everybody’s Protest Novel* (1949) in the *Partisan Review* contributed to that opinion, although it did little injury to Wright’s status. It took the success of *Invisible Man* to give further impetus to those writers already wrestling with and wriggling out from under the narrative strait-jacket of realism and naturalism. As Ellison put it in *Brave Words for a Startling Occasion*, his address at the ceremony of the National Book Award in 1952, ‘the very facts’ which the naturalism assumed would make us free have lost the power to protect us from despair.’ His novel reflected a more ‘experimental attitude,’ designed to combine a commitment to ‘social responsibility’ with a studied attention to the novel’s form. This latter effort, Ellison maintained, was fueled for him as much as by reading Marx, Malraux, Freud, Eliot, Pound, Stein and Hemingway as by

reading Wright, Baldwin, and Hughes and by listening to the blues and jazz.. It is a critical commonplace that with *Invisible Man*, African American writers came to grips with the aims and provocations of modernism. Then Baldwin's masterpiece *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1935) depicted religious fundamentalism, collective guilt, and psychodynamics of family life. Baldwin followed Wright's naturalism.

The plots of African American literary history were based on prose forms of socialist realism and focused on the public quarrels between Wright, Baldwin and Ellison's 'brotherhood' narrative, from which women were excluded. Brooks's *Maud Martha* and Paul Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959) were also great works of fiction.

The poetry of the 1940s of Brooks, Walker, Tolson and Hayden is vigorous. The last lines of *For My People*, the title poem of Walker's prize winning volume, are frequently quoted to support the premise that Walker keeps a militant protest tradition alive. A similar confluence runs through Brooks's first volume of poetry *A Street in Bonnzville* (1945). Writing in an era when American poetry was highly intellectualized and academic, Brooks's studied attention to form and technical craftsmanship links her with Melvin Tolson and Robert Hayden. The three are frequently grouped together as poets conscious of technique and fluent with such modern experimental poets as Crane, Elliot, and Yeats. Critics generally consider Tolson's first volume *Rendezvous with America* (1944), the most 'accessible' of Tolson's work. The careers of Brooks, Hayden, Tolson, and Walker had their beginning in the 1940s, but their poetic output extended through to the Black Arts movement of the 1960s and beyond.

In her poem Margaret Walker speaks of the 'prophets of a new day,' and some of them were Amiri Baraka and Malcolm X. Baraka's poem 'black Art' speaks this:

We want 'poems that kill.'
Assassin poems, Poems that shoot
guns. Poems that wrestle cops into alleys
and take their weapons leaving them dead
with tongues pulled out and sent to Ireland.

Baraka's desire for 'killing poems,' hearkened back to Wright's desire for 'words as weapons,' for art in the service of a struggle for human liberation. It is said: "Because black writers of the 1940-60 generation had earned their strips, so to speak, in the American market of letters and had garnered a considerable degree of public success and recognition, it could be said that they opened a frontier on the future that the Harlem Renaissance generation had barely begun to perceive."

It is said, "While Hansberry's *Raisin in the Sun* began the longest run on Broadway of any drama written by a black upto that time, throughout the 1930s an 1940s blacks were increasingly found to have appeal and significance as dramatic subjects, capable of attracting the play going public and ensuring a sizable financial return. The establishment of the American Negro Theatre (ANT) in 1940 made that decade unusual in African American theater history."¹⁴ ANT produced Wright's dramatic version of *Native Son*. It produced Hughes's *The Sun Do Move* (1942), Baldwin's *The Amen Corner* and Alice Childress's *Trouble in Mind* (which won an Obie Award in 1955). Only ten plays written totally or partly by black Americans were produced on Broadway from 1926 until 1959, when Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* took the theater establishment by storm, winning the New York Drama Critics Award over entirely by such long-established playwrights as Eugene O'Neill and Tennessee Williams.

The Black Arts Movement 1960-1970:

The 1960s was turbulent in American life. The Vietnam war was a thorn in American flesh. America supported South Vietnam and Russia supported North Vietnam led by Ho Chin Minh. America wanted to curb the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia. 570000 Americans lost their lives in the war. Soon John Kennedy became the President. His youth, decisiveness, charisma, idealism, political savvy and good look brought national and international prestige and esteem.

The 1962 Cuban Crisis was bad enough. The black agitation, the assassinations of Kennedy himself in 1963; Malcolm X (1965), Martin Luther Jr (1968), urban riots, antiwar strikes created unrest. In 1960, four black college students inaugurated the modern black civil rights sit-in movement by occupying seats at a segregated lunch counter in the downtown Woolworth's store of Greensboro, North Carolina. Martin

Luther King Jr., the African American Baptist minister, had made such a belief popular during the Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott of the mid-1950s. As a young leader himself, King had invoked the doctrines of civil disobedience and passive resistance so effectively used by Gandhi during the fight against British colonialism in India. The world as a whole acknowledged King's magisterial leadership when he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964.

By the end of the decade, however, the African American freedom struggle had encountered bitter frustration and violent setbacks. Despite the passage of the 1964 and 1968 Civil Rights Acts, and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the U.S. government repeatedly refused to enforce the laws of the land.

Black Muslim (the Nation of Islam) also took part in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960-70. W.D. Fard founded the Nation of Islam, and Elijah Poole (Muhammad) carried it further. Nearly one lakh blacks joined this temple of Islam by 1960. Black people in America, according to black nationalists of the 1960s, had to redeem themselves. No better example than the Muslims seemed to exist for a separatist agenda in which African Americans would undertake their own economic, moral, social, religious and political regeneration as a 'nation within a nation.' The Black Muslims displayed astute financial management, ascetic self-discipline, effective public relations and uncanny zeal for reform among their predominantly black male membership. Malcolm X's fearless honesty was so admired by black nationalists at the time of his death. The important Black Arts poet Sonia Sanchez was, for a brief time, a member of the Nation and proselyte for its program.

The 1960s was turbulent time for the blacks. They wanted freedom and equality, and economic opportunities in practice so they organized black power revolts. Stokeley Carmichael of SNCC was one such leader. Huey Newton and Bobby Seale's Black Panther Party became revolutionary. Constructing a party agenda from an eclectic range of sources such as the Black Muslim preachments of Malcolm X, the teachings of Mao Tse-tung, and the anti-colonialist writings of West Indian Frantz Fanon, the Panthers openly displayed their dedication to a gospel of the gun. The party promised land, bread and peace to the

blacks. Almost from the start, party members became involved in a series of violent confrontations with the police. After Bobby Seale and Huey Newton were arrested and imprisoned, ex-convict Eldridge Cleaver assumed the party leadership. In 1968 he published his fugitive musings on the condition of the nation in the best-selling *Soul on Ice*. That same year, he announced his candidacy for president of the United States.

Another revolutionary political phenomenon was New Left which sought to establish communication with the international peace movement. Betty Freidan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) allied to this. After myriad battles and frustrations, the reformist New Left gave way to more strident factions, and *revolution* replaced *reform* in the vocabulary of the SDS breakaway group known as the Weathermen. The Weathermen were young radicals who cultivated underground identities and believed in strategic bombings as a means of bringing down the old American order. In 1970, several members of the group blew themselves up in a freak explosion.

Black Arts movement was a continuous, collective effort to bring about fundamental social reform. Their objective was to create works that would be-in the words of Maulna Karenga- 'functional, collective and committing.' Hence, the Black Arts of the 1960s proposed to create politically engaged expression as a corollary to the new black spirit of the decade. The writer Larry Neal described the project as follows: "The Black Arts Movement is radically opposed to any concept of the artist that alienates him from his community. Black Art is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept. As such, it envisions an art that speaks directly to the needs and aspirations of Black America... The Black Arts and the Black Power concept both relate broadly to the Afro-American's desire for self-determination and nationhood. Both concepts are nationalistic."

It is said, "Black Arts practitioners sought to combine the African American vernacular resonances of sermons, popular music and black mass 'speech' into a rousing new form of poetry. Their verse was free, conversational, jazzy and bluesy. We see this in the works of Quincy Troupe and Sonia Sanchez. Poet and novelist Margaret Walker once wrote: "The 'black aesthetic' has a rich if undiscovered past. This goes

back in time to the beginning of civilization in Egypt, Babylonia, India, China, Persia, and all the Islamic world that precedes the Renaissance of the Europeans. We have lived too long excluded by the Anglo-Saxon aesthetic. . . . Where else should the journey lead? The black writer IS the black experience. How can the human experience transcend humanity? It's the same thing." In its experimental variety, however, it could work like the best black vernacular linguistic and musical strategies and appropriate 'standard' American forms such as the rhythms of the East Village Beatnik. No one was more competent in this combination of the experimental and the vernacular than Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), whose volume *Black Magic Poetry, 1961-1967* (1969) is one of the finest products of the African American creative energies of the 1960s."

In his classic *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Du Bois speaks of a veil that black Americans are forced to live behind in the United States. What Du Bois means is that black Americans have never been able to enjoy the serenity, choices, opportunities or benefits of 'normal' everyday life in America. There is always, even in the seemingly normal comings and goings of black American life, therefore, a hidden or veiled African remainder. One such work was John Williams's popular and engaging novel *The Man Who Cried I Am* (1967). The novel offers a tale of the always endangered position of the black spokesperson, writer, or artist, who seek to expose inequities of American life. The work of James Alan McPherson, who had only recently graduated from college when the sixties were in their heyday, represents a revolutionary moment 'beyond the veil.'

The Black Arts movement was, indisputably, committed to a goal of black mass communication. Poems and dramas created by 1960s writers did not seek to dazzle the intellect with difficult allusions to Western mythology. Nor did they ponderously rehearse abstract philosophical wisdom. Baraka's artistic output and his literary, critical, social and political influence on the Black arts easily outstripped that of any other black writer of the period.

The treatment of Africa as a subject in all genres of Black Art writings is a direct result of the black nationalist impulse to construct a myth of origins for Africans in America. African American artistic and

literary history are full of statements of longing for Africa, plans for blacks to emigrate from the United States back to an African ‘homeland,’ programs of reform or revolution that will produce an ‘African’ way of life in the Americans.

At an imaginative level, however, black writers and thinkers such as Phillips Wheatley, Martin Delaney, Wylmot Blyden, Marcus Garvey, Melvin Tolson, Countee Cullen, Julian Mayfield, and others from the eighteenth to the twentieth century have projected fanciful and idyllic representations of Africa as a place of hope and promise for black Americans. Sonia Sanchez, Amiri Baraka, Larry Neal, Hoyt Fuller, Nikki Giovanni and others actually traveled to Africa, making a journey back to their origins that became critical for their efforts to frame a new and liberated African American identity.

Dramatist Paul Carter Harrison named this dramaturgy of the Black Arts movement the ‘drama of Nommo.’ Nommo invokes West African philosophical and aesthetic concerns with the power of the spoken word. Rather, the aim of the dramas is clearly a revolution of black will, insight, energy and awareness. Black Arts drama, at its best, is the idea of black mass liberation. Like Black Arts poetry, the drama of Nommo drew on the talents of African Americans across a wide ideological and aesthetic spectrum, from the elegant avant garde of Adrienne Kennedy to the one act exemplar of Sonia Sanchez. The work of the West Indian intellectual and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon offered brilliant dramatic accounts of this overthrow. Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* became a black power and Black Arts movement handbook for imagining the transformation of black American urban ghettos into empowered, self-dependent realms for a black national life.

The reality of African neocolonialism –the continuing exploitation of the masses of Africa by former white rulers in league with puppet representatives among a black African neocolonial leadership–was seldom recognized analyzed, or condemned by American black nationalists looking for ‘home.’ By dealing openly with European colonialism, imperialism, and cultural domination, Black Power and Black Arts, in their university guise as ‘black studies’ revealed the ghost in the machine of Western dominance. Never before had so many turned attention of African history as the very foundation

of the West. In the sixties, Africa became among African Americans a linguistic badge of honor: a source of artistic, intellectual, and cultural pride. Black intellectuals thought that the best of Western civilization also has prejudice and brutality.

Like Hughes, Black Arts workers wished to construct performances, essays, books, dramas and stories that would have the feel of the black majority. They wanted their work to be experimental, musical, vernacularly in harmony with the ‘dream life’ of the masses. Black Arts movement made use of many publishers like Randall’s Broadside Press, Chicago’s Third World Press and Spear Press. Their new magazines were *Amistad*, *Black Books Bulletin*, *Soulbook* and *Negro Digest*. Major white publishers like Random house published black literature.

African Americans also hated the Jews. Because the Anglo-Americans (Christians) pitted the Jews against the blacks. Since Jews, who owned many business ventures in the black urban ghetto, were white, they become catalytic not only for the release of black contempt, but also for that minority warfare welcomed by Anglo-America. Baraka, Madhubuti and Rodgers employ the anti-rhetoric of black American’s long and materially troubled relationship with Jews. In so doing, they follow the paths of the Nation of Islam and its proselytes, who have long credited world Jewry, with quite improbable powers of control, exploitation and general malfeasance.

The African American writers also dealt with gay and lesbian issues. The theme of homosexuality is explicit in Baldwin’s works. Amiri Baraka’s plays *The Baptism* (1967) and *The Toilet* (1967) speak of misogyny and homophobia. And such emergent black women writers as Sonia Sanchez, June Jordan, Carolyn Rodgers, Nikki Giovanni, Jayne Cortez and Mari Evans took second place to none where women’s issues in the Black Arts were concerned.

In criticism and scholarship, the Black arts movement gained strength not only from new journals and publishers but also from newly established black studies programs on American university campuses. Critics such as Darwin Turner, Addison Gayle Jr., George Kent, Arna Bontemps, Eugenia Collier and Carolyn Fowler were all academically trained and university affiliated. In the United States alone, Native

American, Chicano and Chicana and gay and lesbian writers, critics and scholars have acknowledged either directly or by implication--their enormous debt to the strategies, authors and works of the Black Arts movement.

Literature since 1970:

The so called Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement continued weakly. African Americans thought about freedom movements in Africa and Vietnam War, as well as about their own progress. They established African American culture as legitimate. Some African American writers like Ishmael Reed and Adrienne Kennedy questioned the Black Arts Movements' locus standi. Poets like Andre Lorde asked why lesbians and gays fell outside A-A cultural studies. Discussion on what 'blackness means?' continued. Attica Prison revolt (1971), Angela Davis's trial (1972), Miami uprising (1980) continued. Asian Americans, Chicanos, Native Americans sought equality through their own nationalist endeavors and helped to forge the rising debates about multiculturalism. In addition, the contemporary women's movement ignited a decade before by such manifestos as Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), gained center stage in the politics of the United States. Among the most important pieces of legislation of the 1960s was the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Class difference such as the difference between middle class and working class began. African American entered white universities for education. Black intellectuals started to record their history. Mention may be made of such writers as John Blassingome, Gerda Lerner, Houston Baker, Mary Washington and others. The blacks tried to understand their life through slavery. Morrison (*Beloved*, 1987), Gaine (*Autobiography*), Naylor (*Mama Day*, 1988), Dove (*Thomas and Beulah*, 1986), Johnson (*Oxherding Tale*, 1982) and Williams (*Dessa Rose*, 1986) wrote in this regard. Forgotten writers like Hurston (by Walker) were restudied. Reprints of past writers began resoundingly.

It is important to note that African American writers of the 1970s and 1980s did not produce traditionally linear historical novels such as Margaret Walker's *Jubilee* (1966). Their novels, poems, plays and essays remapped the past and sought in it that which would give meaning to their present. Critic Wilhemina Lubiano points out that Toni

Morrison's opus from *The Bluest Eye* (1970) to *Jazz* (1992) 'remaps the terrain of African American cultural and social history and allows for a community of the imagination. Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972), Bradley's *The Chaneyville Incident* (1981), Marshall's *The Chosen Place* (1969), Wilson's plays, do the same. Some of these writers visited Africa and their writings relate their diasporic experience. Also influential have been Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Sembene Ousmane, Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Ama Ata Aidoo and Wole Soyinka. Soyinka is the first African writer to receive the Nobel Prize for literature.

Black writers gradually valued black identity. June Jordan in her novel *His Own Where* (1970) and in her essay "White English / Black English" (1972) analyzed the relation between power and black language. So did Walker in her novel *The Color Purple* (1982). The writers used African American folklore also. Playwright Wilson used blues, poets Michael Harper and Quincy Troupe used Jazz as that of Naylor and Morrison. Hurston, Brown and Hughes used oral traditions. Bumbara called the folk tradition as 'kitchen tradition.' Morrison, in fact, used gaps, allowing the reader responses. African American women have an increased participation in writing today.

Maya Angelou's autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was published, and its success signaled the existence of a market for works by black women. The anthology *The Black Women* (1970), edited by Toni Cade (later Bambara) critiqued the predominantly male cultural nationalist movement and the predominantly white women's movement. In exploring gender issues, these writers introduced new themes into African American literature, such as motherhood, mother/daughter relationships, women's friendships, and the relationship between sexuality and spirituality.

It is said, "By focusing on sexuality as a major issue in black thought and life, African American women writers helped to generate interest in the neglected area of lesbian writing. Barbara Smith's anthology of black lesbian writing, *Home Girls* (1983), Audre Lorde's collection of essays *Sister Outsider* (1984), and her autobiography *Zami* (1982), as well as her poetry collections provided theoretical grounding for the exploration of black lesbian

thought and expression.”

By destabilizing the idea of a monolithic ‘blackness’ African American women writers called attention to issues of class. Early 20th century writers such as Alain Locke, W. E. B. Du Bois, Jessie Fauset, Nella Larsen, Ann Petry and Dorothy West had looked carefully at class consciousness among African Americans. African American writers have also used profitably the insights of other cultural traditions. Like his jazz musician counterpart John Coltrane, Charles Johnson incorporated into his *Oxherding Tale* elements of Eastern philosophy. Ernest Gaines’s first novel *Catherine Carmier*, is modeled on the Russian novelist Turgenev’s *Fathers and Sons*. Alice Walker’s use of the letter in *The Color Purple* speaks to the epistolary beginnings of the English novel.

The issue of back-to-Africa of Garvy and Afrocentricity is also visible in Molefi Kete Asante’s book *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* (1980). Asante calls for a scholarship based on Africa as the centre of civilization. Likewise, critical studies and theories about African American life and literature are increased. Gayle’s *The Black Novel in America* (1975) and Barbara Christian’s *Black Women Novelists* (1980) are examples. Creative writers themselves are producing criticism. Morrison’s *Playing in the Dark* (1992) is an example. Critics of African literature engaged in readings from the wide range of perspectives that existed in the academy such as formalism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism and feminism.

Racism is still a great issue in the world. Navi Pillay writes, “In Jackson, Mississippi, last June (2011), a group of white teenagers targeted a 49-year-old African-American man. First, they savagely beat him. Then they ran over their victim with a pick-up truck and killed him. The reason for such brutality? According to the prosecutors involved in the case, the teenagers had been on a mission to ‘find and hurt a black person’. The incident was reportedly caught on video surveillance, and the footage chillingly chronicles the different phases of the attack.”

No society – large or small, rich or poor – is immune from racism and social discrimination even today. On September 22, world leaders will have a high-profile opportunity to galvanise the fight against

racism as they meet in New York to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The DDPA was adopted by consensus at the 2001 World Conference against racism. Member states agreed to combat xenophobia, discrimination against migrants, indigenous persons, Roma, afro-descendants and discrimination on the basis of descent. Globalization, it must be acknowledged, is said to have heightened the challenge of ensuring mutual respect for and by people of diverse backgrounds in increasingly multicultural societies.

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Confronting the Challenges of Teaching English as a Second Language in India

- C. Rajyalakshmi

Introduction

The main concern of the English as second language (programme) is to help students to communicate in English in order to get a or get promoted; to communicate with acquaintances and co-workers; to enter vocational and higher education programmes; to help adults who want to study English to help their children with school work; some want only survival competence, while others want to have advanced linguistics competence. Some speak and understand English quite well but do not read or write it and others have reverse abilities. As a result, teachers these days seem to be under increasing pressure to have a wider teaching repertoire and a more diverse range of skills. The role of an English language teacher is becoming increasingly challenging one.

Objectives

The present paper makes an attempt of study the various challenges faced by the students and teachers is teaching English to the students of Commerce and Management at Koti Reddy Women's College, Kadapa.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for the following study is "The Random sampling Technique" with a sample of 26 samples selected out of 150 samples. The primary source of data collection was the questionnaires circulated to the students. The opinions of the students formed the basis of analysis. The sources of secondary information are collected from the websites. Questionnaires contained twenty questions highlighting challenges faced by the teacher teaching and English class. The study is based on the opinion given by the students.

Answers to the questions were placed.

2 options

2 to 4 options The following challenges were taken up for the study.

CHALLENGE 1: Inadequacy of Resources

CHALLENGE 2: Differing Levels

CHALLENGE 3: Strength of the Class.

CHALLENGE 4: Emotional and Economic Support.

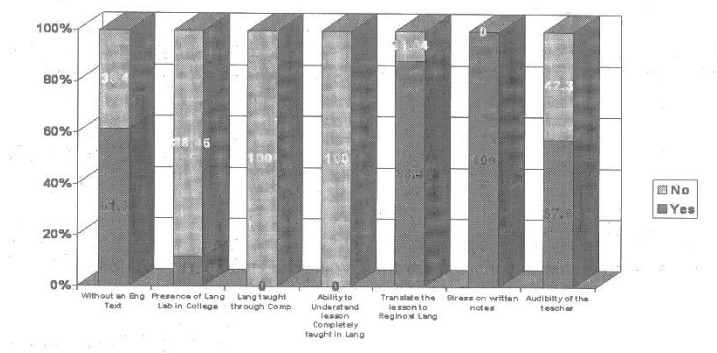
Results and Analysis

Challenge-1 - Inadequacy of Resources

Large number of students requires a large number of resources. Ensuring that there are enough text books, computers, listening devices, hands-on tools and the plethora of other necessary teaching and learning instruments is a very challenging assignments.

- 61.5% of students do not come to the class without an English Text.
- 88.46% of students are unaware of the presence of language lab in their college as they were never exposed to it.

Graphical Analysis of Answers to Questions with two options



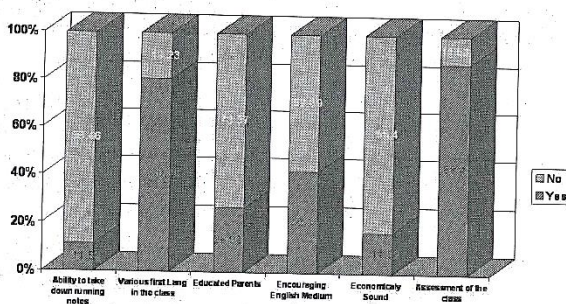
The inadequacy of resources also constitutes a challenge to the teaching of English as a second language. Large numbers of students require a large number of resources. Ensuring that there are enough, textbooks, computes, listening devices, hands-on tools and the plethora of other necessary teaching and learning instruments is a very challenging assignment. Knowing how many students will enter those classroom doors the following year, and projecting the skill level they will enter with, is a guessing game.

Challenge-2: Differing levels

Instructing with an ELT classroom requires formative assessments to be administered, while allowing teachers to find out each student's level of knowledge. When examining the results, we discover that students range in level of understanding. Many different lessons need to be prepared because some students may have no knowledge of the English language; some may understand the basis of letter sounds and may have recognition, while others are beginning the writing phase of the English language.

- 69.23% of the students have been exposed to English language for the first time at the under graduate level.
- 100% of the class wants the lesson to be taught in mother tongue.
- 88.46% of students are still under the perception of taking down running notes though the present curriculum tends to make the student more communicative.
- Second language through various mediums at the under graduate level is also posing a great problem. In a given classroom 150 students there are;
 - Telugu-53.84%
 - Urdu-7.69%
 - Tamil- 19.23%

Graphical Analysis of Answers to Questions with two options



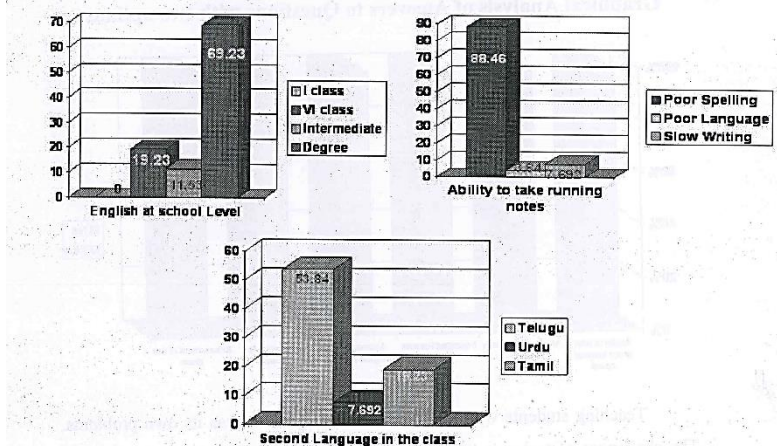
Teaching students with various first languages also has its own problems. The challenges of trying to get immediate assistances and appropriate resources are difficult endeavours teaching a large class for

any subject is challenging. But when teaching ESL (English second Language Students) in a large class who usually have differing first languages, there are many more challenges. Most schools prepare for the second language learners who are the majority within the area. However, at times there will be students who come from different parts of the country.

Challenge-3: Strength of the Class

- More than 75 students in a class room reduces the Zeal and enthusiasm of the teacher and taught. Audibility of the teacher is a common challenge to the class.
- 50 % of the students have opined that the strength of the class is more than 85.
 - 57.69% of the students are unable to hear the lecture

Graphical Analysis of Answers to Questions with Multiple options



Teaching English as a foreign language is a very challenging experience. In large classes, students are varied in their abilities, styles, levels and preferences. Some professionals many consider a class of twenty five as a large class, where as some many consider more than first as a large class. In fact most of the Government College have packed strength of 110 students. Teachers find it hard teach very large chasses. A large number of lecturers have very large chasses. A large number of lecturers have very passure students who sit back and relax

and do not only do large classes affect the quality of teaching delivered; but they can also affect the concentration of the students who are trying to learn in the classes. These include students not paying attention to the teacher and some students trying to hide from the teacher's attention. The following measures can be adopted for large classes

1. Group discussions, pair work according to level's and preferences
2. Dividing the students and the teacher can roam about the class.
3. Lack of Interpersonal communication
4. Tasks are often finished at a time later than expected.
5. Teachers need lot of energy to deal with such classes

Challenge - 4: Emotional and economic support

- The challenge of working with an English Language classroom comprises meeting the range of needs of each student.
- English Language learners need an environment which is non-threatening while allowing each student to feel relaxed, welcomed, and calm. These students come from differing cultural, social and economical backgrounds, we have to ensure that each student feels a part of our class room while becoming accustomed to our ways.
- 88.40% of students are unable to buy the minimum requirement of a text books in an English class due to his economic status.
- 72.07% of students come from illiterate or rural families.
- 42.30% Parents want their children to study through English Medium.
- In the given context a new English text prescribed by the government of AP at the undergraduate level is threatening.
- It is a Herculean task to teach with 16 lessons of prose and poetry and 6 lessons of one Act Play and Short stories followed by grammatical exercises and Phonetics is something unimaginable to be taught with perfection.

Conclusion

With various Challenges in teaching students in the Rural University discussed and exposed it is felt that the area of the ELT is more disappointing. The ELT profession has generally lacked historical

perspective. The mental skills of speech and communication, reasoning and analysis, creativity and imagination, intellectual stimulation and independent perception have not been advanced. Students seem to know more and more about less and less, and cannot communicate with each other. I need not emphasize. The arts of communication or the arts of using the mind are basic to learning for they are the arts of reading, writing, speaking, a timeless quality, as they are the arts of fostering the critical abilities of students, of their qualities of mind and spirit that will carry them to become able.

1. The teacher needs to act as a communicator
2. The Role of a teacher
3. Teachers as educators
4. Teachers as evaluators
5. Teachers as agents of socialisation
6. Teachers need to know a no of topics regarding oral and written language.
7. Zeal towards professional development
8. New means of Technology

I am aware that there is no universal teaching method or ideal teaching material suited to many contexts of language teaching. Whatever didactic techniques one knows without excluding the behaviorist drills, practices and the used of mother tongue where appropriate, are all valid at different process. I stand for and eclectic approach as different methods for different students has always worked and there has not been one best method anytime. With our freedom to choose and adopt any notion that serves our teaching ends, with a reasonable degree of historical sense, flexibility and adaptability that allows us to select among a variety of approaches, methods and techniques, we meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Teaching Communication Skills in Business English Classes – An Overview

- Y. Sreenivasulu & R. V. Jayanth Kasyap

It is a widely known fact that Business English belongs to the academic field and that it is particularly focused on teaching skills rather than pure grammar, being primarily concerned with fluency. This is mostly supported by the content that is taught during Business English Classes. Our analysis is limited to aspects of oral communication skills teaching, since we consider it of paramount importance for any business professional. Moreover, we discuss the fact that in teaching these skills, business communication instructors are faced with a set of challenges which are unknown to the General English teacher.

Business English vs. General English

Business English is generally defined in opposition to General English not only in terms of the *content* that is being taught, but also in terms of *the teacher's background and attitudes*, in terms of the public he addresses, that is, *who the students are* and what their expectations could be. If we consider our first issue – *content* – we come to realize that Business English implies teaching specialized vocabulary, different skills such as: negotiation, presentations, telephoning or socializing, going as far as teaching certain cultural differences, awareness of which turns out to be crucial at certain moments in students' professional lives. By contrast, General English satisfies the need of a general vocabulary, having as a main purpose, most of the times, the close- to- perfect acquisition of grammar rules. It is undoubtedly the necessary basis for the acquisition of Business English rules.

As for the instructor's *background and attitudes*, we have found that it has already been agreed on the fact that the Business English instructor is not only a specialist in English and general education; he is required to have some knowledge of the Business field since he would normally have to deal with issues strictly related to the context.

Moreover, although a needs analysis is required to any English teacher, in the case of the Business English instructor this is an essential stage. Why? Let us focus on the students' status in order to answer this question. Although Romania struggles to adopt European laws and attitudes in order to become a successful member of the European Union, there are some performance items which guarantee our uniqueness after all; the principle that governs the European Union is that all nations should be "united in diversity". Despite different attitudes towards this issue, we do believe this is a positive point in favor of our nation: while many foreign companies hire Business English instructors in order to educate their employees, Indian companies consider knowledge of English compulsory when taking into consideration a potential employee. Young employees are supposed to have knowledge of at least General English if not of Business English. For this reason, we teach Business English at University. These are the issues which make the learners' attitudes towards Business English quite different from one context to another. The already employed students, the ones who already function in a working context might raise problems which are absent in the academic environment. In the first case, the instructor faces the requirements of a business relationship in which the student – client has certain demands which need to be satisfied for the former to get paid. Therefore, the quality of the teaching process is conditioned by the money issue, which is undoubtedly, at least theoretically, absent from the academic world.

However, most of those who teach at the University face other obstacles such as mere lack of interest, this object being regarded as an optional course whose usefulness cannot be grasped by some of the students who find themselves overwhelmed by the multitude of new issues which, at least in the beginning, they cannot make much sense of. Another aspect that the Business English instructor has to deal with in this context is the varied language levels that students have when graduating high school. It often happens that a group would gather students from the beginner up to the advanced level. The large number of students in a group is also an important issue: while a company instructor would normally teach groups of 5-15 people, the University Business English instructor would normally teach groups of 30-40 people whose level of English, as we have already mentioned, is

extremely varied.

All these things considered, we should all bear in mind, irrespective of whether we teach in private companies or at the University, the fact that in order to make our work worthwhile, we need to focus first of all on the *utility* of our teaching. We live in a continuously changing world where, whenever asked to learn something, people ask: *why? what's the use of it?* As consumer – based as it may seem, the University has to move on and be able to answer the requirements of its students. Some academic voices might argue that the purpose of a University instructor is *to present* different issues (depending on the field of study), to rise questions, to stir interest, to point the way, rather than to clarify, explain and give solutions. For all these reasons, the Business English Teaching field can be easily considered an outcast in its relation with the academic world. We could also add that another strong reason which stands against its academic status is the fact that its fields of interest are rather limited, not including complex issues such as philosophy, literature or culture.

What we intend to do further on is to give a brief presentation of the Business English aspects which certify its belonging to the academic space, in its deepest meaning, with an emphasis on the oral communication skills which are taught during Business English classes. The university is an educational institution whose main beneficiaries are the students; coming to university is undoubtedly an essential stage in their professional lives. Their expectations are to acquire the necessary information and skills to succeed in their future careers and these expectations can be fulfilled with the support of their instructors, that is, teachers.

Teaching Business English is by all means a challenge since we are supposed to teach things that people are likely to use in their future careers. The fact that the acquired knowledge will serve in a variety of contexts, the certainty that those contexts will influence, up to a certain extent, different people's lives, turns our profession into a useful activity – let us not forget the extreme importance of *utility* nowadays – and moreover, into a clearly academic one, since our students are likely to practice the skills that studying Business English involves at some of the highest professional levels.

Teaching Oral Communication Skills

One of the most important aspects which certify that Business English Teaching differs from General English Teaching is *content*. Let us start by admitting the fact that quite a large number of people claim they can understand and speak English, at least at an elementary level. However, very few of them know what Business English involves, being unaware of what it actually takes to be a successful Business English speaker. That would be the first, simple argument in favor of our considering Business English a rather unknown field of knowledge to most of the general public.

The main aim of any Business English instructor is to use programs where *content*, *language* and *communication* are combined in order to develop the learner's language knowledge and communication skills. However, most of us are not content specialists; we are rather knowledgeable generalists able to tap into the learner's expertise and use it as a resource for his/her future progress in the field of Business English.

The content-related issues we are going to focus on in this paper are more precisely deal with the communication skills we wish to develop with our students since the ultimate key to successful business is communication. Communication within business can be either written or oral. The main skills we are normally dealing with are *fluency* and *effectiveness*. *Fluency* is concerned with speed and effort of speaking, and *effectiveness* deals mostly with the impact of discourse on the audience. One of the major differences between General English and Business English stems from the different treatment of the following issues: while General English is mostly concerned with developing accuracy and fluency, Business English is rather focused on fluency and effectiveness. However, they are undoubtedly interconnected but not necessarily interdependent: there are students who have already acquired an impressive amount of specialized vocabulary and grammar rules but who have failed in building an effective speech; there is another category who, although being capable of effective communication for a limited period of time, thanks to some other abilities related to it – use of gestures, eye-contact, mastering of context-related structures – once outside their specialist area, are no

longer capable to deal with a spontaneous communication situation [2]. We are going to discuss here only a limited number of situations which illustrate the need for oral communication skills acquisition: socializing in business contexts, presentations, meetings and negotiations, telephoning.

Socializing

Much of the spoken interaction occurring in a business context is concerned with building and maintaining positive relationships, which ultimately play an important role in achieving successful business results. Typically, this relationship-building phase takes place around the main purpose of the business meeting: before the meeting starts, in conversation over lunch or dinner. Although most of the times equated with “small talk”, the socializing stage could be essential for the final result of a business meeting. Mastering this skill could eventually lead to advantages for the business partners: “small talk” is used with the aim to ease communication when people first meet, to build and maintain rapport between people who do business, or create positive relationships for successful business outcomes. Mark Ellis and Christine Johnson see socializing in terms of: *routines*, *social rituals*, *conversational English*. As far as *routines* are concerned they exemplify with ordering drinks or a meal – these being fairly predictable, students normally operate quite efficiently; as for *social rituals*, they refer to fixed phrases for greeting people or saying goodbye; *conversational English* appeals to a wider area of knowledge since it is normally used for establishing contact and getting to know people better.¹ The cultural issue almost automatically intervenes since socializing normally occurs between people who do not know each other and who very often come from different cultural backgrounds. The Business should be aware of the essential factors which form the basis of a culture: climate, social customs and traditions, historical events, ideas and beliefs, religion, geography and, at the same time, he should offer an insight of all these aspects to his/her students. When dealing with socializing, Business English courses familiarize the students with the structural patterns of building “small talk” (travel, accommodation, weather), of welcoming visitors, of introducing oneself and responding to introductions. As far as cultural awareness is

concerned, this is a rather controversial issue. While some scientists argue that knowledge of cultural difference is compulsory in order to avoid any tensions between partners and thus achieve success in business communication, others believe that attention given to details which are rather irrelevant for the business context could only enable the occurrence of stereotypes: e.g. *British do not speak foreign languages; Brazilian males kiss when they meet.*

Presentations

Part of our speaking proficiency depends upon our ability to speak differentially, depending upon our audience, and upon the way we absorb their reaction and respond to it in some way or another. It is probably the best starting point for a successful presentation in business. Presentations relate mostly with effectiveness but effectiveness cannot be achieved without fluency and accuracy.

The key to building an effective presentation is to agree upon the points which constitute it: content, structure, delivery, language. Content refers to the information the speaker has chosen to convey. Structure refers to the organization of the chosen information. At this stage the instructor familiarizes students with the typical pattern:

- a) My name is... and I work for...
- b) *Topic*: e.g. Today I am going to talk about...
- c) *Sequencing*: e.g. First of all...
Secondly,...
- d) *Changing subject*: e.g. To return to the issue of...
- e) *Clarifying*: e.g. For example...
- f) *Summarizing*: e.g. To conclude...
- g) *Questions and interruptions*: e.g. Thank you for your question...
What does this mean in terms of
- h) *Concluding*: e.g. Well, that's about all I have to say...

Delivery refers to the techniques used by the speaker to have an impact on the audience: voice – he/she has to speak loud enough to be heard: a weak voice might suggest uncertainty; body language, eye contact; *language* refers to the traditional categories, more precisely to the accurate use of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation. These are

important aspects of presentations since they trigger the coherence or absence of coherence in a message.

Meetings and Negotiations

Meetings differ in terms of level of formality, number of people attending, of whether they are in-company or with suppliers, customers. They can also be extremely varied as far as their purpose is concerned: exchange of information, reporting, making decisions, negotiating, and planning.

Before teaching any aspects related to meetings, and implicitly, to negotiations, we must be aware not only of the type of meeting which may be relevant to our students but also the role they might have to play during the meeting.

People need a wide variety of social and linguistic skills in order to perform well in meetings, and here we refer to both *social* – appearing to understand, chairing, responding to others, resisting interruption, interrupting, demonstrating (in) comprehension – and *linguistic* ones: functional exponents for arguing, reporting, explaining, grammatical features, vocabulary.

Probably one of the most effective ways of teaching meetings is *simulation* since it is, at least most of the times, perceived by the students as a challenging and exciting activity. However, before getting involved in such a simulation, they need to be familiarized with the roles that participants in meetings normally play: the chairperson/ the participants/ the secretary; the boss/ the subordinate; the expert/ the non-expert. Therefore, the chairperson is responsible for overall control: opening the meeting, stating the purpose of the meeting, involving the participants, clarifying, closing the meeting; the participants are responsible for making relevant contributions; the secretary is responsible for keeping a record of participants, points discussed, and conclusions reached.

Simulations, as we have already stated, are extremely useful since by using them students practice specific language, they are motivating, they involve active use of communicative skills, they help build and maintain group cohesion. As Ken Jones defines it, “a simulation is an event, not taught, but shaped by the students”.

Telephoning

Telephoning may appear as a rather simple issue in the business area. However, teaching telephoning may be more complicated than it appears. Nick Brieger states that a business phone call can be defined according to its purpose: giving information, requesting information, confirming information, making arrangements, persuading (telephone selling), negotiating, and complaining.

An important issue we all agree upon is that students are rather anxious about using the telephone in English. The situation is immediate and they are deprived of context clues that might enable them to get by otherwise – eye contact, mimics, and gestures. The needs to be covered when dealing with telephoning are: politeness, language control, spelling and linguistic numeracy.(6)

Telephoning could turn not only into a challenging but also into a difficult activity for students since the interlocutors do not see each other. Therefore, such “allies” in delivering the message as body language are no longer available. As Nick Brieger argues, *manner* is extremely important since it encompasses some aspects which ultimately enable the clear delivery of the message: in order to achieve effectiveness, the speakers must first of all use clear and comprehensible speech. They should avoid mumbling, jargon, complicated sentence structure. Moreover, they should use the appropriate vocal tone for the purpose of the call: polite, helpful, and persuasive. These are only some of the aspects that turn telephoning into a rather difficult to achieve skill for students: not only that they need to have acquired some knowledge related to the telephoning vocabulary and structure but they also need to be aware of the different registers they are supposed to use on different occasions: formal/informal.

Conclusion

We have tried to demonstrate that the field of teaching Business English is by no means restrictive or limited. We chose to discuss *content* since it is the most representative and relevant aspect in teaching Business English. However, we limited ourselves to dealing with the importance of oral communication, by stressing the importance

of socializing, presentations, meetings and negotiations, telephoning. We chose these to be the focus of our paper because not only do such activities motivate students but they also turn out to be extremely useful in their future professional lives.

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Towards Self Reflection: V. S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival*

- V. B. Chithra

The Enigma of Arrival (1987) is an autobiographical novel. It deals with the changes in writer as he interacts with the history of his changing backgrounds. Wiltshire, a site of England's ancient past and the more recent past plays a vital role in *The Enigma of Arrival*. Wiltshire is Naipaul's present home and it becomes "a setting for concentrated work." In *A Way in the World*, it is Trinidad his first home, to which he returns frequently in his writings. We find similar relation in *The Loss of El Dorado*. In it, history shows a tendency to repeat itself. Recurrences characterize the relations between Naipaul's various works.

In his previous book *Finding the Centre* (1984), the first part i.e., *Prologue to an Autobiography*, depicts an exquisite account of how much of Naipaul's life lay behind just the first sentence of his first book. *The Enigma of Arrival* is a major visionary narrative about his way of seeing the human condition.

In the words of Fazia Mustafa, "*Prologue to an Autobiography* establishes the basis for the enterprise of *The Enigma of Arrival* because it necessarily presumes that the career of which it speaks has already assumed something of a canonical status that merits or can sustain such an inquiry into its composition."¹ The thread of this presumption rests in the groundwork of his first major novel, *A House for Mr Biswas*. We find Naipaul using autobiographical material abundantly in *A House for Mr Biswas*, *The Mimic Men*, and later on in his travelogues such as *The Middle Passage* and *An Area of Darkness*. The subsequent self-exploratory aspects of the travelogues carry a resonance which later works such as *India: A Wounded Civilization* and *Conrad's Darkness* capitalize upon.

In *The Enigma of Arrival* a middle aged, unnamed narrator speaking of himself in the first person seeks to reconcile the two main aspects of his divided personality exactly like that of Naipaul's own

experience as a man and as a narrator. Like most post-colonial writers, the narrator had to leave his native island to become a writer. Naipaul developed a strong feeling of insecurity after leaving his country. Writing was an early vocation and he had also inherited his father's 'fear of extinction.' In *Finding the Centre*, Naipaul admits that "in order to become a writer, that noble thing, I had thought it necessary to leave and that fear, a panic about failing to be what I should be rather than simple ambition, that was with me when I came down from Oxford in 1954 and began trying to write in London."² The fear could be combated only by the exercise of vocation. This is also openly mentioned in *The Enigma of Arrival*: "The fear of extinction which I had developed as a child had partly to do with this: the fear of being swallowed up or extinguished by the simplicity of one side or the other, by side or the side that wasn't mine."³

The narrator of the novel introduces himself as a writer who has produced a number of works like a historical narrative about his native West Indian island, an African narrative and several travel-books apart from telling of his life in the Wiltshire valley. He is seen ruminated on his arrival in this valley. He is a stranger leading a bachelor's lonely life. It's a new life for him because he comes here having faced many deaths. He is able to appreciate the paradox of arrivals and departures as in the painting by Chirico. The writer is seen with extreme self-consciousness. He seems to be the mouthpiece for Naipaul's voice. Interwoven through this autobiographical novel is an implicit statement of the beginnings and endings of novels. Having developed the metaphors for his novel from actual journeys and deaths, the writer describes many events.

Naipaul constructs a new set of affirmations around the figure of Jack. Like the upbeat conclusion to the work as a whole, referring to Naipaul's community in Trinidad – "we had made ourselves anew" (p.31'7) – this affirmation carries less conviction than what has gone before: the evocation of a gloomy sense of the subjection of life and endeavour to time and decay. Jack dies; his garden is destroyed. Jack's care is central to the work and it is the first section which has the greatest impact. Many other discoveries and revised perceptions are recorded in this section. In the novel, Jack reminds us as the "remnant

of the past.”

Referring to the world around him in the manor grounds Naipaul begins self-assuredly “there was an unchanging world,” but later on he observes that he is wrong in this statement: “So it seemed to me when I first became aware of it: the country life The dead life But that idea of an unchanging life was wrong. Change was constant.... People died, people grew old ... houses came up for sale ... My own presence in the valley, in the cottage of the manor, was an aspect of another kind of change.” (p.34)

Naipaul compares stages of his own life with those of his landlord’s noting that in 1949 or 1950 – 1950 being the year I had left my own home island... my landlord had withdrawn from the world” (p.197) The landlord, as an artist of sorts, claims kinship with the narrator by sending copies of his poems and drawings as gifts through Mrs Phillips, although they never meet.

The Enigma of Arrival concludes with the death of his sister, Sati. It is his own loss. With her death we are back in Trinidad, back into the past. In the final section, “The Ceremony of Farewell” the narrator refers to the sister’s death as the real one because she represents that part of the narrator’s family which did not leave Trinidad. Sati’s death is consecrated with the Hindu rituals of the Yagna. Listening to the pundit conduct the rituals, the narrator’s description closely resembles ‘Naipaul’s early fictional versions of pundits in Trinidad, such as Ganesh in *The Mystic Masseur*. Perhaps the novel is a story of how Naipaul has come to terms with his own history of shattered culture. ‘It came to me’ he wrote in an essay on Conrad that the great novelists wrote about highly organized societies. I had no such society.... My colonial world was more mixed and second-handed, and more restricted.” It was out of that experience he wrote to make himself. He has meditated on his personal experience, which is more like that of ours than he could have imagined possible as a young man. It is because of this that he speaks with rare authority. He draws attention to a phrase of Conrad’s: “the exasperated vanity of ignorance”. It is something he has identified as a characteristic of the modern world; his novels reveal it, and seek to dispel it by arousing again the sense of wonder.

There are many instances of Naipaul’s referring to himself as

“the writer” in the text and even in interview, “Naipaul often refers to himself as the ‘writer,’ as if he were discussing someone outside the room; or in an imperious third person.”⁴ This deliberate adoption of the imperious third person of the writer within his most recent fiction compels Peter Hughes to suggest that such “overdone and over determined self fashioning” can be read in terms of the embodiment of a textual “shift away from the referential and toward the performative.”⁵ In support of this, Hughes argues that the high degree of self-reflection in Naipaul’s text actually serves to deconstruct its primary preferentiality. Hence, what reads like and aims for the truth of autobiography actually reveals its very contractedness. In the words of Bakhtin, “Truth is not born nor is to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction.”⁶ This is demonstrated through *The Enigma* as the newly constituted writer attempts to fill in the gaps of previous utterances and reflect upon the meanings attached to past texts and contexts.

In the novel, it might be thought that a consciousness of death as the “nullifier of human life and endeavour” (p.97) predominates. Jack’s illness ends in death and the death of Jack’s father-in-law, Brenda, Mr Philips, Naipaul’s sister and Shiva Naipaul occur on the periphery of the work. All these deaths are mentioned only in the epigraph, but casts its shadow over the whole work. “Death was the motif; it had perhaps been the motif all along.” (p.309) This assertion may seem to be at odds with the work’s concern to portray a rebirth, “a second chance, a new life, richer and fuller than any I had had anywhere else.” (p.96) Naipaul describes his departure from the valley in terms of the death motif: “And as at a death ... everything that had welcomed me and healed me, became a cause for pain.” (p.301)

Naipaul has expressed a fear of extinction that can only be combated by the writer’s art. Death serves as an image of the non-entity of non-achievement. In an interview, he describes that “the old fear of extinction, and I don’t mean of dying. I mean the fear of being reduced to nothing, of feeling crushed. It’s partly the old colonial anxiety of having one’s individuality destroyed.”⁷ Autobiography grows out of and seeks to allay this fear concerning the annihilation of the self.

Salman Rushdie cites the novel as an evidence of the deepening of “dark clouds that seemed to have gathered over Naipaul’s inner world.”⁸ In his review, Rushdie touches upon many of the central elements of the book. He points out that “unlike most of his fellow-migrants, Naipaul has chosen to inhabit a pastoral England, an England of manor and stream.” (Rushdie, p.150). He recognizes that “the idea of timelessness in the novel is undermined” and “turns out to be false.” Further, Rushdie declares: “the idea that British have lost their way because of “an absence of authority, an organization of in decay.. is an unlikeable one.” Helen Heyward points out that Rushdie is somewhat unwilling to acknowledge the decline of people who “grow hearts of ice,” the downfall of “an ancient land like England,” where “there was no room for new stories.”⁹

In one of his essays, Rushdie identifies a connection between migration and skepticism. This is clearly seen in Naipaul’s *The Enigma*: A narrative of disillusionment is a common feature of accounts of migration from the colonies and former colonies to England. C.L.R. James identifies this tendency to be disappointed: “People educated as I had been could move rapidly from uncritical admiration of abstractions to an equally uncritical hostility to the complex reality.”¹⁰ Even George Lamming’s *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960) also explores this phenomenon. He discusses what he terms “the colonial castration of the West Indian Sensibility that is the result of the West Indian’s relation to the idea of England and an oppressive sense of its mausoleum of historic achievement, he arrives and travels with the memory, the habitual weight of a colonial relation.”¹¹ *The Pleasures of Exile* provides a worthy contrast with *The Enigma* in respect of its confrontational re-appropriation of literary allusion.

In fact, in his review of the novel, John Thieme categorized this work as “thinly-veiled autobiography.” In his words, it is “a personal meditation by a Trinidadian writer, whose origins replicate Naipaul’s, who has written a series of books which exactly match Naipaul’s own and who, since around 1970, has, like Naipaul, been living on Salisbury Plain, the area which provides the novel with its main setting.”¹² In Thieme’s terms, the writer of *Enigma* appears as a haunting presence, a shadow, of the “real” V.S.Naipaul.

In *On Being a Writer*, Naipaul declares: “My aim was truth, truth to a particular experience, containing a definition of the writing self. Yet I was aware at the end of the book that the creative process remained as mysterious as ever.”¹³ With *The Enigma of Arrival* he is taught that no absolute truth can ever be reached and that the ultimate mystery of life finally fuses with the mystery of creation in writing. *The Enigma of Arrival* retains the ultimate secret of creation, the ultimate enigma of arrival. Perhaps it is Naipaul’s the most autobiographical work woven through with remarkable invention to make it a rich and complex novel. Naipaul has perfectly achieved his goal of putting self in the foreground.

The Enigma of Arrival is a search for self-definition in terms of “knowledge and self-knowledge” won through sensitivity to change, a dramatization of the growth of a “way of seeing” the human scene as “a ceremony of farewell.” Many critics praised the novel for its exquisite quality and enigmas of creation. It has great dignity, compassion and candour. It is written with the expected beauty of style. It is really a wonderful book in its original sense. In the words of Bayley, “no other writer today could produce anything like it.”¹⁴ This is the recognition of the very essence of this novel.

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Religion and Culture in Indian Literature through Ages

- P. Kusuma Harinath

Swami Vivekananda's call to Indians,

"My India , Arise!

Your vital force is in

Your immortal soul".

briefs the exuberant fervour of Indian religious and cultural ethics. In fact the credentials of India rest even today because of these high cultural, moral and religious values. Indian art, architecture and culture are embosomed in Indian religion.

Religion is an experience – a sum total of our beliefs and acts"¹. In Indian context religion is a conglomeration of different experiences, beliefs and acts resulted from the culmination of different cultures, customs, traditions and languages of the people. A casual look at Indian history reveals this fact crystal clear. From times immemorial India has been invaded by the people of different races with different cultures beginning from Aryans to the English. The native Indians have a peculiar culture to mingle freely with all people and make a harmonious living. This imbibed quality of Indians make them respect foreigners like Babar, Shersha, Akbar, Hsuan Tsang, Clive, Bentick, Macaulay and Amir khusrau. The cultures of these foreigners have become an integral part of Indian culture through the centuries giving a puzzle to the Western eye to understand the spirit and culture of it.

That the essence of any religion is the search for God and its inspiration is to discover the Infinite, the Absolute, the One, the Divine who is all these things. Culture is a distinguished mark of man and his society. Herskovit, the sociologist says, "A society is composed of people; the way they behave is their culture". Art, music literature, religion, morals, customs and traditions and values of life are the cultural factors that show how the men in the society behave or behaved. These fine arts and other studies preserve the culture of the society through the ages. Hence culture becomes the summum bonum of all ages.

T.S. Eliot says culture "is the product of a variety of more or less harmonious activities each pursued for its own sake". He further says, "religion provides the frame work for a culture and protects the mass of humanity from boredom and despair". It means culture is meant to make man happy. Arnold too shares the opinion saying "culture is the passion for sweetness and light and (what is more) the passion for making them prevail". He also says, "Culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world"². "Culture is the main spring of our history, literature, philosophy, arts and even sciences. The great culture finds a synthesis among all these arts and sciences, It is the history of the nation and its individuals and its souls. It is related to religion and through religion it has bound us to many values"³.

Amir Khusrau of 13th century says that India is a multilingual literary cultured society. He praises in his *Nuh Siphir* that "the people of India speak different languages. But the people outside India cannot speak in Indian dialects.....But we can speak any language of the world as fluently and effectively as a shepherd tends his sheep"⁴. The statement when taken into account proves the fact that Indians have a tendency to assimilate and appreciate all cultures still stand as a unique culture of their own. "In India, the greater part of our literature is religious, because God with us is not a distant God; He belongs to our homes, as well as to our temple"⁵, says Tagore. This proposition can unanimously be accepted when we glance at the two outstanding books in Indian literature-the two epics, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*. These two epics are the treasure houses of themes, stories, literary techniques and cultures in India since their birth in the Sanskrit language. Also they are the source of inspiration to the abundant literary output in all Indian languages.

All religions teach love and brotherhood. *The Ramayana*, if we keep aside its religious implications for a minute, has the roots of Indian tradition and culture. It is a treatise on human relationships. The common thread that binds Indian History and civilization from the primitive man to the modern Internet man is the desire and the need for company. This is what *The Ramayana* presents. It shows us what an

ideal man and woman should be; shows how human relations ought to be and ought not to be through its array of characters. Thus it depicts human nature in all its aspects, its glories and its foibles. The entire Indian culture is based on the ideal human relationships explored in *The Ramayana*. It is also the connotation of Indian religion.

The Mahabharatha, the multicharactered epic, gives us many lessons on life with series of transgressions running one after the other. It is, infact, an encyclopedia of our national culture. This exemplary soul of Indian religion and culture runs through all ages. India has a culture that has no inhibitions to appreciate and acknowledge good which may come from where ever and whoever may have contributed for it. This makes Indian culture unique from the other cultures of the world. Gandhi was a leader of India belonged to Gujarat state. His ideas were appreciated by all the people of India of different regions, religions and languages. His patriotic zeal inspired all Indians and he was worshipped as a God and master. Vallathol Narayana Menon in his poem *Ente Gurunathan*(My Master) praises Gandhi

"The whole world is his home;
Even the plants and grass and grubs are his kin;
Renunciation his only earning;
His very lowliness his eminence;
So reigns my Master, - the sage of mystic wisdom"⁶.

Today we know he is the master of not just India but of the whole world. Indian culture equates love of God with love of one's fellow beings. This is the integral humanistic vision distilled from India's puranic heritage. Ulloor Parameswara Iyer brings out his vision in his poem, *Premasangitam* (Hymn of Love).

"The world has but one religion – Love, which is its life,
A Full moon that feeds us all on the nectar -milk
The supreme cosmic power assuming different forms –
Devotion,
Love, Compassion and the like –
Sheds its lustre on all this earth"⁷.

The poem also speaks of the fact that there is one religion. It is that which equals all humanity as one. Subramanya Bharati, the Tamil

poet envisions that India would progress with its own unique culture, arts, humanities and science and technology in a grand scale. In his poem 'Bharata Desam' he inspires the people saying

"Chant Bharat's name
Defeating hatred
Killing fear!"

He speaks that the very name of the country Bharat, brings in love and happiness driving away hatred and fear. He further says in his '*Sight*' (*Katci*)

This world is one....
Vedas, sea-fish, storm, jasmine blossoms-
these are the varied forms of the same.
All that are, are one thing, One....
Let all lives attain joy.
May all bodies be rid of ills.
Feel all senses becoming one⁸.

This temperament of Indians is not seen just only with the modern poets of India, it persisted all through the ages of Indian History. Annamayya the earliest poet-singer in South Indian languages during the medieval period of India too says:

The Supreme Creator is one
and the ultimate reality is one,
it is one, and it is one.
all creatures are alike
in this creation.....
Whoever thinks of you in whatever manner
so you, to them O Lord! appear;
this on inquiry is manifest.
as the pancake depends on the flour available⁹.

Srivijaya, 9th century Kannada poet, also says that Indian culture is rested on forbearance, endurance and tolerance. He says,

"Brooking others' views or creeds
with no ill-will is indeed golden.
One who has no restraint

will suffer pain
whether he gets gold or dross?"

Life has no meaning if it lacks common good. He further says,

"A worthy life is that
which is lived by a code.
Can you call it life
if the wise revile its worth?
Would it then last as long
as there are moon and stars in the sky?
"They'll find fault; or they will acclaim,"
with out worrying thus, one should lead a life
that brings welfare in this world and the next¹⁰

This very idea we are 'one' is a sincere concern of Indian religion and culture. It is this idea that brings an identity and a recognition to Indians in spite of their racial, cultural religious differences. Mother India infuses all Indians with this spirit. That is why the Muslims, Christians and other religious people of India are branded Indian –India Muslims, Indian Christians etc.. This adjective 'Indian' truly brings out the quality of the people and are recognized as people belong to a great culture and religion that always aims for the perfection of everyone in the world for its own sake and for others' sake. The beauty of Indian culture and Indian subjects are fantastically painted by Pampa, a 10th century Kannada poet in his poem, *Adipurāṇam*.

Its beauty
born of diverse sentiments
makes it appear alive;
it glances and speaks
with tenderness;
It looks as if it is breathing.
The delineation
has assumed a charm of its own,
The arrangement of colours
emanates a glow,
that reflects a variety of expressions¹¹

These lines aptly present the Indian predilection and Mothers India's cultural heritage which ever shines in the Indian soul and milieu.

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The Protagonist's Inner Struggle in Anita Desai's *In Custody*

- Prabha. P. Paul

Anita Desai is one of the most eminent and distinguished Indian English writers writing today. She reflects the problems and issues of life which are universally experienced by all. Literature of Anita Desai speaks directly to the mind and heart of the readers. She gives the same attention and care while portraying the male and female characters. She talks of the male characters, who too suffer alienation. She has very beautifully explored and kept open the whole world in front of us.

Anita Desai is able to suffuse her eleven fictions with Indianness. The characters are Indian, the milieu described in her fictions are mostly from India, and the prevailing atmosphere is Indian and the language is chaste English that captures the varying flavors of Indianness. This is because of her Bengali father and Gujarathi husband. Incidentally, Anita Desai was born in Mussoorie, India, in 1937 to a Bengali father and a German mother. She had her rich school education at Queen Mary's Higher Secondary School, Miranda House, New Delhi and later on her collegiate education at the University of Delhi. She has put her power of observation of even the minutiae of men and matters, gathered knowledge, language mastery, language skills, verbal brilliance, writing capacities and style of expression uniquely and originally her own to create great and crafted works of art.

In Custody (1984) by Anita Desai is a memorable novel, beautifully accomplished, and well crafted. The fiction is resonant and realistic. The novel, *In Custody* recognizably marks Anita Desai's first major focus on a male protagonist and his relation to the current political and social reality. Deven is a representative of the ordinary Indian, indeed, of any ordinary person any where in the world, who represents the hopes and aspirations, but also the disappointments and defeats of the majority of people.

Anita Desai is best known for her studies of Indian life. She has been successful in touching almost all the social evils prevailing in Indian society like alcoholism, poverty, superstitions, fight for religion, brain drain, domestic violence, exploitation of the poor by the rich etc.

Murad earns more but never pays Deven for his contributions as Murad is the son of a rich businessman and Devan of a poor widow.

She has also portrayed the true picture of the plight of teachers, poets and the deprived ones struggling for name, fame and wealth. In the present novel Anita Desai has tried to bring up a new issue of problems of extinction of a language like *Urdu* after the partition of India and Pakistan.

According to some critics, with her novel '*In Custody*', Anita Desai enters a new phase in her creative career. The highly-strung or intensely introspective woman protagonist of the earlier novels here gives way to a male protagonist Deven who is a diffident and awkward hero. He comes through the trials of life with a positive vision and self-sufficiency through a clear awareness of the betrayals he has fallen a victim to inevitable and subsequent honest recognition of human limitation.

Desai's protagonists are often portrayed in times of great weakness. Solanki states, "Anita Desai's novels are concerned with the portrayal of the most troubled part of her protagonists' life. They are at their wit's end; the world seems to be 'out of joint', and, in their helplessness, they feel like trapped birds" (22). However, In *Custody*, the period of Deven's life related by Desai as the novel opens does not seem extraordinary. In fact, his effort to interview Nur will be an attempt to step away from his "out of joint" world but will land him crashing back to the place in which he started. Deven's progression is stagnant in terms of the goals he accomplishes, he lives he betters, or events, people, or action he alters. Deven is a type of non-character.

Deven Sharma, is a Hindi lecturer in a college at Mirpore. He comes from a decreased middle class family. His father was a school teacher and lover of *Urdu* poetry. Deven learned *Urdu* from his father. He, then marries Sarla, who is miles away from his literary taste.

The protagonist Deven's failed attempt to write *Urdu* poetry and the occurrence of Sarla's pregnancy made him a Hindi lecturer. He changed his attitude because he needed the security of the occupation and the money it offered. Yet, instead of making use of this situation he stagnates in it. In the classroom, for instance, Deven commands neither

attention nor respect because of his virtual absence from the experience and his perpetual inability to communicate his knowledge to others. Desai writes, “He had for years been practicing this trick of ignoring his class and speaking to himself, or someone outside, invisible. That was what made him a boring teacher who could not command attention, let alone win the regard, of his unruly class” (12-13). His effect on these students with whom he spends the majority of his time is insignificant. His passionate feelings on poetry and language are not communicated to the students, who in return do little to form a bond with him.

Deven leaves hanging in the air, unarticulated, is destructive to his command of the class and his satisfaction as a teacher. The students’ expressions as they look towards Deven reflect the manner in which he impacts their lives. “The expression he saw – of boredom, amusement, insolence and defiance – make him look away quickly and focus his eyes upon the door ‘opened on to the passage, freedom and release’ Desai illustrates” (12). The two bodies of communication, the teacher and students, meant to operate in this classroom appear not to connect, as Deven moves his eyes, speech, and command to another part of the room, towards an invisible, perfect student who does not exist (13). He looks for freedom but his interactions with those outside of this classroom and the manner in which he conducts himself shows his world out in “the passage” to be far from a utopian release.

Deven’s position in the school, relative to the other professors and the school administration, is tentative and dependent. He commands as little respect from the majority of them as from his students, existing mainly in a subordinate position. Deven’s insignificance in the context of the college becomes clear as Desai describes the unusually celebratory day of the Annual board meeting. Deven himself is too meek to approach any of the members of the administration, even those he considers on the lowest rung, and so he must wait in the background as a colleague of his, apparently holding no greater rank than he, makes the contact. Desai describes the awkward, meaningless position that Deven occupies by showing him in relation to a professor of equal status and an administrator of barely greater rank. She writes, “Deven remained in the background, his hands clasped behind his back, not quite certain why Siddiqui should think it

necessary to flatter a minor functionary – but feeling he ought to leave the matter to Siddiqui since he had no clue himself as to how one went about making requests for finance” (102). Not only is Deven standing in the background, a mere observer to a request which seemingly would mean a great deal to him, but also he stands in a position of servitude, hands resting behind his back. He is passive and ineffective.

Deven believes his friend Murad but he cheats him. As Khana explains, “it is the betrayal of friendship rather than its fulfillment which is one of the themes of the novel *In Custody*. It is in the very beginning that the novelist has given us a hint as to what kind of friendship it is going to be”(49) Deven is a type of character who soon believe others. Deven is heavily dependent on others, has very little agency, and has a difficult time communicating his feelings or desires with authority. Stimulating his own betrayal, Deven allows his life to be torn to small, insignificant, non-functioning relationships by his ineptitude towards the explicit exchanges he is invited to participate in as well as his refusal to accept the implicit meaning which arises beneath and between his failed interactions.

Though Murad has evidently searched Deven out in Mirpore, his purpose is not personal, but it is to persuade Deven into helping him with his *Urdu* publication, *Awaaz*. Deven comments pointedly to Murad, “If only we got payment for the articles and reviews that we write for magazines and journals that would be of some help” (14). This line indicates that Deven has written for Murad’s magazine in the past and yet has never been paid for his submissions. It is also implied that Deven has only written items on request from Murad, likely in a similar manner as this encounter portrays, since he does not mention types of writing which demand creativity. When Deven suggests sending in pieces of his own writing for the upcoming edition, Murad soundly rejects the proposal. He bullies Deven into doing work that he needs because he is able to dominate the conversation. The exchange ends notably for the reader as the text relays the power dynamic. Desai writes, “Deven could not have said why but he was frightened. ‘Look, will you do this in feature for me or not?’ Of course I will, Murad.’ Deven became meek. He hung his head, looking at his fingers clutching the edge of the table” (18). Thus, Desai opens her novel with

the non-hero, Deven, involved in a mainly parasitic relationship from which he cannot, and does not even recognize he should, escape. Deven ignores the struggle within him that seeks to alert him to the dangers or truth that are inherent in the situation.

This failing will follow Deven throughout the novel, condemning the relationships and methods of communication with which he is involved. The critic Pathania suggests, “since Desai’s protagonists are determined to maintain their identity and individuality, they fail to achieve fulfillment in human relationships” (51). Though it is certainly true that Deven does not form fulfilling and equal relationships, in this case the problem stems more from an uncertainty regarding his identity; a weakness is strongly separating himself from the will of others, and an inability to significantly and successfully impact his life or the lives of others. He lacks agency, independent will, and social fluency.

Deven’s characteristic role is played out over the course of the novel in many of his personal and social interactions. Desai tells us that his mention of money of Murad is extremely uncharacteristic and if it had not been an extraordinary situation, he would have been motivated more by invisibility and ineffectiveness than by any need for a proactive measure. She writes, “The desperation of Deven’s circumstances made him say something he never would have otherwise. All through his childhood and youth he had known one way to deal with life and that was to lie low and remain invisible”(14). Though not quite invisible in his ordinary interactions, Deven’s life does little to affect others in a positive or significant manner.

In this novel Deven, a lecturer in Hindi in Ram Lal College in Mirpore is assigned the job of interviewing an old *Urdu* poet, Nur, living in Old Delhi. He loves *Urdu* and *Urdu* poetry but has to choose Hindi as a subject for teaching because of its value in the job market. He has great love for *Urdu* poetry and fondly remembers his father’s liking for it.

Deven, a shrinking and weak man, is somehow drawn to his hero. In order to save the name and works of Nur, he decides to record his voice on tape for his small-town university. In this process Deven is exploited monetarily and emotionally. Murad refuses to pay him for submissions to his self-proclaimed literary magazine. His wife Sarla is

indignant at his time away, his fellow professors think that he is having an affair in Delhi. The saddest part is the result of the sessions. Drunk and encouraged by his admirers who follow him along to the sessions, Nur offers nothing new. The session between Nur and Deven gives amazing perception about life.

The uselessness of Deven's project to contain Nur's poetry on tape is evident in the end product. The editing process strips the tape down to nearly nothing, relegating much of Nur's voice unable to save much of anything else. His poetry remains virtually for the school's library as well as for the reader.

Instead, the reader is left with the pleading, coarse notes sent to Deven by Nur that, unlike his wife's letter or the poetry of Imtiaz Begum, are always read by Deven in their entirety. Deven's inability to grasp what is significant in his interactions is a direct product of his active and ignorant dismissal of the unsaid. His ineptitude leads him to attempt to contain the contaminated past of Nur instead of recognizing the meaning of the unsaid his daily interactions with students and colleagues. His yearning for power in a life where he holds very little power leads him to maintain his fragmented, faulty relationships and to repress the unity conceivable in the acceptance of a woman's voice.

By the last pages of the novel, Deven remains fearful of his failure and without the means to make a difference, mirroring his situation at the beginning of his story. Deven recounts, "Sarlah would have to be sent back to her parents to his eternal disgrace, and the boy would grow up to consider his father a failure – a disgraceful, thoughtless, irresponsible and hopeless failure Why, seeing it all so clearly, could he not halt it?" (202). Why? Deven is incapable of impacting, through his own agency, the lives of those around him in any significant manner. The novel details his effort to overcome this unfortunate position but offers no reasonable evidence to believe that he should.

Deven deludes himself at the end of the novel that as "custodian of Nur's very soul and spirit", by possessing the unchanging, repressed voice of Nur's poetry of old, he will be able to enact change and agency in his life (204). His ignorance of the meaning of the new voices and his inability to successfully utilize Nur's voice without editing,

corrupting, and killing the original state before it reaches an audience, suggests that Devan's existence will continue to be a nonexistence. Desai makes very clear the type of communication that will perpetuate the link between Deven and Nur as she states, "When Nur was laid in the grave, would this connection break, this relation end? No, never – the bills would come to him" (204). The breakdown of the relationship into more bills and entreaties is symbolic of Deven's disunited relationships, fragmented attempts at articulation and response, and his disjointed existence on the whole. The reader learns that the missed opportunities in Deven's life, his failed communication and contacts as well as the events and encounters ignored by Deven, especially concerning the presence and power of women, constitute his eclipsed means of redemption. It is through Desai's novel the reader discovers meaning and cohesion, the unity in Deven's environment that he avoids.

Anita Desai is best known for her studies of Indian life. She has been successful in touching almost all the social evils prevailing in Indian society. Murad earns more but never pays Deven for his contribution as Murad is the son of a rich businessman.

Deven and Murad are childhood friends. Murad knows how to lure others and get his work done while Deven, a simple teacher has never been able to command the attention of his students. The novel also questions the meaning of friendship that stands on selfishness and insensitivity. Deven's meetings with Murad always made him sense the latter's desire to earn money and be a superior person.

She has also portrayed the true picture of the plight of teachers, poets and the deprived ones struggling for name, fame and wealth. *In Custody* she tried to bring up a new issue of problems of extinction of a language like *Urdu* after the partition.

Deven, the protagonist is fond of *Urdu* poetry. The whole novel is cleverly woven around Deven's preparations and efforts to interview Nur. Deven has not been able to do much in life. He lacks confidence. In spite of being aware that the people around him are constantly pouring out benefits from his simplicity, weakness of not able to put forth his ideas, and innocence, he acts like a puppet. When Murad approaches him to interview Nur, Deven realizes it is a dream comes true. Anita Desai has portrayed a weak protagonist who is easily driven

by others.

When Deven Sharma reaches Nur's house to get his interview, the image of Nur in his mind shatters. Deven finds his hero's house in the midst of misery and confusion. The dirty, old furniture in Nur's room shows the value and status of the old *Urdu* poet after partition among the rising Hindi poets in India. The room is dark and seems to reflect the true picture of the language *Urdu* which is in total darkness. And the poet in white clothes sitting in that dark room shows the status enjoyed by him even after partition.

The image of Nur as a poet soon shatters when Deven, expecting him to be surrounded by intellectuals and poets of his stature, finds him with people who are more interested in reciting their own poetry. What Deven finds at his hero's house is misery and confusion. Having sunk into a senile old age, surrounded by fawning sycophants, married to a younger calculating wife who wants to use his glory to win herself fame, Nur is not what he once was. Or perhaps he always was this.

Nur like a withered leaf waiting for its decay is barely able to respond. But his weak stature seems to get electrified after he has consumed alcohol. He forgets that he is a poet- rather he behaves like a common Muslim who feels rejected, neglected and dejected. He hates "Hindi Wallahs". He is trapped in the vanity of Imtiaz Begum, now his second wife, a prostitute who has ruined the life of the poet. She is a so called lover of poetry and herself a poetess. She is jealous of Nur's skill and competes with him by holding 'mehfil' of poetry where she recites her poems in public. Deven wishes to help and protect his hero though he cannot defend himself.

In Custody is a different category. Antia Desai attempts to study the helpless nature of male protagonist due to poverty, helplessness and lack of initiative. Deven, who comes from a lower middle class family. So his consciousness is essentially directed towards a wider world beyond himself and his family. Deven seeks to reach out into the wider world in the hope of self-fulfilment. He undergoes experiences of various shades and complexities and eventually emerges as a wiser man with a more complete knowledge of being in this world. He also suffers from the problem of marital dissonance. Sarla, Deven's wife's dreams about marriage are shattered after the marriage with a low salaried

lecturer. Also his position in the classroom is so bad that he cannot look confidently in the eyes of his students. Deven is described as “a boring teacher”.

Deven finds his job and his family oppressive and believes that he is chained to the necessity of earning livelihood in order to support his family. His desire for freedom from mundane existence is also visible in the romantic notions he fosters about himself and his job of teaching. So he feels like a defeat. He loves *Urdu* poem than his profession.

Deven loves poems but Sarla seemed too prosaic. He comes from Delhi and settles down at Mirpore, a small town, along with his wife and his son and leads an unhappy domestic life. He is disappointed with the atmosphere of the institution. Living in Mirpore he has nearly become a villager. He is even hesitant to enter the city or go towards Kashmiri Gate in invention of Murad’s office. Deven’s trips to Delhi teaches him a great deal both about art and human nature. Towards the end of the novel Anita Desai focused him as a changed person. As the novel ends with a positive note, Deven is able to observe a ray of anticipation even in his boundless sufferings and humiliation. Deven’s distress gave him a philosophical outlook. Infact each new mishap and calamity fills him with patience.

The main tragic factor is that Deven does not have expectation and courage to abandon equal to the incident. All his distress is reasoned by his friendship with Murad and Nur. Deven’s behavior is one of lacking in self-confidence; he has neither the sense of excitement which accompanies an adventure nor the sense of bravery which is involved in crusade, though he has religious worship enough for both. Deven fails as an artist because he is alienated from life and its realities and he thinks art to be saved from life. His growth into an artist through the encounters with the *Urdu* poet Nur, is characterized by the transformation of his earlier perception of the separation of art, life and the artist into a wider phantom of their inseparability. But towards the end of the novel when everyone deserts him, Deven suddenly gathers his own inner strength and learns to face his responsibilities with strength.

Deven feels inferior owing to his diffused sense of failure.

Overtly, his irritability with Sarla appears to be the outcome of his hurt male ego. He leads the life of a victim, a victim of the ordinary life. Whenever he sees Sarla, he is reminded of a victim figure. Tired of pursuing such a life of victimization, Deven lies low and remains invisible. He exists in an invisible cell on the margin of life. For him the countryside between Mirpore and Delhi “turned into no man’s land that lies around a prison, threatening in its desolation” (24)

Deven ultimately becomes an embodiment of failure and frustration. Sarla in *In Custody* finds her satisfaction under the care and guidance of her husband, Deven. But Deven is himself a helpless person. He understands the problems of his wife but he cannot sort them out due to his own inadequacies in terms of tact and worldly wisdom. Sarla is a victim of her husband’s weakness and helplessness.

J.P. Tripathi feels that “Sarla is the typical Hindu wife, simple, timid, obscure, domineered, undemanding and cooperative” (1). Their marital life is disturbed due to Deven’s stupidity. Moreover, Deven is not financially sound and he fails to provide even the basic requirements to the family and things needed by his wife and son. His love of *Urdu* Poetry and his obsession with name and fame make him neglect his wife. His initial failure in the interview brings sorrow.

Deven allows himself to be cheated and befooled, his sincerity mocked and held up to ridicule. In the last chapter of the book, Deven was deserted by both Murad and Siddiqui, faces the prospect of dismissal from his college for not having been able to produce the promised interview.

Deven’s helplessness, sufferings and nobility are explained in terms of self – realization. He is thrown into pits of misery due to his foolishness for *Urdu* poetry. He loves *Urdu* poetry beyond a reasonable restriction, which brings him face to face with misery. Deven’s dream of contributing compositions on Nur to be published in his friend Murad’s literary magazine moves out to be a nightmare. Nur, the idol hero of Deven Sharma is found to be a dissolute old man lost in the world of wine, wife and Kababs. Due to his utter disillusion and dismay Nur is not the recluse, magical genius of Deven’s imagination, but a weak, grasping old man, whose creative days are long since over. Both the art and the artist bring humiliation on Deven.

In this novel, Deven is portrayed as “a diffident and awkward hero” and who feels himself a victim of circumstances. These dominant traits of Deven’s character are doubly emphasized by the delineation of his background. Mirpore with its dullness and barrenness reflects Deven’s own personality. The first thing which strikes the reader in the description of the place Mirpore is the numerous reference to ‘dust’, which is symbolic of the dull arid life of Deven. While traveling by bus to Delhi to seek an interview with Nur, Deven is beset with doubts as to whether this “rare opportunity would not also turn to dust”(2)

Deven considers his family and his job as “heaps of rubbish” that obstruct his way towards literary fame and glory. But it is his own obsessive sense of insecurity and inadequacy and habitual timidity that become the stumbling block. He likes to project the view that he is the victim of other people and situations, but in fact he is the victim of his own doubts, a fact which he is aware of. Mirpore becomes an objective correlative projecting the dullness, boredom and apathy of Deven’s life (3). Deven regards Mirpore as a prison where he is doomed forever to live a dull and empty life.

The novel from the beginning to end revolves around Deven trying to interview Nur. He succeeds in recording some verses in the poet’s voice but the tapes are in poor condition. The voice cracks and there are many other technicalities. Deven lacks future insight. It is this weakness that delves him into troubles one after another. He thinks he is going to bring the poet out of dark lanes into new lights but he ends up being exploited by all around him including the poet.

The whole novel portrays the inner struggle of Deven and the rise of miseries coupled with misfortunes. After realizing that a very important work of his interest i.e. interviewing the famous *Urdu* poet Nur, has been trusted on his shoulders, Deven undergoes a lot of pressure and a big change. He becomes more confident and learns tactics. He has now learnt to say no to people like Murad.

Towards the end of the novel, when everyone deserts him, Deven suddenly finds his own strength and learns to accept his responsibilities with fortitude. He realizes that having accepted the gift of Nur’s poetry, he becomes the custodian of Nur’s very soul and spirit, and this great distinction certainly has elevated him. Viney Kirpal states, “this

realization is indicative of his growth as a human being”⁽⁴⁾. Deven welcomes the ‘greyness’ of his life as it is better than darkness.

The sky was filling with grey light that was dissolving the dense darkness of night. It glistened upon a field of white pampas grass which waved in a sudden breeze that had sprung up, laughing, waving and rustling through the grass with a live, rippling sound (5)

The novel unfolds the predicament in the life of cradulous and disingenuous Deven Sharma who is swayed by an idea of creating a work of his life, but fails to measure himself upto the demands of the situation when an occasion to fulfil his ambition actually arrives.

The novel portrays the shift between failure and success, his enthusiasm and inhibitions, and the final disaster he lands himself into. Various forces work to deter and to help him alternately and ultimately he stands at a cross-road, knowing little in which direction should he turn. However, in the end, strength comes from his inner self and he resolves to face life as it comes. He now begins to explore the mysterious, inexplicable nature of art and the relationship between art and life. He even takes up the challenge of being a custodian to Nur’s poetry though he is now fully aware of the difficulties of such a tremendous venture of responsibility. He accepts the human condition as it is and attains the existential dimension of personality.

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Immigration and its Aftereffects in M.G. Vassanji's Novels

- K. Suneel Kumar

M. G. Vassanji was born in Kenya and raised in Tanzania. Before coming to Canada in 1978, he attended MIT and University of Pennsylvania, where he specialized in theoretical Nuclear Physics. Canada and from 1980 to 89 he was a Research Associate at the University of Toronto. During this period he developed a keen interest in medieval Indian literature and history, co-founded and edited a literary magazine (*The Toronto South Asian Review*, later renamed the *Toronto Review of Contemporary Writings Abroad*). He began writing stories and a novel, and then in 1989, with the publication of his first novel, *The Gunny Sack*, he was invited to spend a season at the international writing program of the University of IWOA. That year ended his active career in nuclear physics. He was never tensed; he considered it a blessing, for it freed him to pursue his literary career. Vassanji is the author of six highly acclaimed novels and two collections of short stories. His work has appeared in various countries and several languages. His recent novel, *The Assassin's Song*, was short listed for both the Gellar Prize and the Governor General's prize for the best novel in Canada. It will be argued that while the works of Vassanji are typical for immigrant fiction in that they are concerned with both multicultural as well as post-colonial issues respectively. A comprehensive analysis of his works must treat him as a Canadian writer. Vassanji lives in Toronto with his wife and two children.

M.G. Vassanji's wonderful and satisfied narrative style attracts the readers a lot. His reader-oriented ways and his gripping story-telling way stand out to be very special as it is as natural as his life-reflecting characters in his novels. His concern is the problems the immigrants face in their exile. His contribution to the Canadian literature in passing the problems of Indian immigrants in Canada, speaks a lot about his postcolonial perspective in terms of immigration as well as multiculturalism in the present Globalized society. Multiculturalism is the key whose effect is shown on every social sphere.

In this age of Globalization, the effects increase influence on

considerable parts of the world. Globalization does not only describe international cash flows but also draws attention to the colonial/Neo-colonial underpinnings of the wealth of the Western world and the deprivation of the developing countries. From its origins as a merely descriptive term, Globalization does become a critical vocabulary demanding social justice and global responsibility from the countries of the Western world whose wealth still depends on exploitation of the resources of the South. In the wake of colonialism and neo-colonialism, large number of people all over the world have turned their backs on their home countries and migrated either in order to escape persecution or poverty. The large-scale of migration from Africa, the Caribbean and the Asian sub-continent into the Anglo-American Diaspora has altered the composition of Western society considerably. The immigrants have also brought with them cultural identities of their own.

Canadian society is considered to be a multicultural society where all ethnic groups enjoy equal rights and status. The rules and regulations in Canada argue strongly and try to protect the rights of the immigrants. In spite of such constitution, there are a few minor incidents of racial prejudice in the normal routine experience of people. The national policy of multiculturalism has been adopted by Canada to ensure that all multicultural groups enjoy an equally meaningful and recognized space on the horizontal plane, but in the regular practice of day-to-day living, different ethnic groups occupy different ranks in the society. Though the policy of multiculturalism is ideally a real attempt to forage a new lively society consisting of various diversified cultures-to mark a unified identity; it has just remained as a patchwork or a mosaic. In practice it doesn't work as it could certainly eliminate racism. If there is equal opportunity and equal status to immigrants, it would cause feelings of economic insecurity, moral outrage, and conscious superiority among certain groups. Moreover, as many South Asians are well qualified and prove better in the right to work. This certainly deprives the employability of the people who have been called the locals. These things have been described with authority in their novels and stories by various writers like M.G.Vassanji. Canada's multicultural or ethnic fiction provides a particularly rich showcase for exploring modes of living together in a multi-cultured society. Here an attempt is made to analyze how immigrant writer views Canadian

multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is a new paradigm which could be said to recognize the effects of globalization by accounting for the migrants cultural differences. No matter which view on multiculturalism as a policy one takes, it seems beyond dispute that a truly multicultural perspective cannot but acknowledge that migration is a move with far-reaching consequences for the host society. It also often more drastically, affects the individual migrant. Arguably one of the most pressing problems for those forsaking their homes for a new country is the construction of a new identity. In more accessible terms, the central concern for many who feel them- selves uprooted is how to make life in the diaspora 'livable'. 'Livable' here can refer to an attempt to reproduce the old country in the now; however it might also imply in some cases that the country of origin is discarded in favor of the country of adoption.

East Africa, during either colonization or after decolonization does not show solutions to many problems faced by immigrants community. Even the so called Nyerere's socialism too fails to bring in justice to this community. The subversive situation prompts these people to move farther lands further, where they don't belong either. The frontiers may have changed but they have simply created imaginary homelands. There are many illustrations derived from M.G. Vassanji's novels where protagonists feel uneasy with their cultural tradition and modify or even discord it.

M. G. Vassanji's first novel *The Gunny Sack* is a novel which explores the history and the story of the Indians in East Africa. During the colonial period, they were forced to leave after the independence of Africa. The novel spans four generations from the beginning of the Indian settlement on the coast of East Africa. It was under the Germans then passed on to the British in a course of time. As Ji-Bai says at the beginning of the novel, "Memory is represented by *The Gunny Sack*, and also the sack possesses many tales of the Shamshi community of Indian origin, having first migrated from India to East Africa and from there to the new world in search of a better life". The community's movement is part of a historical sketch drawn in the novel. They are from Kutch. They move from there to East Africa because of the

pressing social and economic problems at home. They went in search of a better life. They face many troubles in the day to day life in the alien land, which was already under European colonial rule. They think again and act upon another place to settle and thus move westward. *The Gunny Sack* stands witness of new history as it throws out many memories as regard the unfolding events in the centre genealogy of Dhanji Govindji.

Salim is the narrator of the story; he vividly catalogues the descendants of Dhanji Govinji, their ups and downs while living in East Africa. Every character's personal life is a historical manifestation told in the tricky conditions of being now here. For example, besides Dhanji Govinji's ventures, his African slave keep, Bibo Taratibu and her son Hussein are the victims of the circumstances. The alien minority and their dispatchment, their predicament, the forced dispersement of the half century settlers are part of personal history reflected in the novel. The Mau Mau uprising, the operational will to wipe it out, the German and British colonization, the liberation of East Africa from foreign rule and the socialistic system of governance as replacement of colonization are the historicity in the textuality of *The Gunny Sack*.

No New Land is also the text that stands for co-textuality which starts in the Canadian present, journeys through African past and moves to the present with futuristic outlook. The two novels deal with immigrant's problem of coming to terms of new land, the real illusionary land colliding in the author's psychological landscape. M.G.Vassanji, for a change uses real raw materials from the historical truths to narrate his novels. Vassanji in his *The Gunny Sack* and *No New Land* tries his utmost best to paint the real picture of the life of Shamshi community which is made a prototype example of how life is like in transcontinental wilderness. Vassanji's another novel *Amriika* may be viewed as classic immigrant story which speaks how far political commitment and radical dissent can go. This novel begins in Boston-Cambridge in the Vietnam War Era. It is seen as documenting the travails of an immigrant. The reader of this novel can draw his or her own conclusion.

The portrayal of woman characters in Vassanji's novels is no big a surprise in the sense that they have many extraordinary roles to play

in the circumstances that are both favorable and unfavorable in new places. The male dominated and chauvinistic treatment against women characters in his works are simply the prototype examples. As to how Indian traditionalistic and orthodox womanhood stays intact with what they do and how they behave at home, and it is no different either when they go abroad.

Under colonization, the woman's role is being what she is generally expected to be and how she is supposed to behave depending on the cultural and traditional parameters Vassanji's women's portrayal in the feministic perspective is not out of bounds other than how they should be. They are casual, traditional, eccentric, sometime heroic, subdued, submissive and more dependent. Their role is marginal when decision making is concerned.

Immigration is a new phenomenon spanning mostly from 19th century and intensifying through twentieth century; gravitating itself before the independence right across the continents. Immigration is not regional that confines itself to only a particular geographical space but its tentacles spread from oriental countries to African hinterlands and from there to trans-Atlantic geo-spaces. Neither immigration is by only one set of people belonging to one specific region of country, nor does it have any zeal of settling in a specific nation out of fascination for that Geo-space, but it is all due to the situation on the ground.

The ground reality is the pressing effect of colonization. Colonizing the third world for material development indicates the imperialist arrogance geared to the appropriation of a weak and backward society through domination and thanks to which people's prompted movement from one part of the world to the other part occurs and reoccurs. This forced displacement has visibly proceeding and culminating causes of victimization, marginalization, economic degradation and most importantly the quest for survival. The issue of immigration and its after effect is the theme of the writings made by the expatriate writers like M.G.Vassanji. His displaced descriptions through images of the historical reminiscences speak volumes of the South Asian Diaspora.

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Select Approaches and Methods to English Language Teaching

- P. Usha Rani

English Language is a complex one and a popular language. There are some approaches and methods to English language teaching. Approaches are assumptions or Philosophies and are flexible in nature. Methods are systematic with definite techniques and are fixed practices. The search for better approaches and methods is an important topic in language learning.

Approaches are loose assumptions that can be translated in different ways in a class room. Methods are systematic teaching practices with techniques. These two are interrelated concepts in second language learning. A method is a procedure in language material to be learned. The basis for this systematic practice is an approach. Before practicing a method taking from an approach an instructional system must be prepared considering some factors like the content, quality of students and the ability of teachers. A system must be designed in order for an approach to be made in to a method.

There are some approaches and methods in language teaching. Some are widely used some have small impact but mixed in accepted system. Approaches and methods are essential factors in methodology in language teaching. Methodology includes theory and practice in language teaching. To explore select approaches and methods to English language teaching is the aim of this paper.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a popular approach to English language teaching. It is an approach to language teaching mainly a foreign language. It stresses the need of communication hence it is also referred to as communicative approach. It is widely used in Europe because of its practical view in language learning. Interaction is important in this study as C.L. Wrenn writes.

Language is a social activity: and whether it is really desirable for English or any other language real or invented to become a world-medium, is a question which perhaps concerns the anthropologist and other students

of the ‘social sciences’ rather than the student of the English language.(1)

The next one is the oral approach. This is heavily based on grammar and sentence structure. This approach also related to communicative language teaching as there is emphasis on oral practice.

Language is a wonderful tool for expression. When used accurately and clearly a person can share feelings, thoughts, philosophies and emotions with words.(2)

In this approach oral skill or oral proficiency is given importance. In this way it is related to direct method as there is stress on pronunciation also.

As regards the methods to language teaching one of the important methods is grammar translation method. This method as the name suggests insists the instruction of grammar and vocabulary.

It is useful in the teaching of classical languages by learning this method student is in a position to control grammar and vocabulary to be able to read, write matter or text. In this method there is the supervision of teacher. The teacher instructs guides and corrects the exercises. So that the pupil can learn the rules of grammar and control the syntactic pattern this gives the learner the capacity to communicate the thought.

The next method is Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) in this mode students listen to records sometimes view videos. Though this is not a basic method in language teaching, the learner practice with sounds hence it is an exercise in listening skill and speaking skill. The emphasis is on target language. This method arose during and after world war – II in U.S. for learning foreign language. ALM proponents feel that this method aims at accuracy of pronunciation.

In an evaluation of teaching materials by the students, video cassettes were received with enthusiasm whereas radio broadcasts were far less popular. (3)

In this method there is stress on behaviorism. It is attached to drilling and repetition in this instruction. The learner acquires

proficiency of a foreign language by learning the skills of listening and speaking.

The next thing is direct method. This method is based on the view that second language learning must be an imitation of first language learning. Hence this is called as natural method. This is the natural practice and the learner uses the target language without the aid of native language. Here the stress is on pronunciation and instruction of oral skills is important. Printed matter or text must be kept away as it trouble acquisition of oral proficiency. In this instruction learning of writing, spelling and translation should be delayed as there is no immediate introduction of printed word to the learner. The learner's choice of conversation is not flexible but with in the limits the use of language is precise.

On observing these approaches one can understand that all these approaches and methods of language teaching are closely related and mutually dependent.

CLT has been appeared as a reaction to the Audio Lingual Method (ALM). A recent phenomenon TBLL (Task Based Language Learning) has achieved popularity and seems to be refinement of CLT.

Similarly oral approach leads to the presentation of direct method. However with some modifications this method leads to the evolution of communicative language teaching. Not only these some other approaches and methods are there in language teaching to provide fluency accuracy and proficiency in usage.

The methods and results of linguistics, in spite of their modest scope, resemble those of natural science, the domain in which science has been most successful. It is only a prospect but not hopelessly remote, that the study of language may help us toward the understanding and control of human events. (4)

In this manner all these approaches and methods contribute insights that are absorbed in the instruction of English, the living language.

English is the language not only of England but of the

extensive dominions and colonies associated in the British empire, and it is the language of the United States.(5)

It is clear that almost all the approaches and methods are absorbed in to the teaching of English language.

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Interconnected Mysteries of Grace and Grotesque in the Fiction of Flannery O'Connor

- M. T. Nirmal Kumar

The chief aim of this article is to give a faithful interpretation of Flannery O'Connor's strange and often misunderstood concept of Grace and Grotesque mysteries in her fiction. The meaning of fiction is not abstract meaning but an experienced meaning and the purpose of making statements about the meaning of a story is only to help the reader to experience that meaning more fully.

Flannery O'Connor's central interest is at the "Passion for extremes". Her writings present the physical world, even at its ugliest, serves as a channel of Grace. She highlights the interwoven mystery of Grace and grotesque in most of her stories. O'Connor asserts that "Violence is strangely capable of returning my characters to reality and preparing them to accept their moment of grace. Their heads are so hard that almost nothing will do the work. This idea, that reality is something to which we must be returned at considerable cost, is one which is seldom understood by the casual reader, but it is one which is implicit in the Christian view of the world." [MM 112].

O'Connor's sort of grotesque, which shows the analogical dimension though the distortion and exaggeration of the physical is only possible in a world where Grace is conveyed. As most criticism reveals, O'Connor managed to convey her readers the idea that her characters were coming into contact with the divine through the mediation of a grotesque seems to be glorious. O'Connor's diabolical voice is better understood as her presentation of a fuller and more traditional view of God, a view that includes judgment as well as mercy and the fear as well as the love of the Lord. Her characters and various biblical figures is vital to understanding many of her works. In her view, "It takes a story to make a story. It takes a story of mythic dimensions, one which belongs to everybody, one in which everybody is able to recognize the hand of God and its descent. In the protestant south, the scriptures fill this role. [MM202-203].

In many writers physical imperfection is an outward mark of spiritual imperfection but in Flannery O'Connor Physical imperfection is a sign of potential grace. This idea of grace through imperfection is an outgrowth of Miss O'Connor's belief that the true communion of saints is not a communion of love but a communion of suffering. Intimately connected with that condition of grace called the communion of suffering is the sign of grace to be seen in the physical imperfection. Explicit connections are frequently made between imperfection and Grace. Imperfection is the basis for the suffering which is an approach to God. In addition to the mark of Physical imperfection there is one other outstanding sign of Potential grace in a character. This sign is what I would like to call the "Doubting Thomas Syndrome". What this means is that the louder a character proclaims his rebellion against God, the stronger is his desire to believe in God.

Hazel Motes says early in the novel wise blood that if he avoids sin, he can avoid Christ. This means that Christ lives in sin that the redemptive powers of the crucifixion and the resurrection cannot operate unless the actor has entered into a state of sin. Grace is this redemptive power operating in sin, the restorative love which annuls any moral wrong doing. Hazel becomes a fornicator and a murderer. Moreover Hazel sins with his eyes open. Therefore, since he sins with his eyes open, Hazel sees clearly at the end of the novel the grace present in sin. If a man has the power to choose corruption over good and thereby to damn himself, than there is a little sense of the new Testament language Grace.

Jesus message is "By Grace you have been saved by faith and this is not your doing, it is the Gift of God.[Ephesians 2:8]. Grace is a gift which comes at odd moments during those times when it is least expected. Grace delivered Peter,disciple of Jesus from the gravity of cowardice from his freewill to say no to and thus to resolve the conflict of any knowledge of Jesus. But he denied before them all saying :I know not what thou sayest"[Matthew 26:74] from the inconsequence of his humanness, his given weakness and his blindness. Grace suffuses Peter with divine light, leads him up from his darkness.

O'Connor's other novel, *The Violent Bear It Away*, has its central character Francis Marion Tarwater, a boy who, like Motes is attempting

to escape a calling. At the end of the novel he is setting out to return to the city in his new role as prophet. What both Motes and Tarwater have experienced is the lacerating effect of God's Grace, a Grace which O'Connor implies is far removed from its syrupy portrayal in popular hymns. Instead it seems to have more in common with the terrifying experiences of Old Testament Prophets for whom it is manifested as God's relentless insistence on bestowing mercy as he chooses.

Grace is radically different from the Law. Similarly the purpose of grace is also radically different. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and Godly, in this present world: looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our savior Jesus Christ. [TITUS 2:11-13].

How to get Grace? Apparently it is not through our own doing. One can not pray for it, nor can one perform charitable acts. One can not invoke it at all. Grace when it comes seems to come to those who least deserve it. It seems to visit cowards and reprobates like St. Peter and Christ's crucified thief or violent men like Saul of Tarsus, the architect of the stoning death of St. Stephen. And too grace seems to be a violent rending of personal reality. To receive Grace one must have the kind of faith identified in "The sermon on the Mount" in the Bible. Hazel Motes can do nothing to shrug Grace from his immoral shoulders. O'Connor's wise Blood is therefore, the narrative of mystery of things which are but are not of a lowly, inarticulate, sin-ridden creature inexplicably and suddenly transcending his existence and becoming superhuman like Peter and Paul and thus able to see clearly in his new blindness the things of this world; despite himself. Things others cannot see; able to endure extra-human, apparently needless suffering; able finally to see God.

From the moment the reader enters O'Connor's world, he is poised on the edge of pervasive violence. Her chief characters barely contain their rage, the images reflect a hostile nature and even the Christ whom the characters are ultimately driven is threatening figure. O'Connor's conscious purpose is evident enough to reveal the need for Grace in a world of grotesque without transcendent context. She

perfectly says that “I have found my subject in fiction is the action of grace in territory largely held by the devil and she was not vague about what the devil is”[MM2].

She creates a fiction in which a character attempts to live autonomously to define himself and his values only to be jarred back to what she calls “Reality”, which means the recognition of helplessness in the face of contingency and the need of absolute submission to the power of Christ.

O'Connor's fiction grapples with living a spiritual life in a secular world. She takes broad approach to spiritual issues by providing moral, Social and psychological contexts that offer a wealth of insights and Passion that her readers have found both startling and absorbing. She inhibited two radically different worlds. The world she created in her stories is populated with malcontents, incompetants, pious frauds, bewildered intellectuals, deformed cynics, racists, perverts and murderers who experience dramatically intense movements that surprise and shock readers.

O'Connor recognized that modern readers are not usually looking for “moments of Grace”,much less ones prepared for by violence. Some critics have treated O'Connor's grotesque as something less transcendent. wise Blood depends on the example of Miss Lonelyhearts, not just for its episodic structure, but for its “conjunction of an ironic voice, grotesque perception and the theme of the religious quest”[MM23].

Flannery O'Connor's world is peopled by mostly sinners, ugly, lame, disabled and grotesque who need to be saved by Divine Grace. she employed the grotesque quite deliberately to express her vision of reality. The grotesque has the power of revelation and it manifests the irruption of the demonic in man and brings to light the terrifying face of world literally disfigured by devil. The grace which the savior brought to the world for all mankind is present everywhere and its presence can be felt by everyone if one has eyes to perceive it and mind to receive it. Grace changes human and change is painful too.

So to answer the critical question, Can the grace be found in violence and the grotesque? O'Connor believed it could. However if

one may not believe her, look to Genesis and Noah or look to Joshua and the Israelites. But perhaps the best place to look is into the face of God as he hung on a cross so that one could become one of His children.

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Diaspora - An Odyssey for Identity - V. S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*

- T.S. Rajeswari & M. A. K. Sukumar

Diaspora is the result of man's choice and inclination towards the material gains, professional and business interests. It is particularly the representation of privilege and access to contemporary advanced technology and communication. Here, no dearth of money or means is visible rather economic and life style advantages are facilitated by the multiple visas and frequent flyer utilities. Therefore, Vijay Mishra is correct when he finds V S Naipaul as the founding father of old Diaspora. Naipaul remarkably portrays the search for the roots in his *A House for Mr. Biswas*:

'to have lived without even attempting to lay claim to one's portion of the earth; to have lived and died as one has been born, unnecessary and accommodated.(Naipaul, 14) Similarly Mohan Biswas's peregrination over the next 35 years, he was to be a wanderer with no place to call his own'(ibid. 40)

He feels like an exotic plant that is unable to strike its roots deep into the soil in which it has been transplanted. Naipaul's keen sense of the comic makes him view his fellow East Indians as Don Quixote's tilting at windmills. He has little time or patience for much of what he sees as stupidity or worse of Trinidadian life. He recognizes the essential rootlessness of the people and himself wants to run away from it. But he does not seek to preach reform. He accepts the anarchy and laughs at it. Often he seems to be pointing a finger at the pathetic over-seriousness of so many West Indians. He sees himself as a person utterly displaced, connected by birth and education with three different societies yet unable to establish living contact with-any of them. He is, as Mohit K. Ray articulates: 'an Indian in the West Indies, a West Indian in England, and a nomadic intellectual in a postcolonial world' (p. 208).

His search for identity is worked out through each subsequent novel and shows a remarkable vista of evolution. It is his recognition

that he is writing about societies to which he cannot belongs that governs his approach to the problem of placing himself as author or narrator accurately and honestly in relation to his material. His deepening understanding of his own displacement makes possible the broadening of scope of his novels. In each story, he deals with homelessness but gradually the homelessness of the East Indians in Trinidad broadens into the homelessness of West Indians as such, and finally homelessness is seen as a universal feature of the modern world, afflicting all races, even those who inhabit the 'capitals of the world'. It is clear that even after having lived in England for many years, he, still, has not had the sense of belonging, as he says: 'I still had that nervousness in a new place, that rawness of response, still felt myself to be in the other man's country, felt my strangeness, my solitude' (EOA p.7)

Biswas enters without a single asset, a life which apparently offers no opportunity for him to realize an identity. He is born at the darkest part of the night, the wrong way and with an extra finger on his hand which represents endemic bad luck and the effects of malnutrition. Ill-luck strikes his steps from childhood and in a sense he is responsible for the death of his father by drowning and the subsequent disintegration of his family. He virtually becomes an orphan having to depend on the crumbs from the tables of richer relatives. But from the start, Biswas reacts to the hostile world with an artist's fastidious consciousness. In Trinidad, however, the only outlets he can find for his creative imagination are sign writing and later reporting sensational episodes for a newspaper.

The resulting internal conflict erupts in a series of symbolic acts of rebellion. He is unable to establish rapport with his wife Shama who is riot prepared to give up the security of the Tulsi menage. Children are born to Biswas and Shama and at first they remain smaller Tulsis. So begins Biswas's quest for a house which will symbolize his independence and which he can imbue with some meaning. At different intervals, he builds two houses both of which get destroyed. Finally, he buys a house which is not worth the price he pays - a price too, which is beyond his means. But this heavily mortgaged tumble-down house that he leaves behind him when he dies at the age of forty-six, becomes

a symbol for the spiritual niche that he is able ultimately to carve for himself in the bare rock of an underdeveloped human existence. Biswas is essentially a creative artist but his artistic talents find no environment to blossom. It is the house that gives him an identity and a special sense of artistic satisfaction.

Surrounding this overt theme of an individual's rootlessness is Naipaul's profound sense of the inherent loneliness of man himself. Significant is the darkness, both physical and spiritual, that Biswas faces when a hurricane blows away his house and causes him a nervous breakdown. But when Biswas is able to have a house of his own, relations get established between him, his children and his wife. His own family thus finally provides the remedy for his loneliness. Naipaul seems to say that though one may be rootless socially, he can have a certain amount of identity through his family. The efforts of Mr. Biswas to own a house to establish his dynasty are nothing but the trails of Naipaul's father to secure an identity in the society and not to remain stranded from his clan.

"The writing that has mattered to me most is that of my father. It taught me to look at things that had never been written before, and seemed dull in life, yet, when transformed to paper, became very surprising. A great deal of my vision of Trinidad has come straight from my father. His work showed me that one could write also about a rootless society," says Naipaul in an interview.

The unity of *A House for Mr. Biswas* is not the result of a central thesis or a tightly-knit story but of this single integrating metaphor. The house stands at the centre and everything that Biswas experience signifies is contained in the various meanings that the metaphor accumulates in the course of the novel. The story starts with a reference to the house and ends also with the return of the orphaned family to the empty house.

Born with several handicaps and discouraged by the surroundings, Biswas feels he will have to find fulfillment not through faith in abstract god but through concrete reality like a house of his own. From the conventional point of view Hanuman House offers him security. He grows into a rebel seeking a new identity. He decides that he cannot have his identity unless he has a house of his own.

The indecisiveness is but a natural outcome of the loss of identity. The nostalgia for the past and the bare realities of the present make the individual remain stranger for himself unable to read his own conscience. Uprooted from his village and ancestral tradition he curses orthodoxy and tradition as obstacles to his efforts to establish himself in the new world, he cannot at a crisis deny how deep rooted are his traditional instincts. For instance, when his mother for whom he has never done anything except for a short period she was with him, at short hills, passes away, he becomes oppressed by a sense of loss. It is not of the present loss, but something missed in the past.

The house in Sikkim Street, however, proves to be a more permanent achievement. He is no doubt cheated of over the price. The house has many drawbacks. But neither the cheating nor the drawbacks matter. What Biswas feels is that he is for the first time at home. This achievement brings a bonding in the family his wife Shama is reconciled to her present status as a wife. *A House for Biswas* in a true sense, a life for Mr. Biswas as it bestows him the social security and family which are the legacies which a man ought to leave for his progeny. The house shows the new and unconquered realities to him and his family members. Shama readily forgoes her claim as 'Tulsis' and voices the urge of Mrs Biswas. His children are no more Tulsis but Biwases, a true patriarchal society according to Hindu tradition. He has at last staked his claim to one portion of the earth. He might have been born unnecessarily and unaccommodated, but he dies fully identified with and by his own family.

He has established adequate relationship with his wife and children and so the house stands as a symbol of fulfillment. From the prison of Hanuman House the Biswases have emerged into the freedom of the Sikkim Street house with its sweet scented shade tree and butterfly orchid. This shows how everyone has to acknowledge sometime or other Biswas's stern spirit of independence. Circumstances may be against him but he refuses to be absorbed into convention and be reduced to a non-entity. Darkness haunts all his steps but he dies in a house of his own "enclosed and glowing in the night".

There is a lot of difference between Biswas and the rest of the people in the Hanuman household. Except Biswas everyone wants to

hide himself under the shade of the Tulsi's family. Though there is a mute rebellion spurring in the hearts of others it was Biswas who dares to raise the voice against the autocracy. Mrs. Tulsi takes to task Biswas for giving a gift only to his daughter. What about his son and the sons and daughters of Shama's sisters? To Mrs. Tulsi all at the same level are entitled to the same privileges. This is a view that does not at all occur to Biswas whose chief struggle is to avoid becoming a Tulsi.

Biswas sums up his protest against all religiosity when, apropos of the Tulsis, he remarks that to be a good Hindu one must be a good Catholic. His toying with Aryanism and insulting Owad are all part of the anti-ritualistic mania. The very order and security that Hanuman House offers rouses his protest. He is afraid that by submitting to the Tulsi tradition he will be sacrificing his identity. The cultural ambiguities implicit in such a background are the pivot of his work. In the novel one finds this search for identity and definition brilliantly illustrated by the brief but restless career of a man who is born 'unnecessary and unaccommodated' but manages to die in a house of his own.

The definition of a house means differently to Biswas and Shama. Shama identifies herself as the branch of the Tulasi family tree hence feels herself strongly rooted though in alien soil. Biswas fails to accept this dictum. The tussle between Shama and Biswas is the confrontation of a rooted plant and a wandering animal. So, however prosaic her life may appear to Biswas, she herself is highly satisfied. Her ambition consists of a number of negatives- not to be unmarried, not to be childless, and not to be an undutiful daughter, sister, wife, and mother. Biswas, on the contrary, yearns to be on his own. He wants to paddle his own canoe. But the paddling is all in shallow waters, and the canoe comes to grief again and again. He refuses to strike roots in Hanuman House because he rejects its swamping of his identity, its denial of his right to speak for himself. He rejects the Indianness it claims to uphold. So, once more Biswas rejects the philistinism and its power to destroy the beauty he cherishes.

The house is the culmination of the efforts to a lifetime to find his own identity. Even Shama, who always tried to retreat into Hanuman House, now boasts to the Tuttles that the house with all its

flaws is just right for her. To the children it becomes a centre of security, a home such as their father never enjoyed, a jumping-off ground for studies abroad. It is true that Biswas dies jobless. He leaves a heavy debt behind. Yet, he dies in his own house – “a place which had been hollowed out by time, by all that he had lived through”. He has found roots in a fashion. Kumar Parag is right in having an opinion:

“a house is not just a matter getting a shelter from heat, cold or rain. In fact, it is both an imposition of order and a carving-out of authentic selfhood within the heterogeneous and fragmented society of Trinidad” (p.139).

The whole of Biswas's career of forty-six years can be viewed as a restless, irritated struggle to emerge from an area of darkness to a pool of light. The novel can be looked upon as a delineation of the stages by which Biswas comes to establish an identity and dynasty of his own.

The house is the symbol of his search for security and status, for an order which is aesthetically pleasing and morally coherent. It is light in the menacing darkness of the void. It is the culmination of his struggle against tyranny and his anxiety to leave the mark of his existence on the world. At the same time, it represents his slow but sure recognition that his identity lies in the relationships he has created, in the wife and children for whom a home must be provided.

“How terrible it would have been to leave Shama and the children in one room”! Worse still, to have lived without even attempting to lay claim to one's portion of the earth, “to have lived and died as one had been born, unnecessary and unaccommodated!”

Achievement and failure are thus presented as aspects of a single experience. The truth lies in the paradox and the house is the image of the paradox. His long Odyssey finally finds Biswas settling down into traditional attitudes. His house becomes in the end the place from which he urges Anand to believe in God. It is the home from which he is carried for cremation as an orthodox Hindu. The revolution has come into full circle. The rebel becomes the sincerest followers of tradition

unawares. His expedition ends fruitfully by securing him the treasure which has instigated him to venture for something that appeared impossible but finally leaves him in a world of hope and tranquility.

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Laurence's *The Stone Angel*: Pride – The Vulnerability of Hagar Shipley

- R. Prabhakar

Margaret Laurence, a widely known writer for her Manawaka novels, is a prolific Canadian writer who is conscious of a personal need for the imaginative revision of history. Her works can be divided into African and Canadian fiction. Human complexity and the search for inner freedom in her Canadian fiction emerged in her writing with the influence and impact of her African writings and personal exposure to the dire African conditions: "I learned so much from that experience".¹ Her works neither autobiographical nor confessional, but from the deep wells of remembered experience. Laurence understood of herself and her own culture took a great leap forward because of her exposure to the different peoples and cultures in Africa. Laurence learned in Africa to peep at her herself. Human complexity, and search for inner freedom are the themes that shape her Manawaka fiction. These have first surfaced in her African writings. The way home for Laurence was through Ghana and the searching desert sun of Somaliland. Her African works examined the issues of tribalism, colonialism, racial intolerance, betrayal, and independence, the clash of generations, self-sacrifice, and survival in harsh land in detail. Africa was catalyst and crucible for much of Laurence's work".² All the above issues recurred in the Canadian novels. These themes were explored in her non-fiction: "I began to write out of my own background only after I had lived some years away".³

Laurence's Manawaka, fictional town, novels are to be read together to constitute a remarkable gallery of varied individuals, a composite portrayal of women's experience and imaginative recreation of a society during her times. The main trait of Laurence's fiction is that giving symbolic form to social or collective life that gleaned her familiarity and distinction. Such a kind of ability has brought for Laurence a comparison with Tolstoy, not in terms of "literary gigantism" but rather "in such terms as a writer relevance to his time and place, the versatility of his perception, the breadth of his

understanding, the imaginative power with which he personifies and gives symbolic form to the collective life he interprets and in which he takes part”⁴

The issue of colonialism rarely appears politically or openly in her Canadian fiction. The colonial mentality corresponded to a third problem that became apparent when Laurence began writing *The Stone Angel*. This was her “growing awareness of the dilemma and powerlessness of women, the tendency of women to accept male definitions of ‘themselves’, to be self-deprecating and uncertain, and to range inwardly”. This is a different kind of colonialism that makes the issues of freedom and survival particularly acute for women. Laurence observed this condition in its starkest form in Somaliland, where women’s lives are strictly scrutinized and directed by men, yet are romanticized elaborately in literature. The status of women in tribal and religious tradition is infinitely inferior to that of men: “The double standard is extremely strong”.

Laurence’s Canadian fiction is also known as the ‘Manawaka fiction’. Manawaka, the small prairie town in Manitoba, has evolved through row of five novels. The linchpin of the Manawaka fiction is the search for Canadian identity (political freedom) and women’s search for inner freedom (women’s liberation.) The notion of Manawaka enabled Laurence to recreate her regional roots. By celebrating her region, she helped us better understand our own. Like R.K. Narayan, Laurence also carved out a fictional setting, Manawaka, for the fiction she wrote out of her Canadian background. Laurence calls it “a town of the mind”, but its particularities are typically Canadian.

Place means land and people and Laurence writes of the ambiguity she felt towards both. She spoke to Cameron about the stultifying features of local culture which helped to develop her love of freedom. The land was lonely, isolated, yet very beautiful. Its inhabitation evoked similarly complex emotions:

“How difficult they were to live with, how
authoritarian how unbending, how afraid to show love.
. . and how willing to sow anger. And yet they had
inherited a wilderness and made it fruitful. They were

in the end great survivors and for that I love and value them”.⁵

Laurence fits her female heroines from the Manawaka cycle into her thematic pattern and reemphasizes that freedom and survival are simultaneously social and spiritual states, hence both political and religious themes. Her political development towards a greater self-consciousness of the rights of individuals, nations and groups to possess their heritage and work out their own destiny seems inevitable.

Laurence describes history and fiction as twin disciplines: implicit here is the corollary that the interpretation of history is a political act. Margaret Laurence's Manawaka is a 'modest town of the mind'. Manawaka incorporates the general geographical and physical features of the town of Neepawa. But Manawaka is not Neepawa. She creates a strong sense of place and tries her best to being her fictional characters to life. She attempts to place these individuals within the historical context of their time and place. Yet certain profound characteristics are observed. First there is the desire to draw near the past and through the workings of memory, to locate it in a familiar place. According to Marco Polo, 'Every time I am describing a city, I am saying something about Venice'.⁶ Similarly, Manawaka contains 'elements of Neepawa' the small prairie town in which Laurence grew up,' especially in some of the descriptions of places, such as the cemetery on the hill or the Wachakwa valley through which ran the small brown river of childhood'⁷ The city itself is 'woman, past moments, doctrines, jokes, things'.

Manawaka is based on Laurence's hometown of Neepawa, yet it not Neepawa for the real town has been remembered and reinvented in fiction. Manawaka is a fictional world structured through the stories the characters tell. It is reinvented by every narrator in her own idiom, from ninety year of Hagar Shipley in the Stone Angel to the middle aged narrators of the other fictions, all of whom are engaged in coming to terms with the past, recalling a childhood place from which they have moved away. For them, Manawaka has become a place of mind. Her protagonists are aware of the discontinuity in their relation to the past and also of their strong need for connection with that lost community and its history. The novelist 'must be involved emotionally with the

world he inhabits”⁸ and Laurence e does just that. Through five works of fiction, Manawaka has grown as a vividly realized micro-cosmic world, acting as a setting for the dilemmas of its unique individuals and also exercising its own powerful dynamic on them. Manawaka is also specially, historically and geographically authentic, dense with objects and true to its place and its development through time. (p. 281)

Laurence’s fictional world, Manawaka, is Everyman’s and Everywoman’s, but its particularities are emphatically Canadian. Grounded in a small western town, her people move out into the wide world, but they carry Manawaka with them, its constraints and inhibitions, its sense of roots, achievements and its tragic errors.

Manawaka canon contains four novels: *The Stone Angel* (1969), *A Jest of God* (1966), *The Fire-Dwellers* (1969), and *The Diviners* (1974). All these novels explore and examine the ‘quest for identity, self-actualization, self-assertion, survival, and acceptance of heritage. Further, all illuminate the past of the people in order to bring a sense of dignity and continuity to their lives in the present. The theme of survival is the dominant theme in all the Manawaka novels, each of Laurence’s protagonists have to travel through sufferings, diverse dilemmas with in and without. Laurence, perhaps, understands women better than men because the protagonists of Laurence are all women. She explores the problems of identity and tries to discover in fictional terms to reckon with women’s problems. Her support to feminism is not the man-hating verity. Survival becomes something of an inner awakening which leads to a miraculous realization that one is not a victim and perhaps has never really been one. The inner awakening in each case necessitates reconciliation with the past and an acknowledgement of the inherent bond between the past and the present. All the protagonists of Laurence are self-reflective, sensitive, dispossessed, and suffer from a sense of inadequacy in their identity. They try to acquire an adequate self-perception in fictional works.

The Stone Angel, the maiden Manawaka novel of Laurence, clearly glimpses the flora and fauna of Canada. Not only is Hagar characterized in terms of the prairie but she lives as a struggling farmer’s wife for some 24 years, a rugged kind of experience known by none of Laurence’s other Manawaka protagonists. Some of the themes

Laurence has explored in this novel are national identity, personal identity, redemption, lack of communication or miscommunication. Besides, the sin of pride and its repercussions, fear of loss of image, loss of family connections, loss of dynasty; fear of losing culture and independence, fear of losing material possessions that make Hagar, the pride woman, fearful which eventually led to her downfall are also dealt with by Laurence in this novel. However, the central theme is the survival; survival with dignity. *The Stone Angel* is very much a novel of middle-class aspiration and folly; all very well brought out through the character of Hagar Shipley. Proud descendant of a family that could claim clan connections, a lapsed Scottish baronetcy and self-made success in pioneering Canada, Hagar (Currie) Shipley has little time for the larger questions of social order and justice, a blindness that was deep rooted in many people of her generation. The novel also portrays the fate as an amalgamation of character and circumstance, the forces interacting complexly. The individual is certainly the victim. In the case of Hagar it is the pendulum like oscillation between impulses of order and disorder, respectability and passion, dynastic pride and individual need that dictate the unfolding of her life and characterize her 'blindness'.

Many of the characters in the novel, *The Stone Angel*, have large amounts of pride in themselves and their belongings. Characters such as Hagar, John, Bram, Jason, and Lottie have pride in themselves, their accomplishments and their families. Throughout the novel you see many instances where pride is found; Hagar's pride in her heritage, Bram's pride in his horses, Jason's pride in his store and his daughter etc. Pride is one of the major themes in *The Stone Angel* and is one worth discussion.

Pride... feeling of pleasure or satisfaction which one gets from doing sth well, from owning sth excellent or widely admires, etc... unjustifiably high opinion of oneself or one's achievements; arrogance”⁹

The Stone Angel written by Margaret Laurence is a novel about a ninety year old woman who is telling the story of her life based on her memories from the past. Hagar, a 90 years old woman, is the 'I' narrator of the novel. The structure of the novels consists of two parallel strands

of narrative, one of which concerns Hagar's confrontation with the brutal facts of old age while the other returns, by means of a series of flashbacks. Laurence doubts about the way she handled the flashback method:

“I'm not at all sure that flashbacks ought to be in chronological order, as I placed them in order to make easier for the reader to follow Hagar's life”.¹⁰

As she recalls the vivid details of the past, she talks about the events that have happened in her life which have affected her significantly.

The dominant theme of *The Stone Angel* is that of pride. For Hagar, pride is the redeemer from her vulnerability, but ironically it makes Hagar doubly blind. She is unable understand herself and fellow human being. The pride is curse and death in life for Hagar. Laurence carved out the character of Hagar, pride woman, with the influence of the African experience. As Hagar herself realizes in a moment of insight near the end of the novel, "Pride was my wilderness and the demon that led me there was fear"¹¹. By pride, Hagar means a number of related qualities, such as stubbornness, rebelliousness, willfulness, and a refusal simply to respond naturally to her own feelings. Pride made her cover up her real emotions and reactions to people and events. She was always too concerned with what others would think. In old age she says, "What do I care now what people say? I cared too long."

Each character has pride in something, whether it is a pin, a child, or an accomplishment. Hagar is the main character of the novel and shows us the most pride. At the beginning of the novel she tells us how proud she was of her heritage, how that "the Highlanders must [have been] the most fortunate of all men on earth" (15) and "How bitterly [she] regretted that [Jason had] sired [them in Manawaka]" (15). She was extremely proud of her history and she tried to force it upon her favorite son, John.

Hagar, *The Stone Angel*, is the protagonist in Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*. 'The Stone Angel', Hagar, is one of deep complexity, instilled in her from early childhood. Hagar is emotionally ignorant and undeveloped towards her emotions because she was raised

up only by her father, the rigid personality, and the maid, Auntie Doll. In Laurence's novel *the stone angel* introduced at the beginning, is a strong symbol of Hagar's personality and traits in many aspects. *The Stone Angel* is a direct representation of the Currie family pride, Hagar's pride and her stubbornness, as the angel was bought in pride to mark [Hagar's deceased mother's] bones..."(3). The angel was placed at the highest point in Manawaka, for all to see the wealth and prestige of the Currie family. As the stone angel her father bought had "the eyeballs [left] blank." (3), and was therefore blinded, unable to view the town below; Hagar was blind to the feelings and needs of others. Hagar's pride sways her decisions to continuously disregard the feelings of those around her. Not only does she lack compassion, but Hagar does not display any emotions for she believes emotion shows weakness. The stone Angel erected on the tomb of the protagonist's mother is doubly blind – because of being a statue and because of the sculptor left the eyeballs blank. "She was doubly blind, not only stone but unendowed with even a pretense of sight. Whoever carved her had left the eyeballs blank" (3). The stone Angel erected on the tomb is symbolical to the Hagar's character. Hagar is, in other perception, the Stone Angel because, as is the stone Angel on the tomb, she is doubly blind. On the one hand, she is unable understand the situations and herself and on the other hand, she is unable to understand the love and affection of human beings. She knows all is Pride. Through the death of her husband, her brother, and her son Hagar comes to terms with herself and realizes that she has been transformed to stone" (81).

The stone angel placed in the cemetery of Manawaka was placed by Jason Currie in pride to mark [His deceased wife's] bones and to proclaim his dynasty, as he fancied, forever and a day." (3). The angel was purchased in Italy and brought to Manawaka, it was the first, the largest and certainly the costliest." (3) stone angel in the cemetery. The angel was placed in the cemetery to broadcast over the town, the Currie family's wealth and class. The largest and the costliest angel in Manawaka cemetery is a direct representation of the Currie family's pride, as well as Hagar's pride and stubbornness. Hagar inherited her great amount of self-pride from her father; this undesirable trait has caused her many hardships throughout her life. When Hagar's father sends her East to attend College she feels as though Matt deserved to

go, not her. Proud that she has been given the opportunity to go, and frightened that her father's decision may change, "[Hagar] said nothing until [her] trunk was packed and all the arrangements made. Then [Hagar] spoke." (42). On the train to the East, Hagar shows the slightest signs of remorse, that she has taken the opportunity from Matt, but justifies it by reassuring herself that he wouldn't know. "...[Hagar] cried thinking of him, but, of course, he never knew that, and [she would] have been the last to tell him." (42). In many ways Hagar is a spitting image of her father, one of the many parallels is they both disapprove of their child's marriage. Hagar's father does not approve of her marrying Bram. "'There's not a decent girl in this town would wed without her family's consent,' he said. 'It's not done.'" (49) Mr. Currie's pride, the trait that is inherited by Hagar, and most importantly, the Currie family's pride. Her father is really proud of what he has done for the community and the fact that he is a self-made man who has established businesses on his own. The pride that Hagar has destroys her bond with many of those around her including, her father, her husband, and her children. The characteristic that exists in the Currie family and which she inherits from her father stops her from expressing her true emotions. In the novel, Hagar's true feelings are never revealed because Hagar is always concerned about weakening her status by other people's judgments.

Hagar lives in a four-bedroom apartment along with her son, Marvin, and daughter –in-law, Doris. The house is her pride because it was constructed by her own earned money. She very much enjoys smoking which she addicted to a 10 years ago merely out of boredom.

It's my enjoyment, that and the cigarettes, a habit I acquired only ten years ago, out of boredom. Marvin thinks it disgraceful of me to smoke, at my age. To him there is something distressing in the sight of Hagar Shipley, who by some mischance happens to be his mother, with a little white burning tube held saucily between arthritic fingers. (5 -4)

She also feels that "Privacy is a privilege" (6). Hagar's pride is that she was brought up in a big house, which was the second brick house to be built in Manawaka. She hates her mother's meek and docile

behavior besides her brothers because she was brought up by her stubborn and strong-willed father, Currie. The father's love with Lottie Drieser's mother is wonder for Hagar. Probably, the action of her rigid father might have given freedom to her to love Bram Shipley, who was already got married. Despite her father's wishes, Hagar, pride driven proceeds to marry Bram. "It'll be done by me,' [Hagar] said..."(49) As a result of her stubborn decision Hagar loses contact with her brother Matt, and her father.

The stone angel with "the eyeballs [left] blank."(3) is blind, although placed overlooking the town, she cannot see. Hagar is figuratively blind in her ignorance towards other's needs and feelings. Hagar's pride prevents her from comforting her dying brother. In his last moments Dan wants to be comforted by his mother, Matt requests "Hagar put [on the shawl] and hold [Dan] a while." (25). Hagar, selfishly cannot overcome her pride to resemble such a "...meek woman [she'd] never seen...from whom [Dan] inherited such a frailty..."(25). She completely dismisses Dan's dying wish, and fails to empathize with Matt, who is as well as Hagar losing a brother. Once Hagar marries and has children of her own, she too like her father, favours the child that disappoints. Since John was born Hagar favours him over Marvin, although Marvin does everything his mother could ever need or want in a son, she is blind to his efforts. It is not until John disappoints Hagar, with his marriage proposal to Arlene, that he opens her eyes to how she has treated Marvin; "'always bet on the wrong horse,' John said gently. 'Marv was your boy, but you never saw that, did you?'" (237). It is not until after the passing of her favoured son, John, that Hagar lye on her death bed and she can tell Marvin "'You've not been cranky, Marvin. You've been good to me, always. A better son than John.'"(305). Hagar, like her father fails to take her children's feelings into consideration when they wish to marry. Hagar and Lottie put forth their best efforts to separate John and Arlene, casting aside their children's feelings. Just as Hagar's father disowned her for marrying "[someone] common as dirt."(48), although Hagar loved Bram. Hagar does not take a liking to Doris, Marvin's wife, either. Through Hagar staying with them in her old age, she continues to mistreat them both, showing them little respect and criticizing Doris. Even at ninety Hagar's pride prevents her from caring about her detrimental behaviour towards her

son's marriage, and refuses to be put in the Silverthreads nursing home.

Hagar's mindset creating an inability to show any emotion is symbolized by the stone angel's heart of stone. Even as a young girl Hagar believed that showing emotion was a sign of weakness. "[Hagar] wouldn't let [her father] see [her] cry, [Hagar] was so enraged. He used a foot ruler and when [she] jerked [her] smarting palms back he made [her] hold them out again." (9) Throughout the novel, the character of Hagar does not cry in the presence of any one. After the passing of her favoured son, John, at his funeral she does not shed even a single tear. In the hospital after the immediate passing of John, Hagar does not allow herself to be comforted:[the nurse] put a well-meaning arm around [Hagar]. "Cry. Let yourself. It's the best thing." But [Hagar] shoved her arm away. [She] straightened [her] spine and it was the hardest thing [she has] ever had to do in [her] entire life, to stand straight then. [She] wouldn't cry in front of strangers, whatever it cost [her]. (242) Hagar's incredible ability to mask her emotions and save face eventually prevents her from sharing her feelings all together. After the funeral, once she returned home, the feeling of sadness had escaped Hagar and she was incapable of crying. Hagar has maintained the appearance of a strong character, as well as cold and distant. She does not show any emotions, not just sadness. Hagar secludes her feelings of enjoyment while making love to her husband Bram. "[Hagar] never let him know. [She] never spoke aloud, and [she] made certain the trembling was all inner." (81). After Bram died, Hagar still did not allow herself to cry. It was only later in life after the passing of both Bram and John that she became aware that she was "transformed to stone" (243).

The Stone Angel referred to in Margaret Laurence's novel depicts the main character, Hagar, in many ways. The stone angel is the Currie family pride, brought from Italy to proclaim Jason's dynasty. It is Hagar's pride that she travelled to the East for college. It is Hagar's stubbornness that ends her relationship with her brother and father, but begins her marriage to Bram. The angel has no eyes, as Hagar is figuratively blind, in that she is oblivious to other's needs and feelings. Her pride stops her from comforting her dying brother, showing no respect towards Dan, nor Matt. Hagar does not see that she has favoured

the wrong son, John has to point it out to her, she cannot admit to Marvin, until she lay on her deathbed, that he was in fact the better son. Hagar's efforts to separate her son and his love shows a total disregard for John's smitten feelings towards Arlene. The stone angel has a heart made of stone, as it appears does Hagar. Since she was a young girl, she believed to show emotions meant that one was meek and feeble. Hagar never let her husband know that she enjoyed making love to him, she kept all the feelings to herself. She did not cry after the death of her husband, nor her son, nor did she allow herself to be comforted. It was not until later on in life that Hagar realizes that she was in fact "transformed to stone" (243).

Pride was not only Bram's economic downfall and Jason's prize's downfall. It, the pride: the flaw, was also Hagar's ultimate demise. At the end, Hagar comes to know of her life that she has made too many mistakes due to her pride. Hagar was never emotional because it would ruin her image which she took so much pride in. By not being emotional, none of her relationships ever deepened. The one time she showed emotion to Bram "[he] looked up at [her] with such a look of surprise" (87), as she had never done that before. She never comes close with anyone in her family except for John, who bitterly rejected her. Hagar was also too proud to have gone to the Doctor earlier when it mattered and she could have been saved. When she died, she died dignified and proud. She wouldn't let anyone help her with her water and perhaps died from the exertion.

Bram could also be seen to have died from his pride. He was too proud to admit that he needed and loved Hagar and wanted her back. If he had asked her to stay or to come back, he probably wouldn't have become a raving alcoholic, thus ruining his liver, killing him.

The pride these characters have connects them and separates them at the same time. The discussion of pride in *The Stone Angel* could go on forever. There are so many aspects to pride, it is difficult to discuss them all. However, the definition would be one thing to change. The definition mentions nothing of the difficulties pride causes. The characters of *The Stone Angel* found this out the hard way, by giving up or losing their lives and loves.

The Stone Angel is the first of the Manawaka sequence by placing

at its centre ninety year old Hagar Shipley. Hagar's great flaw is her pride, her instinct to rebel, and her refusal to give or accept love, her inability to communicate. Hagar's problems are universal and as such she stands for 'Everyman'. Freedom, survival, pride as isolating wilderness and redemption are brought out through the character of Hagar Shipley.

Manawaka is indeed Laurence's vision of human nature. As a symbol of human divisiveness whose inhabitants are separated by pride and greed, Manawaka is an inner and out world and an inescapable one. The achievement of each of Laurence's protagonists is that finally she stands and faces and so triumphs over the Manawakas within.

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A Journey from Reality to Fantasy in select works of

Doris Lessing

- B. Sreekanth Reddy

Post-colonialism appeared in the context of decolonization that marked the second half of the twentieth century and has been appropriated by contemporary critical discourse in a wide range of domains. The concept of post-colonialism has stretched to the more encompassing and controversial sphere referring to the status of a land that ceases to be colonized and has regained its political independence and on the other hand denouncing the new forms of economic and cultural oppression that have succeeded modern colonization. The term post-colonial is used both as a literal description of global condition after a period of colonialism. Post colonial literature is concerned with the political and cultural independence of people who were formerly subjugated in colonial empires, and the literary expression of post-colonialism. The post-colonial literature emerged out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial center. It especially focuses on how the social construction of racial, gendered and class differences uphold relations of power and sub-ordination. It addresses the issues such as identity, gender, race and ethnicity: the challenge of developing a national identity in the wake of colonial rule, the ways in which knowledge of colonized people has served the interests of colonizer, and how knowledge about the world is produced under specific power relations. It is also built around the concept of resistance, of resistance as subversion, or opposition which can carry with it ideas about human freedom, liberty, identity, etc.

Of the many Post-colonial women writers, Doris Lessing writes with fire and visionary power with deep feminist engagement. She was rightly awarded the Nobel Prize for literature 2007 by the Swedish Academy at the age of eighty-seven. Her writings extended the boundaries of fiction, experiment with different genres, explore the worlds of Arica, Britain and of Space, as well as offer a socio-political commentary upon the postmodern world. Her works focus on a wide

range of 20th century issues, from the politics of gender which lead to her adopting the feminist movement, to the role of the family and the individual in society, to the explore in the space fiction of late 1970's and 1980's.

Lessing began her career in the 1950's, focusing on the themes of racial injustice and colonization, she went on to compose major feministic concerns portraying strong willed independent heroines who often suffer emotional crises in male dominant societies and must struggle with dominant socio-political constructs to reach higher levels of identity and liberation. The consistent themes of her fiction are feminism, the battle of the sexes, individuals who challenge pre conceived beliefs. Now let us see some of the post-colonial themes as depicted in Doris Lessing's literary works.

The Golden Notebook (1962) was a landmark in the Women's movement. It is written in the form of diaries. The Golden Notebook is best known as 'the Bible of the Women's Movement.' It raised the consciousness of a generation of women readers and played a major role in the second wave of feminism. It had radically changed the consciousness of many young women. Lessing wrote a new preface for *The Golden Notebook* in 1971, explaining that it was not intended as a trumpet for Women's Liberation, instead , she identified the central theme as 'break down,' which is a way of 'self-healing.'

The Golden Notebook deals with a novelist Anna Freedom Wulf, who keeps four notebooks while working on her fictional novel, entitled, 'Free Women' narrated from different perspectives, each notebook incorporates aspects of Wulf's latest novel in narratives that assume multiple levels of significance. The title refers to Anna's attempt to integrate her fragmented experiences in order to achieve wholeness through art. Struggling with crisis in her personal and political life, Anna in the end gives the 'golden notebook' to her American lover, the conventional narrative ends prosaically with Anna's declaration that she is about to join the Labor Party. This novel is a befitting example of metafiction, where Lessing has ironically titled her novel within *The Golden Notebook*, 'Free Women,' and has demonstrated how Anna and Molly, although in one sense free of traditional conventions are actually bound with their lovers and

children.

Her next work, *The Grass is Singing* (1950) was her first novel. It was one of the first books to confront the use of apartheid. Deriving its title from T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, it introduces two of recurrent themes of Lessing's fiction – the causes and effects of racism and the myriad ways that history and politics can determine the course of a person's life. The novel is a painful picture of a women's failure, in which the drama and conflict are mostly internal. The story is set in South Africa and is about sexual and racial tension between a disillusioned South African farmer's wife, Mary Turner, and a black servant named Moses. The novel describes the white couple's isolated life on a Rhodesian farm and the wife's reaction to the social and political condition. The novel is a notable analysis of the colonial experience and tells the story of a lonely and desiccated Rhodesian white woman, Mary Turner, who marries a white farmer working on a small farm in Rhodesia, Dick Turner. Brutalized and emotionally vacant, Marry is a misfit for the hardship ridden life at the farm. She gets involved in an ultimately destructive sexual relationship with one of the black Rhodesian farm worker Moses: who eventually kills her. The story opens with the announcement of a white woman's murder and closes with the act of murder itself. In between we see Mary's growing relationship with Moses, a relationship which had to discontinue due to the issue of apartheid. Thus, *The Grass is Singing* is a bleak and terrifying analysis of a failure marriage, the fear of black power as well as the question of a women's loneliness, abnormal consciousness and fragmentation. Lessing's heroines emerge as vehicles for social criticism and also trumpets for some issues.

After dealing with themes of racialism, generation gap, women liberation and sexual maladjustments, in the late 1970's and early 1980's, Lessing turned exclusively to writing about fantasy and science fiction in the Canopus in Argos: Archives series developing ideas of scientific fiction. The series is composed of five volumes in which Lessing creates a fantasy world that allows her to diagnose the malaise of our society, to observe phenomenon which cause disharmony. Some of the critics say that 'it is neither science fiction nor freewheeling fantasy, but has something in common with the myth making in

Rousseau or William Morris that offers vision of hope or disaster for mankind.’ Lessing’s themes in her later novels are rather unconventional like nuclear holocaust societal degeneration, cosmic consciousness and inner stellar harmony. These themes show Lessing’s progress from realistic to fantasy.

Canopus in Argos, a series of fantastical novels set in space, presents Lessing’s interest in Sufism, stressing the theme of cosmic evolution which aimed at raising mankind to a higher level of existence, and the inter-connectedness between one’s own fate and well-being to that of others. With the publication of *Shikasta* in 1979, the readers were perplexed with this launch of her ‘space fiction’ series.

Shikasta recapitulates the Biblical History from Genesis to the ‘Century of Destruction’ and visualizes a golden future where the new world is founded on the principles of harmony with cosmos. Canopus is a galactic empire whose dispassionate agents oversees a good scheme for cosmic welfare, concentrating on a rather troublesome Earth like planet named *Shikasta*. It is a compilation of reports, historical documents, letters and psychiatric diagnoses is used to unfold the story of an alien envoy, Johor’s three visits to *Shikasta*, the last taking place in the final phase just following the Third World War. Johor is an emissary from the galactic Empire of Canopus, sent to *Shikasta* to report on the colony. Johor had been used to life where beings live in harmony and hence is appalled by the destructiveness and dogma of the Earth. He is sent to educate those who have survived the Third World War.

The Marriages between Zones Three, Four and Five (1980), In this part Lessing deals with the territory of legends, of myths, dealing with the story of the lovely Queen of Zone Three and her forced marriage to Ben Ata, the soldier king of Zone Four and later the marriage of Ben Ata to Vahshi, the ruler of Zone five. Here we use the word zones instead of cities. Fantasy is freely depicted here. Then the novel locates its legendary action in the fabulous zones and concentrates on the relation between the sexes.

The Sirian Experiments (1981) recounts the colonial experiments practiced upon *Shikasta*, leading its people into their 20th century of destruction. It describes the stages of human history, from the view

point of a female Sirian colonial administrator who deals mainly with a series of exotic earlier periods, in contrast to Johor, the narrator of *Shikasta* who speaks at great lengths of the 20th century. Ambien II is by turn's rash, foolish, headstrong, imperceptive but finally brave enough and persistent enough to learn the truth. The novel deals with the theme of involvement of the super aliens in human affairs. Both *Shikasta* and *The Marriage between Zones Three, Four and Five* relate the same story, but the narrator changes. Human Affairs governed by the super aliens who are termed 'Canopean Super Agents' in the *The Sirian Experiments* and *The Providers* in the *The Marriage between Zones Three, Four and Five*. *The Making of the Reresentative for Planet 8* (1982) evidences Lessings interest in dystopian themes in its story of a slowly freezing planet whose inhabitants expire while awaiting a promised transport to a warmer environment. Perhaps the Antarctic expedition of Robert Falcon Scott motivated Lessing's *The Serian Experiment* and *The Making of a Representative* and provided her with an understanding of the landscape of paralyzing ice and snow but by offering her insight into the social processes of the Edwardian era to which Scott belonged-an era of national pride and imperial longings. It tells of Johor's journey to the planet and the ordeal that he and Doeg, the narrator of the novel, along with other representatives encounter when the planet begins to freeze to death. The earlier novel depicted how Johor had saved *Shikasta* from extinction arising due to the meanness of the inhabitants. He had taught them the finer values of life but Planet 8 threatened by the coming of an ice age, poses a greater challenge for him. Johor assists them to confront this calamity bravely even though the entire planet 8 is submerged under ice and only fifty chosen representatives survive, who are transported to Canopus and await the end of the cataclysm.

Like the earlier four novels of this series, *The Sentimental Agents* (1983) occurs in a galaxy where the struggle between good and evil takes place. This novel shows Lessing's use of socio political satire more than her deft employment of science fiction. It is an indictment of the misuse of power of speech by man and his self-flattering sentiments about emotions. The book brings us to the Volyen Empire where Incent, a Canopean agent who was deputed to convert the Volyens morl way of life but he succumbs to a 'stubborn condition of Undulent Rhetoric'

after years of sporadic attacks of simple Rhetoric. Agent Klorathy is sent to Volyen to redeem the Volyen Empire. He is initially rejected but is called for help in face of sudden invasion from Planet Sirius. Sirius conquers Volyen and turns it into a prosperous state thus symbolizing the victory of good over evil.

Thus Lessing, one of the most significant women writers of the post-world war II generation, displayed various interests and issues of the 20th century ranging from racism, communism and feminism to psychology and mysticism and in every possible post-modernist fictional form from magic realism, metafiction, surrealism, fantasy, space fiction, etc. Doris Lessing is above all ‘the archeologist of human relations.’ Her novels expose a world out of control and attempt to teach us how to manage our worlds. A quote by Lessing herself best sums up the genius of this matriarch of British Literature: Some people obtain fame, others deserve it.

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Is Translation An Art or Craft?

- A. Taralakshmi

Translation of literature, poetry, history and such other subjects has its own place in our lives. It is ultimately a human activity which enables human beings to exchange ideas and thoughts regardless of the different tongues used. It has become an important discipline and that it is very much in use in every sphere of activity is evident. The word translation is an Anglicized form of a Latin word, “Trans” meaning across and “LATUM” means to carry in literal terms. It is an art of carrying across boundaries and barriers without losing the materials that carries over in literary terms, to translate means to make another language like one’s own to preserve meanings and significance across vocabularies, grammar and syntax. In other words it is an art of carrying across of the matters of one Source Language (SL) into a Target Language (TL). Translation is, in Enni’s view, a modern science as the interface of philosophy, linguistics, Psychology and Sociology. Literary translation in particular is relevant to all these sciences, Audio visual arts, as well as cultural and intellectual studies.(1)

Translation is closely associated with the field of literature. It has always been considered the branch of literary study and an off shoot of comparative literature. There are different definitions, theories and principles which try to bring out a clear margin to understand what actually discipline can offer through its classified ideology. A translation study is indeed a discipline in its own way. It has not been fixed on a single frame work to offer what the field could perform a language teaching process. It is not merely a branch of comparative literary study and specific area of linguistics but a vastly complex field with many far teaching ramifications. At the same time translation is pursued as an intrinsic part of the foreign language teaching process.

Anton Popovic of the view that the aim of translation is to transfer a certain intellectual and aesthetic values from one language to another language.(2) Randolph Quirk says “It is one of the most different tasks that a writer can take upon himself.(3) Leery declares

that it is not a monistic composition but an interpretation and conglomeration of two structures. New Mark has given a simple definition of translation. He writes “Often though not by any means always it is rendering of text into another language”.

Translation is the art of rendering a work of one language into another. This art is as old as written literature. It plays a key role in utilization, addition and explanation of languages. It enriches both the targets language and the literature written in it. It is through translation that the words become familiar with the culture and peculiarities of each country. Translation is actually a kind of transfer. There is no distortion or loss when a piece of literature is translated. (4) Translation has been described as an art by some people and it has also been define as craft by others. As an art, translation involves transfer to another. And it also involves artistic modification of language in an accurate and controlled manner.

A good translation is one that carries all the ideas of the original as well as its structural and cultural features. Massoud (1988) sets criteria for a good translation as follows:

- A good translation easily understood.
- A good translation is fluent and smooth.
- A good translation is idiomatic.
- A good translation conveys, to some extent, the literarily subtleties of the original.
- A good translation distinguishes between the metaphorical and literal.
- A good translation reconstructs the cultural historical context of the original.
- A good translation makes explicit what is implicit in abbreviations and in allusions to sayings, songs and nursery rhymes.
- A good translation will convey, as much as possible, the meaning of the original text. (5)

J. T. Shaw, in his essays “Literary Indebtedness and comparative literary studies, “observes translation is itself a creative art Abraham Cowley said that omissions and additions can be made while a work of art is translated. Theodore Savory defines translation as on art. Nida

defines it as a science Horst Freng considers it as art with qualifications. Claiming that translation is neither a creative art nor imaginative but stands somewhere between the two”.

The translator like the original creative author has to seek a word to express a thought or describe a feeling, or an experience as found in original. The choices of words depend on the personality of the translator as that of the original composer. In it aesthetic choice cannot be ignored or denied.

The writing of the original author may be blunt or subtle, hesitant or fluent, sober or cheerful, majestic or paltry and the translation may be any of these according to the wit and skill of the translator in the natural categories of translation, the distinction between the translation of prose into prose, of poetry into poetry and of poetry into poetry provides an analogue and contrast to make it an art from.

Translation has had more than its share of appropriation. It has always been considered an intermediate form and vulnerable to attack as it is a kind of bastard art form. It is almost as old as language and most certainly as old as the contact of a language. As it is in ancient craft, it seems to be an art. It is defined by its very existence in poetics.

“Craft would imply a slightly lower status than “Art” and carry with it suggestions of amateurishness while “Science” could hint at a mechanistic approach and distract from the notion that translation is a creative process .purposeless and can only draw attention away from the central problem of finding a terminology that can be utilized in the systematic study of translation. So far in English, only the attempt has been made to tackle the terminological issue, with the publication in 1976 of Anton Popovic’s Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary translation a work that sets out, albeit in skeletal form, the basis of a methodology for studying translation.

God gave us language as one of His greatest gifts. But it is not only a great gift but also an exceedingly rich and complex gift, that very richness makes translation a challenging operation. It has been observed that a good translation is a best at distortion of the original and a bad translation is a crime. But exposure to foreign literature and critical

works is possible, particularly in case of those who do not know the foreign language concerned, only through good translations of the original works in the local language. Hence translations become the backbone when studies comparing one literature with another are undertaken.(6)

Every work of translation which truly reflects and originally transcreates the text and makes the reader encounter a new dimension of the text. Thus one sees something new in the old. The test of a good translation is that the reader should be able to understand thoroughly the ideas of the original text through its translation and without having the need to go to the original text to clarify his doubts. Though scholars have offered various opinions on such issues as whether translation of verse should be in verse or prose. Whether the language of translation should be in modern or ancient idiom, whether closeness to the original or clarity of the translated material is more important, or whether the translator should paraphrase or metaphrase the original and so on, all are unanimously of the view that translation should have the utmost fidelity to the sense of the original .(7)

The translation is not the original made easy; it is not the guide to the original; it is not the essence of the original as some people think. If the source is the flower, the translation is its essence. A good translation is as good as the original. It is the original in a different language, the form and context being the same. That is a good translation which preserves both the content and the form of the original.

A translator should have complete mastery of the two languages involved and should be able to cross the cultural barriers posed by the language concerned. He should be able to recapture all the meaning as well as the artistic quality of the original without sacrificing the purity and the essential quality of the native language. The reader of the translated work reposes a lot of trust in the writer and the writer should be worthy of the reader's trust. Sometimes he trusts his own opinion into view in contrast to the views expressed in the original work. Due to various considerations like clash of opinions chiefly involving religious, political, social and cultural aspects, personal bias and so on, but this is tantamount to cheating the unwary reader.

There is no doubt that the translator is more creative than initiative, but his creativity should be such as to clarify the meaning of the original and not to contribute to its distortion through a display of his own knowledge. In translating a critical text one will have to surmount many difficulties the accepted local equivalent to a foreign critical term may not precisely convey the meaning of the original and the translator is often forced to modify it or even to improvise a new term himself in order to convey the meaning of the original as accurately as possible. Moreover new critical terms are coined rapidly and a standardised and acceptable local equivalent may not be available and the local scholars have arrived at a consensus of opinion regarding its suitability then a translator finds himself in a dilemma whether he has to modify the existing local equivalent to suit the new perspective or invent another one himself to convey the new meaning as closely as possible to the intensions of the original author. When the acceptance of the new term is confirmed by its extensive views then it will become part of a revised dictionary on translations of foreign critical and literary terms even now and then, lest they should become outdated and obsolete .

The art of translation is not that much easy. During the process of translation, the translator comes out faces many hurdles. It is very difficult to find the exact, meaningful and fitting words for the source language. When one refers to translation dictionary one can find different polynoms. Then the translator faces difficulty .That is, she/he has to know the usages of those different words referring to dictionary. It is a time consuming process. The translator has to work with lot of patience. Though two words from the two languages may roughly correspond in meaning, they seldom match exactly in many cases because, a word has several different possible meanings, one word in English matches the uses of another.

One may not possess the same command as that of mother tongue. Sometimes it becomes difficult to bring out the same form and meaning that is present in the source language. In such a solution the translator has chosen the form of meaning which give the near or similar meaning. One cannot find the same words for air, wind, breeze in Telugu. No such words exist in Telugu language. Similarly the words

‘widower’ ‘parent’ and ‘divorce’.

As the knowledge and civilization are expanding there are the changes in the way of thinking experiences, new words being originated. New meanings are given to the same words. Different words present different cultures, foods habits etc., are being evolved. So veil translator has to identify and understand the concepts’ and thinking of the source language exactly. Native speakers of English usually decide instantly and without effort with sense of a word are right.

Syntax of the sentences totally differs in both languages. For the translator if happened to think carefully for the word order it is the responsibility of the translator. The translation is meant for the enlightenment of soul way of living, inculcation of generosity, humanity, philosophical thinking etc.

It is a problem to translate the addressing words. The way of addressing and addressing words differs from one language to the other. For the translator it was problematic. So one has to substitute the meaning where it is not possible to use the same word. Similarly some exclamatory words are also not possible to translate in to English.

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Theme of Marital Discord in

Mahesh Dattani's *Seven Steps Around the Fire*

- C. S. Srinivas

The institution of marriage in ancient India had a very strong religious backing and social sanction. From the religious point of view, marriage between two opposite sexes would serve the primal and providential need of procreation. Manu says, “*To be mothers were women created and to be fathers men. Religious rites therefore are ordained in the Veda to be performed by the husband together with his wife*” (qtd. In Jois 39).

Indian religious philosophy attaches a great value to the centre stage *grihasthashrama* (“the householder stage”) that is family life. It is at this stage that both husband and wife are supposed to fulfil their marital vows and familial responsibilities and discharge their duties towards society as well. Without passing through this stage of life it is not possible to attain salvation or *moksha* which is considered to be the principal goal of human life. Sangeeta Mishra writes, “the Hindu ideal of marriage is essentially a fellowship between a man and a woman who seek to live creatively in partnership for the pursuit of four great objects of life—Dharmma, Artha, Kama and Moksha” (43). At a societal level, marriage necessitated the set up of family unit whose moral obligation was to shape and give good citizens to the society for its well being. At a personal level, marriage would legalise sexual relationship, foster love and intimacy, establish interdependence, develop a sense of bilateral faith and respect between the couple to make the union a heavenly bliss on earth. Manu states, “*Mutual friendship and fidelity is the highest Dharma to be observed by husband and wife, throughout their life*” (qtd. in Jois 41). In this way, the Hindu concept of marriage based on the principle of mutual love and faith, promised and promoted peace and harmony not only within the family but also in the society as well and paved a way to fulfil the spiritual, societal and personal needs of humanity.

As should be expected, with the lapse of time, marked changes

have occurred in all these affairs of family life. In this regard, Psychiatrist and marital therapist, Vijay Nagaswami makes an interesting observation, “Gone seem to be the days when one got married because it was one of the stages of life, and if one didn’t get the person one liked, one forced oneself to like the person one got”(4). The institution of marriage in contemporary India is in deep crisis for a variety of reasons. Marital discord is one major theme that draws serious attention in many of Mahesh Dattani’s plays. He makes a scathing attack at this institution of marriage which is considered very sacred in India and exposes its lopsidedness.

The title of Mahesh Dattani's play, “*Seven Steps Around the Fire*” is suggestive of Hindu wedding. According to Hindu marriage customs, the newly wedded couple walks around the holy fire, hand-in-hand, for seven times, and pledge mutual love and fidelity towards each other in their longstanding marital life. Hindus consider this act very central and sacred to the whole wedding ceremony because they believe that the god of fire (*Agni*) who stands for purity is invoked as a prime witness to this mutual oath taking, thus sanctifying the nuptial bond between the couple. Such is the significance of the act of walking “*Seven Steps Around the Fire*”.

Dattani challenges the validity of the institution of marriage in the contemporary Indian society and says that behind those happy and contented smiles of lots of married couples there is painful endurance of marital dissatisfaction. In the play “*Seven Steps Around the Fire*” Uma and Suresh are presented as the married couple. By profession, Uma teaches Sociology at Bangalore University and her husband Suresh is the Superintendent of Police of Bangalore city. Both have equal social status as Uma’s father is the Vice chancellor of the Bangalore University and Suresh’s father is the Deputy Commissioner of Police of Bangalore city. Yet for all, marital dissatisfaction is evident in their lives as Uma feels more alienated in marriage from her husband Suresh because she feels that he lacks understanding and fails to recognise her needs. Throughout the play, we find her struggling for personal freedom and longing for individuality.

Suresh and Uma are ideologically different from each other. She is kind towards the downtrodden and the underprivileged sections of

the society. At one point in the play, we find Uma throwing some coins in the direction of some beggar children at a traffic signal. She was taught by her deceased mother to be empathetic.

UMA. *When I was small . . . my mother always carried small change. When we stopped at the traffic lights . . . she would throw the coins as far as she could on the pavement . . . I would watch while they fought with each other for the coins. . . .* (CP 18)

In contrast, Suresh behaves in a rude manner and shows his apathy towards them.

SURESH (mutters). Bloody beggars! (CP 36)

Uma's takes a humanitarian approach towards the *hijra* community in the play. As a sociologist, she is very much aware of the fact that *hijras* like themselves to be identified with women. Hence she respects their sense of identity and always addresses those in feminine gender 'she'. She is very much upset at the fact of their social exclusion on the basis of inferior gender. Whereas, Suresh is extremely inhuman and does not even recognise them as normal human beings. The callous way in which he addresses the murder suspect *hijra* 'Anarkali' as 'thing' and 'it' is typical of his cynical attitude towards their community.

SURESH. I hope this thing didn't give you any trouble.

UMA. No. She is very well –behaved.

SURESH. Are you through with it?

UMA. Yes, I am for now. (CP 16)

The above examples, place Uma on a higher plane of social consciousness than her husband Suresh. Also, it is when she discovers his prejudiced bend of mind against *hijras* that she begins to tell lies to him and maintains secrecy with him. While Suresh believes that she is meeting Anarkali quite often only to pursue her research work, Uma is busy tracing the real murderer of 'Kamla.' at the expense of her doctoral research. It may be well to understand here that mistrust and secrecy are more likely to creep into marital relationships due to personality clashes.

Another crucial factor that strengthens the emotional and

psychological bonding between husband and wife is a mutually gratifying relationship. Speaking about the role of sex in marital life Nagaswami writes, “Sex is a very important aspect of the marital relationship. It is a primal, biological need inherent in all human beings. Sex has entered the forefront of our minds as something that is of absolute essence to the relationship, and rightly so. For in the absence of a mutually satisfying sex life, our relationships become dull” (149).

Love without sex and sex without love play an equally destructive role. A mutually rewarding sex-expression helps avert all tensions in marriage. What is more, it gives scope for adjustments in marriage when there are conflicts. Primarily, it is the absence of this mutually gratifying sexual experience that has caused fissures in Uma-Suresh’s marital relationship. There is no love factor in Uma-Suresh’s sex life. To him, she is a ‘sex object’ that fulfils his physical gratification. She fulfils his whims and fancies mechanically.

SURESH. They are as strong as horses. Wear the purple one.

UMA. I wore that last night.

SURESH. Again.

Silence. Uma opens the wardrobe.

Good. (CP 9)

Suresh’s care for personal happiness in sex life makes her a passive partner. Her silent submission to him in the act of love making with eyes closed is clearly suggestive of her sexual dissatisfaction.

SURESH. Come here.

Silence. Uma lies down on the bed. Suresh moans with pleasure as he kisses her.

Hmm.Uma, I really love you. You know that.

Uma. Yes.

SURESH. Hmmm. Uma . . . Open your eyes . . . (CP 10)

Childlessness is another problem that is disturbing Uma psychologically. For no fault of hers she is denied the joys of motherhood. Medical reports say that there is nothing wrong with her and she is perfectly fit to become a mother. But, Suresh’s refusal to get medically examined for sperm count further weakens her hope of becoming a mother. But, she endures the pain in silence and quickly

changes the topic as she does not like to stir up more emotions and hurt suresh's male-ego.

UMA. I went to the doctor again. Your mother insisted she takes me.

SURESH. What did they say?

UMA. Nothing . . . They want to see you.

SURESH. I don't think so.

UMA. Just a test for your sperm count.

SURESH. I don't have to go . . .

UMA. Would you like to go shopping with me? (CP 32)

At this juncture, it may be noted that most men in India are allowed to remarry with the consent of their first wives if their wives are barren. Whereas, women have not raised any hue and cry at the failure of their husbands to produce the child they passionately yearn for.

Fast degradation of human values, both at the family and the societal level in the contemporary Indian society, has been a chief focus and concern in Dattani's plays. He keenly observes the swift changes in the value-system that have remained a mainstay in the almost stable social structure in the Indian society. With the changing social, cultural and economic patterns in society, the institution of marriage too has been undergoing transformation. Dattani suggests how in India, the institution of marriage which is regarded as a sacred bond, has undergone a drastic change and has turned into a vehicle of convenience and manipulation. The concept of marriage for the mutual benefit of the married partners in particular and for the common good of all has been gradually weakening and, selfish interests have started becoming so important that the valued social and familial norms are dissipating into avarice and whimsical behaviour of the individuals leading to domestic and societal instability. He shows how the strands of egoism, selfishness, and rigidity, hurting the feeling, negligence, humiliation, criticism, offensiveness or provoking accusations, domestic violence can damage the marital relationships. The conjugal relationship analysed in the play *Seven Steps Around the Fire* hints at this grim makeover.

Thus, like an expert psychologist, Dattani critically examines the spousal relationship against the back drop of strained marital bond with pinpoint. He suggests that unhappy marital relationships may transfer undue stress and diffidence causing emotional drain in the married partners. In this way, Dattani's plays put the contemporary Indian couples on high alert about the domestic calamity that they may have to face if they should fail to understand the sanctity of marriage.

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Genetic Engineering and the Resultant Bio-wasteland in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*

- M. Devi Chandra

Margaret Atwood, the environmental activist, is the leading Canadian novelist. Her *Oryx and Crake* is the work of speculative fiction that is set in the near future. It depicts scenarios take place in the U.S.A. It is told from the perspective of a person who survived in the new system. It is closely connected to the social, political and environmental problems of the time they were written in. It is a warning sent out to the contemporary world. It indicates that the seeds of such ecological disaster and bio-terrorism are in the present world. Atwood wants to make the humanity aware of their dangerous situation and rectify it. Danette DiMarco is of the opinion that “Atwood uses him (Snowman) to produce a cautionary tale that questions the ethics of humans motivated by greed and profit.” (140)

Oryx and Crake takes place in the year 2025. Due to the recent developments in biotechnology like the development of clones, genetic manipulation of plants and animals, man invents too many things in this digital technological era. But he loses all sense of direction, all sense of meaning. Words have no meaning. In this novel, Atwood leaps ahead to a period when the environment has been destroyed because of an entirely credible combination of all-too familiar circumstances. The birth rate has fallen alarmingly and radical measures must be taken to rectify the situation. Survival itself is an achievement. Such crude assumptions are commonly taken for granted in so-called hard-science stories.

Over the past decades, the writers have turned to biology as the hard science frontier of the future. Genetic engineering is a theme related to biology has shown remarkable endurance up to the present. In it, Genetic manipulation alters the physiology or behavior of individuals, populations or the entire human race. Endangered species and environments face destruction by human technology. Margaret Atwood depicts a near-future world that turns to the horrific bio-

wasteland. Atwood explains that the work was also a product of her lingering thoughts on such a scenario throughout her life, as well as spending a great amount of time with scientists throughout her childhood. She explains that several of her close relatives are scientists. The main topic at the annual family Christmas dinner was likely to be intestinal parasites or sex hormones in mice, or, when that makes the non-scientists too queasy, the nature of the Universe.

The novel shares similar plot and philosophical considerations to those found in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. It provides background for her portrayal of contemporary biotechnology. *Oryx and Crake* an alternative version of the future in *The Handmaid's Tale*. If *The Handmaid's Tale* was a warning about an anti-feminist backlash, *Oryx and Crake* is about another set of dangers facing the human race with its genetically modified viruses. Coral Ann Howells argues “*Oryx and Crake* is in some ways a sequel to Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* in that it carries the national catastrophe in the earlier novel to global level.” (161)

Oryx and Crake unfolds in the near present and the memory of Snowman. While describing the present, Atwood shows how animals are burned in mass bonfires to eradicate the spread of disease. Violent summer thunder storm render outdoor activities impossible. The wealthy people live in corporate compounds whereas the poor in the toxic wastelands. This is the same situation in *The Handmaid's Tale*. With this background only, the two friends' lives are given in elaboration.

Jimmy and Crake are the boys growing up at a time of rapid technological innovation. They meet in high school in the Helth Wyzer Compound, where their parents work. The people who work for corporations are considered haves and are comfortable to live in gated compounds. The have-nots live in the toxic wastelands. Both of them play computer games together. Their favourite games are extinction lore, historical battles and world conquest. Jimmy chooses the “2D window-dressing” public relations. Crake chooses Watson Crick, a prestigious institute of science. There he focuses on transgenics. Eventually he became a leading biotechnologist. He learns that HelthWyzer has programs not only to cure disease but also to create it.

This assures profits into the indefinite future. He achieves his dream of sealing the fate of humanity. Both Jimmy and Crake finally become involved with Oryx.

Climate change and uncontrolled disease mutation have devastated the world. Disease is presented in *Oryx and Crake* as a weapon of mass destruction. Crake's widespread distribution of his masked virus results in the death of almost the entire human population. Crake is not the only one to use disease as a weapon. Crake himself accuses pharmaceutical companies of inventing diseases and cures simultaneously in order to maintain a high demand for their services. Finally, disease is subversively used as a cure to the problems of humanity. By inflicting a lethal disease on the world's population, Crake hoped to remove hunger, war, jealousy, crime, rape, and a host of other undesirable conditions of the human experience. Throughout the novel, there is a distinct division between before the release of the virus and after.

The Children of Crake are eerily perfect beings whose exquisite human forms cannot disguise the fact that they are not quite human; The Crakers do not seem to do anything. They lounge around eating leaves and grass. The kids patter around and sometimes swim. At hardwired times, the adults mate, and then the women bear and nurse the infants. As in Eden — and the Eden analogies are pretty blatant, from the Bosch painting on the cover onward — they do not have to work to get their food, do not need housing, do not wear clothing, do not want to acquire anything, are not permanently in heat so they do not have love lives. They do sing, they do dream. They are as innocent as Adam and Eve. In time they are cast out of Paradise, the lab Crake builds to house his life's work, not through their own choice but as part of Crake's plan to improve on creation and evolution.

After the destruction of entire humanity and ecology, Jimmy (Snowman) is the only person who survived a genetically engineered plague that wiped out the entire humanity except him. He becomes a mythical creature among the bio-engineered creatures as he is the one and only human creature and so he calls himself Snowman. He can be compared with Robinson Crusoe who is cast away on the shores of the futures. The viewpoint character Snowman lives in a tree, wrapped in a

dirty bed sheet, gradually starving to death because his only nourishment comes from what he can scavenge in forays through abandoned houses, along with the fish brought to him once a week by the Children of Crake, who are like Fridays. His place is full of bio-engineered. The novel begins with Snowman's early morning search for food and his talk with the Crackers. Showing the objects of plastic bio-wastes, the Crackers question him of its harm:

...a hub cap, a piano key, a chunk of pale green pop bottle smoothed by the ocean. A plastic Blyss Pluss Container, empty; a Chicken Nobs Bucket O' Nubbins, ditto. A Computer mouse, or the busted remains of one, with a long wiry tail.

... Sometimes they find tins of motor oil, caustic solvents, plastic bottles of bleach. Booby traps from the past. (7)

Oryx and Crake is technically a single-character novel "Snowman" (or Jimmy) is the surviving human after a cataclysmic global disaster. Snowman describes his closest friends Crake and Oryx and their role in bringing the world to its present state. He mockingly details his attempts at elevating them to the status of Gods for the new species. The new creatures are spliced together by bored genetic scientists -- bobkittens, snats, rakunks -- and more purposeful creations, such as the pigoons, pigs engineered to grow organs for human transplantation. Atwood's futuristic world aims at the elimination of eros as anything more than mere sexual reflex. If biotechnology brings health improvement, making people rich and comfortable, all the people would welcome it wholeheartedly. Atwood reminds that the greatest danger is not from cloning, germline engineering or corporate domination of the world's food supply, but from engineered disease.

Snowman wishes to have a safe place. "If only he could find a cave, a nice cave with a high ceiling and good ventilation and may be some running water, he'd be better off." (42) He does not clean water to drink and to take bath. He says that they are "full of grit and twigs and other things he doesn't want to think about – the water must have found a channel through derelict houses and pungent cellars and clotted-up ditches and who knows what else." (45). Jimmy as Snowman looks less and less human. His skin is covered with bug bites and scabs, his toe-nails are thick and yellow, and he stinks. Atwood writes, "He

stands up and rais-es his arms to stretch, and his sheet falls off. He looks down at his body with dismay: the grimy, bug-bitten skin, the salt-and-pepper tufts of hair, and the thick-ening yellow toenails” (10). The Craker children, unfamiliar with the possibilities of physical decline of the body, request that he explain about the “moss growing out of your face” (8). Metaphorical suggestions of his animal side continue; he knows that “He does stink, he knows that well enough. He’s rank, he’s gamy, he reeks like a walrus—oily, salty, fishy—...” (7).

Atwood is inspired by Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* and George Orwell’s *1984*. Atwood herself states that she was inspired by *1984* when writing *The Handmaid’s Tale* particularly when writing the epilogue.

(Atwood) She writes of getting inspired to write the novel in Australia, where she was deeply impressed by reminders of how indigenous peoples had lived in close connection with their environment. (Ingersoll, 112)

The power of scientific and technological knowledge further genders this futuristic society, as it becomes evident when Crake is identified as a boy-genius at genetic engineering and admitted to Watson-Crick Institute where he trains to become a major player in constructing the future, while Jimmy is relegated to Martha Graham Academy, where the arts and humanities have been prostituted into training schools to market what corporations produce. The curriculum offers only commercially useful subjects. Instead of acting, singing, and dancing, students choose “Webgame Dynamics”, “Image Presentation”, “Pictorial Plastic Arts”, and “Problematics”. Watson-Crick has trained Crake to ignore the emotions and self-awareness. They ignore themselves and the natural world around them. The children have free access to the websites offering child pornography, real time video suicides, and executions. Individuals are depersonified in the present condition. It reveals a world hurtling toward a dystopian future. This novel is just a satire on commercial biotechnology. Though it is an exaggeration, it informs the people of the upcoming disaster. Squier in “A Tale Meant to Inform, Not to Amuse”,

Most of all, in *Oryx and Crake* readers will find a powerful meditation on how education that separates scientific and aesthetic

ways of knowing produces ignorance and a wounded world. (2)

Science and technology were inherently masculine endeavours. Women predict the danger in masculine attempts. In this novel also, Jimmy's father's project shocks his mother. It is she who foresees the danger and opposes it. But she is suppressed by him and later he with all the human beings encounters the consequences. As Brian Attbery notes,

The master narrative of science has always been told in sexual terms. It represents knowledge, innovation, and even perception as masculine, while nature, the passive object of exploration, is described as feminine. (134)

Jimmy's father worked for OrganInc Farms, the company that created the pigoons - pigs designed to grow human organs for transplants. These animals have escaped and run free and, at one point in the novel, Snowman is almost eaten alive by the hybrids his father created. Science which should be for the people turns against the human beings as they play the role of God in creating new hybrid creatures. *Oryx and Crake* examines the social, economic, scientific, and ethical consequences of such technology.

Crake concludes that science must create a species with a better chance of surviving in a damaged ecosystem. It is clearly understood that traditional human qualities have to be sacrificed in order to survive; it may not be worth surviving. Crakers are genetically engineered to withstand a devastated environment. It ranges from the carcinogenic effects of sunlight, air and water. Due to the shortage of food, these creatures have digestive systems allowing them to recycle their own excrement. Upon seeing three other surviving humans, Snowman has to decide which population, human or Craker, will have the chance to prosper. His decision, which is not revealed in the text, raises questions about human nature and the future evolution of the various surviving species.

In the bio-wasteland, Snowman longs for someone to speak with. He feels alone. He has no one to talk with. He experiences the mind-crushing boredom. He has the Crakers around him. But he does not want to talk to them. He needs a human being or any other being

excluding the being created by man. He experiences the loneliness in the bio-wasteland. He wants to talk with someone and so, he talks with the caterpillar which comes near him. He admires it and thinks that it is unique as it is the creation of God. It provides “irrational happiness” (41) to him. He talks to that caterpillar which has tiny bright hairs on it, “We are not here to play, to dream, to drift. We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.” (41) He feels that his life is empty. The loneliness kills him. “Now I’m alone,” he says out aloud. “All, all alone. Alone on a wide, wide sea.... He feels the need to hear a human voice – a fully human voice, like his own.” (10) He feels that he loses his identity and he behaves like animals by laughing like a hyena, or roaring like a lion. The emptiness around him is oft-repeated.

He scans the horizon, using his one sunglassed eye: nothing. The sea is hot metal, the sky is a bleached blue, except for the hold burnt in it by the sun. Everything is empty. Water, sand, sky, trees, fragments of past time. Nobody to hear him.(11)

In the words of Danette DiMarco, “Snowman’s cognition, particularly his ability to understand symbolic lan-guage systems, also reflects his metamorphosis.... He substitutes non-verbal, particularly animal sounds, for verbal and human linguistic signifiers.” (138) Once a writer (as Jimmy), Snowman now repeatedly struggles to remember words and their meanings: “From nowhere, a word appears *Mesozoic*. He can see the word, he can hear the word, but he can’t reach the word. He can’t attach anything to it. This is happening too much lately, this dissolution of meaning, the entries on cherished wordlists drifting off into space” (39). He “grunts and squeals like a pigeon, or howls like a wolvog: *Aroo! Aroo!*” (10).

Snowman struggles to remember lines from what he believes to be a “survival” manual:

It is the strict adherence to daily routine that tends towards the maintenance of good morale and the preservation of sanity,” he says out loud. He has the feeling he’s quoting from a book, some obsolete, ponderous directive written in aid of European colonials running plantations of one kind of another. He can’t recall ever having read such a thing, but that means nothing. There are a lot of blank spaces in his stub of a brain, where memory used to be. Rubber plantations, coffee

plantations. (What was jute?) They would have been told to wear solar tops, dress for dinner, refrain from raping the natives. It wouldn't have said raping. Refrain from fraternizing with the female inhabitants. Or, put some other way. (4-5)

His act can be understood as symbolically cannibalistic, not for the purpose of achieving dominance, or even for saving himself, but for shaking existing domination narratives and clearing a path for a possible reinvention of a better world.

The atmosphere itself reveals the environmental degradation. The climate has changed along with everything else, creating intense heat and sudden storms. Snowman's only protection from the elements consists of a pair of sunglasses with one lens missing, leaving him pathetically vulnerable to the monsters. The climate itself shows the condition of ecological disaster.

Noon is the worst, with its glare and humidity. At about eleven O' clock, Snowman retreats back into the forest, out of sight of the sea altogether, because the evil rays bounce off the water and get at him even if (Jimmy)he's protected from the sky, and then he reddens and blisters. What he could really use is a tube of heavy-duty sunblock, supposing he could ever find one. (37)

And again, "But the build-up of hot, damp air under the tarp was too uncomfortable: at night, at ground level, with no breeze, the humidity felt like a hundred per cent: his breath fogged the plastic" (38) He sweats so hard and the trickles of sweat crawl down him. Drinking water and water to take bath are not clean.

The characters are in the constant fear of being killed. Snowman had the fear of killing by pigeons, wolovogs, rakunks. They need the safe place for them to live in. He moved to trees to be far away from the hybrid creatures created by the scientists like Crake. At the novel's end, Snowman is left near death and contemplating whether he personally has the ability to raise a white flag and declare a truce in the human war. He speculates on whether he will set the domination narrative into motion again. He questions, "What next? Advance with a strip of bedsheet tied to a stick, waving a white flag? *I come in peace*. But he doesn't have his bedsheet with him" (373). And even Snowman's

impending death symbolizes a hopeful death where others are awakened to the tragedy of routine systems that oppress others for vested self-interest

The appearance of *Oryx and Crake* of dystopian futures are the results of the tremendous power that genetic engineering could have for the 21st century. The world has become aware of the great potential for change that Science is threatening the readers to be aware and beware of the darker consequences of Science's influences. Through *Snowman*, Atwood invokes the dead, *Oryx and Crake*, and sends the Crakers (and Atwood's readers) important messages about the possibilities of regeneration and prevention from the ecological destruction. Thus, Atwood presents only the basic, painful truth behind a new Genesis mythology. She does not want to ignore the possible dangerous ways that humanity might take but she wants to illustrate them to her readers and make them aware of their situation. It is quite clear that unrestrained progress is the key to environmental degradation and eventually man's extinction. The barren environment around the human beings should be enlivened. She shows a path for the possible reinvention of the better world.

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The Portrayal of Gender inequality in Girish Karnad's *Naga- Mandala*

- P. Ravichandra Reddy

Girish Karnad is one of the prolific and leading playwrights in India today. In an age where the genre, dramas has almost faded out, writers like Karnad are trying to revive the genre and have become successful to some extent. Though several modern playwrights like A.S.P Ayyar, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and I.M. Loboprabhu did write plays, their main concern was to make their plays realistic and satirical and as pieces of art. Karnad's uniqueness lies in making them totally befitting to stage performance in addition to bestowing them with the above qualities. Basically, Girish Karnad is a writer in a Kannada, a south Indian language. But he has achieved national and overseas recognition for writing the able stage plays in English. He is not only a play a playwright but also an actor-director, art-critic and film star. But the playwright in his multifaceted personality is at its best.

Karnad has attempted various themes concerning past history, past and present values and religious beliefs and myths of India. His plays reveal how he is deeply concerned with India and India ness. In fact most of the plots he has used in his plays have been judiciously adopted from the rich reservoir of native myth and complex historical heritage. He has best exploited the dramatic potential of the ancient Indian myths, legends and folk tradition; with these he has made bold experiments. Besides, making his plays lyrical, allegorical and symbolic, he has made them realistic and satirical. He not only strikes at certain social evils like untouchability, dowry system and exploitation of the poor by the rich but also discusses at length certain psychological aspects like alienation and suppression of women's feelings, passive domestic violence and the like.

In Chapter Six a deep study is made into Karnad's another play *Naga-Mandala* in which the playwright throws light on various themes such as alienation, love adultery, fantasy, sacrifice and the plight of a dejected and disillusioned women. The title named after not a human

being but a snake suggests how the playwrights choose a fantastic theme to discuss all the above said themes. In sum, it can be said that the theme deals with the clash between illusion and reality. Appanna marries Rani for the sake of convention and status and ignores her after marriage. In her attempt to use a magical spell on her husband to turn him towards her, by turn of fate it so happens that a snake is enchanted and possess her in the guise of her in the guise of her husband, especially during night times. The play takes different twists and turns and finally ends in a positive note with a mixture of illusion and reality.

Naga-Mandala on the literal level, presents adultery as a remedy for marriage. Karnad blends the human and the non- human , the world of Rani, and the world of Naga and he also attaches human feelings like jealousy of Naga. The non-human is presented as the more admirable character than the human.

The play *Naga-Mandala* throws light on various themes such as alienation, adultery, patriarchy, chastity, death, sex, sacrifice and Rani's longing for love and affection. The mere title of the play is not named after some human character, but it is named after a snake. This story does not stop with merely dramatizing the folk tales, but it implies much deeper meaning at various levels. In this play we come across two important characters Appanna and Rani. Appanna, locks his wife inside the room and goes out to male- dominated society.

Though Appanna has married Rani, he never touches her. When he goes not his concubine's house, he reaches home only the next day. He does not lead a disciplined life as indicated by the great Tamil poet Tiruvalluvar.

“An individual whomsoever it may be, should lead a disciplined life, falling which, they would face great disaster. Appanna does not have a moral code”. But he expects his wife to be chaste and subservient. Rani, always feels very lonely, afraid, depressed and miserable. When she raises any question to Appanna, he refuses to answer and he only says:

Rani : Listen (Fumbling for words)? “Listen-I- Feel-
Frightened alone at night”

Appanna : What is there to be scared of ?

Rani : Please, you could just keep to yourself. No one will
Brother you, right! (Pause)

Appanna : Look, I don't like idle character. Do as you are told,
you understand.

From the above dialogue we come to know how Rani is treated as a slave by her husband Appanna who does not allow her to ask any question. She is continuously ill-treated by Appanna and was totally ignored by him. Added to this, Appanna locks the door from outside, leaving her inside. Appanna's attitude to Rani reminds us of an observation in Badal Sircar's play *Evam Indrajit* where it is stated: "Girls must follow the rules. Men can do what they like but women must be obedient".

Garish Karnad's play *Naga-Mandala* clearly highlights gender inequality that continues to exist even in Modern India. Though there is some improvement in the plight of women, still women in several parts of the country are not treated on par with men.

Rani, the heroine of *Naga-Mandala*, is married at a young age. Her parents married her off as soon as they found a rich bridegroom. She has no role to play in her marriage except to remain a mute spectator. She goes with Appanna in order to lead a married life. But the dreams of Rani were shattered. Appanna married Rani not to lead a blissful life but to get a servant. The following dialogue clearly shows that Appanna doesn't treat Rani as a human being.

Appanna : Well, them, I'll be back tomorrow at noon. Keep my lunch ready. I shall eat and go.

But to Rani's dismay, she found a sadist and womanizer in Appanna. He locks her up from outside and goes away to return only to have lunch on the next day. He does not allow her to talk with others.

Appanna: She wasn't talk to anyone. And on one need talk her.

To put it in the words of D.H.Lawrence "Man is willing to accept woman as an equal, as a man in skirts, as an angel, a devil, a pair of legs, a servant, an encyclopedia, an ideal, or an obscenity; the one thing he won't accept her as a human being of the feminine sex".

Rani's miserable and pathetic life can be understood when she

says--- the bells of cattle returning home---that means it is late afternoon. The cacophony of birds in a far-away tree—it is sunset. The chorus of crickets spreading from one grove to another—it is night.

No one from Appanna's village questions him for keeping Rani in the solitary confinement. Certainly, society is partial towards women. Rani is treated like a slave. Her feelings are not given importance. The following dialogue clearly shows that Appanna is a vivid manifestation of sadism in the society and also the male egoism.

Appanna: Look, I don't idle chatter. Don't question me. Do as you are told and you won't be punished.

In spite of her pathetic condition, Rani never tries to rebel against her husband because she was brought up in that tradition which makes women to treat their husbands as Gods. Girish Karnad rightly comments "where in public our middle class has accepted the western bourgeois notions of secularism, egalitarianism, and individual merit, while at home it remained committed to the traditional loyalties of caste, family and religion". Marriage has become a prison from which she could not escape.

Fortunately, Rani found a Good Samaritan in Kurudava, who has undergone a lot of suffering to find a bridegroom.

Kurudava: I was born blind.... No one would marry me.

Kurudava has to seek the help of a saint to find a bridegroom. She in turn gave some herbs to Rani so that Appanna will become a Goodman.

The wayward life of Appanna is changed by the divine intervention in the form of Naga. Unknowingly Rani surrenders herself to Naga. Naga is seen here as a liberator of Rani from her suppressed life. According to Girish Karnad, "The position of Rani in the story of *Naga-Mandala* can be seen as a metaphor for the situation of a young girl in the bosom of a joint family where she sees her husband only in two unconnected roles—as a stranger during the day and as lover at night inevitably, the pattern of relationship. She is forced to weave from those disjointed encounters must be something of a fiction. The empty house Rani is locked in could be the family she is married into".

As though chastity is only for women, Appanna cries hoarse

when Rani is pregnant. He forgets his immoral like and abuses her and tries to kill her baby with a stone. At this time also on one from society comes there to rescue her. She has to protect herself by bolting the door from inside. According to Marulasiddappa “The irony of the term ‘Fidelity’ comes through in this sequence of events”. Appanna and Naga-the two faces of one man, one seen at day the other at night-symbolize the exploitation and double standards of man, while Rani is the symbol of a woman’s eternal endurance of this oppression”.

Appanna seeks justice from the Elders of the village. They, who till then do not do anything to help Rani from that prison, ask her to prove her chastity by touching a red hot iron. This clearly shows that the elders turn blind eye to the fallacy of Appanna which reflects the male discrimination of women in our society. Here, the burden of proving chastity fell on the shoulders of Rani. The Elders force the accused to prove innocence rather than asking Appanna to prove his charge. Here also the law of the land is favourable to men.

Rani, who went through snake-ordeal, emerges as a righteous one. Appanna who treated her like a slave till then prostrates before her believing that she is the goddess. People also worship her when they realize that she is the incarnation of the goddess. In this context, Naga is seen as a reformer or catalyst of the mental attitude of Appanna as well as the Elders. Thus *Naga-Mandala* clearly portrays the plight of women in the male-dominated Indian society.

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Shashi Deshpande's *In The Country of Deceit*: A Study

- J. Ravindra Das

Shashi Deshpande's recent novel *In the Country of Deceit* (2008) certifies her position once again as one of the remarkable authors in the domain of Indian English writing today. Deshpande, in her prolific writings accurately mirrors the microcosm of India with its tradition, culture and social conventions. Love, relationship, family, and home are some of the recurrent themes imbibed in the narratives of her novels. At the same time she catches feminine sensibility too as a perennial context. From *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980) to *Moving On* (2004) she delineates the fluctuations of the female ego or self beneath the unavoidable pressures of social and emotional affinities. Her heroines Saru, Indu, Jaya, Urmi, Sumi, Madhu, born out of her pen during 1980 to 2004, in the form of characters are seen entrapped between tradition and modernity. And it is noteworthy that her heroines are so strong that they not only win over the tumults of life in due course of time but also testify their creator's vision of 'reformative feminism'.

The novel *In the Country of Deceit* (2008) too contains some of the signature themes of Shashi Deshpande's writing but differs from her other novels in terms of its bold subject matter and entirely novel treatment. The title of the novel is straightforward and is capable of drawing readers' attention. The use of term 'deceit' in the title of the novel raises several questions in our mind such as who is deceived in this novel. Who has deceived? Is it about some place where deception takes place? Or it is simply state of mind? In this article an attempt is being made to find answer to these questions while highlighting the narrative of the novel from the point of view of love and adultery.

The narrative of the novel has been divided into four segments entitled "Ground Zero", "Epiphany", "In the Country of Deceit" and "Unspooning" where the first two segments appear to be kind of preparation for the third segment whereas the fourth one supplements the whole narrative with meticulous summing up. The title of each segment metaphorically informs about the content. The story begins with detailed description of the background where the heroine

Devayani is shown recovering from the demolition of her ancestral home by building a modern house. As Devayani puts in the beginning:

‘Ground Zero’. It was I who said the words. And, in spite of the death knell sound of the words, in spite of their association with destruction... For us, this was not an end, but a beginning. A fresh start. A clean state (ICD 1).

The next segment “Epiphany” enkindles delicate feelings in the heart of Devayani who experiences the epiphanic ecstasy of love and sex with her lover Ashok. The third segment is of immense significance in the novel because it offers a close view to the dilemma and mental processes of the protagonist who wins at last over the circumstances with a spiritual realization in the fourth segment.

Devayani in the novel is one of Shashi Deshpande’s highly ambitious characters which could take its proper shape in nearly 20 years. As the author herself says in an interview to *The Hindu*: “Devayani, a character in an early novel *Come Up and Be Dead* lingered. I ignored her, but she was quietly persistent. Five novels and 20 years later after completing *Moving On*, I realized that the next novel would be Devayani’s story”(ambianny.blogspot). The novelist contextualizes the character of Devayani Mudhol with the mythical Devayani of Mahabharata. In this story, though Devayani was the queen of king Yayati but it was Sharmishtha, the other woman who enjoyed king Yayati’s love. Yayati’s Devayani metaphorically presents a woman “who never got what she wanted, who never understood what love meant”(ICD 36). Through the context of Devayani Mudhol and Ashok Chinnapa, the author re-tells this story from the perspective of the protagonist Devayani in the first person. Apart from this, the novelist has made use of numerous letters written by other characters to the heroine as fillers in the narrative. In due course of the novel, we also see how Devayani gradually matures and evolves from Devayani to Devi and finally to Divya, a modern incarnation of the mythical Devayani.

The praise of the book rightly highlights the following extract from the novel that gives a clear indication of the anguish as well as the dilemma of the heroine after her entrance in the country of deceit.

*Why did I do it? Why did I enter the country of deceit?
What took me into it? I hesitate to use the word love,
but what other word is there? (ICD 257)*

Devayani feels perplexed to understand the difference between right and wrong, love and the less accepted versions of love in the society. But she gradually learns this through her experiences of life and matures largely on account of her love relationship with Ashok. When the narrative begins, we are introduced to Devayani in her 30's who has decided to live alone in a small town of Rajnur after the loss of her parents. With this objective, she engages herself whole heartedly in the task of gardening and takes up the job of teaching English to the school children which offer her immense tranquility. She prefers solitude and sustains herself despite loneliness which is occasionally defeated by memory and nostalgia. In order to preserve her privacy and hard-won independence she decides to never get married. It is ironical, however, that Devayani refuses the seemingly promising marriage proposals brought by her friends and relatives for her and unexpectedly enters into an illicit relationship with a middle aged DSP of Rajnur Ashok Chinappa who is much older, married and father to a ten year old daughter.

Devayani is introduced to Ashok by middle aged actress Rani in a small gathering. Unexpectedly, after few days Ashok proposes Devayani by promising her nothing in life. His call for love stimulates the lady in such a way that she breaks all social barriers and steps into what Shashi Deshpande calls 'the country of deceit'. The 'country of deceit' could be interpreted in various ways. Apparently it seems to be the world of love or desires. At the same time it also refers to a state of mind when an individual is conscious of some guilt. As the protagonist says: "I had entered the country of deceit. I could no longer be open and honest with people I loved; I had to deceive them" (ICD 147). This shows that the heroine is conscious of her act of hiding the reality and it is largely due to this reason that the author has given the title *In the Country of Deceit* to the novel. Highlighting the significance of the title Shashi Deshpande frankly says in an online interview: "It seems odd, doesn't it? But, when you think of what love does to people and the things love makes them do...My novel explores the slippery,

treacherous terrain that love takes people into”(ambianny.blogspot).

Love undoubtedly happens to be perennial theme in Deshpande's novels but in the present novel she focuses more on the adult love between two highly mature couple. The author in an online interview explains: "All my books are about relationships; particularly this one which is about love between an adult man and an adult woman" (dnaindia.com). Therefore, Devayani's fall in love is though unexpected but not sudden because she ruminates seriously over the pros and cons associated with her would-be relationship with Ashok. When we carry out a compassionate examination of the narrative we find that the threads of love, loyalty and deception intimately intersect each other in the novel. Speaking thoughtfully about adult love the author states:

It is very difficult to judge if adult love is good or bad. Human being always crave for love, even in death a dying man wants to hold someone's hands...My novel is about adult love... In my book, the first thing the man tries to tell the woman is that 'I promise you nothing. But I stand outside our gate and cannot get out of my mind'. I think that's the real sign of love.(dnaindia.com).

Critics often compare Shashi Deshpande with Jane Austen for her art of characterization, magnitude of narrative and range of themes. Rumina Sethi writes in this connection: 'Deshpande's novels are about the ordinary lives of women, too ordinary I might add. These are women who live a humdrum existence...a world so common that I sometimes think it does not deserve to be written about"(hindu.com). There is an epic quality in her writing with prime focus on the consciousness of the characters rather than their appearances. In "In the Country of Deceit", Devayani undergoes process of mental scrutiny regarding her terms with Ashok and the bourgeois world of moral and ethical values in which she has to justify herself.

Devayani, in this novel is prism like character with many potential shades which emanate only when the spark of Ashok's love falls on her. She is many times deep inside than what she appears on the surface. She is highly thoughtful and self-conscious being who knows what she does. The events and incidents in her life apparently

seem to be accidental or coincidental but the deeper observations inform that they are well deliberated actions. For instance, she doesn't accept or reject Ashok's proposal immediately, instead, she thinks over it for several days, evaluates every idea and then proceeds. She has an insightful, meditative and philosophical temperament which gives her an independent perception of life uncontrolled by social conventions. Devayani reflects in the following manner:

I had wanted to go to a place where no one would know me...I felt as if I had shed my past and become new person altogether. I was not Devayani Mudhol, I was an anonymous Nobody. It felt good. I knew then why people walked out of their homes leaving everything behind.(ICD 15-16)

These words reflect the heroine's mood in complete dejection. Truly, Devayani in the beginning of the novel is found least influenced by the flood of marriage proposals and sex suggestions coming from her friends and relatives. She is not even slightly moved by the advices such as "anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without affection" (ICD 28) or "collective experience has value, individual experience has none" (ICD 41) or "the generating organ is the centre of all pleasure" (ICD 43) but her friendship with the neighbour actress Rani opens that gate of "ananda" for her in which she enters to never return back (ICD 43).

Devayani's life changes completely with her frequent clandestine meetings with Ashok. After this meet, love and sex acquire prominence not only in the life of the protagonist but also in the plot of the novel. The nectar of love certainly intoxicates Devayani but a realization of what she is doing persistently compels her to evaluate the two sides of her being: "I believe in marriage, I believe that marriage means loyalty, it means being honest... As for love, I think it does not justify deceiving another person, I don't think it excuses cruelty..." (ICD 94). Devayani-Ashok love relationship is governed primarily by head rather than heart and this feature differentiates their love from the adolescent one. One may easily understand the distinction between adolescent and adult love through these words of Devi when she plans to transcreate her own love story into a film in order to revive the film

career of her friend Rani: “I was not thinking of the usual filmy love story. I am thinking of the real thing. Between two adults ... I am speaking of people in their thirties and forties”(ICD 139).

The third segment of the book which also provides the title for the novel may be interpreted as a domain of deceit due to the illicit nature of the love relationship between Devi and Ashok. The author however doesn't seem to approve of this idea. She believes in the concept of pure love which is highly respectable and doesn't demand or promise anything. It could be deceitful from societal point of view but is divine if selfless and unconditional in nature. And the guilt that Devi feels in the later half of the novel is not her own but it is generated due to the pressures of social conventions. Her mental dilemma gives us an elaborate examination and explanation of what a true love should be like.

Deshpande probes deep into the psyche of her young heroines especially when they rebel against the traditional ways of life. The conflict in the psyche of Devayani germinates when her sister bewares her that the society would call her Ashok's “girl” or “mistress” or a “whore” or “flossy” for her relation with man who is already married. In this novel through the character of Devi, the author has tried to present the position of unmarried girls amidst the social and individual reality. Devi thinks too much about herself, about Ashok, about love, sex and society. Her partial obsession with pre and post thought in way also offers us an open access to the mental mechanics of Devayani: “And then I thought of what I had done, I thought, why had I done this? I knew it was wrong; nothing could make it not wrong. And yet I had rushed into it. Why had I done it?(ICD 142). Her too much thinking at times reminds us of Shakespeare's hero Hamlet. She, however, differs from Shakespearean hero in the sense that Hamlet fails to resolve his conflict whereas Devayani succeeds in doing so.

Devi's contemplative nature pushes her to think: “I now realized that adultery remains adultery, whoever the couple may be. That it is always riddled with guilt and fear, constantly swinging between euphoria and despair. I knew this too, that the main preoccupation of all adulterous couples is: how do we meet? And where?”(ICD149). She enjoys the sensuous experiences with her lover Ashok and his ecstatic

endearments but in the heart of hearts also realizes the guilt for what she is doing. At times she feels that “All that she had was guilt” (ICD 196) because Ashok had his own life consisting of his wife and a daughter. At the same time, Devi’s involvement in Ashok is so intense that she agrees to live even with this guilt: “I would even learn to live with guilt. You get used to everything- you learn how to live with suffering, pain, death. Why not with guilt then? Yes I would learn to cope with guilt as well” (ICD 152).

Ashok, the only prominent male character in the novel and Devayani’s lover is also very mature. He is professionally sound and “a man with weight and substance” (ICD 157). As a lover, his role is to a great extent justified though he fails to prove full loyalty to his wife by breeching the sanctity of his marriage. His character is comparatively less evolved as compared to the heroine but he plays a vital role in the evolution of the heroine’s personality. Ashok’s love is selfless and he takes great care of Devi’s reputation. He even agrees to divorce his wife for Devi towards the end of the novel but Devi prevents him from doing so. It is noteworthy that he neither deceives nor deserts Devayani and his physical separation from Devi is only an expression of obedience to her decision. Certainly, Ashok establishes himself as a true lover and wins our heart by his sincerity and honesty. In the beginning he proposes to ‘promise nothing’ to Devayani but unknowingly he gives her an experience for lifetime. Devayani too acknowledges the austerity of his feeling and emotion but she is exhorted so much by her sister and relatives in the name of social interpretation of extra-marital relationships that a sense of guilt creeps into her conscience. She undertakes a turbulent journey of guilt and involuntarily decides to dissociate from Ashok: “I’ll give up Ashok, I’m doing wrong, this is a punishment, but I’ll give up Ashok, I promise...”?(ICD177).

The protagonist feels herself to be “incommunicado”(ICD196) after stepping into the country of love because the imposed moral and ethical conventions of society force her to perceive it as “the country of deceit”. This acceptance terminates the flow of “hormone music” (ICD 18) from her life, as Devi says:

I had had a strange sense of being rift into two selves: one doing things and the other watching, thinking, I will never

forget this, I will remember this all my life. Now both of us were aware that we were coming to the end of this time together. Only a few hours, but we had crammed whole lifetime into them, we had lived a whole life together.(ICD 195)

It is this eternal experience which gives her towering tolerance Deshpande, in no way advocates illicit or extra- marital relationship or adultery of any kind but through the character of Devayani she certainly attempts to fight against certain orthodox conventions of the society. She bestows her heroine with so much strength that she can challenge the conservative norms of society. Due to this reason Devi does whatever she wishes to do and attacks severely on the double standards adopted by the society to judge something. She professes that one should have second chance to correct the wrongs in marriage: “When even criminals get a second chance, why can’t we have a second chance? Why is it that you can correct all mistakes, but not this one”(ICD 199).

The author conceptualizes love in high terms which has the potential of surviving on its own. According to Shashi Deshpande, love is not merely a blending of two individuals of opposite sex but a natural bond formed between two persons on the basis of mutual harmony. In her view no authority is needed to build or sustain any relationship. Devayani authenticates this view in these words:

What do I want, you ask me. Marriage?... I know it will never happen; though I must admit that I have secret hopes that he will come to me one day and say ‘I am free, we can be together’. A futile dream. I know that. And I also know that we could be happier than most married couples, that we could have the kind of marriage very few couples can even dream of. I hunger for him, I thirst for him. How easily you ask me to give him up. Have you any idea what he means to me?(ICD 30)

Her concept of love is so sacred and divine that she goes to the extent of comparing it with “breath” or “*pran*” or “life”. That is why the idea of leaving Ashok for Devi becomes difficult. Deshpande

presents this idea by quoting “*pranah pranam dadati*” from *Upanishad* which means what is life without breath (ICD 201). The author elaborates this concept by saying that a true love cannot make anyone mean or selfish and if it does so then it can’t be a real love. It has been expressed through the following words of Devayani.

Savi and Shree are right. Something is wrong with our relationship; Ashok’s and mine, if it makes me think this way, if it makes me mean and selfish. And I have to ask myself: if love is so wonderful, why should love make me do what is wrong?(ICD 202)

Proper understanding and mutual compatibility are the essential pre-requisites for a sound relationship. Shashi Deshpande too highlights this point in the novel and says that nothing can ensure smooth relationship except love which acts as a strong binding force. It not only makes discordant things concordant but also generates a unique beauty out of the contraries

Music for him was jazz and the Beatles and for me, Hindi film songs...He loves open spaces, the jungle, horses, dogs and I had my books... He could not imagine a meal without meat, and for me, even an egg was anathema. Yet, when we were together, none of it mattered and I, who hated the smell of whisky, could inhale his whisky- smelling breath with ecstasy. (ICD 208).

Devayani gradually develops an insightful acumen with the passage of time. When she comes to understand that her love affair with Ashok will not ultimately be welcomed by the society she decides to conclude it in very intellectual and dignified manner. She however doesn’t stop loving Ashok but realizes her own imitations. About her concluding meetings with Ashok she says that nothing changed between them “not our feelings for one another, but our recognition of what was possible, of what was not possible”(ICD 211). Now Devayani who is transformed into Divya acts very prudently and chooses the right course of action for her life. She rejects every social certificate to be called ‘right’ and ‘innocent’ and says: “I had seen birth, death, despair and suffering, why did they call me innocent? If Ashok was doing

wrong, so was I. I would not exculpate myself” (ICD 223). Therefore A. Maria Philomi and Shanti also remark in the following manner.

Deshpande's women are enlightened, culturally rooted, awakened to the realities of life and make decisions of their own. Their decisions are not out of their ignorance, inability or submissiveness. They decide making an analysis of the situation, crossing all barriers of identity crisis and subordination. (sites.google.com)

Devayani worships her love like a deity even if it is “cheap” for the society. Though she knows that her relationship with Ashok would never be warmly welcomed by the society she lives in, yet she would also not like to be caged in the marriage like social institution: “I don’t want marriage. I have never thought of it. It has always been out of bounds for me. I never could”(ICD 237) because “Love was not enough, no, it was never enough”(ICD 210). Shashi Deshpande candidly appears to support live-in kind of relationship here, provided it has the sanctity of emotion and honest dedication.

Without Ashok in her life, Devayani once again becomes alone. She expresses her feelings by saying: “My grief and loneliness came up in a surge, with the force of a tidal wave, swamping me. I would wake up this way every morning, I thought. To an aching emptiness. Blankness(ICD 255) . She had once heard her father saying that “love is only an idea”(ICD 255) and it is not enough in life because nothing remains unchanged. But for Devayani there is one place where things never change and that is the secret lanes of memory. The narrative has been touchingly concluded with the following philosophical words of the heroine:

No, I don't want to forget, I want to remember, it is not remembering, but forgetting that will be my greatest enemy like from now a constant struggle between trying to forget and wanting to remember?(ICD 259)

The novelist remarkably presents the dilemma of the protagonist Devayani who dwindle between her love affair with a married middle aged man and the societal norms. Presenting a fine balance between

traditionalism and progressiveness, the narrative offers a realistic portrayal of wistful pursuit of Devayani for love. The subject of adult love between Devi and Ashok has been boldly yet convincingly discussed in the novel from hedonistic point of view. As Deshpande announces about *In the Country of deceit* during one of her talks: “This one is purely about love... ‘Come Up and Be Dead’ is wholly realized here”(hindu.com).

Shashi Deshpande not only claims to be great communicator but also proves it through her magical command over language. She plays beautifully with words and adds a regional flavour to it. For instance, her infusion of Kannada and other non-English words in the present novel such as *ekadashi*, *akka*, *putat*, *pyar*, *ananda*, *mavasi*, *ajja*, *dhumi*, *gurudakshina*, *sannata*, *chivda*, *laddoo* and so on contextualize the narrative more with the Indian cultural ethos. Deshpande is an insightful writer with remarkable understanding of Indian philosophy and mythology. Her reference to *Mahabharata*, *Upanishada*, *Vishnupurana*, *Matsyapurana*, Marathi *Shloka*, and other rich ancient texts is commendable. For instance, she employs *Devayani- Yayati* myth to present the dilemma of man since time immemorial and the myth of *Vamana* to suggest the prudence and pragmatism of man which can resolve any crisis. The novelist has been successful in giving convincing justification to the title *In the Country of Deceit* but just like the title of the novel the ending too raises several questions pertaining to the issue of disputed land, the role of the actress Rani in the novel, the relevance of series of letters written by different characters to Devayani, and the need of introducing few such characters that seem flat and redundant.

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Gender Discrimination in *The God of Small Things*

- T. K. Balaji Purushotham

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is an electrifying novel centered on the forbidden love affair between a Syrian Christian woman, Ammu, and a low-caste carpenter, Velutha, in the Indian state of Kerala. Ammu and her fraternal twins, Estha and Rahel, live in Ayemenem with Ammu's brother Chaco, their mother Mammachi, and their aunt Baby Kochamma. During a two-week visit to Ayemenem by Chaco's ex-wife, Margaret Kochamma, and daughter, Sophie Mol, life takes a devastating turn. Through a series of flashbacks and foreshadowing, the novel unfolds in two basic time periods: the two weeks leading up to the death of the twins' first cousin, and twenty-three years later when Rahel returns to the house in Ayemenem. Throughout *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy depicts the oppression of Indian culture through the sexuality of the subaltern; she accomplishes this by juxtaposing individuals of different caste and class within three generations: the generation which accepts the oppression, the generation which rebels against the oppression, and the generation living in the wake of the rebellion.

In *The God of Small Things*, the author exposes the oppression of Indian culture through the sexuality of those individuals who accept the oppression. Mammachi, a member of this generation, has grown to expect the exploitation of both women and "untouchables" typical within Indian society. The wife of a former government official, Mammachi is familiar with the general resentment from and regular beatings by her husband. Referring to Mammachi's husband, the narrator claims, "Every night he beat her with a brass flower vase. The beatings weren't new" (A. Roy 47). This illustration of physical abuse provides only a glimpse into the patriarchy of Indian culture. Mammachi's inferiority to her husband becomes clear when the narrator states that "Pappachi would not help [Mammachi] with the pickle-making because he did not consider pickle-making a suitable job for a high-ranking ex-Government official" (46). Roy's ironic juxtaposition of a slothful character, exerting energy only to beat his

wife, serves to further illustrate the patriarchy of Indian society. Consistent with the expectations of Indian culture, moreover, Mammachi remains committed to her husband until his death and even cries at his funeral – not necessarily because she loves him but because she has been committed to him for so long. The narrator states, “At Pappachi’s funeral, Mammachi cried.... Ammu told the twins that Mammachi was crying more because she was used to him than because she loved him. She was used to having him slouching around the pickle factory, and was used to being beaten from time to time” (49). Despite the frequent abuse of her husband, Mammachi understands her role of wife as determined by her contemporaries and fulfills the expectations of the role.

In addition to Mammachi’s submission to her husband, the author further develops this character through the relationships with her children. Binayak Roy describes Mammachi as a “Big Woman who deifies her son Chacko and despises her daughter Ammu” (60). The critic continues to address Mammachi’s favoritism for her son by stating that Mammachi “makes all arrangements for the satisfaction of Chacko’s sexual needs with Paravan women. However, she becomes furious at Ammu’s affair with the Paravan Velutha...” (B. Roy 60). A member of this patriarchal society, Mammachi venerates Chacko simply for being a man. Over time, however, Mammachi begins to develop an underlying love for her son. After Chaco prevents Mammachi’s husband from beating her, he becomes “the repository of all her womanly feelings. Her Man. Her only Love” (160). As a direct result of the physical abuse inflicted upon her by Pappachi, Mammachi projects her womanly affections onto the offspring of her own womb. The author uses Mammachi’s submissiveness in marriage and unnatural affections toward her son to illustrate the oppression of the subaltern in Indian society.

Baby Kochamma, Mammachi’s sister-in-law and fellow member of this former generation, is used to depict the oppression of women through her sexuality, as well. From a young age, Baby Kochamma has loved Father Mulligan, an Irish monk studying Hinduism in India. According to Binayak Roy, “The beautiful, headstrong eighteen-year-old Baby and the young, handsome Irish monk Father Mulligan fall

passionately in love. But the ‘Love Laws’ (33), operative from time immemorial, get in their way” (59). According to the narrator, these laws “lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much” (33). In hopes of establishing a physical relationship with the monk, Baby Kochamma enters the nunnery. Unable to fulfill her desires, however, “Baby ends up a sex-starved spinster, adoring her lover for more than sixty-five years” (B. Roy 59). Before bed each night, Baby Kochamma documents her love of Father Mulligan in her diary by writing “*I love you I love you*” (281). Under the established laws of love, Baby experiences oppression as illustrated by her frustrated sexuality. According to O.P. Dwivedi, “[Ammu’s] daring love affair with Velutha undoubtedly incited a sexual desire in Baby Kochamma to some extent. She cannot digest this affair as she herself is denied the carnal pleasure” (393). Baby Kochamma’s sexual frustration leads to her later disastrous actions, in which out of her sexual jealousy she invokes police involvement in the affair between Ammu and Velutha. The author shows the oppression of Indian society through events which stem from Baby Kochamma’s sexual frustration.

Vellya Paapen, an employee at Mammachi’s pickle factory and the father of Velutha, is another member of the generation which accepts the oppression of women and “untouchables.” An accident at the factory having cost Vellya Paapen his eye, Mammachi has taken the initiative to purchase a glass eye for him. To Mammachi and her family, Vellya Paapen feels eternally indebted. The narrator states of Vellya Paapen, “He hadn’t worked off his debt yet, and though he knew he wasn’t expected to, that he wouldn’t ever be able to, he felt that his eye was not his own. His gratitude widened his smile and bent his back” (73). Vellya knows he is not entitled to Mammachi’s generosity. The narrator reiterates the point by saying, “[Vellya Paapen] had seen the Crawling Backwards Days and his gratitude to Mammachi and her family for all that they had done for him was as wide and deep as a river in spate” (73). Like Mammachi, Vellya Paapen has witnessed the days in which “Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan’s footprint” (71). This passage leads the reader to see Vellya’s reaction to Ammu’s and Velutha’s inter-caste love affair in this “historical

perspective” (Dwivedi 390). Reiterating this point, Dwivedi states, “The intense anxiety of Vellya Paapen regarding Velutha’s unorthodox affair with Ammu should be read in this context. Paapen is an old Paravan and therefore does not dare to disturb the social hierarchy as he is fully cognisant of the harsh treatment meted out to persons who attempt to transgress the rigid social order” (390). While the narrator does not directly reveal Vellya Paapen’s sexuality, his opinion of the Love Laws is demonstrated when he discloses his son’s secret affair. Upon arriving at the Ayemenem House to tell Mammachi of the affair between Ammu and Velutha, “Vellya Paapen began to cry” (242). In this scene, the narrator describes Vellya as “an old Paravan, who had seen the Walking Backwards days, torn between Loyalty and Love” (242). The reader sympathizes with Vellya Paapen as he dutifully divulges his son’s forbidden affair – yet another instance in which Arundhati Roy uses sexuality to depict the oppression of the subaltern.

In addition to those individuals who accept the oppression of the subaltern, Arundhati Roy depicts the oppression of women and “untouchables” in Indian society through the sexuality of those who rebel against the oppression. Chacko, a member of this younger generation, enjoys the favoritism of the patriarchy within Indian culture. A Rhodes Scholar, Chacko left Ayemenem for an Oxford education. In England, he met and quickly fell in love with Margaret Kochamma. According to the narrator, “Margaret Kochamma was the first female friend [Chacko] had ever had. Not just the first woman that he had slept with, but his first real companion” (233). Chacko marries Margaret without their parents’ knowledge or consent. Illustrating Chacko’s disregard for his family in Ayemenem, the narrator states, “[Chacko] had no pressing reasons to stay in touch with his parents. ... He was deeply in love with his love for Margaret Kochamma and had no room in his heart for anyone else” (234). When the marriage fails, Margaret grants herself sole custody of their only child Sophie Mol, and Chacko returns to Ayemenem. Despite his love for an Englishwoman, Chacko is again favored by his mother. Susan Stanford Friedman sums up the events when she states, “Chacko [was] sent to England for his education, given the factory to run upon his return and allowed a secret passage in and out of the house for his hidden sex life with lower-caste women” (120). Clearly, the author establishes a character in Chacko

who rebels against the oppression of Indian society through his first marriage and through his disregard for the Love Laws as demonstrated by his sexual relations with low-caste women.

Ammu, Chacko's sister, rebels against the oppression of Indian society through her sexuality, as well. Familiar with the confines of the Love Laws, Ammu seeks to free herself from their restraints. Having been terrorized by her father from a young age, Ammu acquires "a lofty sense of injustice and the mulish, reckless streak that develops in Someone Small who has been bullied all their lives by Someone Big" (172-173). Veena Shukla states that in order to escape the circumstances at home, Ammu marries "an alcoholic husband, who treats her in a beastly manner, and even asks her to satisfy the carnal pleasure of his boss, so that he can keep his job secure" (965). In order to escape the horrors of her marriage, Ammu returns to Ayemenem with her twins, Estha and Rahel. Here, however, "she suffers a lot [of] mental blows by her own family members" (Shukla 965). In a final attempt to escape the confines of her home and the limitations placed on her by society, Ammu participates in a love affair with Velutha, a Paravan who works in Mammachi's pickle factory. While the two individuals have known each other since childhood, their love is initiated in a single glance. Of that moment, the narrator states, "Centuries telescoped into one evanescent moment. History was wrong-footed, caught off guard. Sloughed off like an old snakeskin" (167). Ammu's blatant rebellion against traditional Love Laws of the culture infuriates her mother, who claims that Ammu's affair has "defiled generations of breeding...and brought the family to its knees" (244). Through her demoralizing marriage and forbidden love affair, Ammu's sexuality is used to expose the ills of Indian society.

Velutha, the Paravan with whom Ammu has the affair, joins her in rebelling against the confines of Indian culture through his sexuality. Velutha's diversion from the rigid social order of Indian society is evident from an early age. According to the narrator, "Vellya Paapen feared for his younger son. He couldn't say what it was that frightened him. It was nothing that he had said. Or done. It was not *what* he said, but the *way* he said it. Not *what* he did, but the *way* he did it" (73). Velutha specifically chooses to disregard the Love Laws; for him,

“caste or status [does] not matter. What matters most is to preserve the bond of pure love...” (Shukla 966). Velutha extends his love not only to Ammu but also to her children. In turn, Velutha is adored by the twins as a type of father figure in their lives. Ritu Menon alludes to this point when she describes Velutha as “a low-caste employee in the factory – whom Estha and Rahel love with the unconditional love that only children can have.” In *Velutha*, the author creates a character that rebels not only against the Love Laws but also against “all laws of a class- and caste-based society” (B. Roy 61). Nevertheless, Velutha’s sexual rebellion through his affair with Ammu provides a prime illustration of his desire to rebel. Emphasizing the significance of the unorthodox love affair between Ammu and Velutha, Binayak Roy states, “Their sexual union marks the victory of ‘human nature’ over ‘the human mind,’ of biology over history...” (61). Velutha’s willingness to defy social custom through his affair with Ammu further supports the author’s master plan of exposing the oppression of Indian society through sexuality.

In addition to those individuals who accept the oppression and those who rebel against it, Arundhati Roy explores the implications on the generation living in the aftermath of the rebellion and continues to expose the social ills of India through sexuality. Sophie Mol, the daughter of Chacko and Margaret Kochamma, is a member of the generation living in the wake of the rebellion. Her conception having resulted from a forbidden relationship between an Indian man and an English woman, Sophie Mol is irreplaceable within the tale. Having been blessed with an English upbringing, Sophie is favored over her Indian cousins. Describing the events surrounding Sophie Mol’s first day in Ayemenem, the narrator remarks, “Sophie Mol, hatted bell-bottomed and Loved from the Beginning, walked out of the Play.... But the Play went with her. Walked when she walked, stopped when she stopped. Fond smiles followed her” (176-177). Highlighting the importance of caste in Indian culture, the narrator contrasts Sophie Mol with her Indian counterpart Rahel: “One beach-colored. One brown. One Loved. One Loved a Little Less” (177). Sophie Mol’s life is short-lived. Suggesting the importance of Sophie’s presence within the story, however, Menon states, “[Sophie Mol’s] dying is the unexpected trigger that turns Estha’s and Rahel’s world upside-down and insideout,

and is more or less directly responsible for the deaths of Velutha and their mother.” Though Arundhati Roy cannot directly explore Sophie Mol’s sexuality due to the character’s untimely death, the favoritism Sophie experiences as a result of her parent’s daring relationship along with the ramifications of her death on the relationship between Ammu and Velutha allow the author to use Sophie Mol, a member of the youngest generation, in order to illustrate the oppression of the subaltern in Indian culture.

Estha and Rahel, Ammu’s fraternal twins, are also members of the generation living in the wake of the rebellion. Significantly, they are young in the weeks leading up to Sophie Mol’s death and thirty-one years of age when they return to the Ayemenem House. According to Dwivedi, the author urges the readers “to adopt the innocence of the dizygotic twins – Estha and Rahel who in spite of living in India do not know any caste, religion and boundaries. They are completely innocent in this cruel world” (391). When Estha visits the refreshment counter during *The Sound of Music*, however, his faultless impression of the world is tainted by fear for the first time through a forced sexual act. The Orangedrink Lemondrink Man hands Estha his genitalia and instructs him to massage it. Revealing the event’s psychological disturbance on Estha, the narrator states, “And so, behind the Refreshments Counter, in the Abhilash Talkies Princess Circle lobby, ... Esthappen Yako finished his free bottle of fizzed, lemon-flavored fear” (100). After the horrific sexual act has been performed, Estha’s anxiety is two-fold: that Ammu will discover his actions and for it love him less, and that the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man will arrive at the Ayemenem House to further terrorize him. Encapsulating this reality, the narrator explains, “[Estha] felt the shaming churning heaving turning sickness in his stomach” (108). Once again, Arundhati Roy’s exposure of the ills of Indian culture is centered on sexuality, however perverted it may be.

In much the same way, the author develops Rahel’s sexuality in order to illustrate the effects of the rebellion on the younger generation. In the wake of her mother’s affair with Velutha, Rahel moves to the United States and marries Larry McCaslin. Even within the establishment of marriage, however, Rahel is unable to develop a

physical relationship with her husband. On one occasion when her husband attempts to seduce her with an act of passion, Rahel can think only to her mother's lover, emphasizing the profound effect of her mother's affair on her life. Offering a possible explanation for this occurrence, Friedman states, "This transgression of gender and caste norms and the violence of the family and state in disciplining the transgressors have life-destroying consequences for the next generation, for the children who are forever scarred by what they have witnessed" (117). While Rahel is able to escape the aftermath of the rebellion geographically, she continues to be tormented by thoughts of her childhood. According to the narrator, "[Rahel] wondered why it was that when she thought of home it was always in the colors of the dark, oiled wood of boats, and the empty cores of the tongues of flame that flickered in brass lamps" (70). The author uses Rahel's dysfunctional relationship with her husband to illustrate the powerful effects of the rebellion on the younger generation.

Upon Rahel's return to Ayemenem, Arundhati Roy uses sexuality in an unexpected manner to further expose the traumatic effects of the rebellion: Rahel and Estha partake in an incestuous relationship. The author's exposure of social ills through the sexuality of the subaltern is culminated in this final sexual act. A deeper understanding of this text reveals that Estha and Rahel "break the Love Laws against incest by reuniting what had been sundered, the connection of souls figured in the anguish of touch" (Friedman 121). Similar to their mother's sexual rebellion, Estha and Rahel throw off the confines of society, even if in an unsettling sense. The twins' disturbing sexual relationship clearly exemplifies the effect of oppression on India's subaltern.

Throughout *The God of Small Things*, "clearly a novel which deals with the troubled history of females and the untouchables," Arundhati Roy depicts the oppression of Indian society through the sexuality of the subaltern (Dwivedi 387). By contrasting the generation of individuals who accept the oppression, the generation which rebels against it, and the generation which must endure the consequences of the rebellion, the author is able to illustrate the harsh realities of oppressive Indian culture. Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, and Vellya

Paapen are accustomed to the Love Laws and are consequently disgusted by the affair between Ammu and Velutha. Though these three individuals of the former generation represent different castes and classes, they adhere to the same values of love and marriage. Mammachi is submissive to her abusive husband, and Baby Kochamma remains sexually frustrated as she expresses her love for Father Mulligan to the blank pages of her diary. Vellya Paapen, a low-caste carpenter, even offers to kill his son Velutha when he partakes in an affair with “a high status woman” (Shukla 967). These three members of the oldest generation are essentially character foils for the rebellious Chacko, Ammu, and Velutha, who defy social conventions and break the Love Laws. Although Chacko marries a woman of English descent and partakes in love affairs with Paravan women, he is favored over his sister Ammu, revealing the patriarchy of Indian culture. When the affair between Ammu and Velutha is discovered, the oppression of both females and “untouchables” becomes evident as Ammu is ostracized by her family and Velutha is castrated, beaten, and left to die by policemen. Future generations, however, are not exempt from the lasting effects of the rebellion. Light-skinned Sophie Mol is favored over her Indian cousins Estha and Rahel, an illustration of the caste-based society in which the novel is set. Estha, psychologically disturbed after performing sexual acts on a theater concessions attendant, lives a life of perpetual fear. Similarly, Rahel can think only of the traumatic events of her childhood even as an adult. When Estha and Rahel reunite in Ayemenem at the age of thirty-one, their relationship becomes incestuous. This final sexual encounter clearly demonstrates the effects of the rebellion on the youngest generation. Throughout *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy develops each character through his or her sexuality, each time revealing the dark oppression of Indian culture.

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Religion as an Identity in Cross-Culturalism in Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land*

- C. Naresh

Amitav Ghosh's third novel *In An Antique Land* (1992) comes as a fresh breath of air in Indian English Fiction. In it, he creates an extraordinary world, where the past and present merge effortlessly into each other. The text has double narratives, and similarly it flip-flops between two eras. The narrative space of the novel is occupied by horizontally structured multiple interpolated tales. Amitav Ghosh's mastery lies in using his double narrative technique. Through this he looks backward and forward, and presents the information in a gigantic way. It appeals to the readers' eyes. This kind of narrative technique enables him to explore the situations with a historical depth. His aim is to present the plight of culture and colonization from ancient to the present. One of the characteristic features of Ghosh's novels is the rejection of the political borders. Ghosh depicts this trait by introducing either by travel or migration. Travel is a symbol of quest and discovery. Like an excavator, Ghosh's fictional characters explore and step into the unknown worlds to a better understanding of the self and the environment around them.

Amitav Ghosh himself is a character in the novel. He himself goes to Egypt for his field work. He goes to Egypt in 1980, 1988 and 1990. The novelist's search begins in a small village called Latâifa. The book provides an opportunity for Ghosh to project history as well as his personal experiences with the native culture. Ghosh keeps on traveling between Cambridge and Egypt for his thesis. Ghosh's accounts on his fieldwork is rightly pointed out by James Clifford as "It is less a matter of localized dwelling and more a series of travel encounters. Everyone's on the move, and has been for centuries dwelling-in-travel...a view of human locations as constituted by displacement as much as by stasis practices of displacement might emerge as constitutive of cultural meanings rather than as their simpler transfer of extension" [*Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, PP.2-3].

The first two sections of the novel deal with the cultural and social changes in Egypt. The author has been brought to Abu Ali's house by Doctor Aly Issa, a professor in the University of Alexandria and one of the most eminent Anthropologists in the Middle East. He goes to the village of Latâifa and Nashawy to learn the language and culture of the Egyptians. Ghosh is introduced by Ustaz Sabry, a teacher, to the guests at his home as in Ghosh's words "I was a student from India, he told them, a guest who had come to Egypt to do research. It was their duty to welcome me into their midst of friendship between India and Egypt." [P.106].

Identity is a problem in cross-culturalism. After reaching Latâifa, Ghosh has struggled to reveal his identity. Majority of the villages are not aware of the news channels and what has been happening outside their world. They have little knowledge about India. Only people like Ustaz Mustafa, who has specialized in civil and religious law, knows a little about India and its culture. Ghosh is asked whether he is a Muslim he says no, 'I was born a Hindu' [P. 31]. Then Ustaz Mustafa ask Ghosh "what is this 'Hinduki' thing? I have heard of it before and I don't understand it. If it is not Christianity nor Judaism nor Islam what can it be? Who are its prophets? [P.31].

At this Juncture perhaps Ghosh is well aware of the statement of Swami Vivekananda on Hinduism, who says Hinduism is not a religion but a way of living. Ghosh replies that it does not have a prophet. As for as the Egyptian villagers are concerned, religion is the foremost thing, which reveals the identity of a person besides name. They also think that according to their world there are only two religions, one is Islamic and the next is Christianity. According to them culture is a part and parcel of religion. It decides the progress of a person in the society.

T.S Eliot the profounder of the modernist movement believes that there is a very close relationship between culture and religion. It is religion of a people which makes them culturally different from the people of other faiths. In his treatise, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, T.S Eliot says "a culture will appear to be the product of religion or the religion the product of the culture" (P.15). Eliot thinks that religion is indispensable from culture "Any religion; gives an apparent meaning to life, provides the framework for a culture, and

protects the mass of humanity from boredom and despair” [P.34]. Perhaps this concept can be applicable in several parts of the novel. The villages in their free time often discuss the myths and stories about Abu Sidi and Abu- Hasira’s tomb.

People under the impact of post-colonialism, often tend to look down upon other religion and tries to find faults with others’. They think their religion and culture are superior to others. It is clear from the coquettish smile from Ustaz Mustafa, who says “ I know-it’s cows you worship” but Ghosh says “In my country some people don’t eat beef because... because cows give milk and plough the fields and so on, and so they’re very useful” [P. 32]. Even Ghosh has tried to convince him but Ustaz never believes his words. He tells Ghosh “that you will convert and become a Muslim. You must not disappoint me” [P.35]. Thus Ghosh is allured to join the Muslim community. In Latâifa the wide-spread religion is Islamic. They have no contacts with other people in the world. All of them lead a pious life. They still follow their culture and the evil of modern civilization has not yet reached there.

In the total Muslim culture of Egypt people can hardly conceive of men not circumcised in childhood. In Arabic the word ‘circumcise’ derives from the root that means ‘to purify’. According to them if a man is uncircumcised he is impure. In one of the conversations with Jabir, Ghosh confesses that he and his people are not circumcised. He feels embarrassed to answer the questions as he has no alternative and is trapped by language. Jabir though unharmed, but inquisitive, asks by pointing a finger at Ghosh’s crotch:

‘Don’t you shave there either?’

‘No’ I said

But then, he cried, doesn’t the hair grow longer and longer until ...

At last Jabir confesses that Ghosh “Doesn’t know a thing... Not religion, not politics, not sex, just like a child”(PP.44-45).

Ghosh is confronted with the barriers of language. The narrator cannot express himself properly because in Arabic even the innocuous word, uncircumcised becomes overwrought with connotations of

irreligiousness. Unable to answer the questions he simply becomes an object of fun and remained a child in Jabirs's eye.

There is a rumour in other places of the world that Islamic women are too much orthodoxical. But the things are too different for Ghosh. He has encountered several times with them but he never attempts to talk with them at the beginning. Their customary dress is black fustan, a heavy, shapeless robe. At last Ghosh describes:

“I was so cowed by everything I had read about Arab traditions of shame and modesty that I barely glanced at them, for fear of giving offence. Later it was I who was shame-stricken, thinking of the astonishment and laughter I must have provoked, walking past them, eyes lowered, never uttering so much as a word of greeting. Shaking hands with them now...” (P.26)

The natives of Egypt perceived Hinduism as completely different and strange system of values. In Latâifa during Ramadan, when almost the entire village is on fast, Ghosh wants to join them. He would like to take it as an opportunity to show that he is a liberal person towards religion. He wants to join them in the fast but everyone insisted “No, you can't fast, you're not Muslim-only Muslims fast at Ramdan” [P.55]. He feels now like an outsider. He knows about the festival and how it is celebrated among Muslims. He has understood at last the reason for denying him that “belong(ing) to the immense community was a privilege which they had to re-earn every years and the effort made them doubly conscious of the value of its boundaries” [P.57].

Humour is a part of cross-culturalism. Ghosh is a master in producing positive humour but not negative humour. Humour often results from ignorance or lack of preparedness. In this novel, Gosh has offered a compassionate humour. As J.B. Priestley suggests the authors “In order to be humorist, you must have a needle eye for the incongruities, all the idiocies and antics of this life, but you must also have strange and contradictory as it may seem an unusual quickness and warmth of feeling an instant affection for all that is lovable “[*English Humour*, P.130]. Amitav Ghosh might have followed the concepts of J.B.Priestley in colouring humour in this novel. While presenting Ghosh's arrival in Latâifa he describes Abu-Ali who has

given shelter for him. He is obese but he is the first person in the hamlet who has acquired a form of motorized transport-a light Japanese moped. It is very fragile in appearance but sturdy in build. He is very jealous of his custodianship of his vehicle and never allows others to use it. The way he drives is presented humorously by Ghosh,

“He would hitch up the hem of his jallabeyya and then, lifting up his leg, he would mount the vehicle with a little sidelong hop, while his son held it steady. To me watching from the roof, it seemed hardly credible that so delicate a machine would succeed in carrying a man of Abu- Ali’s weight over that bumpy dirt track.... it was like watching a gargantuan lollipop being carried away by its stick (P.15).

The comparison here is very apt.

The second humorous incident in the novel is at Mabrouk’s house. Generally villagers have the tendency to believe strangers rather than the natives. This happens when Mabrouk’s family bought an Indian machine. Its name is “Makana Hindi!”. Mabrouk’s father is interested to invite Ghosh when he brings it home for the first time. Ghosh has not known anything about water-pumps. Mabrouk’s father invites him to verify whether it is a good one or not. Ghosh does not have even a slight acquaintance with this machine. Only to please them he verifies the pump’s diesel tank and says “It’s a very good manaka Hindi... Excellent! Azeem! It’s an excellent machine?”(P.54). Humour does not end here. The next day Jabir comes to Ghosh’s room and seeks his help to buy of the same kind when they move to Damanhour. These two humorous incident creates a room to show that the curiosity of the villages for technology. The account of the acquisition of a brand-new Indian diesel water pump by Mabrouk’s father is another case in point. He feels proud of possessing this rare machine. This is a means of moving forward along the lines of modernity for the peasant and counter-opportunity to impress.

During his second visit to Egypt in 1988 again he encounters with cultural problems. He comes to meet Ustaz Sabry. There are already rumours about this dokto’r al-Hindi (Ghsoh). This time Amm Taha is there at home.

“Tell me”, she said. ‘Is it true what they say about you? That in your country people burn their dead?’

Some people do ‘I said. It depends’.

Why do they do it? She cried. ‘Don’t they know it’s wrong? You can’t cheat the day of Judgment by burning your dead’...

... But now tell me this: is it that you worship cows? ... They said that just the other day you fell to your knees in front of a cow right out in the fields in front of everyone’.

‘You have to put a stop to it’ ... you should try to civilize you people. You should tell them to stop praying to cows and burning their dead”. [P.99].

Ghosh is confronted with the barriers of language. Though he knows their language, he often finds difficult to find a suitable word for ‘Cremate’ in Arabic. During the conversation with Khamees and Busaina again Ghosh encounters the same problem with culture. Ghosh declares that “My heart sank this was a question I encountered almost daily and since I had not succeeded in finding a word such as ‘cremate’ in Arabic, I knew I would have to give my assent to the term that Khamees had used: the verb ‘to burn’, which was the word for what happened to firewood and straw and the eternally damned”. [P.135]. Now Kamees asks,

“Even little children? Said Kamees. Do you burn little children?

Busaina spoke now... of course not... hugging her baby... they wouldn’t burn little dead children- no one could do that.

Yes, I said ...we do- we burn everyone.

But why? She cried. Why? Are people fish that you should fry them on a fire?

I don’t know why...It’s a custom- that’s how it was when I came into the world. I had nothing to do with it.

Khamees at last says “they do it so their bodies can’t be punished upon the day of Judgment...it’s very clever- they burn the bodies so there’ll be nothing left to punish and they won’t have to answer for their sins.” [P. 136].

The encounter does not stop here again Busaina interrupts, “Everything’s upside down in that country...tell us ya doctor: in your country do you at least have crops and fields and canals like we do?

Yes I said we have crops and fields, but we don’t always have canals. In some part of my country they aren’t needed because it rains all year around.

... so tell us then, she demanded, do you have night and day like we do?

Shut up woman, said Khamees. Of course they don’t. It’s day all the time over there, didn’t you know? They arranged it like that so they wouldn’t have to spend any money on lamps.”(P.138)

This provokes humour but mirrors up the ignorance of the natives. Thus Ghosh has faced the problem of using a term which sounds fit in to the context. When Ghosh attends the marriage at Nabeel’s house, he is asked to sit among the relatives of Nabeel who are strangers to Ghosh. They ask some typical questions like “Do your people cook on gas stoves or do they still burn straw and wood as we do? [P. 162]. At last the discussion goes to,

“Tell us then, said someone, ‘in your country amongst your people, what do you do with your dead?

They are burned, I said.... ‘And the ashes?’ another voice asked. ‘Do you at least save the ashes so that you can remember them by something?

No, I said. ‘No: even the ashes are scattered in the rivers’.....

... someone asked at last. ‘Is there no law or morality; can everyone do as they please-take a woman off the streets or sleep with another man’s wife?

‘No’, I began, but before I could complete my answer I was cut short.

So what about circumcision? A voice demanded...(p.165)

Thus Ghosh has encountered cross-cultural dialogues with the fellaheen. Ghosh is a scholar and very intelligent. He doesn't want to find the faults with the questions about the customs of other religion. As a foreigner and a student of Ghosh oxford knows the equation between male circumcision and clitoridectomy. Clitoridectomy is more dangerous operation since it requires the complete excision of the clitoris. It is hideously painful. It was declared illegal of the Revolution in Egypt. The narrator feels uneasy in the company of fellaheen's repeated questions about the Indians' cultural practices. His childhood experience of the 1964 communal riots in Dhaka moulds and determines his sensitivity to the Hindu-Muslim relations. When he becomes an easy target to a series of questions related to Indian culture, he is horrified and tries to find a rescuer. Now Nabeel comes to his rescue and says "they were only asking... Just like you do. They didn't mean any harm. Why do you let this talk of cows, and burning and circumcision worry you so much? These are just, it's natural that people should be curious. These are not things to be upset about' [P.166].

Thus the novel presents a picture to discover the human history and the roots of man's alienation. The alienation lies in man's dissatisfaction with whatever he has and the unquenching thirst for something more, something better.

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Celie's Struggle for Survival in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

- D. V. Adithya Joseph

Alice Malsenior Walker is an American author, poet and activist. She was born on Feb 9, 1944 to Willie Lee Walker and Minnie Lou Tallulah Grant who were sharecroppers. She was the youngest of eight children to her parents. Her parents opposed landlords who expected the children of black sharecroppers to work in the fields at a young age. Walker became partially blind in 1952 when one of her brothers misfired at her from a BBgun. Her family could not take her to hospital in time for immediate treatment. This shows the helplessness of her poor family. As she became to look intently at and sometimes insulted, she felt like an outcast and turned to read and write poetry for solace and to avoid her isolation. She started writing privately at a tender age of 8 years. Her first book was on poetry which she wrote while a senior at Sarah Lawrence. She took a brief sabbatical from writing when she was in Mississippi working for the Civil Rights Movement. In 1982, Walker published her best known and critically acclaimed work *The Color Purple* which was also a resounding commercial success. Critics lauded it as a land mark novel. Andrea Ford, a critic, noted in the *Detroit Free Press* that Walker has succeeded in creating a jewel of a novel.

The novel *The Color Purple* is a triumphant story of Celie, the chief character. Celie's narrative actually begins as a result of her victimization. She suffers the tyranny of the people and gradually overcomes her disadvantages and achieves a sense of self-worth. She begins to write letters to share her extreme depression and suppression. Her letters are addressed to god who is her usual addressee as she does not know to whom else she can write and share her inner conflict and silent suffering. This is because of her being raped repeatedly by her stepfather and also warned by him that she'd better not tell anyone that he's raping her, at least not anyone aside from God. "You better tell no body but god. It'd kill you Mammy" (page 3).

Her addressing to god shows the extent of her helplessness and

the intensity of her situation. God is the only being for her for a very longtime trusting him firmly that he will eventually bless her life. She writes the letters with love and lot of hope from the heart. She speaks only to God as she was emotionally and physically isolated unlike other characters in the novel. When she feels deserted by God, she places her faith in Nettie, her sister. She is able to express her true feelings and desires only in her letters and so they are very personal to her. Her writing letters symbolizes a certain voice that only she has unlike others. She does not want anyone to see her letters as they are very private and possess her personal emotions. One can see the growing internal strength and her final victory. Through Celie, Walker portrayed the inside world from the outside. Celie has written letters out of desperation and to preserve the core of her existence. "He (Pa) never had a kind word to say to me. Just say You gonna do what your mammy wouldn't" (1.4.5).

By this she proved herself willing to fight for the people whom she loves. Even as a downtrodden victim of her Pa, Celie sacrifices herself and offers herself to her father so that he keeps his hands off Nettie and doesn't disturb her sick mother who has just given birth to another child. In a similar manner, she fights for Shug with Mr. Father when he comes and criticizes. Celie silently spits in the man's water. Celie quietly took her own abuse voluntarily to save her mother and then Nettie from the cruelty of Fonso. She also decides to wed to Albert so that her sister Nettie will not be forced to marry him. She sends away Nettie from the farm to protect her from Albert being aware of losing the only family and friend she has in the world. So, it is evident that Celie loves others more than she loves herself. Celie bores three children by her step father and she was separated from them; the first is taken out and killed' ("then that little baby come out my pussy", her mom wants to know where the baby went. Celie says "God took it" (Pa got rid of the baby the hide the evidence that he's a child molester) (letter2)

The second a boy (Adam) and third a girl (Olivia) are given to a local couple. Celie was forced to marry Albert who beats her and badly mistreats her. She sacrifices her body to Albert without love or feeling. "I make myself wood" I say to myself, Celie, you a tree", (p 22)

And also she convinces herself that she has been a constant source of exploitation and had no hope (or) desire to know her body. She shows a state her degradation. Her fear of losing her life and shelter confined her to accept the actions that take place against her. Celie's estrangement is because of her ignorance of her own sense of self and oppressive behavior of her husband.

Harpo, One of the Mr.____ sons, married Sofia, a strong and physically imposing woman. She was mistreated by Harpo but she fights against him and Celie was amazed at her rebelliousness. As Celie feels intrigued and excited by the liberated version of femininity, she is attracted to Shug Avery, the extroverted and transcendental character of the novel, a blues singer.

Celie develops a strong acquaintance with her and as a result of it, Celie realizes that she is worthy of being loved and respected. It is through Shug Avery, Celie comes to know that Mr. _____ is hiding the letters written by Nettie, her sister. These letters remained as a source to reveal Nettie's travel to Africa with a missionary Couple. Celie also comes to know that Alphonso was not her real father.

After becoming the friend of Shug Avery, Celie learns many things and models herself after Shug. She becomes more independent by listening to Shug's views and opinions. Celie loves Shug before seeing Shug believing her to be the perfect picture of glamour and independence. "Celie sees a picture of Shug Avery and dreams about her. Shug is apparently gorgeous and fashionable" (letter 6).

Shug Avery takes care of Celie and a result Celie becomes lover of her as well as Albert's. But when Shug loves her back, she finds it hard to believe. In fact Shug is larger than life and she knows surely how to love. But the only problem is that she loves and keeps on loving even when she adds other people to the mix. She teaches Celie about her own self-worth, making her belief in herself. The novel clearly shows how black women are the victims in the hands if the black men. They are locked into unhelpful cultural myths concerning the nature of masculinity. Celie's relationship with the stubbornly independent Shug Avery resembles "Sisterhood" more than a cliché. Celie not only attains self-respect from Shug but also a faith in an Omniscient God. The same faith can be noticed in Alice Walker as well and as a result gave her

unflinching portrait of racial and sexual oppression with transcending hopefulness. Celie imagines what colors Shug A very should wear and requests "something purple, may be a little red in it too" (page 20).

Celie is always passive completely and she feels that it is better to stay alive than to fight and risk not surviving. The life described in her letters is one of almost grimness. Celie to withstand the sexual abuse of Fonso, the loss of her babies, the cruelty of Albert, the loss of her sister Nettie and the uncertainty of Shug's love. These things of suppression defined her life as a life filled with poverty, struggles and prejudice. In spite of these hardships, Celie never gives up faith. Strength and endurance, the ability to love unconditionally and the constant search for truth are the three leading qualities of Celie's personality. These come out of a belief in her even though those are sometimes tenuous. Her fortitude is truly amazing and a tribute to human kind as she finds it easy to love when she feels loved. She remains a caring and gentle soul.

Celie releases her restricted anger at Mr. ____ and leaves to go with Shug, where she begins a lucrative business of making paints. Sofia is at once a foil to Celie and a mirror to her. Sofia faces abusive childhood. Both Celie and Sofia suffer the tyranny of people who believe that have a natural right to dominate black women. Sofia is the most obvious descendant of slavery in the novel. But she beats them twice as hard as they gave it to her. Celie is admired by this quality. She is viciously punished for her disobedience towards the whites and her fate remains her to become a white woman's maid which is a deconstruction of the Mammy stereo type. But Celie maintains a steadfast, platonic love for Sofia. We can see this when Celie goes to the jail for Sofia and cares for her wounds in the imprisonment. She visits her often during the year of her imprisonment. "She's supposed to be in jail for twelve years" (letter 38)".

Celie encourages Sofia and gives her strength. Celie learns the power of women's solidarity through her bond with Sofia. Later in the novel, one comes to know that Mr. ____ has reformed himself and Alfonso has died leaving their property.

Celie's quest for truth is the most amazing trait of this beautiful character. As she is poor, black and female, she was at the bottom of

the social hierarchy in the south. As a female, she was sexually abused by her Pa (step father) and by her husband. This is just because of her being in a patriarchal social system that does not value a female except as a sexual object. She searches for the ways to stand up for this unjust system. As a poor girl, she is deprived of education and as an older daughter she was confined to stay at home and to take care of Fonso and the house. Fortunately Miss. Beasley and Nettie privately teach Celie. But it was difficult for her to learn because she was both physically and emotionally beaten by her abuse.

After going with Shug Avery and forming a business, Celie becomes an independent woman happily re-united with her sister and children by the end of the novel. Celie undergoes various phases of transformation. Initially, Celie is shown as a female being raped, beaten and humiliated in the hands of the male. Her innocence and fear of survival makes to restrict her and doesn't try to violate the situations. She forcefully bears all types of situations. Her life doesn't improve as she was trapped by the male figure that was powerful. Ultimately she becomes an agent of suffering bearing the consequences with fear and a hope of survival. "I think about Nettie, dead. She fight, she run away. What good it do? I don't fight. I stay where I am told but I'm alive" (page 29).

The ability to endure under such worst circumstances is Celie's key to her survival. By the end of the novel the characters are brought together and celebrate communal harmony. Harpo explains the significance of July 4th by saying that "white people busy celebrating their independence from England... so most black folks don't have work, us can spend the day celebrating each other (p. 243)

Celie believes and accepts that she is black and ugly. But she does not realize that one must not only survive but to survive without being degraded. We must know that Celie progresses in her life journey by inspiring from Nettie, Sofia and Shug Avery. These three women are considered to be the strong women in Celie's view. A known fact is that Celie comes to value herself as a person through her love for her sister Nettie.

Alice Walker through the character of Celie shows the primary issue of self-esteem which the black writers usually do. Walker resents

people who differentiate themselves because of the black skin that is not much valued. She also emphasizes the importance of female friendship and sister hood in black community. Walker identifies Womanism as an empowered form of feminism just as purple is a bold to an empowered version of lavender.

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Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra* - An Exploration

- D. Ramesh

Gita Mehta has been acclaimed as an international cross-cultural critic. Her writing distinguishes itself by freshness as much as by a cosmopolitan outlook. Mehta is not wedded to any 'isms' and that sets her apart even from the contemporary women writers of India. To encounter her writing is virtually to make a fresh discovery of India. The present paper is an attempt to show love as the dominant theme in the novel *A River Sutra*. The novel offers authentic interpretations of Indian cultural values, music, art forms and heritage. In this novel, we find Mehta's major involvement with human subsistence in modern times. The setting of the novel is on the banks of India's holiest river the Narmada. It is not only the setting but also the principle of the novel. It includes both a meditation and an exploration of the novel and also finds the simple pattern of the pilgrims' voyage in search of Moksha.

The river in India is generally considered as a sacred one and has the spiritual bliss. It is also believed that gods stay on the banks of rivers and thus there are many shrines on the banks of rivers. There is an assumption that if someone takes bath in any of the sacred rivers, the sins are purified. Since it is a spiritual belief even now also people are continuing washing away their sins. The novel, *A River Sutra* contains many interlinked stories within it are narrated to the narrator by other characters of the novel. Mehta presents unconnected stories in the novel - stories about Hindu and Jain ascetics, courtesans and minstrels, diamond merchants and tea executives, Muslim clerics and music teachers, tribal folks. The narrator is unnamed and unidentified in the novel, is gaining knowledge which brings on the shores of Narmada where he meets many people and learns from them various ideas of life. Unlike most first-person narrative, the narrator in this novel, reveals very little about himself. He seems to have no life story, no main event that made him choose to live a retired life on the banks of the Narmada River. In contrast to this, the people whom the narrator meets and the stories he hears, reveal the disorderly nature of human life. Without exception, the narrator meets or hears tales of extraordinary people;

people who have made enormous sacrifices for love or who have been treated cruelly by life.

The novel *A River Sutra* set in the bank of the river shows how the narrator is getting experiences from the people those come/reside on the bank of the river. In the novel the narrator often meets someone who comes to rescue in the banks of the river which gives shelter to everyone who comes after some disturbance in their normal life. The narrator listens to their stories and gains experience/knowledge from their experiences. Thus the shore becomes a guide to develop the narrator's knowledge by providing him the opportunity of meeting those strangers. There are six stories; The Monk's, The Musician's, The Teacher's, The Executive's, The Courtesan's and The Minstrel's. Almost all characters in different stories converge for one or the other reason on the banks of the river for renunciation and tranquility and breathe repeated motifs of love and rebirth. Mehta presents love as the dominant motive force in the stories.

The Indian River is considered as a religious one. Dr. Mitra in this novel also narrates how the people consider the river as a religious one. He discusses about the historical memory of the Narmada saying the great Alexandrine geographer Ptolemy wrote about Narmada. He also remembers that the Greeks and the Alexandrines had heard about the river Narmada's holiness and the religious suicides at Amarkantak. He adds that people fasting to death or immolating themselves on the river's banks, or drowning in waters to gain release from the cycle of birth and rebirth. Dr. Mitra says thus,

In the silence I can hear waves lapping at the riverbanks and I think of the ascetics meditating by the holy pool at Amarkantak, seeking through their meditations to liberate themselves from the cycle of rebirth and death (Gita Mehta : 42.)

Thus the spiritual bliss the river has was an age old belief and is being followed by many who come to the banks of the Narmada to worship her. Both the narrator and Dr. Mitra, narrator's friend, also believe that the river has some spiritual power within it. They somehow believe the stories told by the strangers. Dr. Mitra feels happy being in the banks of the river and shares his observations with the narrator as,

A mere glimpse of Narmada's waters is supposed to cleanse a human being of generations of sinful births. Just think how pure you and I must be, gazing on this river every day (Gita Mehta:151.)

In the novel, freedom becomes the question of spiritual one. The Jain monk's story which is narrated as the first story to the narrator shows the spiritual freedom, he wanted to get. On his way, he meets sturdy tribal women from the nearby village, Vano. On one occasion, he met a Jain monk who had recently renounced the world. The bureaucrat pretends ignorance to know why Jain monks must shave their heads and cover their mouths. The monk says that nonviolence is very tiring and most difficult for a man to practice and keep. A close look at the stories of the bureaucrat and the monk becomes evident that the bureaucrat retires from his active life hoping to find the meaning of life, as he lost his wife and had no children. So, he chose going into the forest by preferring a less important job on the banks of the Narmada. But indifference to it, the monk suddenly decides to give up wealth, wife, children, friends and all the comforts of luxurious living. Commenting on his decision, Parasuram Ramamoorthi writes, "His decision is based on intuition and faith whereas the narrator's life is one pursuit guided by reason." (Parasuram Ramamoorthi:146)

Though the monk is young, he renounces everything, the description he told the narrator about the grand function by his father when he renounced the world shows that he is immature to renounce the world. The narrator understands his mission as,

Then I remind myself that the purpose of the pilgrimage is endurance. Through their endurance the pilgrims hope to generate the heat, the tapas, that links men to the energy of the universe, as the Narmada River is thought to link mankind to the energy of Shiva. (Gita Mehta:8)

Haunted by the Jain monk's encounter, the bureaucrat seems disturbed. Although Tariq Mia often teases the bureaucrat, he is the man who tells stories and clarifies his doubts. Tariq Mia explains that the Jain monk loves the human heart and its secrets because it has only one secret, the capacity to love. To understand the ways of the human heart, Tariq Mia tells 'The Teacher's Story'. It is about Master Mohan, who

has a greedy family dominated by a nagging and scolding wife. Master Mohan is a music teacher and remains as an unsuccessful ambitious singer. Though he leads an unhappy life, his gentle nature always ushers him to small acts of kindness. He stood spellbound to the voice of a young blind Muslim boy, who enters the song leading two musical lines above the others:

I prostrate my head to the blade of Your Sword. O, the wonder
of my submission.

O, the wonder of Your protection. (Gita Mehta:61.)

As being kind, Master Mohan becomes the guardian of the boy, Imrat, and decides to train him. He grooms him in music and discovers that the boy to be a prodigy. He instructs Imrat to sing songs of Kabir, Mirabai, Khusrau, Tulasidas, Chisti and Chandidas. His singing becomes so popular and attracts the attention of a music records company. Unable to bear the rude behaviour of his wife, Master Mohan leaves the house for Imrat to continue his practice. The boy's popularity invites him to sing at a great Sahib's palace, but Master Mohan refuses. It is Master Mohan's wife, who wants to make some money out of the boy, accepts the offer and receives five thousand rupees. Later, the boy is forced to sing and his singing fills the hall with ecstasy and mystic raptures. When the great Sahib rises, Master Mohan thinks the Sahib is going to dance to the music of the boy. But when he slits the throat of the boy, his cold cruel logic is revealed,

Such a voice is not human. What will happen to music
if this is the standard by which God judges us? (Gita
Mehta:81.)

The gruesome end drives the Master to the verge of madness. He comes to the banks of the Narmada in search of peace, but he does not get it as the story leaves him with many questions unanswered. Tariq Mia's explanation is that he does not know answer and it is a story about the human heart. The bureaucrat questions himself whether police catch him or not and why the Sahib kills the boy. Unable to come to a conclusion, Master Mohan commits suicide on his way back. In this context, Pradeep Trikha comments, "The story indicates distrust in the goodness of human beings. It has a sensitive emotional unfolding,

which consequently mark the ways of the world and generates tolerance towards inhuman acts of man”. (Pradeep Trikha:176)

In the novel, the river remains as a hope-giver by giving them peaceful mind to worship. The Narmada is portrayed from different points of view by many characters in all those stories. The main characters in those six stories come to the river banks of the river Narmada to find solution to their problems. Therefore the river is taken granted for life-giver, mind-consoler and remains as the symbol of hope those who suffer in their life. When the narrator is discussing about the river and the relationship to those with Dr. Mitra, another character who shares his ideas with the narrator talks about the river as,

Her holiness is believed to dispel the malevolent effects of Saturn so all manner of epileptics, depressives, and other unfortunates rush to her bands. And yet, the Narmada is also a magnet to scholars. Towns on the banks of the river are renowned for the learning of their Brahmins. (Gita Mehta:152-153)

Thus, the novel *A River Sutra* ends in a note of ambiguity; however all the stories are treatments of love and life giving principles. The bureaucrat cannot believe that Prof. Shankar was once an ascetic and now an admirer of the river Narmada. Gita Mehta sketches that the river is a perennial source of life, so it has become immortal. Parasuram Ramamoorthi writes, “*A River Sutra* is an attempt to subversiveness to present the river as an eternal source of the flow of life.” (Parasuram Ramamoorthi:153)

The progress of the six stories can be seen as variations on the theme of love and the secret of the human heart. Commenting about the uniqueness of the stories of the unsettled nature of man, swinging between happiness and despair, Asit Chandmal points out, “There are stories of obsession and renunciation, desperation, and destruction, desire and death. Above all there are stories of sexual, sensual and spiritual longings and love.” (Asit Chandmal: 30)

In the novel the river Narmada is portrayed as river full of life and hope. It gives shelter to many living things other than human beings also. The river tried to give a sort of experience to the narrator of the

novel and others those who dwell in the bank of it and remained as a guide of giving knowledge and experience to them. The Indian River Narmada is seen with the spiritual bliss, “In the living stones of the Narmada, God is to be found”. (Gita Mehta:174)

In the novel the narrator is observing the experiences of different kinds of people living on the banks of the Narmada River. It gives different experiences and so the narrator gets intellectual bliss through the real stories and also the spiritual nature of the Narmada River is realized by the narrator through other characters he meets. At the end of the novel the narrator is moving away from the banks of Narmada but the lessons given by it are pleasant memories to him. In *A River Sutra* for the narrator the river is not only symbol of experience but also as the guide to the characters in the stories and to himself. The narrator stays at one place, but the people come and go from him and give him experiences; therefore the river stands for experience-giver/guide of knowledge in this novel.

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The portrayal of Childhood Reminiscences in the novels of Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand

- Dara Babu

According to William Wordsworth “Child is the Father of Man” which indicates that childhood life is very much important to shape the future of children. Presenting the Protagonist’s past life is one of the major concerns in literature. Through this the readers can understand the psychological feelings and emotions of almost all the major characters in a work of art. Creative writers often dream about childhood in order to recollect it and write the same in their fictionalizing events. These childhood recollections appear autobiographical and become inevitable that such writers present these with care and commitment.

Describing Childhood, Erich Neumann has said,

What is childhood...the time of great events; the time in which the great figures are close at hand and look out from behind the corner of the house next door. The time in which the deepest symbols, of the soul are everyday realities and the world is still radiant with its innermost depth...In the childhood, there is as yet no separation between personal and supra personal, near and far, inward soul and outward world. (*Art and the Creative Unconscious*, P.138).

Childhood is a stage of life, associated with chronological age, located between infancy and youth and including adolescence. The word child has been used in many societies to indicate a kin relationship but also to indicate a state of servitude. But biological determinants have not always been paramount in indicating childhood. Sigmund Freud, the father of psychology, is of the notion that childhood is of key significance in the adjustment of the individual to mature well-being. Freud developed his theories of the sub-conscious partly through considering the reasons early childhood memory becomes lost. Since childhood was regarded as the key stage in the successful, or unsuccessful, development of ego, psychological well-being in adult life hinged in this period of time and healing might be effected through

the recall of repressed childhood experience. Many disciplines came into emergence with the advent of science and technology. These fields stressed the importance of creating a healthy environment during the childhood. Before the second half of the twentieth century, physiological, psychological, and cognitive mapping of development was the dominant theoretical model for the study of childhood. However research and theory which emerged from the disciplines of history, anthropology, and sociology came to strongly question the developmental model, shifting the focus from the child itself to the socially and culturally constructed view of childhood specific to time and place.

Charles Dickens crafted his art by giving immense scope and importance to childhood. Charles Dickens is a writer who is very sympathetic towards his child characters. “He is personally aware of the exploitation to which the children are subjected because of his own history of workhouse incarceration, which parallels Oliver’s workhouse experience” (Louis James, P.89). This explains the pathos in his novels, surrounding the uneducated and deprived orphans whose loss of childhood is echoed through their physical exploitation. Dickens’ novels ultimately petition society to protect these assailed juveniles. However, the Victorian society is paradoxical because it perceived childhood as essential, yet most of its juveniles are not given the chance to safely experience growth and transition into adulthood. Deborah Gorham states that : “...childhood had great symbolic importance, but many Victorians suffered from an uncertainty about the nature of childhood and the proper relationship of children to the structure of the family and the wider society. In the late – Victorian period, many people who were concerned about the welfare of children also found themselves uncertain about how the boundaries of childhood should be defined” (*The ‘Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’ Re-Examined : Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late Victorian England*, P.355).

Like the Victorian novelist Charles Dickens, Mulk Raj Anand’s ardent advocacy for the poor downtrodden ‘underdog’ is quite patent on the very surface. The titles of his various novels are a clear pointer to the various types of exploited classes whose miseries and disabilities

are highlighted in his novels. He uses all his skill in painting a more realistic, faithful and 'true to life' picture of these various 'miserables' of Indian society. He brings out the pathos and poignancy of the feelings and thoughts of his heroes and heroines, who are poor, socially, economically and people of the lowest rung of Indian society. These heroes are touched by the spirit of modern discontent and they try to revolt against the existing order. They feel pain and suffer consequences under the dead weight of useless conventions and outmoded themselves breaking down under it, bringing to the surface all the anguish and agony of their life and expressing the fury of the novelist against the unjust social, economic, political and religious order of the day.

The theme of childhood is predominant in the novels of Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand. Dickens always cherishes the memories of his childhood. And childhood always chains him, enchants him, and holds him in its magic spell. Not a single impression is left out, not a single memory is forgotten. Everything appears fresh and lively. Hence, the actuality and poignancy of these pictures of childhood always impresses upon the readers.

Charles Dickens is sympathetic and empathetic towards the children of London. Dickens presents with infinite sympathy the woe and sufferings of child life. He is primarily interested in presenting the sorrows, sufferings and privations suffered by his child-characters. The hardships borne by David Copperfield, under the tyrannical domination of Mr. Murdstone and Miss Murdstone are brought out in a touchingly tender manner. The readers are inclined to shed tears for the lot of little David as he washes bottles and suffers the pangs of penury. A similar fate falls on Oliver Twist, who again wins our sympathy for the cruel treatment meted out to him by the parish administrators and mentors of workhouses. When Oliver asks for more food and is reprimanded by the dispenser, one can feel sympathy for the poor boy. The lot of Pip in *Great Expectations* in the earlier chapters is equally touching and moves the readers to sympathy for him.

Dickens' characters are representations of the actual world as Rosenberg remarks : "...the best Dickens' characters are examples of verisimilitudinous representation" (*Character and Contradiction in*

Dickens, P.147). Dickens' characters are not only representations of the world, but also reflections of existent beings, "...and assumed, by virtually all readers, to be representations of people" (P.148). Therefore, his child characters represent real children with actual experiences and backgrounds such as poverty, orphanage, neglect and deprivation of education.

Firstly, Dickens' child characters are usually orphaned or their parentage is unclear, for example Pip (*Great Expectations*), Esther (*Bleak House*), Oliver (*Oliver Twist*), Estella (*Great Expectations*) and Sissy Jupe (*Hard Times*). Estella and Esther are initially introduced as orphans, but the reader later discovers that they are actually abandoned children as is Sissy Jupe. All the three characters are adopted, for example Estella is adopted by Miss Havisham, while Esther is adopted by John Jarndyce and lastly, Sissy is adopted by Mr. Thomas Gradgrind. The three young ladies have a common background, that of lower class parentage, yet they are adopted by middle class guardians, therefore they eventually become members of that class. Charles Dickens' seems to suggest that a lower class member can never belong to the middle class unless the elevation into that upper class is generated by the middle class. Dickens' belief is that the lower class' dependency on the middle class is inevitable. To a larger extent, he is also suggesting that it is the middle class who can change the plight of the lower class and, therefore it is their responsibility to eradicate poverty.

According to Rawlins, Dickens' *Great Expectations* is a way for Dickens to "dream a healthy relationship with the child within him" (*Great Expiations: Dickens and the Betrayal of the Child*, P.668). One can certainly see how the tragedies of his lifetime would compel him to use his gift of writing as a psychological release. As Rawlins explains, "In his last years, the demons of his childhood tear at him with increasing violence; with increasing desperation he seeks escape in self-destructive behavior" (*Great Expiations: Dickens and the Betrayal of the Child*, P.668). *Great Expectations* was one of the last novels that Dickens completed, in 1860-61. It makes sense that the middle-aged Dickens might have been looking back on his life, evaluating the good and the bad. In this novel he records clearly all the joys and sufferings that one experiences in a life-time.

Dickens' novel *Great Expectations* seems to cling more to reality than those by the majority of his Romantic contemporaries. Rawlins remarks : "Fantasy has traditionally been a theater where the demands of the superego can be circumvented and one's shadow be allowed to triumph." (*Great Expiations: Dickens and the Betrayal of the Child*, P.669). Yet Dickens' fiction is more than fantasy. The characters are more real and more tangible. This is because he really puts his own heart and soul into his characters by weaving his own experiences into his works. He also avoids delving too far into the supernatural. In *Dickens and the Grown-up Child*, Malcolm Andrews points out the balance between reality and fantasy that Dickens himself felt to be necessary in his work :

Dickens was always careful to indicate that, although he was a novelist with a professional interest in imaginary worlds, he was also a clear-sighted, responsible, business-like adult who knew the difference between illusion and reality. He was aware that, without such assurance, his fiction would not be taken seriously. (P.42)

The characters in his novels are convincing because he was committed to portraying reality. It is almost as if there is a real possibility that Pip, or someone like him, actually existed. "Dickens appeals to the common experience of the reader" (Andrews, P.43). The reader is easily able to identify with the bitter-sweetness of the character's lives in his novels. In *Great Expectations*, for example, life for Pip and Estella is by no means perfect. There are no easy solutions to the problems they face, and in this way Dickens makes his characters more real to the reader.

Besides applying his own experiences in his novels, Dickens also utilized many other sources of reality in creating his characters. He made an effort to really understand the thoughts and emotions of children. He viewed children as sensitive creatures whose thoughts and feelings deserved special consideration. In one of his late letters, for instance, Dickens described the intensity of children's feelings and how adults needed to be sensitive to these feelings : "Force a child at such a time to, be Spartan with [the child], send it into the dark against its will,

leave it a lonely bedroom against its will, you had better murder it” (qtd. in Collins, P.186). Dickens was very empathetic towards children. He seemed to understand their thoughts and feelings. Because he took that into consideration, it enabled him to add depth to the child characters in his novels, which made them more real to his readers. He simply applied his own mind and thought to read their status of life. He keeps his record and space in portraying the destitute children and suffering ones. He makes use of his writing attitude to bring out the attitude of children.

A thorough study of Dickens' novels reveals the importance that is attached to childhood and its joys and sorrows. Truly Dickens is a master in handling the theme of childhood and his experiences in his childhood are reflected in the novels he had written. There must be a greater volume of writing about children in Dickens than in all the other Victorian novelists put together.

Like Charles Dickens, Mulk Raj Anand is undoubtedly a champion of the poor, the lowly, and the down-trodden. It is simply because he thinks that poverty is no matter for complacent pride. Food, clothing, and shelter are the basic needs of any human society. Starvation, disease, and unemployment are the factors which stifle the healthy growth of a nation, and so they must be removed root-and-branch. Anand also wants all this to be achieved through the resources made available by scientific and technological advancement, and not through bloodshed and war. These are the ideas of a humanist. He further says that all people must have freedom. He recognizes the importance of education as a vital social institution. He wants free primary education to be given to all children.

Mulk Raj Anand selects a particular untouchable boy, Bakha, as the central figure of *Untouchable* and selectively narrates certain incidents that happen to him in a day's span. He suggests that the impact they have in effecting a gradual growth of the boy's personality and in producing in him an acute awareness of his low social status and the possible ways out of the situation. The very fact that Anand has chosen an untouchable as the hero, a boy from the lowest stratum of Indian society - ignored by his predecessors as an unsuitable theme for fiction - establishes Anand's firm faith in the dignity of man

irrespective of caste and social position, a doctrine central to Anand's humanism.

The character of Bakha also illustrates Anand's concept of work as worship, his belief in dignity of labour, and the importance of developing man's personality as a whole. He does his work willingly and neatly. He has unconsciously assimilated the idea of devotion to his duty. Cleaning human excreta is regarded by many as a low and dirty work. But Bakha has no inhibitions and he looks clean and sensitive in spite of his work. In fact, the hard job has made him strong and well-built.

The most important doctrine of Anand's humanism that finds clear amplification in *Untouchable* is, however, rejection of casteism as a cruel evil, the practice of which results in suppression of untouchables, who are denied their fundamental right to grow into respectable citizens of society. These unfortunate men are segregated from rural community, dreaded as lepers and treated most contemptuously because of the enormously useful work they do in tidying up the entire village as well as cleaning the dungpots of all castemen.

Bakha in the novel *Untouchable*, for instance, narrates how difficult it is for him in spite of his most pitiful, repeated requests - to fetch a doctor to attend his dying son, simply because he is a mere untouchable, worthy of only neglect and contempt. Bakha, in fact, suffers no less. He is a fine boy-good, tender, and intelligent. But all the reward the society gives him is insult or injury, or a mixture of both. Though he is quite tired of his morning round of work of cleaning latrines, he goes out, at the instance of his father, to sweep the main road and the temple courtyard. It is, of course a welcome change for him - a change from his odorous world to a world of light and sunshine. Bakha feels elated as he proceeds towards the gates of the town which offers him a gallery of colourful things - fruit-stalls, sweet-meat stalls, betel-leaf shops, and so on. Now he stops at a shop to buy a packet of 'Red Lamp' cigarettes. He puts an anna [coin] on the board. The shop-keeper dashes some water over the coin, picks it up and throws it into the counter. Then he flings the packet of cigarettes at Bakha, "as a butcher might throw a bone to an insistent

dog sniffing round the corner of his shop”. (*Untouchable*, P.30).

Mulk Raj Anand, in the novel *Untouchable*, portrays another incident of Bakha's humiliation. He reaches the temple courtyard full of all manner of men and women, singing and chanting the several names of gods which he can hardly comprehend. However unable to suppress his curiosity, he goes near the temple-door and catches just a glimpse of the dark sanctuary and its idols. He is moved by the chorus of the devotees. But the next moment he is stunned to hear the priest shout: "Polluted, polluted". The whole crowd takes up the cue and starts shouting the same words. Bakha is unnerved. Anand vividly pictures what would be Bakha's predicament and reaction.

The novel *Coolie* is the story of Munoo, a fourteen years old hill boy, who is forced to leave his idyllic village in the Kangra Valley so that he may work and see the world. The first contact with reality shatters his dreams. Arriving in the house of a minor bank clerk, he falls foul of a shrewish and vindictive housewife, and before he flees from his employers' frenzied rage, he has relieved himself near their doorstep and thereby lowered their social prestige. He next finds himself in a primitive pickle and jam factory, hidden away among the reeking lanes and dark alleys of the feudal town of Daultapur. The proprietor who has befriended him is bankrupt by the thievery of his partner and hurled back into the ranks of the labourers from where he had sought to rise. Out on the streets again, Munoo becomes a coolie, facing desperate competition from other coolies for a chance to serve as a beast of burden.

Both Charles Dickens and Mulk Raj Anand trace the life of children by mixing their childhood in their respective novels, having children as prime characters. Though the concentration of Charles Dickens is all type of children, Mulk Raj Anand cares for the downtrodden alone. The children in Charles Dickens' novels are destitutes, orphans, and left outs but Mulk Raj Anand's children in his novels are untouchable and downtrodden. Children are instinctive having strong imagination. They have both a sensitive and sensational nature. Charles Dickens children see life with no logic or philosophy. They view it blindly and passionately with curiosity and suspense. This shows that Charles Dickens has a thorough understanding of children.

The child characters of both the writers have left an indelible impression on the minds of the readers. Charles Dickens' children are the victims of industrialization whereas Mulk Raj Anand's children are the victims of both imperialism and casteism. No writer's child is born with silver spoon in his mouth. So they faced a lot of humiliation and suffering during their childhood which in disguise has helped them to understand what life is and to face it boldly.

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