



Literary Vibes

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Editorial

Literary Vibes, A Refereed National Journal in English Studies, is published twice in a year since 2012 with the objective to provide an integrated platform for research in English Literature and English Language Teaching and to deliver free access to the knowledge produced through research.

Most of the articles address the current issues in the field of English Literature thus making it possible to have a full length research on the discussed writers. A few papers touched upon the English Language Teaching.

We hope this issue of the 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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‘Imagined Dalitness’: Manu Joseph’s *Serious Men*¹

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In featuring a dalit as its chief protagonist, Manu Joseph’s (1974-) debut novel *Serious Men* (2010, winner of five lakh rupee the Hindu Literary Prize; the PEN/Open Book Award and short listed for Man Asian Literary Prize) is an addition to the precursor to the genre of dalit writing in English that include Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* (1935), Bababi Bhattacharya’s *He who Rides the Tiger* (1960), Sankarakutti Menon Marath’s *The Wound of Spring* (1960), Padmini L. Sengupta’s *Red Hibiscus* (1962), Shanta Rameshwara Rao’s *Children of God* (1976), Romen Basu’s *Outcaste: A Novel* (1986), Rohinton Mistry’s *A Fine Balance* (1995), Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997), which feature dalit characters in the lead.

On account of having a dalit as the novel’s protagonist, the author won accolades from critics as well as fellow novelists. Shashi Deshpande for instance writes: "In Indian writing in English we haven't yet approached the novel in the way this man has done...He has spoken about caste. We are ignoring reality, but he has straightforwardly plunged into the mind of a *Dalit* man and has done it with style and panache. To have a *Dalit* man speak in English and make it authentic is very difficult; but Manu Joseph has done it very easily, without making it grotesque" (Deshpande). The author is praised for “fearlessness in tackling issues of caste head on.” He is credited with writing about slum life, which he claims to have observed during his stint as a journalist in Mumbai. The publisher, Roland Philips hails "the freshness of the voice and storytelling" and the book's "very sly humour."

¹ This work forms part of the Major Research Project on “Dalits in Recent Indian English Novel: Emergence of a New Genre,” (2012-15) and the author gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the UGC.

However two aspects about representation of dalits need to be addressed: does the way the dalits represented in the novel serve the understanding of dalits' subordination and their struggle for liberation; and whether, like other novelists, the novelist represents caste to the foreigners as exotica? This paper attempts to address these concerns. The dalit representation in *Serious Men* needs to be examined critically, though the novel is written against the postcolonial backdrop of interrogating the hegemony. A peripheral reading of the novel would give an impression that the writer is progressive in the selection of the dalit theme. But critically interpreted, the portrayal of the dalit theme in the Indian English novels is found wanting in authenticity, self-respect, protest and reclaiming identity: "The representation of the dalit culture, ritual, tradition, intra and inter-caste contradictions, *inter se* untouchability, hostility of the State against the dalits, futility of the State in changing dalits' lives hardly find suitable place in Indian English novels" (Purushotham 45).

To begin, it is important to note the way the dalit protagonist is described in physical terms. Ayyan Mani sports thick black hair; combs sideways; parts his hair by a crooked line: "His eyes were keen and knowing. A healthy monstrosity shattered a perpetual smile. A dark tidy man, but somehow inexpensive" (3). Mani, brought up in strict conservative set up, is presented as "something of a legend" (7). Highly assertive of his identity, Mani is critical of the discrimination based on caste. Set in Worli Seaface, Mumbai, Manu portrays the pathetic conditions of the slums: "a hive of ten thousand one-room homes" (6). The chawls in Worli, which served as a prison in the British period were converted into homes for the homeless: "now lived over eighty thousand people who heaved and sighed with the burdens of new unions and the relief of death" (6-7). The constrained living conditions of the one-room apartments are symbolic of the marginalization of the poor.

What does Mani do as a mark of protest? He converts to Buddhism: "Buddha is our god. The other gods are gods the Brahmins created. In their deviant stories, those gods fought against demons which were us. Those black demons were our forefathers" (50-51). However, Mani's conduct at and out of home does not conform to any of the Buddhist traits. His conversion to Buddhism is not guided by

the tenets of Buddhism. Contrary to his tall claims to be progressive, Mani's thoughts and deeds are driven by the traditional belief system.

Mani works as an assistant to Arvind Acharya, a brahmin astronomer in Mumbai. He is self conscious about his subordinated status as much as Acharya is about his sense of social superiority. Acharya, by virtue of social elitism, considers himself intellectually superior, and therefore commands social respect. He considers Mani far inferior. True to the corresponding social status, Mani speaks Tamil while Acharya English. His success is seen as a result of free will, of sheer hard work and intellect. Mani concocts, out of unfounded frustration, that his ten-year-old son is a mathematical genius. Then on the lie goes beyond Mani's control leading to a predicament he would never escape from. The relationship between Mani and Acharya juxtaposes the novelist's portrayal of the dalits.

Mani manages to publish an article in *The Times* featuring the child prodigy along with a photograph of the boy. Having read the article, the brahmins summon Mani to ascertain whether or not the young dalit boy is really a genius. This attitude of the brahmins is suggestive that the dalits are incapable of being meritorious. The novelist's portrayal of Mani as a liar and manipulator especially with regard to possessing merit is an instance of the dalit stereotype; of the upper castes' undermining of the dalits being incapable of merit. In his attempt to juxtapose a dalit's desire to be successful, the author had to attribute cheating to the dalits. Acharya succeeds in his scientific endeavor by dint of sheer hard work and merit. In contrast, Mani survives by concocting lies.

Another aspect of Mani being un-dalit is about his attitude towards his wife. He controls his wife ruthlessly like any other oppressive husband in the patriarchal system. Oja, his wife is subjected to suppression like a typical housewife. Oja's liberty and freedom are subjected to questioning: "a rudimentary kitchen that ran into a tiny stained-glass bathroom where one would fit and two would be in a relationship (9). Mani controls Oja's life in all aspects. For Mani, Oja is nothing more than an object of pleasure and lust. As an outlet she derives pleasure in television serials identifying herself with the persona in the serials as a form of freedom. This kind of portrayal of a dalit woman as a victim of patriarchy is not common in the dalit families. The dalit women are self-assertive, and they challenge their

oppressive husbands. The portrayal of Oja as a docile and suffering wife is not common in the dalit families. The dalit women would rather walk out of the wedlock than to suffer in the hands of their husbands, an aspect which is portrayed powerfully by the Tamil dalit writer, Bama Faustina in her novels and short stories.

Another character, Sister Chastity serves the novelist's purpose of portrayal of dalits vis-à-vis the upper castes. Sister Chastity runs a missionary institution. According to the narrator, the missionary education aims at religious conversions. Sister Chastity lures Mani by offering him the material benefits. Sister Chastity holds: "The Brahmins, the kind of things they did the things they do even now. In private, they still call you the Untouchables, do you know that? In public they call you "Dalits", but in private they call you such horrible things" (21). The upper caste people like the Hindus do not allow the low castes to prosper in life. Mani seems to believe that nothing significant has changed in the society.

The novelist romanticizes Mani's character. Irrespective of a dalit's limitations regarding awareness on account of his social backwardness, Mani articulates proficiently the dalit anger against the oppressive social system. The juxtaposition of Acharya and Mani as the social binaries is quite artificial: the former, devoted to an experiment in the beginning, is slowly drawn towards Oparna, a good looking scientist. His commitment to sustained research gives way to carnal pleasure leading to his downfall. Mani uses his lies about his son's ability as a means of power. However Mani's intentions of projecting his son as a genius are clueless. The novelist himself is hazy about the episode of caste system and media culture. To add to the way the author confounds the theme, the novel's title sounds ironic: Mani and Acharya are portrayed to be serious; both of them pass through the absurd and strange predicament. Thus *Serious Men* fails in focusing an aspect that its author desires to satirize: the absurdity of the dalits through Mani; the seriousness of the brahmins through Acharya; the culture of the media. The portrayal of the protagonist is based on romanticization and negative portrayal of the dalits. The social life of the dalits is not documented in the novel. The portrayal of the dalit characters is unrealistic, stereotyped and imagined by using the dalits as mere means.

Serious Men represents the dalit experience vis-à-vis the failure of the state in addressing the dalit problems. The author uses satire to

portray realism: “Yet *Serious Men* succeeds in portraying the reality of dalit experiences without defining the identity of its protagonist” (Gupta). Mani acts subversively by inserting certain statements into the ‘Thought of the Day,’ which are a bit anti-brahminical. Mani’s wife, Oja is portrayed as naïve and innocent. Mani is portrayed negatively by attributing to him such traits as manipulative, sly, and scheming with endless machinations. The anger and other negative qualities are attributed to his caste. The negative portrayal, interestingly, won not only critical acclaim but awards too. The technique the author employs is that he would first create a character, attribute certain qualities like deviousness, anger, and call him a dalit transposing the stereotyped features on him. Joseph says in an interview about the creation of Mani:

When Mani first formed in my head he was just the same but he was not a Dalit. He had this anger and a comical interpretation of the modern world and modern women and science and everything around him. But he was not a Dalit. Then I asked myself, why is he so angry, can I give him a justification? And the idea of a Dalit male who is trying to create from thin air the first Dalit boy genius just fascinated me. (Joseph)

Anand asks:

Consider what kind of social reality leads a writer like Joseph to decide that Mani *ought to be* a Dalit because he is “so angry.” Mani’s specific kind of imagined ‘Dalitness’ is clearly a by-product of the post-Mandal anti-reservation rage of the upper classes of India, represented with deep sympathy by the Brahmin-controlled media. Such a portrayal of a scheming Dalit—who is merely a prop in the novel—would perhaps not have been possible in the period before the 1980s or the 1990s. (Anand)

Joseph employs the same technique in creating another dalit character, this time Adi, Mani’s son. He portrays him to be not only poor by birth, but as an underperformer in the school, with a hearing disability, and therefore cheats in tests. This amounts to stating that dalits lack in merit. As though not enough, Joseph creates a scene in which a dalit mob ransack the Institute of Theory and Research because of a brahmin’s anti-dalit comments. The mob is depicted to be ravaging without being capable of argument and logic. What is interesting is that

Manu Joseph needs dalit characters as ‘props,’ but the fact that they are dalits is not acceptable to him: “But yes I am surprised that everybody seems to be talking about the fact that Mani is a Dalit while I think that is the least important detail of the novel” (Joseph).

Thus the dalit characters in the novel are portrayed with such stereotyped traits as inefficiency, lies, being romantic, docility, malleability and lacking in talent. The author portrays the dalit characters as ones without agency. The portrayals do not keep pace with an awareness of the history of the evolving realities of dalit life—specifically, the assertion of dalit identity and the rising consciousness of their social subordination. Manu Joseph, like his counterparts in the genre, has empathy sans agency since his dalit characters lack distinct subjecthood prior to their involvement with high-caste characters.

A dalit’s capacity to express dissent, protest against subordination and struggle for identity is not represented in *Serious Men*. The dalit’s capacity to act for liberation is missing in the novel. Mani, Ojha and their son in the novel are portrayed as victims of their own making. The novelist portrays unequivocally the victimization of the dalit characters as a consequence of or bequeathed because of either hereditary or environmental forces. All the three dalit characters are portrayed as incapable of fighting the oppressive system. The characters are not portrayed as capable of overcoming their limitations. *Therefore* it may be concluded that Manu Joseph uses the dalit question as a means of exoticizing India since he connives at the essential dalitness in the portrayal of the characters. The dalit characters could have been portrayed as acting against social discrimination unconsciously, involuntarily with the specific direction of liberation. These aspects are missing in *Serious Men*. The dalit writing, representing their inherent ability to make choices, decisions and enacting them on the world, is undermined in *Serious Men*.

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Alice Walker's Crafts Womanship

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....the ultimate subject of a work of art the act of storytelling, of narration itself : that for characters involved for homologue at large - narration equals life; the absence of narration death" [italics as in the Original] ¹

The epigraph indicates that the artistic goal of Alice Walker has been to turn into an astounding creative genius. Critics universally acknowledge that she has achieved her aim. She has established her reputation as a master craftswoman and as a committed artist. She has achieved immeasurable success as creative genius mainly because she has been able to employ her powers of imagination, inborn talents, inspiration and apt modes of expression in a combined manner for creating aesthetic artifacts.

Understandably then, the Oeuvres of Alice Walker is marked by a high level of technical achievements.

Infact, Alice Walker employs her tools and artistic devices with functional valuations and variations. Through verbal mastery, language manipulation, linguistic experimentation, innovative forms, and technically perfect purposive art Alice Walker gets recognized as a creative genius.

This woman writer has immeasurably enriched African American Women literature through her Oeuvres marked by artistry, structural perfection, and technical excellence. Terry Eagleton's statement qualifies the writings of Alice Walker, and it is quoting here:

To write well is more than a matter of "style" it also means having at one's disposal an ideological perspective which can penetrate to the realities of man's experience in a certain situation.²

Therefore, the ideal approach to the work of literature would be one of allowing for insight into the deepest psychological motives of the writer, particularly the woman artist; at the same time, as to how a work of art examines all external factors operating within a given **milieu**.

Therefore, it is of absorbing interest to examine how Alice Walker introduces the right kind of Gestalt in their works. In other words, her chief concern is to adopt the right form and create a proper structure and organization, and thus through an effective **Gestalt** communicate feelings, thoughts and experiences, and ideologies that are relevance to society.

It ought to be noted that Alice Walker, with a clear awareness of the values of the elements of fiction, employs them to great fictional advantage. In fact, with artistic and creative capacities, and writing talents this woman artist gives the right definition, substance, and meaning to the elements of fiction.

It is of interest to record that the well-crafted and purposive art of Alice Walker reveals her artistic ingenuity. She has the talent to handle all aspects of fictional art such as narration, story-telling, description plot development, characterization dialogue writing, argumentation. As such, the real artistic strength of Alice Walker in her ability to employ the elements of fiction in a balanced proportion and to make one element contribute to the strength and relevance of the other. Yet again, more than the imagined it is the real that matters to Alice Walker, the woman writer of relevance, significance, and consequence.

Thus, it is maintained that Alice Walker concentrates on form, structure and organization in her writings. With the perfect **Gestalt** qualifying her literary products, she projects the truths about women. With these intentions in mind she makes the form suit the content. In fact, she makes form and content quite identical.

And it ought to be stressed that Alice Walker admirably articulates the world of women and captures feelings thoughts and experiences of the women quite artistically and convincingly.

The point that is made here is that more than the predicaments of individuals what counts as valid is her humanism and humanistic

concerns. Yet again, the conscious artist will conceal the particular in the universal and celebrate human life. And in this respect, Alice Walker achieves remarkable success.

At this point it ought to be noted that the male perspectives are not the same as the female perspectives. Mental complexes, biological determinants, educational levels, social and historical background approaches and attitudes concerning domination or submission, independence or dependence, permissiveness or otherwise and the question of accepting the Western cultural patterns or not are some of the several factors that have a controlling factor on the mind and art of the woman artists.

In such a light one appreciates the crafted art of Alice Walker.

Alice Walker's works are termed as purposive art. Her craft-womanship, her language maximization, her Black English, her choice diction, her writing skills come to the fore in her literary products. Moreover, they bear the burden of the purpose sense.

Alice Walker's first fiction, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* is remarkable for its intense, and descriptive language. In *Meridian* she employs language as a protest medium to pour out her rage against social injustices. She argues that all her works simply presume that all history is current; all injustice continues on some level"³.

Through her adroit use of language in *Meridian* Alice walker, succeeds in focusing on harsh actualities and experiences of pain and anguish and thereby freezes them as fixtures illuminating aspects of brutality related to sexism and violence. The scenes in *Meridian* concerning ignorance, discrimination, in poignant language. These scenes suggest how personal outrage can stem from social and historical forces.

In fact, this fictionist has discussed her writing, and her need to write, in terms that articulate her deflection of rage and her reconciliation with it. On this point she herself remarks.

Write I [Alice Walker] I did, night and day, *Something*, and it was not even a choice..... but a necessity. When I didn't write I thought of making bombs and throwing them.....Writing saved me from the skin and

inconvenience of violence-as it saves most writers who live in interesting and oppressive times and are not afflicted by personal immunity [*Italics as in the Original*]⁴

On Alice Walker's writing capacities, Gloria Steinem makes valid statement, which is recorded here :

Even "writer" may be too distant a word. Travelling and listening over the years. I [Gloria Steinem] have noticed that the reader of Alice Walker's tend to speak about her as a friend; someone who has rescued them from passivity or anger; someone who has taught them sensuality or self – respect humor or redemption. "I've been a much better person, said an angry young novelist to a roomful of his peers, "since I've been under the cure and feeling of Alice Walker's writing" "While I'm reading her novels, I'm completely unaware of her style" said a literary critic, who is a writer herself. It's unpretentious and natural like a glass that contains whatever she wants you to see. Yet I can read a few paragraphs of hers and know immediately: That's Alice" I. [Gloria Steinem] have heard many such comments over the past decade or so I don't hear the usual celebrity question: what is Alice really like? Readers feel they know her personally from her writing. But lives touched by her work form a small secret network on almost every campus and in many circles and towns. Of course, the existence of such readers, even unknown to each other, means that Alice Walker is not a secret writer. Her novels and poems and critical essays have been sold and reviewed respectably.... This statement of Gloria Steinem quoted in extenso goes only to prove the kind of impact that Alice Walker could create in the minds and hearts of the perceptive readers⁵.

Regarding the effective manner in which Alice Walker has employed Black English to create realism in her magnum opus *The*

Color Purple in her other literary products, in the manner and style of Mark Twain, Thadious M.Davis makes a pointed observation:

Celie's verbal connection to Hughe's Black every man, and the Black oral tradition extends her affirmation of self, so that it becomes racial as well as personal, and is an actualization, rather than the potentiality that most often appears in Walker's work, Celie is or in her own Black folk English, she be's her nappy – haired, ordinary self in all the power and pain that combine in her writing to reveal the girl , the female becoming totally a woman person who survives and belies the weak, passive exterior her family and community presume to be her whole self. Her act of writing and affirming is magnificent⁶

Alice Walker's crafts – womanship comes to the force in her magnum opus *The Color Purple*. It is an empathetic fiction about the poorest of the poor. She creates a world vision – **Weltan Schaaung** - that is complete for proceeding from the bottom up. *The Color Purple* symbolizes the miracle of human possibilities.

The conclusive and comprehensive argument of Gloria Steinem on the artistic achievement of Alice walker runs as given below:

The point is she [Celie] must tell someone the truth and confirm her existence. The result is an inviting dead – honest, surprising novel that is the successful culmination of Alice Walker's longer and trips outside the safety of Standard English narration, and into the words of her characters. Here, she takes the leap completely. There is no third person to distance the reader from events. We are inside Celie's head. And Celie turns out to be a no – nonsense, heart rendering story teller with a gift from cramming complicated turn of events and whole life histories into very few words. Like E.L. Doctorow in *Ragtime*, the rhythm of the telling adds to the momentum of suspense ---- but what he did with an episodic style and pace of chapters,

Celie can do with the placement of a line, phrase, or a verb⁷

Thus, Alice Walker displays her skill at writing fictions of lasting repute.

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Sri Aurobindo's *The Renaissance in India*: A Study in Spiritual Regeneration

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Sri Aurobindo (1872 – 1950) a creative writer and a Professor of English Literature, participated in the freedom struggle of India. Being an ardent nationalist he was imprisoned in 1908. During this imprisonment, he stated that he had a mystic experience of *Narayan Darsan*. His conversion from activism to introspection was a turning point in Aurobindo's life. After his release from the jail, he went to Pondicherry and founded an *Ashram* (hermitage), known even today as Sri Aurobindo Ashram. From here he began his work for the spiritual liberation of the nation. Certainly this period helped Aurobindo to produce his best poems and plays. Critics credit Aurobindo as a philosophical poet with a message to mankind.

The Renaissance in India, the primary text for the present study was first published serially in the monthly review, *Arya* between August and November 1918. Later this lengthy prose piece was published as a booklet in 1920. At the end of the first paragraph of the essay itself Sri Aurobindo stated the central idea of the essay. The renaissance or new birth in India must be understood in a broad perspective that is, the contribution of the Indian Renaissance to the human race. The discourse starts with a question, whether “there is really a Renaissance in India”? (1). Aurobindo while agreeing that there is, says that it is different from the European Renaissance. India is always awake hence there is no need for re-awakening. But under “The pressure of a super imposed European culture” (4), India needs renaissance. Then he states “The beginning of this process of original creation in every sphere of her national activity will be the sign of the integral self-finding of her renaissance” (28).

From the beginning India is essentially spiritual in its outlook. The sense of the infinite is very strong in its thinking. Neither the physical nor the supra physical alone will answer the human life. It

should be the right combination of this physical life in its right relationship with spiritual or infinite that will give a meaning to life.

Spirituality is indeed the master-key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinite is native to it. India saw from the beginning,- and, even in her ages of reason and her age of increasing ignorance, she never lost hold of the insight,- that life cannot be rightly seen in the sole light, cannot be perfectly lived in the sole power of externalities.(6)

Human beings should realize the kaleidoscopic experiences in life. Man is basically good and he has the potential to become still better. This is possible when a human being realizes the dignity and divinity in him. The purpose of life is to “. . . become the spirit, become a god, become one with God, and become the ineffable Brahman” (7).

This should not pave way to the misconception that India relies only on spirituality. To lead a meaningful life on the earth one should make a balance between earthly life and spiritual life. And this is the belief of Indian Philosophers. “When we look at the past of India, what strikes us next is her stupendous vitality, her inexhaustible power of life and joy of life, her almost unimaginably prolific creativeness”(7). A person becomes a materialist if he lives in a world of the present, the expedient, and in the customary self-interest of man. Nevertheless he becomes an idealist, when he only believes in the world of eternity and of the love of beauty and goodness. Hence India emphasizes on the sensuous and mystical worlds. Either absolute materialism or absolute idealism will not answer the purpose of life. India finely combined both these worlds. As Aurobindo states:

Thus an ingrained and dominant spirituality, an inexhaustible vital creativeness and gust of life and, mediating between them, a powerful, penetrating and scrupulous intelligence combined of the rational, ethical and aesthetic mind each at a high intensity of action, created the harmony of the ancient Indian culture. (11)

Aurobindo warns that people should not mistake that spirituality flourishes well in an impoverished country. He says “It is

when the race has lived most richly and thought most profoundly that spirituality finds its heights and its depths and its constant and many-sided fruition” (11).

Aurobindo then expresses the significance of the Indian mind. He says “The ideals of the Indian mind have included the height of self-assertion of the human spirit and its thirst of independence and mastery and possession and the height also of its self-abnegation, dependence and submission and self-giving” (12-13). He then points out at the caste system the worst evil in the Indian life that “the human soul and the human mind are beyond caste” (13). Swami Vivekananda also vehemently criticized the hideous practice of caste system in India. He said:

It (caste) was intended to be a very scientific system allowing everybody to develop his aptitudes fully, but it ended up being a most heinous machinery of torture for a vast number of people. Its worst feature was branding a section of people as untouchable. According to him, the day India started using the word ‘Untouchable’, its downfall began. ‘No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism’. (Lokeswarananda xx)

The presence of Narayan in the lowest of human being is the doctrine of Indian philosophy. Therefore it is meaningless to retain the distinctions based on caste. The same idea is preached even by Transcendentalists of America. Ralph Waldo Emerson the founder of Transcendentalism emphasizes on the idea of self-trust and self-reliance; as the human spirit receives inspiration from Divine Spirit. Further Emerson declares that the presence of god in every human being should be the supreme revelation. Emerson, a believer in American democratic ideals discovers this idea of god in every human as the primary idea of true democracy. He gives this message in his journal (9 December 1834):

Democracy, Freedom, has its root in the sacred truth that every man hath in him the divine Reason, or that,

though few men since the creation of the world live according to the dictates of the Reason, yet all men are created capable of so doing. That is the equality and the only equality of all men. To this truth we look when we say, Reverence thyself; Be true to thyself. Because every man has within him somewhat really divine.

Certainly the significance in Indian philosophy is the “. . . fusion of the knowledge it has gained and to a resulting harmony and balance in action and institution” (14). But this significance ceased from the Indian soil and Aurobindo traces this loss. He analyses that after the age of Spirit, came the age of Dharma; and then the great classical age of Sanskrit dominated. The spiritual truth is at the backdrop of all these ages. “The great classical age of Sanskrit culture was the flowering of this intellectuality into curiosity of detail in the refinements of scholarship, science, art, literature, politics, sociology and mundane life” (16). In the later period (Post-classical) the *Puranic* and *Tantric* systems dominated. During this period importance is attached to the lower life and impressing upon it of the values of spirit. The last fine flower of Indian spirituality is *Vaishnavism*. From then onwards the Indian mind witnessed the retrogression in its spiritual truths. The past knowledge is not understood in a right way.

At this juncture, when Indian mind is in complete confusion, “. . . the European wave swept over India” (15). Against this European influence, there is a need for Indian Renaissance, argues Sri Aurobindo. The necessity for renaissance in India is to recover the old spiritual knowledge. There is every need to rediscover and emphasize the presence of spirit in every human being. The general state of human spirit is dead. Hence the need to wake up this spirit and revive its potentiality and make it “a dominating power in the world” (20). To become a world power, India needs to overcome certain weaknesses. Those weaknesses, according to Vivekananda are “Poverty, neglect of the masses, caste, denying women their basic rights, and a faulty system of education. He wanted India to take full advantage of modern science and technology to fight poverty and unemployment” (Lokeswarananda XX).

When India came into contact with European ideals, India radically reconsidered some of the prominent elements and even denied the basic principles of old culture. Another important factor in this connection is that in the process of receiving the European ideology Indian mind adopts the true and useful modern idea and form and slowly the foreign principles disappear and it becomes Indian.

The first generation of Indian intellectuals of western education earnestly hoped for radically modernized India in mind, spirit and life. Under the complete influence of western spirit they even questioned the validity of the civilization of Indian past culture. Though they looked back at ancient India as a sentiment of pride, they could not connect it with westernized intellectuality.

They sought for a bare, simplified and rationalized religion, created a literature which imported very eagerly the forms, ideas and whole spirit of their English models, - the value of the other arts was almost entirely ignored, - put their political faith and hope in a wholesale assimilation or rather an exact imitation of the middle-class pseudo-democracy of nineteenth-century England, would have revolutionized Indian society by introducing into it all the social ideas and main features of the European form. (24)

The result is that these intellectuals remained as copyists only. This blind aping of any foreign ideology and denial of the original Indian spirit is even now proved to be a bane in Indian life. In the name of globalization the Indian leaders are Americanizing the Indian soil and soul. The cultural and social values are at stake. India is in the process of losing its well-established and appreciated civilization. Values like hard work, discipline, concern for fellow beings, tolerance, and respect for elders, honesty and sacrifice are slowly fading away. The Indian joint-family system – the locus of values, is disrupted in the present society and has disappeared. The misinterpretations of independent living and individual thinking are leading to nuclear families. Hence the children forgo love, affection, concern and care of the grand parents, uncles and aunts. In these circumstances they are sometimes forced to become anti-social beings. The education system, which concentrates on the character building of a student, is now being

replaced with grades and grade points. Personality development is giving way to professional success minus professional ethics. The advancement of technology in the world and its import to India drive people to give more importance to materialistic thinking and finally becoming slaves to machines. People have become puppets in the hands of modern luxuries and this has resulted in corruption, crime and violence. With so much advancement in electronics, people love to live in the world of electronics rather than human beings. When ethics are displaced by electronics that is the end of all civilized behaviour. People would like to become rich in no time and so get involved in all sorts of crimes. Criminalization of politics is yet another evil grown in full in the second half of the 20th century. By foolish aping of the western culture India started losing its place in the world of knowledge and spirituality. Hence there is a need for India to emancipate itself from the clutches of globalization to retain its own identity.

Any development in the field of science and technology has to be tampered with moderation or discipline, the great classical virtues which have always born the characteristic of Indian ethos: Nothing in excess, *ati sarvatra varjayet*. It is this avoidance of the material extreme that India has always practiced. Spirituality that seeks to turn the attention of India from the material happiness has been the bulwark of Indian mind.

A few great movements started in the Pre-Independent India are essentially based on “new spiritual thought and usually a new religious activity” (30). It is to be noted that “The instinct of the Indian mind was that, if a reconstruction of ideas and of society was to be attempted, it must start from a spiritual basis and take from the first a religious motive and form” (31). The seers and saints are behind these great movements. They try to herald a new era in history, as for example the older ones like Sikhism and Jainism or the later *Brahma Samaj*, *Arya Samaj*, *Prardhana Samaj*, *Ramakrishna Mission*, etc. These movements indicate that the Orthodox Hinduism is under revision and revived many a time. Perhaps a majority of such movements tries to add a new social dimension to Hinduism. As Aurobindo rightly remarks: “India is the meeting-place of the religions and among these Hinduism alone is by itself a vast and complex thing, not so much a religion as a great diversified and yet subtly unified mass

of spiritual thought realization and aspiration” (32). Rajmohan Gandhi in his address at the annual international convention of the Theosophical Society, Adayar, Madras in 1993 expressed that “...somewhere in the Indian soul has always lurked a feeling that India had something to contribute to the world, ...”(12-13)

Indian society is in a chaotic state at present. “... for the old forms are crumbling away under the pressure of the environment, their spirit and reality are more and more passing out of them... (40). The confrontation is severe between the old forms and the new. The old order is slowly crumbling, so the destruction is hardly perceptible. At the same time the new order is not yet ready to be born. What W.B Yeats has said seems to be happening in India. Things are falling apart the centre is not holding. The centre in India is the spirituality sheer of rituals, religious dogmas and other exclusive tendencies. Perhaps the new pattern based on the suitable old form may be an ideal solution. Spirituality is not theocracy. Aurobindo while explaining spirituality puts forward his theory of humanity which acts, perhaps, as a better solution for the turbulent human race. He states:

Spirituality is much wider than any particular religion, and in the larger ideas of it that are now coming on us even the greatest religion becomes no more than a broad sect or branch of the one universal religion; by which we shall understand in the future man’s seeking for the eternal, the divine, the greater self, the source of unity and his attempt to arrive at some equation, some increasing approximation of the values of human life with the eternal and the divine values. (44)

The four fold principle of Dharma (Righteousness) Artha (attainment of riches), Kama (Desire/sex), Moksha (liberation)- defines the Indian concept of life. Notice how the attainment of riches and desire (which means sex also) are bracketed by Dharma (Righteousness) and Moksha (liberation). That means Dharma puts on the two a control so as to reach liberation, if they are moderately practiced. If these ends of life are followed in life, the individual, or by extension the society a continuity of individuals would attain a level that would liberate the spirit from all bonds. The *Isavasya parishad* rightly starts with this idea. All this, what so ever moves on earth should be covered by the lord. Protect (yourself) through that detachment. Do not covet anybody’s wealth. Another Upanishad says, neither by action

nor by progeny, nor by wealth, but only by sacrifice one attains immortality.

The grabbing tendency, possessiveness, selfish behaviour have been engendered by our emphasis on economics to the exclusion of ethics. When Mammon and Manmatha (*artha* and *kama*)sway the human mind , it loses sight of *dharma* and *moksh* and gets sink in the materialistic slough, so much so that it wallows in the quagmire itself and puts the others too into it. As the *Brihadarnayaka*, quoted by T.S.Eliot in the *The Waste Land* aptly says: Men should cultivate three qualities, Give (*datta*), control (*damayata*) and be compassionate(*dayadhavam*), to be able to bring the kingdom of God here and now and avoid the world from becoming a waste land. Here the ancient civilization has always emphasized the noble side of human mind and soul has much to give to the entire world, as Swami Vivekananda has always said.

The ancient Indian culture emphasizes on the “. . . soundness, growth and strength of the mind, life and body as the old Hellenic or the modern scientific thought, although for a different end and a greater motive.” (45). The ultimate goal of man is the awareness of god in him and to live with respect to the divine and human values. Hence the success of an individual or a nation depends on this idea of god within every human being. Undoubtedly every human being is a potential source of virtue and power. “Spirituality is not necessarily exclusive; it can be and in its fullness must be all inclusive”(45). India should be a torchbearer in focusing this idea to save the human race from ethical and moral degeneration. As Rajmohan Gandhi rightly proposes the mission of India is “To bring the man the world over face to face with his conscience; to bring man closer to his fellow man in every corner of the earth;to evoke each man’s best and noblest; to take the world closer to the justice and harmony that men may find when they make God their master rather than their servant”;...(Gandhi 26).

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Understanding Productive Skills: Its Scope and Significance in Workplace Communication

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Introduction

Verbal communication is recognized through spoken and written forms of communication. Speaking and writing are the two main facets of verbal communication. The art of speaking and writing is highly significant in contributing literacy development among the masses. Speaking and writing skills has made authentic communication possible in both domestic and professional entitlements. It is always realized that the liveliness of any language is solely depended on both the features of speaking and writing. Speaking and writing skills can be otherwise termed as ‘productive skills’ or ‘the skills of expression’. The task of speaking and writing is to stabilize expression and make others to understand and communicate. Speaking and writing skills are the skills that inevitably stand to express, share, transmit, store, and retrieve information, thoughts, ideas and emotions. The main function of productive skills is to inform, persuade, share, convince, and negotiate and to build relationship with the listeners/readers. It is always found that to know a language is the ability to speak. Writing envisages the authenticity of knowing a language in standard form. If fluency is the target of speaking, writing aims at communicating effectively. Productive skills are found to be inevitably important in both oral and written business transactions. This paper attempts to discuss the relevance of productive skills in executing business in workplace communication.

Salient features of productive skills

Language is the medium and tool of communication. The ultimate use of any language is to communicate. Language and communication plays an indispensable role in human interaction. The true existence of any language is always relied on the factor of how people use it to communicate. Language is universally acknowledged through spoken and written forms of communication. Language and communication are the two major disciplines facilitated through the

skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The act of communication can be reliable and effective only if the response and feedback is exchanged by the speaker and the listener. It is evident that speech and writing is consistently interdependent for mutual expression and interaction (Sarudin, Zubairi & Ali, 2009). Language is organized through sounds in speech and script in writing. In oral communication, both verbal and nonverbal or to say, both linguistic and paralinguistic features play a vital role. In written communication, verbal, graphical and diagrammatic representation stipulates functional and transactional use of language. The making of personal and social relationships, business links and tie-ups, and professional activities are highly delved upon functional and interactional mode of communication.

The status of any language discriminated as ‘living’ or ‘dead’ is associated with the prominence of its oral and written communication. Scholars have vivid opinions on the evolution and existence of speaking and writing as which may have come first. It is a matter of great controversy that whether speaking preceded writing or writing has paved way for speaking. It can be generalized that oral communication has preceded the written communication. It has been always a matter of great instinct that speech occupies the primary position in the process of communication. The art of writing is held to be secondary. As the act of speaking is primary; writing stands secondary, it is implied that speech is an innate activity and could be easily acquired. Writing is a governed activity and it could be exercised with precision. Every child has the ability to communicate. The child tends to speak what it has observed from the outside world and it conveys the same to its parents. A child cannot initiate with writing what it thinks or observes. As oral communication is prior to written communication, language is facilitated through oral discourse.

While learning a language, speaking is essentially practiced through face to face communication. Oral communication is habitually used for real and instant communication. Spontaneous exuberance of any language exists only through the spoken form of the language. The gradual development of a language is solely based on speech. It can be visualized that speech is prior to writing as the vocal organs play an indispensable role in inculcating speech sounds and interpreting it for communication. The interrelatedness of language system and

communication system stabilizes signals and messages and channelizes the productive and receptive ability of the individual. The natural instinct and the discourse of any language are organized through the sounds in speech and script in writing. Stories, articles, essays and other forms of literature can be produced through writing and dramatized through speaking. Speaking activities can be conducted through practically discussing about the real things around the world (Robson, 2008). Due to time, distance, emotion and body language, written communication varies distinctly from the speech.

The intuition of the speaker can be revealed through paralinguistic features too. Paralinguistic features of the body language play an essential role in speaking. Emotional impact is more in speaking. Through speech, one can transfer the personal instincts with emotions, sentiments and culture. Emotional intelligence can be speculated through face to face communication. The variation in attitudes, optimistic and pessimistic outlook of an individual is easily speculated through oral communication. Inferiority complex can be reduced while one has confidence to speak. The degree of spontaneous interaction can be found increasing in speech. The audience are easily moved to the speaker as the speech influences them instantly rather than writing. To illuminate thoughts and expressions through emotions, speaking is very effective.

Speaking and writing are the two major forms/medium in which thought and expression could be made possible in the easiest way. Oral communication can be made possible through both formal and informal ways of communication. Through speaking, we can communicate with the illiterate people too. Any language could reach wider audience through oral communication. Even an illiterate can take part in oral communication. Though one may not indulge in the skills of reading and writing, but may be able to listen, observe, understand and speak and inevitably participate in interpersonal communication activities. Speaking skills can be exercised through formal and social interaction (Crosling & Ward, 2002). Speaking can be acquired, but writing should be learned. Though formal education is not needed for speaking, social interactions stabilize oracy skills. Both literate and illiterate people who are abstained from optimistic outlook and approach; amiable attitudes and behaviour; and managerial and soft

skills often find themselves fail to speak and coordinate with others. And those who are ingrained with cognitive and psychological complexities are neither able to engage in interpersonal communication nor can build constructive network in personal and professional arena. Both speaking and writing skills are innate skills - only some people are gifted in both. Time consumption is less in speech rather than writing. Expressing spontaneous thoughts is easy and it is more compatible and reliable for instant communication process. As miscommunication or communication gap could be significantly reduced through oral interaction, face to face communication is exceedingly preferred for developing business networks.

Productive skills are the nutshell of communication process. The key discoursal functions that contribute for the development of productive skills are the ability to express, describe, explain, instruct, negotiate, persuade, compromise, apologize, complain, accept, reject, demonstrate, and appreciate. The major aspect of communication process is to develop a mainstream of contact from personal to interpersonal, group and mass communication. As productive skills nurtures communication activity, interpersonal skills can be generally explored. The ability and the skill to transmit ideas are entirely owed to sustain social communication environment. Productive skills are stimulated through cognitive, affective and social factors. Cognitive motors help to develop thinking, understanding and perception skills. Creative and critical thinking is the major factor that contributes for the stupendous development of discursive skills. Thinking and understanding skills supplement the necessary fuel for developing informative communication. As optimistic thought and clear expression is essential for efficient communication, language productivity is much facilitated through cognitive and social abilities.

Productive skills vs language models

Language models play a pivotal role in developing literal communication. The three basic use of language namely, structural, functional and interactional models contribute in the development of communication. In speaking, meaning of the content stands paramount, grammar lies secondary (Richards & Rodgers, 1989). The intention of the speaker will be assumed through speaking with or without grammar. Mostly, speaking skills are based on incorporating grammar and lexis,

but in practical sense, grammatical rules cannot be strictly adhered in speech. The grammatical and phonological aspect of the language has induced to develop adequate linguistic knowledge. Syntax, vocabulary and conveying intended ideas are consistent to make standardized oral/written communicational activities. Vocabulary can be developed through conducting language games and also it could be learnt through studying dictionary. Technical terms and specific jargons of any discipline can also be learnt for improving vocabulary skills. Adequate knowledge of structural units of grammar and other categories and its use in communication will mark linguistic competency in communication.

Voice modulation, stress, accent and style play a promising role in speaking skills. Coherence and cohesion should be deliberately adopted and followed in both speech and writing. Legible hand writing should be one of the major tenets of writing skills. Brevity and precision should be followed in writing skills. It is universally acknowledged that while writing, spelling mistakes could be made, whereas in speaking, pronunciation problems could be encountered (Lee & Ridley, 1999). Grammar plays a vital role in writing. Structural components of the language like grammar and lexis is predominantly seen in the written form of the language. The parts of speech are the nucleus of any grammatical form. The importance of language is facilitated through both oral and written forms of the language. The lexical components are highly essential to suffice the meaning of the expressions conveyed. Vocabulary exists and plays a vital role in both the oral and written form of the language. Vocabulary interrelates the meaning of the message. In speech, vocabulary signifies the message without any accurate grammatical structure of the sentence. In writing, word order correlates the importance of following grammar in the sentence.

Due to the impact of globalization in language, culture and society, grammar is gradually changing and the twenty first century witnesses a transition in grammar and vocabulary in most of the popular languages of the whole world. Hence the need to negotiate with grammar is essential and it is empirical to adopt the prevalent use of grammar according to the subject. The advent of technology and media instigates on the use of language rather than on its usage. Appropriate grammar should be incorporated in both speaking and writing. Syntax

and word order and sentence structure should be adequately followed with sheer appropriateness, but not necessarily with great accuracy. Grammar should exist and vary and could be liberally and technically modified according to its use. Adhering strict grammar should not be a barrier to communication. Grammar is viable to change according to the vivid forms of communication. As pragmatics and discourse are the basic factors in oral communication, the use of grammar should not stand as a hindrance to participate and perform in task based communicative activities. In written communication, structural and functional models of language are predominant, whereas, in oral communication, interactional model of language stands significant according to its use.

The functional model of the language has perturbed to develop functional writing activities like comprehension, paraphrasing, letter writing, precise writing and dialogue writing. But the most practical need of the learner is to interact in real situations. Official and administrative communication is solely functional only through written communication. Generally, speaking form is not permanent, otherwise only it is recorded. Speech is not considered as an authentic proof for official and judicial communication. Audio and video records sustain the importance of speaking. As written skills are more emphasized through authenticated mode of documentation and records, speaking can also be recorded through multimedia. Authentic communication can be made instantly possible only through written communication. Still, due to the advent of audio-visual multimedia and other communication technologies, authentic communication can be made possible through speaking too. Plagiarism can be easily observed through the written documents. Written communication is very effective as it is often considered as a record and it could be copied saved, and retrieved as a document. Writing is a permanent record and it is a proof for any action undertaken. Written documents are commended as an authentic record and the chronological history of any subject is perceived through the reliability of the record. Though we die, our writings never die. Testing, measurements, assessment, evaluation and judgments are made through writing. Practicing both speaking and writing skills can lead to the perfect presentation of the individual.

Speaking and writing skills are both highly consistent in pursuing the process of both formal and informal communication. They are highly interrelated and also interdependent in the domains of communication process. Speaking promotes language fluency and builds positive attitudes like courage and confidence coupled with enthusiastic behavior in interactional communication. As spontaneous and continuous speaking promotes versatile communication, chatting and informal communications often boost the personality of the speaker. Speaking is generally favoured to writing as it can be instantly exercised in face to face interaction and the intention of the speaker can be easily acknowledged. The effective use of productive skills is liable to enrich the standard of language. It facilitates the function of language and it plays a significant role in making language a tool of communication. Interactional model of language teaching envisages the whole system of language pedagogy to put the language into practical use (Watanabe & Swain, 2007). It fosters a great instinct to develop practical communication. Realistic way of communicating and presenting oneself in a given situation or context has opened a new arena for practical communication (Lambert, 2001). As language is the tool of communication, language models penetrate through the process of direct and indirect communication.

Significance of productive skills in workplace communication

Communicating in English through oral and written mode has been the core demands of the institution and industry (Barbara, Celani, Collins & Scott, 1996; Zhu, 2004; Louhiala-Salminen, Charles and Kankaanranta, 2005; Huh, 2006; Cowling, 2007). Speech and writing has been the major function of academics and business (Zhu, 2004; Flowerdew, 2005; Woodrow, 2006; Bacha & Bahous, 2008; Bosuwon & Woodrow, 2009; Basturkmen, 2012). Several research studies (Wongsothorn, 2002; Sesek, 2007; Ehrich, Kim & Ficorilli, 2010) on employability reflect that the purpose of English communication is to develop interpersonal and group communication skills for involving in formal and social communicative situations. Sharing and exchanging opinions, joining in conversations, facing direct and indirect interviews, presenting research papers and project reports, contributing information through interpersonal and official transactions, reporting business facts through e-mails and video conferences, participating in group and panel

discussions and debates, convening meetings, attending seminars, organizing workshops and public conferences are basically required in educational institutions and workplace (Forey, 2004; Flowerdew, 2005; Dovey, 2006).

Industrial personnel often reflect that presentation of thoughts is important in both speaking and writing. The linguistic skills are primarily based only on writing skills. It is also witnessed that most of the professionals are able to speak but they do not possess good writing skills. Apt and clear expressions reflect the perfect presentations of the individual. They often reflect that both oral and written communication can be developed through continuous practice. Most human resource managers stress that seven C's and three P's should be employed for easy and perfect communication. They envisage that KISS – "Keep it short and simple" and SSS - "Short, simple and sweet" are the two paradigms that are often employed for presenting any information. Planning, Preparing and Presenting – 3 P's are the three important facets of written communication. In oral presentation too, the 3 P's are followed for formal speech. But in general, instant and spontaneous speaking is the major characteristics of oral communication, giving less space to planning, preparing and presenting any topic.

Presentation, group discussion and job interviews are the dyadic and group tasks that are widely used in workplace communication (Taillefer, 2007). Chew (2005) has explored that written communication is vital in professional communication in a multilingual environment. Dolton & Vignoles (2002) state that most of the previous research projects both quantitative and qualitative have shown the predominant use of oral communication as the most needed language skills and also they confirm that the extensive research survey on needs analysis has revitalized "language needs are context dependent". Writing business, technical and administrative correspondences like circular, agenda, minutes of the meeting, essay and paragraphed writing, note-making, paraphrasing and dictation, writing definition and process description, drafting, noting, documentation and writing messages and short information are some of the key activities done in any routine jobs.

Internet has paved a great way for global communication in both oral and written forms. As in informal communication people

enjoy speaking rather than writing, telephonic conversations, online chatting and video conferences are in full swing to promote oral business communication. Online business interactions through web camera are mostly preferred after sending e-mails. Instant solution to problems can be achieved through conversations and discussions. When any important information is to be delivered, writing e-mails are preferred. Oral communication through direct and indirect communication and written communication through letters, emails, and pictorial and graphical representations in reports are commonly demanded for business proceedings.

Conclusion

Productive skills are the skills of expression and it is the most pertinent vehicle for communication. Again, it is quintessential for the processing of business in workplace contexts. It can be visualized that for every aspect of personal, interpersonal, group and mass communication, productive skills acts as a signpost of literacy and wisdom. The utility of language skills procure better interactional communication. Professional speaking and writing skills can be developed through practicing and using the language in context to topics related to job situations.

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The Triumph of Gandhism in Chaman Nahal's *The Triumph of the Tricolour*

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Chaman Nahal is a prominent contemporary fiction writer, who deals with Indian freedom struggle and the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan in his novels. He designed *The Gandhi Quartet* to explore the incidents and events of freedom struggle and partition in a chronological order. The third novel in the 'Quartet', *The Triumph of the Tricolour* was published in 1993 after the remaining novels in the Quartet were published already. The novel covers the gap between *The Salt of Life* and *Azadi*. *The Triumph of the Tricolour* deals with the incidents beginning from the 'Quit India Movement' to the Cabinet Mission's visit to India during the freedom struggle. Unlike the first two novels, the major part of *The Triumph of the Tricolour* deals with the revolutionary activities in the freedom struggle. The fictional characters are attracted towards Subash Chandra Bose rather than Gandhi. But ultimately those characters accept Gandhi and his Principle of non-violence.

A part of the 'Quartet' Nahal continues his fictional characters from *The Salt of Life* to *The Triumph of the Tricolour*. Kusum plays a prominent role in all the first three novels. Though Vikram and Kusum attract the revolutionary activities in the novel, finally they accept Gandhi's path to restore peace among the people of the county. The activities of Bose abroad for the Indian National Army form the major historical background in the novel.

The novel starts with the passing of Quit India resolution in August 1942. The Congress decides that the British should leave from India at the earliest. All the National Congress leaders participated in the special session in Bombay and pass the resolution.

The historic August meeting at Gowalia Tank in Bombay was unprecedented in the popular enthusiasm it generated. Huge crowds waited outside as the leaders deliberated on the issue. And the feeling

of anticipation and expectation ran so high that in the open session, when the leaders made their speeches before the many thousands who had collected to hear them, there was Pin-drop silence. (Bipin Chendra; 1993: P-456)

Kusum accompanies Gandhi. Darbara Singh the Himmat leader asks Gandhi about the part played by the revolutionary groups in the freedom struggle. Kusum now a forty-four middle-aged woman buys a house in Benaras, which gives shelter to many women. Gandhi had gone on a twenty-one day fast early this year to protest against the government's barbaric handling of the situation when the people broke the salt law.

Vikram, the son of Kusum now a twenty-six year old young man is in love with Julie, the daughter of Colonel Fogelson. Vikram meets her first at Lambini, where she is studying. Vikram meets Darbara Singh at the hotel Alma. They plan to liberate the Japanese war prisoners who are to be transported in a train from Sialkot to Jammu by the British officers. Vikram and Darbara bribe the train driver and the train leaves before the British security get into it. The war prisoners escape miraculously from the incident.

Vikram is successful and plays an important role in the escape of the war prisoners from the British jail, whereas Rakesh failed to liberate Bhagat Singh and Charulatha in *The Crown and the Loincloth*. Vikram leans towards terrorism. It is an astonishing thing how this Sabarmathi inmate brought up under the shadow of Gandhi in the earlier novels is attracted towards terrorism. Perhaps it is his youth seeking action and the slow activities of the Congress prompted him to turn to terrorism. Moreover the long absence of Gandhi in society and his confinement in the jail may have forced Vikram who is hesitant to take this decision. The police suspect Vikram and he is interrogated.

All the top leaders were in jail; so were the second and third line of leaders who functioned at the provincial or the district level. Vikram had never sought such command – no, he was not a leader. He was happy to be a subordinate and live close to Bapu and Ba. Ba was now gone. Bapu was in jail. Who should Vikram consult with? They alone had given directions to his being and they were nowhere around. (137)

Amit comes to Sialkot. He is eleven now and a student of Lambini High School. He is very much disappointed by the behavior of Kusum and Vikram, because of their negligence to look after him. He knows the love affair of Vikram and wants to help him.

The Second World War is on. The government holds war preparations in Sialkot. Lala Kanshi Ram explains to the panic ridden people about the mock bomb blasting. Kanshi Ram sits on the terrace with Bibi Amar Vati and Gangu Mull for a chat. Bibi explains to him the history of Sialkot and she narrates how the Pandavas founded Sialkot in *The Mahabharata*. She says that she has some scrolls of history and gives them to Kanshi Ram. Kanshi reads the scrolls day and night and finds that many people were buried in Sialkot at the time of 1857 mutiny. Hindus and Muslims claim the area. The government had decided to dig the area to find out the truth. Under the supervision of Ashby the places are dug. Some moth eaten corpses are found, but they are neither Hindu nor Muslim but British. People from all over the country send food and clothes to Bengal, where the great famine occurs in 1943. Bose reaches Tokyo.

Kusum induces the revolutionary parties. It is again a surprise that Kusum a staunch follower of Gandhi also supports and helps the revolutionary activities, but again it might be the same case as with Vikram- namely the absence of Gandhi and his other followers. Matthew Craig, a teacher of Lambini high school comes to Kusum to discuss the founding of a charitable trust in memory of Celia Ashby. Matthew is the inheritor of Celia's property. Kenneth Ashby reaches Benaras and pleads with Kusum to realise that the Japanese want to rule India like the British, if they win in the war and he makes an enquiry about the revolutionary parties. Kenneth wants to settle at Lambini even after the British quit India. Kusum and Kenneth go to the Ganga Ghat, while Kenneth is taking a bath Kusum finds Gurinder in a group of girls, who are chanting. Gurinder is taken to Kusum's house.

Gandhi meets Jinnah at his residence in Bombay. Jinnah demands for a separates country called Pakistan, which is the main demand of the Muslim League. Gandhi pleads for unity, as he does not like partition.

Jinnah having accepted the proposal to meet, the talks began on September 9, at the house of Jinnah on the Malabar Hill in Bombay. The talks continued till September 27, when Jinnah announced their termination as a result of failure to reach an agreement. (Tara Chand; 1972:P-430)

Kusum goes to Gomph with Amit and others to construct a temple. She writes a letter to Vikram to look after Amit. The British government also brings to the notice of Kusum the revolutionary activities of Amit.

The world war is going on. Bose with Japanese general Togo and other Japanese officials watch a film of war scenes, which is projected by Naval in Singapore. They watch the construction of a bridge in the war. The people of Indian origin who are living in Singapore, Malaya, Siam and Burma contribute to the Indian National Army. Bose wants to attack India via Tibet. Some of the Indians request Bose to come back to India when they meet him at an Indian benefactor's daughter's marriage.

Darbara Singh reaches Singapore and meets Bose. Naval and Darbara spend two days in a jovial mood singing and dancing. But the very next day Darbara commits suicide. Bose wants to leave for Germany by special arrangements made by the Japanese government. Unfortunately he is killed in a flight accident on his journey.

Netaji left Saigon with a single companion in a twin-engine Japanese Bomber carrying senior Japanese officers to Tokyo via Dairen in Manchuria. It arrived safely at Taihoku in Formosa at about 2 P.M. on August 18. After lunch it left Taihoku. This is all that is definitely known. What happened after this is uncertain. The Japanese official version, issued at that time, was that almost immediately after the plane had taken off, it caught fire. Netaji badly burnt, somehow came out of the plane, and was removed to a hospital where he died that very night between 8 and 9 P.M. (Majundar R.C; 1963: P-736)

Attlee, the new Prime Minister of England sends a three member Cabinet Mission under the leadership of Cripps to India to settle the problems before giving independence. The people surround the mission wherever they go and very curious to know about the diary

of the Mission. Lala Kanshi Ram also makes an enquiry to Arun about the diary.

The properties of Santhi Nath flourish. Factories, societies, banks and colleges are established under the name of Knathi, the son of Santhi Nath. Kusum comes to Ajitha after twenty- four years. Kusum is irritated to look at the name of Kanthi for the common property. Gunjan, the daughter-in-law of Santhi Nath and the wife of late Sukhbir helps him in the business. The development of Ajitha from *The Crown and the Loincloth* to *Triumph of the Tricolour* reminds the development of *Malgudi* by R K Narayan in his early novels to the later novels.

Kusum and Vikram take a bath at Sawera Ghat in Benaras. Vikram refuses the Congress proposal to contest in the elections for the Benaras Constituency. He wants to follow Gandhi to restore peace among the people at the places of communal violence. Kanthi Nath a self-centered fellow contests in the elections from Ajitha. Though Kusum thinks of making Vikram the people's representative in the general election, Vikram, as a true Gandhian, wants to follow the footsteps of the Mahatma. He thinks that there is no need to have any authority to work in society.

Kusum's brothers Anand and Sudheer sell away their property at Wazirabad and settle in Benaras. Sadanand and Sudheer support Manoj Kumar the Congress candidate in Benaras. Manoj is almost a puppet in the hands of both the brothers. These brothers want to support him in order to improve their business. They make arrangements for the elections through illegal processes.

Julie, the wife of Aamit does not accept to Vikram's tour with Gandhi. Vikram finally convinces her to stay for one year at Benaras until he comes back from the tour. Nahal continues his story through the diary of Abha. Kusum finds an infant female floating on the waters of the Ganga. Abha adopts the infant and she is given the name Gulbandan. Unfortunately, Gulbandan is deaf. Manoj Kumar wins in the election and holds the huge procession to celebrate his victory.

Communal violence erupts in many parts of the country. Gandhi decides to walk at Bhangi colony a communal affected area in Delhi, along with Kusum and Vikram. Nahal describes the scene graphically as follows.

Of murder, of loot, of plunder, of bestiality. The dead lay in streets and back lanes. The houses stood burned. The cattle lay dead in the fields. The water wells poisoned; many of dead lay slumped inside those wells. The village tanks showed bloated bodies floating in foul-smelling water. The shops were all closed; the streets deserted. Horrified faces looked down from some of the houses. And when they saw Gandhi come, they ran out, slumped against his legs, and broke down. (P-.462)

Kusum stays at Abha's house and every day she follows Gandhi in the disturbed areas. Gandhi and Nehru appeal the people again and again to maintain peace in the country. People from different religions meet Gandhi and explain him of their plights. Kusum goes into a street alone where the inmates have fled. She witnesses as some parts of the human bodies are being eaten by vultures. She stands on a terrace and watches the massacre. All of a sudden she is attacked by a group of vultures. Fortunately Vikram and others save her and she is hospitalized. She does not recover easily from the shock. She says that the path which Gandhi follows is the right path. Gandhi speaks to the British officers to maintain law and order and the problems of administration. Nehru speaks to Wavell for interim government.

As a true Gandhian, Vikram does not like to indulge in violence when Joseph gives him an assignment in Imphal in the revolutionary activity. Vicram is an example of the round character. Vikram's marriage with Julie, a Eurasian is a remarkable incident in the novel. As a true lover Julie follows Vikram's likes and dislikes and moreover adapts to Indian tradition and culture.

Vikram protests against the collection of donations by Griffith for the World War. He gives an inspiring speech which moves the people of the mohalla. Even children and women support him. His shrewdness in misleading the British officials at the railway station is striking. Though the police interrogate him, they cannot find any fault with him. Vikram is virtuous, selfless, shrewd, determined, duteous, responsible, amiable and amicable.

Kusum also plays a prominent role in the novel. She is now forty-four, a woman of maturity who buys a house in Benaras, which gives shelter to many women in distress. The reader has a little bit of

surprise as she lives apart from Gandhi's ashram. Moreover to that she supports the revolutionary activities in the freedom struggle, which are against Gandhian ideals. However, she finally follows the path which Gandhi leads. As a selfless person she advises Matthew Craig, a teacher at Lambini high school to donate the property to YMCA instead of establishing a charitable trust in the memory of Celia Ashby.

Naval, the grandson of Thakur Santhi Nath is attracted towards revolutionary activities in the freedom struggle and works with Subash Chandra Bose in Singapore. Though three important characters Vikram, Amit and Naval are attracted towards revolutionary activities in the novel, only Naval actually works with Subash Chandra Bose. He works fulltime for the activities like Rakesh, the father of Abha in *The Crown and the Loincloth* and in *The Salt of Life*.

Amit is the central attraction at Ajitha when he goes there with Kusum and Vikram to see Santhi Nath who is on his deathbed. He is drawn to Santhi Nath and serves him affectionately. Though he is a boy but with generous mind he advises his mother not to seek any property from Ajitha as they are having a lot at Lambini. Though he is younger, he promises to help Vikram in his love affair with Julie. He finally goes to Ghomph with Kusum for the construction of a temple in memory of his father Vishal Chand. Gandhi has high opinion about Vikram and says, "he's a true son of India, a true son of a noble mother." (P-332)

Gandhi's role in the novel is less, when compared with the first two novels in the 'Quartet'. But the influence of his principles and himself attracts the main characters towards his ideology at the end of the novel. His talks with Jinnah have failed, and he is personally defeated by the arrangements for partition and the communal violence. He maintains a personal touch with Kusum's family and sends his blessings through telegraph greetings for the marriage of Vikram and Julie.

Gandhi's heart is wounded when he witnesses the massacre in the communal violence at Bhangi Colony in Delhi. He wanders many a street in Delhi to restore peace along with Kusum and Vikram. He listens to the plights of the victims of different religions in the communal riots. His idea of an ideal non-violent state is demolished

before his eyes. He cannot endure violence but helpless. Gandhi's character in the novel *The Triumph of the Tricolour* as a part of 'the Quartet' plays a key role in drawing the attention of the main characters Kusum and Vikram.

Subhas Chandra Bose, another historical character also plays a significant role and many characters in the novel revolve around him. "Next to Gandhi, the most dominant figure in the struggle for India's freedom was Undoubtedly Subhash Chandra Bose." (Majundar R.C:1963; p-xxvii)

Even Vikram, a Gandhian and Sabarmathi – brought up is influenced by Bose. Naval helps him in his activities for some time is also influenced by Bose. Though Bose does not come in contact with Kusum, Vikram and Amit, they are attracted towards his revolutionary activities in the novel. Surprisingly even mild people like Kusum and Vikram are attracted by the revolutionary activities. Like Kusum and Vikram some thousands of freedom fighters were in hesitation whether to support the ideas of Gandhi or Bose. Some people who had a lot of patience and strong determination for Gandhi's principle had stood by the side of Gandhi whereas the hot blooded youth like Bhagat Singh and Chandra Sekhar Azad in history and Rakesh and Naval in fiction had supported the ideas of Bose's terrorist activities. Some people like Kusum and Vikram who have lot of faith in Gandhi have followed the foot-steps of Gandhi, but they also have been influenced by the terrorist activities for some time, maybe, because of Gandhi's absence in society said only truth can win ultimately, Kusum and Vikram follow Gandhi to the last. Kusum cries in the sick bed, "Bapu's way. That's the only way." (P-475)

Conclusion

Gandhian followers are attracted the activities of Subash Chandra Bose temporarily because of different reasons including Gandhi's absence in the movement. The young and hot-blooded youth desired to have Indian independence as early as possible. But Gandhi foresees the problems in the post-independent India. Gandhian philosophy is understood by his staunch followers and realised their mistake. The fictional characters in the novel like thousands of real characters in Indian freedom struggle believed the principle of Gandhi

and sacrificed their lives to get freedom to the country. Thus, the triumph of Gandhian ideology was compiled by Chaman Nahal successfully in his *The Triumph of the Tricolour*.

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Is Indian Poetry in English Dead or Alive?

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In 2003, 'News Week' magazine had carried an article announcing the death of poetry. 'Washington Post', yet another newspaper also published, more recently, similar article which sent indignant waves of ripples through literary circles. In this context it seems pertinent to take a look at the state of Indian Poetry in English and examine some crucial facts which are impossible to ignore. For the sake of academic convenience, I would examine IPE after 1950 which was largely Bombay phenomenon. Earlier IPE was centred in Kolkata. From 1825 to 1950, for nearly 125 years, IPE was dominated by Bengali poets. Rather, we can say, IPE had started from Bengal. It was largely a Bengali and an upper caste phenomenon. Name any poet of this period, he/she would be a Bengali. Noted poets include Henry Derozio, Kashiprasad Ghose, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Govin Chunder Dutt, Aru and Toru sisters, Ram Sharma, Manmohan Ghose, Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, Sarojini Devi, Sri Ananda Acharya, Humayun Kabir and Harindranath Chatopadhyaya. Purana Singh and J. Krishnamurti are exceptions. It was only in the last quarter years of Nineteenth Century, IPE had moved out of Bengal for the first time with the publications of the Bombay Presidency poets, B.M. Malabari's *Indian Muse in English Garb* (1876), Cowsaji Nowrosi Versuvala's *Counting the Muse* (1879) and A.M.Kunte's *The Rishi* (1897). Though still an upper class phenomenon, IPE was slowly spreading to metropolitan centres outside Bengal. From Kolkata it had moved to Bombay and much of the credit goes to Nissim Ezekiel who had retained IPE in Bombay with his domineering personality, as he happened to be the harbinger of Modernism in IPE. A large number of the younger poets came to be associated with Nissim Ezekiel mainly because he had generously encouraged those younger poets interested in writing poetry in English. Thus "Bombay School of Poets" came into existence comprising about a dozen poets including Saleem

Peeradina, Sntan Rodrigues, Manohar Shetty, Raj Rao, Ranjit Hostkote, and a number of women poets led by Eunice de Souza. Like Ezekiel in Bombay, Jayantha Mahapatra in Cuttack, Orissa seem to have inspired many Oriyan poets including Niranjan Mohanty, Prabhanjan K.Mishra, and Rabindra K.Swain. His magazine, *Chandrabhaga* has become a mouthpiece of several promising younger poets.

A number of poets of the period spanning over thirty years starting from 1950 to 1980 which Makarand Paranjape calls it as “Modernism” (8) and I would endorse it for academic purpose and for the sake of academic convenience, have either ceased to write poetry or have left the mortal body. A.K.Ramanujan, Dom Moraes, Gieve Patel, P.Lal, Saleem Peeradina, R. Parthasarathy, Nissim Ezeikel, Keshav Mallik, K.D.Sethna, Niranjan Mohanty, and Dilip Chitre are no more. Among those alive, Adil Jussawala has ceased to publish poetry after his *Missing Person* (1974), Jayanta Mahopatra has become incapacitated, Arvind K.Mahrotra has engaged in translation, Shiv K.Kumar has drifted into silence due to advancing age, and Arun Koletkar has chosen to remain silent, and several others have exiled themselves from poetry. To this phase include five distinguished women voices. They are Kamala Das, Mamata Kalia, Eunice de Souza, Silgardo and Gowri Deshpande whose poetry has been rated as high. Except Kamala Das, the other four women poets are alive. Bruce King is right when he has commented that one could find in women poets the “directness of expression” and “idiomatic colloquial vigour” more than in the male Indian English Poets (161). These women poets have deconstructed the myth of “male-centric” in IPE. In spite of this, IPE has not stopped. The flow has continued, perhaps with more vigour and speed by new generation of voices. There has been a phenomenal increase in poetry writing in English in India in the last three decades.

Eventually, after 1980, IPE has moved away from Mumbai to Delhi though Mumbai has still retained its reign over IPE. After the death of several Bombay-based poets, Mumbai has indeed lost its glory and charm. The death of Nissim Ezekiel was a blow to the Mumbai’s hold over IPE. Nevertheless the work and service rendered by Nissim to the cause of IPE was remarkable and indelible in its annals and his spirit was carried out by a distinguished woman poet, Menka Shivdasani, one of the co-founders of “Mumbai Poets’ Circle in 1986.

In Delhi “The Poetry Society” was launched by H.K.Kaul in July 1984 along with the other co-founder members including Keshav Malik, J.P.Das, Lakshmi Kannan, Man Mohan Singh, Sunita Jain, S.Balu Rao, and Priya Devi to (i) promote Indian Poetry and look after the interests of poets in India; (ii) undertake collection, interpretation, translation, publication, and propagation of Indian poetry in India and other countries; (iii) arrange expert advice on composition, publishing, distribution, and translation of Indian poetry; (iv) help maintain the highest standards and foster a sense of literary affinity among the poets writing in different languages in India; (v) undertake, facilitate and provide for the publication of newsletters, and of a journal devoted to Indian poetry; (vi) assist in settlement of differences and disputes between members of the Society on the one hand and other bodies and individuals on the other; (vii) award grants, fellowships, prizes, subventions and assistance to poets and translators of poetry; and (viii) engage in such educational, literary, and charitable activities, as would promote, provide and develop the above objectives of the Society.

Though several reasons can be cited for this upsurge in IPE, I would like to dwell upon three perceptible reasons. First, after gaining an increasing acceptance from academic circles more and more have taken to writing to poetry in English. This phenomenon has been supported by numerous anthologies that began appearing, most of them with a clear emphasis on modern poets. The sound fillip was given by one of the earliest and most inclusive anthologies, *Modern Indian Poetry in English: An Anthology and a Credo* (1972) edited by Professor P.Lal. Thereafter selective anthologies followed, edited by poets themselves. Saleem Peeradina’s *Contemporary Indian Poetry in English* (1972), Pritish Nandy’s *Indian Poetry in English Today* (1973) and *Stranger Time: An Anthology of Indian Poetry in English* (1977), V.N.Bhusan’s *Contemporary Indian Poetry in English: An Assessment and Selection* (1973), Gowri Deshpande’s *An Anthology of Indo-English Poetry* (1974), Adil Jussawalla’s *New Writings in India* (1974), R. Parthasarathy’s *Ten Twentieth Century Poets* (1976), Syed Ameeruddin’s *Indian Verse in English: A Contemporary Anthology* (1977) and *New Voices: Indian Poetry in English* (1981), and Pranab Bandhopadhyaya’s *The Voice of Indian Poets* (1975) and *Hundred*

Indian Poets (1978). These significant anthologies belong to the phase of the “Modernism”.

On the other hand, from 1980 till today, as many as fifty anthologies have emerged on the scene, which is an encouraging phenomenon, and IPE has carved out a distinct niche in Indian Writing in English. Some of the notable anthologies include Vilas Sarang’s *Indian English Poetry since 1950* (1990) Aravind Krishna Mehrotra’s *The Oxford Indian Anthology of Twelve Modern Poets* (1992), , P.Raja and Rita Nath Keshari’s *Busy Bee Book of Contemporary Indian English Poetry* (2007), K.V.Raghupathi’s *Brave New Wave: 21 Indian English Poets* (2009), Jeeth Thayil’s *60 Indian Poets* (2008) metamorphosed as *The Blood axe Anthology of Indian Poets*, Sudeep Sen’s *The Harper Collins Book of English Poetry* (2011), and the recent anthology *The Dance of Peacock: An Anthology of English Poetry from India* (2013) edited by Vivekananda Jha.

Second, as more and more favourable reviews and articles have appeared, this has facilitated many poets to continue to write in English with confidence, zeal and optimism. The positive criticism by the western critics has further strengthened the hands of the poets. The third perceptible reason is the support rendered by the technology and the journals. More and more opportunities for publication of poetry are now being made available to poets by numerous on line and off line journals. A number of print journals such as ‘*Brown Critique*’ (Kolkata), ‘*Chandrabhaga*’ (Cuttack), ‘*Crimson Feet*’ (Ahmedabad), ‘*Flatfile*’ (Kalimpong), ‘*Indian Literature*’ (New Delhi), ‘*The Indian PEN*’ (Mumbai), ‘*Kavya Bharati*’ (Madurai), ‘*Poetcrit*’ (Maranda), ‘*Poet*’ (Chennai), ‘*Poetry Chain*’ (Mumbai), ‘*Poetry Today*’ (Kolkata), ‘*Voice of Kolkata*’ (Kolkata), ‘*Taj Mahal Review*’ (Allahabad), and ‘*Reading Hour*’ have devoted to promote new writers of poetry and short stories. The climate is made ripe for the appearance of several young poets. This has been further facilitated by a number of poetry circles and corners that came into existence in several metropolitan cities such as ‘Mumbai Poetry Circle’, ‘Chennai Poetry Circle’, ‘Hyderabad Poetry Circle’, ‘Poetry Society of India’ (New Delhi), ‘Poets’ Nook’ (Bangalore), and ‘Cyberwit’ (Allahabad). All these have encouraged young upcoming poets passionate about writing poetry in English in these cities.

Among the male poets that came after 1980 include Vikram Seth, Saleem Peeradhina, Manohar Shetty, Santan Rodrigue, Hosang Merchant, Aga Sahid Ali, EVS Ramakishnan, GJV Prasad, Makrand Paranjpe, Sanjiv Bhatla, Tabish Khair, P.K.Joy, R.K.Singh, O.P.Bhatnagar, K.Raghavendra Rao, I.K.Sharma, Gopal Honnalgere, D.C.Chambial, R.Ravindra Menon, PCK Prem, K.V.Venkataramana, P.Raja, K.V.Raghupathi, Jeeth Thayil, and Sudeep Sen. By the last quarter of the century women's poetry too has consolidated its gains. Umpteen new women voices have blown their trumpets with vehemence and new energy. Some of the women poets of this phase include Margaret Chatterjee, Menka Shivdasani, Laskshmi Kannan, Anita Nair, Tara Patel, Rukmini Bhaya Nair, Mamata Kalia and Smita Agarwal.

The last two decades have witnessed more number of women poets in IPE. They include Prabha Mehta, Meena Kandasami, Rita Nath Keshari, Nadini Sahu Ali Coby Eckermann, Sunita Rajan, Shilpa Viswanathan, Vijaya Goel, Mani Rao, Anuradha Nalapet, Venu Arora, Kamal Gurtaji Singh, Renu Singh, Chandini Kapoor, Rita Melhotra, Monica Chaudhury, Jyotirmayee Mohapatra, Madhavi Lata Agarwal, Jaleena Narayanan, Tejender Gaur, Purabi Patnaik, and Sunanda Mukherjee. These poets seem to be outspoken and self-assertive. These poets like their predecessors have dealt with injustice of all forms, infidelity in marital life, hypocrisy in human relations, false ethical and cultural values, anachronistic taboos in the society and duplicity in their poetry. Besides they are highly intuitive, interpretative and evaluative of the contemporary realities. On the other, women poets like Indra Devi Dhanrajgir, Ira De, Leela Dhanraj, Gauri Pant, Lalitha Venkateswari, Shree Devo Singh. Lila Ray, Mary An Das Gupta, Bhanumati Srinivasan and Malathi Rao have failed to achieve recognition because of certain inherent limitations.

Significantly, IPE also includes poets from the North-East region, which has been consciously neglected for various political reasons. Since 2008, there has been an upsurge in their writings. Magazines and journals started figuring their writings by giving considerable space. Poets such as Mamang Dai, Mitra Phukan, Dhruba Hazarika, Terusula Ao, and Siddhartha Deb are some important voices. The younger generation includes Jahn timer Barua, Siddhartha Sarma,

Nitoo Das, Aruni Kashyap, Manash Pratima Borah, Uddipanad Goswami have addressed issues such as identity and ethnicity, question of violence that has ravaged the region.

These women poets though seem to be outnumbering male poets they suffer from certain inherent limitations. Theme wise their poetry is largely “confessional” and colloquial and chatty in style though it is often surcharged with powerful striking imagery to reveal their wounded feelings. Their poetry seems to be “self-centred”, “self-assertive” and “self-inflicting”. Their thematic interests by and large are narrow, too subjective and too sentimental. Right from Toru Dutt, these women poets have been anxious about women and their fate. They occasionally wrote impressive descriptive and narrative poetry and dealt with social issues. It seems there is no issue which is dearer to Indian women poets than their own agonizing predicament. Besides, yet another perceptible shortcoming is that they seem to be lacking a sense of humour. On these grounds, however, their poetry cannot be dismissed as trivial and irresponsible. At least they have made their poetry challenging and provocative. They have made “confessional” an accomplished self-revelatory design.

Men poets on the other hand have no such issues. They have dealt with their personal and the world, social and transcendental, nature and supernatural, sensuous, picturesque and impassioned, romance and everyday realities by using imagery, symbols, irony and humour.

IPE however is not free from certain inherent limitations. One serious limitation is that it is devoid of description of rural scenes and elements. Many poets writing in English have not drawn their attention towards rural scenes, characters and misery. The simple reason is that many of these poets are city-bred. They are born and brought up in cities and hence have written about their baffling experiences in city life using striking images. It is, however, not an exaggeration, if I say IPE is largely “cosmopolitan” in character. Nevertheless, there is a silver line. Among the poets I.K.Sharma, D.C.Chambial, P.Raja, PCK Prem, Man Mohan Singh (*Village Poems*, 1982) and T.V.Reddy, who have emerged after 1980 have written about rural life. Of them T.V.Reddy hailing from AP, is undoubtedly a remarkable in depicting rural scenes in his poetry. Though the tiny village is close to Tirupati

where the poet was born and brought up, and where he lives even today is absorbed by rapid urbanization, the poet seems to have been unaffected by such process. He has been loyal to his village, its beauty and ugliness. K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar, a noted critic, writes that his poetry has created “a void in Indian English Poetry which remains unfilled for a long time” (Poetcrit, 1999). T.V.Reddy has written a lot about village life by rendering it in highly musical quality blended with irony through captivating diction. It is the lyrical element accompanied by similes and metaphors that has infused his poetry with beauty and excellence.

Poets of the recent younger generation are scattered. The “city-centric” myth of IPE has been demystified, destabilized, dismembered and disbanded in the true post-modernist sense. These poets seem to be well read and many of them are teaching in academic institutions. They seem to be not content with only intellectual interpretations of life in cities, but on the contrary are engaged in giving expression to various social, political, economic and religious issues. Yet they are not worried about metaphysical questioning and spiritual inquest but suddenly return to earthly realities, for, it looks they are comfortable with realities “here” in the present life or such wanderings in esoteric realities are baffling for them or they want to pursue the realities of life energetically with intentional objectives.

Another limitation is that though IPE has truly acquired “Indianness”, it has not steeped in Indian ethos, its cultural moorings, and the rich tradition which has remained unexploited unlike Girish Karnad in his plays. Among the recent poets, Tabish Khair comes to my mind immediately. An expatriate now settled in Denmark, writes about his small town Gaya where he grew up, Indian mythology and legends, great names in India’s past, and ordinary folk on the streets of Gaya like Jayanta Mahapatra who writes about Cuttack, Puri Jagannath, Bhubaneswar temples, the ubiquitous and cultural ambience of Orissa with nostalgia and sorrow. If the poets draw inspiration from the huge corpus of folk tales, fables, folklores, myths and legends scattered over in Hindu religion, instead of relying on myths and legends of other traditions, they can not only add strength and beauty to their poetry but also effectively articulate their anxieties with true Indian character. These myths and legends provide rich cache of

symbols, metaphors and images to add beauty and colour to their expression. There is a likelihood of overlapping of various influences of ideological standpoints, cultural shifts and changes in science and technology. While assimilating these changes, IPE can still be a votary of true Indian ethos and tradition. This is another interesting development that needs a more conscious approach and deliberation. Time alone decides this. While making Indian heritage and culture integral to the poetic output, it can reveal its universal and secular character in dealing with various volatile life-conditions and ramifications. As observed earlier, in spite of these limitations, IPE stands unique in the world of poetry. Though it is unfortunate that some publishing houses have become insular and exclusivist there is a growing enthusiasm among younger poets to write and a growing idealization of the poetic medium. It is very encouraging to see poets of this younger generation making waves in poetry. But when they fall prey to their frenzied emotions and haste throwing away the sublime aspects and a sense of humour and irony the readers are disappointed.

This brief survey gives us optimism, and the significance of Indian poetry in English has not declined, and the 21st Century seems to be the Golden Era for IPE. The younger poets seem to be promising because they have distinct voice. These poets are experimenting with themes and creating identity that are both strong and unique. English poetry in India is far from dead though it seems to be growing like wild grass and the newer voices emerging like mushrooms, and though most of them seem to be pseudo poets pursuing the inconsequential, to use Professor M.K.Naik's words (183). It has, however, morphed and is breaking conventional moulds. Indian poetry is part of the Indian Consciousness from childhood. Arundhati Subramaniam rightly observes, "Poetry is not endangered. We are endangered if we don't have access to poetry. What do we lose if we lose poetry? The delight of organized sound and rhythm, joy in the patterning of sound and silence, the magic of the charged utterance, the shock of insight, the gift of clarity, the deep human thirst for mystery."

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Tony Morrison's *Beloved*: An Analysis

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Influenced by the revolution and evolving black consciousness of the sixties, Tony Morrison chose the obsession of blacks with an American standard of beauty (white) as the theme of her novels. Morrison's *Beloved* won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988 published in the year 1987. *Beloved* is the Tony Morrison's first novel in her proposed trilogy on Black experience. She captures the real pulse of the Blacks and creates the right image of black women, their biological conditions, plights, predicaments, patriarchy and dual standard of the American Society. She writes with a commitment and mission to create the right kind of black consciousness in the minds of the perspective and critically oriented readers.

Beloved portrays the continuous searing, emotional conflict in the psyche of its protagonist, Sethe. Sethe lives in her home "124" Bluestone Road in Cincinnati with her fourth and the youngest child Denver, a young girl of eighteen years. She was named after Amy Denver, a white girl who helps Sethe on her flight to freedom. Sethe lives in self-imposed isolation with only Denver for human company after her "crawling already? Baby" (99) had a violent end and her two sons flee from a house haunted by the "spite from the baby's ghost" (12). One of the men Paul D, who endured slavery with Sethe on the old Kentucky farm "Sweet home", arrives unexpectedly at 124, full of ardent memories, peeling time away. His presence resurrects memories that have lain buried in Sethe's mind for almost two decades. From this point on, the story will unfold on two temporal planes. The present in Cincinnati constitute one plane, while a series of events that took place around twenty years earlier, mostly in Kentucky constitutes the other.

This latter plane is accessed and described through the fragmented flashbacks of the major characters.

In Sethe's philosophy, "nothing ever dies." The past events continue to occur, not only in one's "memory" but also somehow in the real world. Sethe and Paul D re-experience their years in slavery when men and women in the novel were moved around like checkers. Rushdy states that *Beloved* traces the intertwining of Sethe's and Paul D "primal scenes" "remomored" until they form one story. These re-memories help them to remember the past while allowing Paul D to open the rusty lid of the tobacco tin buried in his chest where a red heart used to be and Sethe to "quiet" "spiteful" and "loud" haunting in order to make a future that is not haunted by the past. Major characters in the novel, Paul D, Sethe, Baby Suggs, Stamp Paid and Ella have been mortally humiliated in countless ways about which the reader comes to know from different angles.

Beloved is set in Cincinnati in 1873, eight years after the end of the Civil War. The passage of time has neither healed nor anesthetized the pain and effects of slavery. Slavery as a past of pain is one of the most revolting tragic chapters of history. By the virtue of power man has often tried to subdue and suppress lesser beings. But slavery is ironically the worst and most abominable form of subjugation of human beings by other human beings. It is not mere subjugation that makes slavery the worst form of human degradation but the denial of human characteristics to the enslaved, which subsequently leads to dehumanization in both the slave and the master.

In the novel, Sethe born to African mother she never knew, was sold to the Garners who own Sweet Home. After the death of her master, sadistic, vehemently racist brother-in-law runs the farm. He is known to the slaves as school teacher, and his oppressive presence makes life on the plantation even more unbearable than it had been before.

School teacher treated the slaves like farm stock, measuring their body parts and studying them like biological specimens. Once, Sethe overheard him giving a lesson to his nephews about her, instructing them to categorize each of her characteristics as either human or animal.

Slaves were thus deprived of the foundations of any identity apart from their role as servants. Baby Suggs is a woman who never had the chance to be a real mother, daughter, or sister. Neither Sethe nor Paul D knew their parents and the relatively long, six-year marriage of Halle and Sethe is an anomaly in an institution that would regularly redistribute men and women to different farms as their owners deemed necessary.

Sethe has been whipped severely by the school teacher for reporting his misdeeds to Mrs. Garner. The scars on Sethe's back serve as another testament to her disfiguring and dehumanizing years as a slave. Like the ghost, Beloved, the embodied spirit of Sethe's murdered daughter whose identity is mysterious, the scars also work as a metaphor for the way that past tragedies affect psychologically, "haunting" or "scarring" for life. More specifically, the tree shape formed by the scars might symbolize Sethe's incomplete family tree. It could also symbolize the burden of existence itself, through an allusion to the "tree of knowledge" from which Adam and Eve ate, initiating their mortality and suffering. Sethe's "tree" may also offer insight into the empowering abilities of interpretation. In the same way that the white men are able to justify and increase their power over the slaves by "studying" and interpreting them according to their own whims, Amy's, indentured servant who helps in delivering baby Denver interpretations of Sethe's mass of ugly scars as a "Chokecherry tree" transforms a story of pain and oppression into one of survival.

The characters in *Beloved* are formed and deformed by their experiences in slavery. Through flashbacks to past tragedies, *Beloved* explores the hardships endured by a former slave woman and her family during the Reconstruction Era. Sethe, an ex-slave has escaped from slavery and captivity in Kentucky to Cincinnati eighteen years earlier in 1855. She had already sent her children ahead to her mother-in-law Baby Sugg's house in Cincinnati. "Her three children she had already packed into a wagonload of others in a caravan of Negroes crossing the river" (9).

Sethe spends twenty-eight wonderful days in Cincinnati, where Baby Suggs serves as an unofficial preacher to the black community. On the last day, however, schoolteacher comes for Sethe to take her and children back to Sweet Home. Sethe's children consist of two boys,

Howard, Buglar and her already crawling daughter. When she recognized school teacher's hat outside the house, she felt hummingbird wings beating around her head and could think only, "No". Killing her children was a way of protecting them from the horrors of slavery she had herself endured, a way to secure their safety. Rather than surrender her children to a life of dehumanizing slaver, she flees with them to the woodshed and tries to kill them. Only the third child, her older daughter, dies, her throat having been cut with a handsaw by Sethe. At her daughter's funeral, Sethe mistook the preacher's reference to the "Dearly Beloved" mourners for a reference to her dead daughter. Afterward, she agreed to ten minutes of sex with an engraver in order to have the word "Beloved" carved on the baby's headstone. Not only has her body been violated, but her emotions have been treated a saleable commodities by the power-to-be;

Ten minutes, he said. You get ten minutes I'll do it for free.

Ten minutes for seven letters. With another ten could she have gotten "Dearly" too? She had not thought to ask him and it bothered her still that it might have been possible-that for twenty minutes, a half hour, say, she could have had the whole thing, every word she heard the preacher say at the funeral (and all there was to say surely) engraved on her baby's headstone; Dearly Beloved. But what she got, settle for, was the one word that mattered. She thought it would be enough, rutting among the headstone with the engraver..."

The murder of her infant daughter to spare her from a life of ignominy and slavery became the central incident in *Beloved*. Morrison as a senior editor at the publishing unit of Random House, based *Beloved* on an article she read in a nineteenth century magazine while editing a historical book, *The Black Book*. Sethe in *Beloved* is like Margaret Garner, - a runaway slave who was tracked down by her owner in Cincinnati, where she sought refuge with her freed mother-in-law. Faced with imminent capture, Garner attempted to murder her four children and succeeded in killing one.

Margaret attempted to kill her children so that they couldn't be forced into a life of slavery. She wished her children to be dead rather than became slaves and "murdered piece meal." In an interview with Paul Gilroy, Morrison finds a text in the Garner story, which had not previously been realized:

It occurred to me that the question about community and individuality were certainly inherent in that incident as I imagined it. When you are the community, when you are your children, when that is your individuality, there is no division... Margaret Garner didn't do what Medea did and killed her children because of some guy. It was for me this classic example of a person determined to be responsible"

There is bonding among the woman in their shared pain under slavery. Sethe has a perfect relationship with her mother-in-law. But she remembers of her mother and what happened to her under slavery. Sethe's account of her own mother reminds us of the pain of slavery how it interfered in the relationship between mother and child just to provide a contrast of her relationship with her own children:

By the time I woke up in the morning, she was in line. If the moon was bright they worked by its light. Sunday she slept like a stick. She must of nursed me two or three weeks-that's the way the others did. Then she went back in rice and I sucked from another woman whose job it was. So to answer you, no. I reckon not. She never fixed my hair nor nothing. She didn't even sleep in the same cabin most night I remember. Too far from the line-up, I guess (60-61)

The use of the verb 'sucked' emphasizes how the white man's system has reduced black woman to a breeding stock. Together with the noun 'job' it also reinforces the denial of the closest of emotional bonds that is between a mother and child. "Line" and "line up" emphasize the factory-like nature of the system that supports a capitalist, exploitative society in the name of "race." Like a stick, a slave is broken off from his life source and is thereby dry and dead.

Beloved can be labeled as a multi-narrative because numerous voices retell the same events, each from a different perspective, without

one perspective getting privileged over the other narratives of the same event. Karla F.C. Holloway observes, “Here, narrative structures have been consciously manipulated through a complicated interplay between the implicit orature of recovered and (re) membered events and the explicit structures of literature. The reclamation and revision of history function as both a thematic emphasis and textual methodology. The persistence of this revision is the significant strategic device of the narrative structures of the novel”

Tony Morrison’s *Beloved* remembers the horror and pathos of the Black Slaves prior to their emancipation and their emotional status after their legally won freedom. The novel brilliantly displays the emotional response of each character to unimaginable loss and suffering. The narratives by the main characters are actually documented thus making *Beloved* a historical novel woven within a fictional plot. The novel then becomes not only a document of historical and emotional evolution of the Blacks, but Morrison’s eloquent tribute to “Sixty Million and more”. This tribute is Morrison’s sacred obligation both to the history of her nation, race and the memory of all who suffered only because they were different-black and heathen by the standards of their enslavers.

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Evolution of American Literary Heroes

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Literary heroes represent the cultural, moral and spiritual texture of a country. They reflect the spoken and unspoken ideals, the dreams of life and the mundane existence of people of a nation. The concept of the hero generates some of the most existing criticism in the literary history of a country. The emergence of mythological hero or heroes gives proper direction to the people of a nation in formulating religions, morals, cultural and social ideals and values. Indeed, in a society with rich religions and cultural background many heroes exist who reflect the passion, purpose and perception of that particular society. Most of these heroes have their origin from the mythological sources belonging to the people of a country. These heroes are presented as the archetypes and based on their heroic ideals the subsequent heroes are created. In this paper an attempt has been made to trace the evolution of American heroes beginning from Emerson to the period of Saul Bellow.

Accordingly, it is rather difficult to evaluate American literary heroes from the point of view of mythological structure as the history and culture of America has its origin only in seventeenth century. It is quite obvious that in American literature the emphasis is more on the extraordinary individual hero, rather than the romantic hero portrayed in other literatures. The hero of American literature is the exceptional man who seeks to realise an ideal. Whatever his distinctive features are and however idiosyncratic he may be, the hero perceives an ideal and in the process demonstrates certain common characteristics. Like heroes in the writing of other countries and of other times, the hero of American literature is a courageous, active and responsible man but his passions are more intense and individualistic than the other literary heroes. The protagonist must struggle and view his experience with perception and possesses the ability to see things as they really are, but he must in some sense, be extraordinary.

William Gilman in his brilliant essay ‘*The Hero and the Heroic in American Literature*’ explores the origin of hero in American Literature, when he says, “American heroes by making themselves gods and eliminating gods through reductive generalizations the very things which make them distinctive” (4). Gilman censures D.H.Lawrence, Richard Chase, Henry Murray, and R.W.B. Lewis for treating the hero as symbolic, for obscuring the literal character of man “by the light of the into which he is assimilated” (William Gilman 10). He offers an alternative definition of the hero in American literature. He says, “The American hero arrives from the formulations of Kenneth Burke and Francis Fergusson in which tragic rhythm depends upon ‘the constant interplay of purpose, passion, and perception’”. He further argues, “A male character in American literature may be a hero in almost any circumstances; all he must do is struggle, see things as they really are, and benefit from his knowledge” (14).

Theodore Gross in his exhaustive study on American literary heroes traces five types of heroic figures in American literature. According to him these five types are: “The Emersonian hero; the Southern hero; the Black hero; the Disenchanted hero; the Quixotic hero”(Intro vii). Gross tries to define heroism within the framework of conflict between heroic ideal and authority while describing the heroes in American literature. He believes that there is a strong relation between the political commitment to common man and literary obsession of writers with the exceptional man, the hero.

The first hero to appear in American literature is ‘the Emersonian hero’, in the works of Emerson, Walt Whitman and Henry James. The Emersonian hero measures heroism in the backdrop of strong moral values. Ultimately he emerges as an intellectual and ethical hero. “He is the self-reliant of the transcendental movement; he is Walt Whitman, with inevitable variations; he is the central figure of all those Jamesian novels” (Theodore Gross ix). Hawthorne and Melville also contributed during this period but their heroes do not entirely fall on moral ideals. Some of the important works of this period are ‘*The American Scholar*’, ‘*The Conduct of Life*’, ‘*Songs of Myself*’, ‘*The America*’, ‘*The Ambassador*’ and ‘*Moby Dick*’.

The major contributions of nineteenth century American literature are Poe, Twain and Faulkner. This period is mainly dominated

by Southern Writers. The hero that evolves during this period is the Southern Gentleman, who functions as a kind of social hero. Personal idealism and sectional authority fuse in the minds of typical writers like William Gilmore Simms and Thomas Nelson Page. During this period, the influence of Mark Twain on American fiction is immense. Ernest Hemingway considers, “All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*” (Van Wyck Brooks, ed. *Writers*, 189). Through the adventures of young boy, Twain introduces some of the main motives that clamour for possibilities on the heart and soul of American fiction — a subjective innocence planted amidst an objective world of experience. A mythic poetic creation, Huck Finn is primitive in his sense of morality that seeks nothing wrong in humbling before a negro. Equally important work that belongs to this period is Faulkner’s *The Bear*.

Meanwhile, the American writers did not have to worry about the intellectual burden or emotional debt to a tradition rigidified by centuries of customs and traditions which influenced the literature in Eastern and European countries. In fact, the absence of mythic heroes lead to spontaneity for a moral order, individual drive for innovation, love for freedom and the daring for adventure for glorification of high values. These themes remained as the main sources of American literature until the 1861-1865 Civil War, which struck a vital note in defining America to the Americans. A new awareness of inherent conflicts, evil and the changing scenario in the realms of social dynamics projected new images in American literature.

During the same time, while the Victorian English choose to opt out to present a dynamic hero, the Americans on the other hand, were shaken out of the sleepy satisfaction of transcendental path ways as a result of the Civil War. In this new setting, the American character had to deal with the newly discovered contradictions, conflicts, clash of values, the north and the south, of the reality before and after the war, the code of honour and chivalry clubbed with defeat and despair, the new prosperity grafted on the malpractices of materialistic effort. The consequent challenges for the writer was to forge in the smithy of his soul which is a new phenomenon of an American consciousness.

Henry James, Ford Maddox Ford and others brought to the American narrative tradition what fiction writers had not brought earlier

– circularity of experience and unpredictability in narrative methods thus breaking the etiological role of linearity. As Linda Wagner-Martin rightly says, "... circularity, layers of metaphor, and repetition and nuance were more common narrative devices than were linear plot lines." (11) Hence, they tried to project a new hero to suit their themes and narrative technique. The nineteenth century fiction is often understood as realistic or mimetic, and rightly so. All fictions emanate from the self, but realist narrator depersonalises himself, abides by, merges himself into, goes in and out, and finally, if at all, transcends the characters and situations he creates. The eighteenth century novel could hardly get the sense of milieu of the times in its fictional fold but the nineteenth century novel has a highly democratic sense of the sentiment of the participation of the common man. However, it is realised only through the contribution of strong individual hero characters. The tradition continues in the twentieth century novel though presentational methods changed radically.

The late nineteenth century and early twentieth century witnessed a different hero in Black American literature. Frederick Douglas and W.E.B.Du Bois challenge the authority of white American. Between 1860 and 1919 black American writers mainly focussed on slave narratives with fundamental American myth. *Up From Slavery* (1901), *Out of the House of Bondage*, *In Spite of Handicap* and *Finding a Way Out* (1920) are some important works that developed a new hero mainly out of social necessity and to fight against oppression. As Theodore Gross identifies, "The black author, who has greater historical justification for bitterness than his white contemporary, is genuinely idealistic, bearing many similarities to Emerson and other transcendental writers." The flowering of black American literature stems largely from the authors' ability to believe in a heroic ideal as it clashes with the authority of America, which is a paradox of American literature.

The modern period in American literature begins with the fiction of Ernest Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, Ford Maddox Ford and other writers. Just as the Civil War served as a nodal point in the sensibility and prose style of nineteenth-century writers, the First World War marks a profound ideological shift for American writers of twentieth century. The initial heroes of all these writers suffer from

disillusionment and despair due to the War, hence are grouped under 'lost generation'. The following famous lines from Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* sum up the entire ideology of this period: "I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain... Abstract words such as glory, honour, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates." (143-44)

However, there is a remarkable difference in the American literary protagonist in the continuity of heroic ideals in the modern era which begins from twentieth century. In modern American literature, heroism is denied as an abstraction due to the disillusionment created by the First World War. The protagonist rejects validity of heroism and believes in only personal courage. Unlike the earlier heroes he is not an exceptional personality, but his private code serves as protection against the absurdity of a world filled with violence, rootless, and godless. This kind of hero appears mainly in the novels of Ernest Hemingway, who is a direct outcome of his personal experiences combined with despair of the period.

Though man finds himself in a meaningless universe, the best that he can hope to do is to find some order to conduct himself properly where there is no order. So, Hemingway created a 'code' for his hero to overcome the complexities of life. The Hemingway hero in fact became an archetypal hero in twentieth century American literature. As Cleanth Brooks aptly says, "The Hemingway hero finds in the universe no sanction for goodness; he sees through what are for him the great lying abstract words, like glory, patriotism, and honor; he has found that the institutions that pretend to foster and safeguard the traditional moral codes are bankrupt. But in a hostile universe – or in what is at the least an indifferent and meaningless universe – the Hemingway hero clings to a lonely virtue. If his virtue is an elemental virtue like courage, and if it is exercised as an effect of almost quixotic pride, still it is virtue, and he who exercises it thereby defines himself as a man, and repudiates mere thing hood." (8)

Fitzgerald shares Hemingway's disillusionment with abstract heroism, although he reflects, to a greater extent, a despair that succeeds in destroying the individual in himself. The loss of belief in the concept

is integrally related to self disillusionment that one can never divorce heroism and the hero as one can in Hemingway's work. As Fitzgerald grew to understand the social implications of what was at first a limited personal theme, his work became less narcissistic, less sentimental, and took on a tragic quality that is artistically compelling. Writing around the same time, James Faulkner tried to push away or bury certain unsavoury elements in the very ground to which the conscious ego has no access.

After the Second World War, Saul Bellow, J.D.Salinger, Norman Mailer, Ralph Ellison and others tried to present a different hero who is not in despair anymore. However, a lack of certainty and a lack of confidence can be observed in these heroes when compared to that of Hemingway and Fitzgerald. But the contemporary hero struggles a lot to bring out the truth within the framework of his own heroism. As Theodore Gross says, "Moses Herzog, Seymour Glass, and Norman Mailer are uncomfortable heroes, figures who aspire to heroism rather than realize it in any traditional manner; they must laugh at themselves in order to believe in themselves. But whatever the inward convulsions of their character and however unlikely they appear as candidates for heroism, they believe – or rather they need to believe – in a heroic ideal; they can not afford anything less. But the hero still emerges, struggling to discover the truths of life." (xii)

In fact, the contemporary American hero is greatly influenced by Saul Bellow and Ralph Ellison. It is remarkable that Bellow's involvement with the American reality has led to a comedy of suffering jokers, to the representation of a human condition that is comic, pathetic, and cruel depending on the point of view, and to the assertion of a religious affirmation for the very fact of a living human being. This process of cognition is conceived through the fiction of voyages, adventures, encounters, and the complexities of relationships. The letters of Herzog are a testament to the range and reach of Bellow's fiction. On the other hand, striving for ultimate possibilities is exemplified by the hero of Ralph Emerson. The Ellison hero seems capable of leaving his hibernation and entering the world of possibilities with clarity and power. Despite all these tendencies, the contemporary American hero has been striving hard to fight against brutality,

discrimination, torture, racial discrimination and misplaced transference with a passion which are exceptional to American heroes.

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Dalit Philosophy in Kolakaluri Enoch's *Ancestral Profession and Pawning The Sacred Thread*

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Kolakaluri Enoch is a well - received writer. He has been writing in all genres of Telugu literature and winning the appreciation from both critics and common readers. There are 82 books to his credit. Many of his works have been translated into languages like, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi. Addition to this his works have also been translated into English. He translated some of his works into it and also wrote books in English.

Enoch condemns social evils. He depicts not only the plight of dalits and the other marginalized sections in the society in his writings but also makes his protagonists overcome the difficult situations. He has created many great women characters and presents them as the powerful forces in work. He believes in the point that the comforts which every one of us has been enjoying today are the outcome of blood, toil and tears of the under-privileged. He is against the atrocities upon them. He unhesitatingly opposes the situation wherein people commit crimes against them in the name of God. He honours human beings more than religion. Extending a helping hand to a suffering man by the passer – by seems to him more important than offering prayers to God to see that his own wishes are to be fulfilled. He condemns any of the systems that ignore the sufferings of dalits and the other marginalized sections in the society.

When there is a fight between common man and his genuine cause on one side and the liturgy and social norms of Indian society on the other side, Enoch chooses the common man as his choice and extends all of his support to him. In their efforts to champion their cause, characters in Enoch's short stories register victories over the liturgy and the social norms that are evil in nature. His philosophy is concentrated on dalits and the other oppressed people and their fight against oppression. Despite the war they wage against their persecutors,

the protagonists in Enoch's works never resort to violence to win their cause but to non-violence.

Kolakaluri Enoch's *Kulavriti* a Telugu short story was translated into English by Ms Sukshma Vedere under the title *Ancestral Profession*. When it was published in Telugu it created sensation. Response to it from both critics and common readers was immense. A section of readers' brood over what the writer had discussed in it seriously. It was exposed to criticism of all sorts. The hero in the story is a dalit. He hails from Madiga community. He is an officer of a higher rank. He visits a famous temple to have darshan. The priest of the temple, who is waiting near the entrance of the temple to welcome a VVIP, notices that this man is trying to enter the temple with his shoes. The priest, not knowing that this was the one whom he has been waiting for, prevents him from stepping into the temple with shoes.

In the conversation between Murthy, the officer and the priest – Murthy disagrees to remove his shoes to enter the temple; the latter prevents him from stepping into the temple with shoes stating that it affects the sanctity of the temple – forms the content of the story. The conversation that comes into force between these two characters drives not only the group of common readers but also the intellectual wing in the society in the direction of serious thinking. Murthy makes his argument against the liturgy of the temple and speaks about the lapses in it. The writer has taken an extraordinary care to compose the dialogue form of Murthy. Even the group of critics, who are unhappy with the stand Murthy has taken, cannot prove Murthy wrong in his argument.

Murthy tries his best to convince the priest to let him into the temple with his shoes. But the priest refuses to it. The conversation between the two, at the beginning is very interesting.

“Stop! Who are you?” Questioned the swami barring his way.

“A devotee” replied Murthy

“You are entering the temple with boots?”

“Yes”

“You should not.”

“Who prohibited it?”

“It is a practice”

“Who are you to prevent me?”

“I am the chief priest of the temple”

“Who told you to stop me?”

“Dharma”

“Where is it written?”

“I am saying so!”

“Are your words the ultimate command or rule?”

“Ah! Both. You cannot enter with your slippers”

“Not slippers, boots”

“You have to remove them”

“Did God command that one should not enter with boots?”

“I demand, it is our tradition and custom to do so”

“Why do you interfere between the God and the devotee?”

“Without the priest there is no oblations, there are no devotees and God will not be satiated” (p.11-12)

Murthy wears neat dress and he looks pleasant. In his mind he is calm and composed. He is waiting peacefully for the permission from the priest for having him allowed into the temple with his boots. Priest wore a neat dress in the morning but no sooner it turns out into dirty. He is tired of his duties. There was a lot of commotion in his mind. There are two reasons for it. The first reason is that he leaves all his work in the middle and keeps waiting at the entrance to welcome the VVIP. The second reason is Murthy. Priest's argument with him leads the priest to serious thinking. Murthy questions priest's access to enter the temple even though his head, body and clothes stink of sweat. He also argues with the priest that how could he be deprived of access to enter the temple for the only reason he has worn boots but not for being uncleanly like the priest who stinks of sweat. He finds no good reason with the priest.

Many in the society are with polluted minds. Clergy permits them to have darshan in the temple. The same clergy doesn't permit another group - though they are not with polluted minds - stating that they are untouchables. This discrimination causes immense pain to Enoch. The Murthy's character and the strength of his argument take their effective form from the pain of the writer. We realize the depth of his thinking when Murthy questions the priest "When the people with polluted minds have the access to enter the temple why don't I?" The thought – provoking argument runs thus.

“Murderers, thieves, criminals, cheaters, prostitutes, gamblers, drunkards, hypocrites, betrayers, pimps, rogues, swindlers and charlatans may come and seek the lord's blessings, but an untainted person cannot enter with boots. Right?” (p.15-16)

Murthy tries very hard to make the priest realize the truth in his argument. But he fails. The priest, who admires Murthy's strong will and his flawless argument, fails to convince his soul in letting him into the temple with shoes. Then Murthy, as his last resort, designs an idea how to make the priest agree with him. He deceives the priest by saying that his feet are affected by skin disease. There are full of boils on his feet and puss is oozing out from them. The priest, who has already been impressed by his determination and is now convinced with his beautifully created story, grants Murthy permission to step in into the temple with shoes to seek the almighty's blessings. Murthy there upon declines his offer by saying that he cannot enter the place to which his people have no access to enter and where his ancestral vocation is dishonoured. He makes the point clear that he shall enter the temple only when his people and his ancestral vocation receive the due respect.

One should understand the agony of the writer when the character in this story making such a decision. As a Dalit, a Madiga, he has experienced all pains which a dalit in India experiences. Making shoes is the ancestral profession of Madigas. Madigas, the most debased untouchables in the society, feel being humiliated when they watch how the footwear, the vocation of their ancestral profession, is illtreated by everyone in the society. He says that pottery, the ancestral vocation of potter is honoured in temples. The implements of barbers have also been honoured in temples. In the sameway ancestral vocations of many

other groups in our society are honoured in temples but not the ancestral vocation of Madigas. They all, except Madigas, receive due respect from the society. “Why is this?” questions Enoch. Does it mean that people don’t need the footwear at all? They absolutely need them wherever they go. Except inside the temples they tread nowhere without footwear. Yet people pay no respect to footwear. The content of the story *Ancestral Profession* is woven round these two issues. He speaks thus:

“You have denied my entry with my boots. You may think it great on your part to have permitted me entry with them. This is an insult to me. I cannot be happy where my footwear, my boots and my ancestral vocation have been insulted. I cannot bear it when all other communities other than mine are treated with respect. Like all other occupations, the vocation of manufacturing footwear entails struggle. Only when the Madiga vocation is treated with dignity like other professions, I shall enter the temple.” (p.18)

Dalit literature evolved out of the fighting spirit of dalit literati. It, which is overwhelmingly dominated by dalit philosophy, reflects the life, hopes and ideology of dalits to the fullest. Interestingly Kolkaluri Enoch’s literature is different from that of other dalit writers; Likewise, his Philosophy too. He writes differently. The characters in Enoch’s works fight against atrocities against them differently but not in the same way how other Dalit writers portray the fight of their characters against the atrocities upon them. A few characters in the works of other writers succumb to the atrocities of their persecutors. They aim at drawing the sympathy from the readers. In some other cases the characters of these writers resort to violence to win their cause.

The characters in Enoch’s stories will never surrender before their persecutors despite the powerful position the latter occupy in the society. They reach to the shores of victory by resorting not to violence but to non-violence. Persecutors in his stories realize their mistakes. If not they remain helpless and watch the victory of the under-privileged. The sufferer could win anything he wishes for with love is the strong will of Enoch. The same is reflected in all his short stories. And this is the point that is missing in the works of other Dalit writers. That’s how

the short stories of Enoch are distinguished from those of other Dalit writers. The writer in his *Ancestral Profession* suggests that a dalit in India will have to show perseverance even in the face of difficulty to win his self-respect.

Kolakaluri Enoch's another story in Telugu was *Taakattu*. Malathi Nidadavolu translated the story into English under the title *Pawning the Sacred Thread*. Why not a Dalit is not permitted to do the same like a Brahmin does in our society? What aspect of a Brahmin prevents him from being friendly with a Dalit? Why does a Dalit dislike the sacred thread of a Brahmin? We find answers to all these questions in Enoch's *Pawning the Sacred Thread*. A Dalit's strong wish for being equal with a Brahmin is reflected in it. In this story Obilesu and Sastry are the two main characters. Obilesu a Dalit and Sastry, a Brahmin are two good friends right from their childhood. Obilesu is an English lecturer and Sastry a Telugu lecturer in the same Junior College. Their friendship continues even after their marriages.

Obilesu's wife works and earns her salary where as Sastry's wife doesn't. Sastry leads a lavish life. A part of Obilesu's salary and the complete salary of his wife go into savings. As we go through the story we come to know about the importance a Dalit woman has among dalits. A woman from them is allowed to work. As his wife is working, Obilesu confronts no financial troubles. The future of his life is safe. Sastry spends the lion share of his salary on victuals. His hunger is insatiable. He raises loans from everyone whenever he needs money and forgets to payback. The result is loans mount up to Rs.10,000/-. People begin to pester him for their money. The story begins when Sastry asked Obilesu to lend him Rs.10,000/-.

When Sastry asks Rs.10,000/- as loan, Obilesu is surprised. After thinking about it seriously for some time, at last, Obilesu decides to lend him money he is asking for. Pawning the sacred thread was the condition he laid before Sastry to give him the amount he had asked for. It is a shocking surprise to Sastry. When he asks Obilesu why does he need his Jandhyam (the sacred thread), Obilesu gives his answer where in reflect the agony of the writer.

“I want something that you have and I don't have and the thing that hinders our friendship,...”. This sacred

thread –either we both have it or both don't have it. It is preventing us from being brothers, and creating a disparity between the two of us. We're not on par because of this thread. It's separating us" (p.90)

After thinking about it seriously, Sastry finally decides to pawn his sacred thread. He wishes it is to be done at a place where no one should present to witness the act of removing the sacred thread from his body and pawning it to Obilesu. They finally decide that the college urinals was the right place for it. The writer by creating the situation where in Sastry removes his Jandhyam, "the nine threads. Nine was an absolute number, three times three, three fold universe, three million gods, three supreme deities – all pointing to the significance of the nine threads in the sacred threads" (p.93) describes how the inequality comes into being among the people.

Obilesu does not touch the Jandhyam when Sastry removes it in the college urinals. Not even in the college staff room when they come back. As he considers the Jandhyam the filthiest object he ever knows, he decides not to touch it. He gives money which he promises to Sastry and asks him not to wear it again before he returns his money back. Though he keeps his Jandhyam with him Sastry should not wear it is the condition of Obilesu. He has the confidence on Sastry that he will not break the condition. At the end when they were about to leave for their homes Obilesu says thus.

"Sastry, I will not be distressed even if you don't pay off the loan". He stopped for a second, and said speaking clearly. "I'll be happy" (p.97) with these words the story ends.

When we draw a comparison between Murthy in *Ancestral Profession* and Obilesu in *Pawning the Sacred Thread*, we find many similarities between the two. Both are with the same bent of mind. Murthy and Obilesu are dalits. Both of them are job holders. Murthy in *Ancestral Profession* makes the main priest of the temple on waiting to welcome him. Obilesu in *Pawning the Sacred Thread* makes his friend Sastry to wait anxiously as he has promised to lend him Rs.10,000/-. Both of them are in a position to make their counterparts-the priest and Sastry-wait for them endlessly.

Both Murthy and Obilesu are bestowed upon strong mind. Once a decision is made, they stick on to it till the end. Murthy says that he enters the temple only when he is allowed to enter the temple with his shoes. He demands the same respect that has been given to the ancestral vocations of different groups in our society to be given to his shoes, the vocation of his ancestral profession from the society. With his expertise in making the argument, Murthy convinces the priest and seeks the permission from him to enter the temple with his shoes. In the sameway Obilesu in *Pawning the Sacred Thread* convinces Sastry to remove his jandhyam and lends him money Sastry has asked for. The writer thereby highlights the self-respect and iron will of dalits in his short stories.

In the same way in *Pawning the Sacred Thread* also Obilesu does not touch the sacred thread of Sastry when he removes it from his body. Obilesu considers it as an object that divides him and his Brahmin friend as a barrier which the both of them cannot overcome in their lifetimes. He also considers it the filthiest object he has ever seen. Hence Obilesu denies touching it. The paramount form of dalits individuality is reflected in Obilesu when he denies touching the Jandhyam of his friend. We could see only in the stories of Enoch where a priest, who feels himself a king in the premises of temple, bowdown before dalit and accepts his supremacy, as in *Ancestral Profession*. As Enoch's literature is of with these qualities, it strikingly distinguishes itself from the literature of other writers in the society including Dalit writers.

Dalits are suppressed for centuries. Under the British rule they received education and realized how they had been exploited over centuries. Ambedkar gives them inspiration to fight against atrocities against them. When other dalit writers draw inspiration from the writings of Dr. B.R.Ambedkar, Kolakaluri Enoch, as a writer draws inspiration from his own experiences. He not only discusses the problems of dalits but also shows solutions to the problems. This is the principle on which his dalit philosophy was constructed. It is the striking characteristic of Enoch's works. Kolakaluri Enoch on one occasion says thus:

“The vision of religious orthodoxy is the one I cannot tolerate. I long for the reflection of a thought rather

than pleasure. I do not believe in the principles of caste and discrimination. God and religions are not of great importance to me. Human being is important. I want a man in the society action oriented. I expect literature to give its encouragement to a man who is trying to free him from religion caste and poverty by which he has been mowed down for a longtime. I long for literature that is able to face indifferences, violence and vice".
(1)

The above comment makes us realize the point that the indifferences among people can be erased by literature.

Enoch's belief is that literature where in common man (irrespective of his caste, religion and creed) occupies a respectable position brings a change, in the right direction, in the society. All his literature is woven round this belief. He, as a writer, develops an attitude in compliance with his belief and produces literature. It will be very apt to quote Enoch's comment on his literature at this moment.

"My yearning and fighting have been to win your love. On behalf of the weak and on my own behalf, I continue to fight to win your love. My fighting instinct fosters my aesthetic susceptibilities, my vision, mission and my voice. All my strength lies in my voice and pen. I keep walking on the path I have chosen to accomplish my task. I hate no one. I don't know about violence. I hold neither a sword nor a gun. I love people and yearn for their love.....The ink of my pen is my tears. My literature reflects my tears. My copious tears await the unification of us".(2)

Thus the protagonists in Kolakaluri Enoch's *Ancestral Profession* and *Pawning the Sacred Thread* resort to thought provoking methods to win their causes.

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**Political Victimization and Quest for Identity in Margaret
Atwood's Novel *The Handmaid's Tale***

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Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* presents the imperialistic structures of power and dominion and their destructive effects on individuals, especially women. In this novel, Atwood exposes the power structures and their effects on both those who exercise power and those who are subjected to it. Political power is used as a symbol of exploitation, isolation and alienation where women are used as objects or functions. It is through Offred, the protagonist's first person narrative that Atwood reveals the horrifying, bleak and disoriented world of Gilead, where men are the rulers and women are reduced to being men's possessions. According to M.F. Salat, "Gilead, therefore, is not only a repressive but a regressive society" (Salat, Canadian 75). The novel depicts the social isolation of women and their separation into rigid, subservient gender roles as wives, wombs, workers and whores. Except wives, all other women are deprived of their basic human rights such as the rights to education, jobs and property and even one's own name and speech. This novel is viewed as an overtly political novel more than her previous novels. As Helge Norman Nilsen says, "*The Handmaid's Tale* (1983) is the most explicit one in its protest against the mistreatment of women, but in this novel the political message is preached too overtly..." (Nilsen 126).

The protagonist, Offred, lives happily with her husband Luke and daughter before the state is taken under control by new regime. She had a wonderful time with her mother during her childhood, with her friend Moira during the college years, with Luke as a wife, and with her daughter as a young mother. But after the new regime gains control over the State, they take over the Government by assassinating the President. The new regime declares a state of emergency by pretending that Islamic fundamentalists are planning to destroy the country. They suspend the constitution. After the constitution is suspended, the newspapers and other media forms like television, magazines, print and electronic media are censored. With the approval of the people, the new

regime introduces identity cards and blocks important roads. Women are not allowed to do jobs; they are not allowed to own property and hence their bank accounts are closed. The money is either transferred to their husbands or to the eligible male heir.

The regime's social structure is designed with its focus on child-bearing. This structure is imagined to be devised because of the decline in Caucasian birthrates. The decline in the birthrates is due to AIDS, genetic deformities, birth disorders like stillbirth, unsafe birth control measures, R-strain syphilis and miscarriages. Due to these reasons men become sterile and women barren and the children become wretched mutants called 'unbabies' or 'shredders'. The zero population among the ruling elite causes distress.

In the new regime, groups as well as individuals are tragically alienated from each other. The alienation experienced by the protagonist from herself, as well as from those around her, is more terrifying than that of any other female characters in the novel. The regime divides all women according to their functions, as Wives, Marthas (House keepers), Handmaids (Child bearers), Aunts (Disciplinarians), and Jezebels (Prostitutes) and Econowives. Marthas are forbidden to become friendly with Handmaids. Aunts are used to oppress and control Handmaids. Moreover, the Handmaids are not supposed to talk to each other. There is a constant invigilation to prevent the forging of relationships among women.

The Handmaids are always dressed in red, the colour of blood. This colour defines their function of breeding and child bearing. The separation of women according to their functions and these colour-coded uniforms deprive them of their natural identity. Of all roles assigned to women, the role of Handmaids is the most dehumanized. They are valued only as walking wombs because their only function is child bearing. They are considered as national containers, two legged wombs and sacred vessels.

The protagonist wants to come out of this segregation. Hence, she tries to escape along with her husband and daughter. But she is caught at the border of the state and is tragically separated from her husband and daughter. She is assigned the role of a Handmaid. In Gilead, all the Handmaids are trained by Aunts. The Aunts who train

the Handmaids are rigid middle-aged women who have internalized patriarchal values and are used to teach them to other women. The basic principle of colonialism, “control of the indigenous by members of their own group” (320) is adapted in Gilead. They believe that “the best and most cost-effective way to control women for reproductive and other purposes was through women themselves” (320). All the patterns of Colonial exploitation are unleashed on the people of Gilead and as a natural corollary it is more on women.

Another factor the regime uses to control people is through language, because it considers language as the only weapon at the disposal of those who are under subjugation. The language which women use to create their own subjective meaning and to challenge socially, politically oppressive institutions is restricted by Gilead. The very act of writing that empowers a person to influence changes in political, social, and economical ideologies are also denied to the women in Gilead. Hence, Helene Cixous says, “... Writing is precisely the very possibility of change, the space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social and cultural structures” (Cixous 879). The women of Gilead are not allowed to read, write, communicate or form friendships.

After the completion of training at the centre, the protagonist is assigned to a commander called Fred, who is childless because of the infertility of his wife, Serena Joy. A deliberate and systematic attempt is made in Gilead to obliterate a sense of individuality and identity in women by taking away their original names from them. A Handmaid’s name indicates merely the name to whom she is assigned to. Since, the protagonist is assigned to a commander called Fred, her name becomes Offred. The name “Offred” is composed of the preposition ‘of’ indicating possession and ‘Fred’ the name of her commander. This destruction of the individual name is part of the attempt to destroy the past and force women to live in the present moment alone. In fact, Offred’s real name is never mentioned in the novel, because the name is a link to her past, her unique individual self. The society destroys her past very effectively and systematically that Offred feels her next generation of Handmaids will become more docile because their past is rewritten and their individual pasts are completely erased. They are all

enchained in the present and are completely cut off from the past, delinked from their genealogical identity.

In Gilead, Offred suddenly finds herself as nothing more than a thing. The brief memory glimpses of Offred's past provide a contrast between the drab barrenness of her present and the rich texture of her former life. As Amin Malak explains, "These shifting reminiscences offer glimpses of a life, though not ideal, still filled with energy, creativity, humaneness and a sense of selfhood, a life that sharply contrasts with the present alienation, slavery, and suffering under totalitarianism" (Malak 13). Offred has no control over any aspect of her life, including herself. She is completely under the control of political power and is forced to live for the good of others. She realizes that the regime regards women as 'things' and that she as a Handmaid, with her tattooed ankles and identity pass, is merely, a valuable thing with a rich womb. Offred is aware that only the insides of the Handmaids' bodies, which are important for reproduction, are essential to the authorities.

Not only language, but also food is restricted to Handmaids. As Gilead wants to deny all forms of power to women, it also controls their food habits. The Handmaids have no choice about what they eat and are permitted to eat only that food which the authorities decide because it may improve their health and fertility. Their meal is brought to them into their rooms by Marthas and they eat alone. By controlling food, the regime gains direct control over the Handmaids' bodies.

Leisure time activities are similarly controlled by the authorities. The only leisure time activity a Handmaid is allowed to do is to go shopping with a neighbour Handmaid and buy only those things for which she has been given tokens. The rest of the day she is supposed to do nothing. Being a Handmaid, she is not allowed to read, write, smoke, weave, stitch, listen to music or go for a walk. Offred cries out in anguish "What is to be done, what is to be done" (52). Offred feels time is a trap in which she is caught and would rather do anything they want her to do than nothing at all. Her extreme isolation and boredom is revealed by Offred, "I am like a room where things once happened and now nothing does, except the pollen of the weeds that grow up outside the window, blowing in as dust across the floor" (104). Most of

the times, she occupies herself with nostalgic memories of her mother, husband, daughter and Moira and eagerly wishes to meet them.

When Serena Joy, wife of the commander, finds that the Commander cannot impregnate Offred, she arranges an affair with Nick, the car driver with a hope of freeing herself from the awkward situation of her husband trying to impregnate Offred in her presence on the bed. She bribes Offred with a cigarette and even promises her to procure a picture of her daughter. Later, Serena Joy gets a photograph of Offred's daughter. The photo causes Offred more pain than pleasure for she realizes that her memory is erased from her child's mind. She dejectedly says, "Time has not stood still. It has washed over me, washed me away, as if I am nothing more than a woman of sand, left by a careless child too near the water" (228).

When Serena is out, Commander sends word to Offred through Nick asking her to meet him and play Scrabble with him. Offred has already lost all her language skills because of the restrictions imposed by the regime on oral and written communication. As she starts playing the game she feels, "My tongue felt thick with the effort of spelling. Creation of new words, rediscovering language and cunning imagination play a vital role on the psyche of Offred. She slowly gains control of herself and begins to think of a new life in her sub-conscious state.

If the Handmaids conform to all the rules passed by the regime, they are allowed to go shopping but are allowed to buy only those things ordered by their Commanders. Routine shopping sometimes take them to the 'wall' where dead bodies with covered heads hang from hooks. In fact, these dead bodies reveal the nature of human spirit that despite severe oppression there are people who fight against it. What the Handmaids are supposed to feel towards them is hatred. The feelings which are purely a mark of individual and which come out naturally for a human being are also tragically controlled by the regime. These 'Salvagings' i.e the ritual slaughter and dismemberment of wrong doers serve the dual purpose for the Gilead such as annihilating the rebels and creating terror in others. On the other hand, their death is the symbol of injustice, tyranny and defiance.

The Handmaids are allowed to attend ‘Prayvaganza’ a procedure where regime chooses women from different categories such as nuns and forcefully makes them marry in the guise of common good. Handmaids gather to watch this ceremony. The Commander responsible for this ceremony teaches women how to be silent with all subjection, and not to usurp authority over the man because he says that Adam was formed first and then Eve. Further he says that Adam was not deceived but Eve was deceived in the transgression. Eve can be saved by childbearing if they continue in faith and charity and holiness and sobriety.

Another chance the Handmaids get to go out is to attend the delivery of a Handmaid. A red coloured Birth Mobile, a van, takes all the Handmaids to attend to the delivery of a Handmaid. In the training centre, Aunts show Handmaids the clippings of the deliveries of women. Before lunch they repeat the sentences, “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children” (124). Aunts train these Handmaids in the procedure they have to follow when they go to attend the delivery of a Handmaid. The Handmaids are forced to watch pornographic films in which women are tied up with dog-callers around their necks or women hanging from trees upside-down naked with their legs held apart. Susan Brownmiller opines that pornographic films like this would depict rape and sexual sadomasochism as natural and acceptable behaviour. She strongly condemns pornography and says that, “It represents hatred of women... we are unalterably opposed to the presentation of the female body being stripped, bound, raped, tortured, mutilated, and murdered in the name of commercial entertainment and free speech” (Brownmiller 572).

Every night Offred sleeps with a hope that she would get up next morning in her own house with her husband Luke and daughter. But it remains only a dream to her. Finally she escapes from Gilead with the help of Nick and literally tells her story by recording it on tape instead of writing it down. Offred’s telling creates its own auditor when she says, “By telling you anything at all I’ve at least belief in you, I believe you are there, I believe you into being. Because, I’m telling you this story. I will your existence. I tell, therefore you are” (251). Offred’s story telling produces social community. Offred, by remembering her painful past reveals it to the listeners. Offred cherishes multiple

possibilities of language that the regime is ultimately unable to control at least in her case.

A close reading of the novel reveals that all the main characters tragically lose their identity – Offred as mother, wife, daughter, and friend; Serena Joy as an independent woman; Offred's mother as a revolutionist; Commander as a good husband; Aunts as responsible human beings. All the characters try to create a space for themselves within the limited and restricted circumstances. This may be done through autonomy of thought, through self-definition and self-reconstruction of one's own history, through creative composition, oral, written, through bonding among women and through refusal to accept their victimized status by the patriarchy. These are the various strategies of survival under victimization. The important strategy is bonding among women. Despite the strict segregation of the Wives, Marthas and Handmaids, there is a slow forging of relationships among the women.

Even in a politically oppressive regime, women can reclaim their identity, freedom and sexuality through language and story-telling. In this context, Lucy Freibert points out, "Atwood demonstrates through Offred that women, able to take risks and to tell stories, may transcend their conditioning, establish their identity, joyfully reclaim their bodies, find their voices, and reconstruct the social order" (Freibert 285). Linda Kauffman also echoes Freibert's faith in the power of women to use language. Kauffman observes, "She (Offred) first has to reclaim herself, retrieve her voice; once she does so, she turns to re-inscribe the voices of other women" (Kauffman 227). The use of language gives Offred the opportunity to interrogate her world, her identity, and the position of that identity in her world.

Atwood's primary concern in *The Handmaid's Tale* is to examine the political nature of the use of language. Offred gradually recognizes that she can manipulate language in order to create her own subjectivity, a subjectivity that can enable her to act as a subversive agent against the oppressive reality created by the Gilead. Atwood, not only explores the political potential of the user of language, but also suggests that the receivers of language must properly interpret the language because it is used to create a self-empowering subjectivity and reality. Through the epilogue, Atwood suggests that not only should women raise their voices against oppressors but also women audiences

must learn how to read those reinscribed voices and properly judge their own subjective meaning.

The Handmaid's Tale is the first of Atwood's novel to be set entirely outside Canada. It is set in the United States of America. The Americanization of Canada as a result of its colonial outlook has been of great concern to nationalists like Atwood. They feel that Canada itself is responsible for its own submissiveness. Atwood remarks that Americans sometimes refer to Canada as their front yard and sometimes as their backyard, both of which imply their ownership. The timidity of the Canadian Government with reference to the Gilead authorities is ridiculed in the historical notes given at the end of the novel. Atwood considers that much like the Gileadean rulers who suppress the voice of Handmaids, the USA also has been suppressing the voice of Canada by its Super Power status. The Canadians regard themselves as morally superior to the violent yanks. However, she feels that Canadians are just as predatory as the Americans but can afford to feel morally superior only because they are relatively powerless. Power has an intoxicating effect on those who have not known it. Though Atwood deals with the theme of American domination versus Canadian national consciousness in most of her novels, in *The Handmaid's Tale* it is more direct and forceful.

The Handmaid's Tale, which is about the power and how power operates is a serious criticism of life not in one particular country but may be in many countries. Our present actions and beliefs if unchecked could make Gilead a reality. Offred has recognized and rejected not only the disasters of social and sexual policies but also her own participation. She has not only come out of victimization and reconstructed her former identity but also tried to construct the identities of other women. In *The Handmaid's Tale* this is made possible with the integration of Offred's double with the self and by her voicing of her experience and thus liberating herself from gender power struggle.

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Tughlaq: An Alienated Existential Outsider

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Girish Karnad's play *Tughlaq* works out its protagonist's progressive alienation with existential overtones. This study is an attempt to interpret the play in the light of certain concepts of alienation. Like Camus's *Caligula*, *Tughlaq* also may be seen as a play which deals with an alienated, outsider figure estranged at various levels from society and the individuals around him, from traditional religion, from existence and the human predicament in this world and from himself. This thesis aims at studying the various levels of alienation in *Tughlaq*.

From the opening scene, Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq is seen as a man estranged from his society, primarily because he is a man ahead of his age. He is not understood by the society around him because his ideas and ideals are far above the comprehension of his contemporaries. In an age of religious fanaticism and hostility between Hindus and Muslims, his broadminded religious tolerance seems foolish to the Muslims and cunning to the Hindus who suspect his motives (Scene One). He wants to win the confidence of his subjects and build an ideal empire together with its traditions; any attempt to undermine them meets with a violent reaction. Hence arises the perennial dialectic between the Outsider and society. The changes proposed by Tughlaq pose a threat to the time-honored conventions and beliefs of society and so he meets with stiff opposition from all classes of people. His plans regarding the change of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad and the introduction of a token copper currency are sound and reasonable but fail to convince his subjects. His frustration at their non-comprehension is understandable. "But how can I spread my branches in the stars while the roots have yet to find their hold in the earth?" - He realizes here that his idealistic dreams can never reach the stars unless they are rooted in the firm support of his people. Despite all his efforts he is unable to win the confidence of his subjects -both the aristocrats and the commoners. He fully realizes the tragedy of his predicament. 'But how can I explain tomorrow to those who haven't even opened their eyes to the light of

today?. It is the alienation of Tughlaq from his people, which is responsible for the failure of his grandiose schemes. Just as they fail to understand his reasons for proposing these schemes; he too fails to foresee their reactions of them. He does not take into account the emotional attachment of people to their native soil when he proposes a change of capital involving not only the shift in the administrative machinery but also of the people, lock, stock and barrel. Neither does he foresee and take precautions against the possibility of counterfeiting when he introduces token copper "coins. The repeated failure of Tughlaq to win the confidence of his people paves the way for his gradual disillusionment and fall from his ideals, which ultimately ends in a state of existential alienation, as it will be seen later.

Not only is Tughlaq alienated from the society in which he lives, but he is also estranged at the interpersonal level from the individuals around him. His interpersonal alienation manifests itself in two-ways. First of all, he is shown to manipulate people for his own purpose, treating them as objects and not as persons. Secondly, he is unable to establish meaningful communication with others and is seen to be play-acting continually.

Erich Fromm has defined as a form of alienation the relationships among men who see each other not as human beings but as objects, which can be used to achieve their own goals. In Scene Three, Tughlaq is seen as an ace schemer who manipulates Sheikh Imamud-din to act exactly according to his own pre-arranged plans. By a diabolically clever strategy he gets rid of both his enemies - Sheikh Imam-ud-in and Ain-ul-mulk at one stroke. Tughlaq sees others through an alienated vision - not as persons but as pawns in a political game of chess, objects to be used and discarded.

In Tughlaq's relationship with others there is very little genuine communication. Most of the time he seems to be play-acting, thus revealing his alienation from others at the interpersonal level. He seems to be giving a performance all the time, striking a series of histrionic stances and poses. In the very first scene, Tughlaq tries his best to impress his people by playing the role of a just and impartial ruler (3). At the end of the episode the Guard dismisses the crowd, saying, 'what are you waiting for? The Show's over! Go home'. These words suggest that the Guard has almost seen through the theatricality of the entire

performance, which had been staged by Tughlaq to win popular support. Not only in public does Tughlaq indulge in role-play, even in private conversation with his step-mother he seems to be acting, though he says that she is one of the three people in whom he can confide. When she asks him why he does not sleep at night, he launches into a long piece of inflated rhetoric. It is so obviously theatrical that the stepmother bursts into laughter with the amused comment, "I can't ask a simple question without your giving a royal performance". According to Erving Goffman, "To the degree that the individual maintains a show before others.... he can come to experience a special kind of alienation from self".

Tughlaq is not alienated from human existence right from the beginning of the play. The First Scene reveals him as an idealistic reformer who hopes to lead his people into a Utopia. It is only when the idealist becomes disillusioned, on seeing the unbridgeable gulf between aspiration and reality that he moves towards existential alienation. Though all the innovative measures of Tughlaq like giving equal rights to Hindus, change of capital and introduction of copper currency are excellent in principle, they fail because of two main reasons - his inability to win the people's confidence and his failure to foresee the flaws in his schemes. His social alienation from the people thus paves the way for his schemes. His social alienation from the people is also responsible for his existential alienation. Scene Two reveals Tughlaq's longing to be accepted by his people as their savior-monarch. "Come, my people, I'm waiting for you". He also realizes the helplessness of the individual and the brevity of human life. "I have only one life, one body and my hopes, my people, my God are all fighting for it". In Scene Three, there are brief intimations of the beginning of existential alienation in Tughlaq. This is seen when he tells Sheikh Imam-ud-din about the "surrounding void" which sometimes pushes itself into his soul and starts "putting out every light burning there".

Self-alienation has been defined in philosophy as 'alienation of a self from itself through itself. It is state of a division of self into conflicting parts, which becomes alien to each other. When the self-division become extreme, the person suffers from various psychological disorders and may even be driven beyond the border of sanity into the total self-estrangement of madness. In Scene Ten, soon

after condemning his stepmother to death, one finds Tughlaq experiencing intense self-estrangement. Left alone, he falls to his knees, clutches his hands to his breast and desperately pleads with God to help him. "God, God in Heaven, please help me. Please don't let go of my hand I started in your path, Lord, why am I wandering naked in this desert now?". The tone of despair, helplessness and bewildered incomprehension are unmistakable in this prayer. Yet when zia-ud-din Barani enters, he jests at his own praying gesture in self-mockery. But a note of anguish is recognizable at the end. "I was trying to pray! Think of that no one in my kingdom is allowed to pray and I was praying. Against my own orders!

Girish Karnad's play *Tughlaq* has been much acclaimed by critics for its depth and range. It contains within itself the suggestiveness and richness of a work of art, which lends itself to various interpretations of its thematic concerns at different levels.

The historical theme in *Tughlaq* is quite obvious as Karnad explores the paradox of Muhammad Tughlaq, the idealistic Sultan of Delhi, whose reign is considered to be one of the most spectacular failures of Indian history. But, *Tughlaq* is not an ordinary chronicle play, on the other hand it is a very imaginative reconstruction of some of the most significant events in the life of a great king. Tughlaq is compared to Camus's *Caligula*, for both the plays present a tyrant using his power absolutely, indulging in wanton and senseless cruelty. Yet, neither play can be called historical fact, in both of them. The theme of the play is from Indian history, yet the treatment is not historical but highly political.

Attention has been paid to the political theme of the play as it reflects the political mood of disillusionment in the sixties. In Karnad's own words, what struck him "absolutely about Tughlaq's history was that it was contemporary. But Tughlaq is not merely a political allegory."

The greater part of the fascination and appeal of the play surely arises out of the complex personality of Tughlaq who has been realized in great psychological depth. The ambiguities in Tughlaq's character come from the fact that he is at the same time the most idealistic and the most intelligent ruler ever to have come on the throne of Delhi.

Several characters in the play attest to the fact that Tughlaq has power, learning, intelligence and talent; yet he is cruel and crafty. He is an idealist, but is also impulsive and cannot tolerate opposition. M.K. Naik feels that *Tughlaq* is basically concerned with the tragedy of the limits of human power in a predominantly psychological context.

Again, it would perhaps be unjust to say that the play is about an 'interesting' character, for the play relates the character of Tughlaq to philosophical questions on the nature of man and destiny of a whole kingdom, which a dreamer like him controls. Thus, critics have also studied the theme of alienation with existential overtones.

However, the lasting interest of the play is due to the way all these themes are subtly woven together and the way each of them gains significance from the others. For example, the political theme in this play is ingeniously linked with people, religion and history.

But the young find Tughlaq a true representative of Islam; he is human and humanist. He is not an "Insult to Islam", as the older people say he is, but a king who has made a law that he Muslims have to pray five times a day. Moreover, *The Koran* is allowed to be read in the streets. But the fanatics as represented by Sheikh Imam-ud-din believe that the Sultan is going against the Islamic tenets: "If one fails to understand what *The Koran* says, one must ask the Sayyids and Ulema". Tughlaq asserts his allegiance to *The Koran*: "I have never denied & the word of God, Sheikh Sahib, because it's my bread and drink".

Thus, we see that the different stages of the action and the different fields of interaction in the play are inter-linked by the common motif of betrayal. The betrayal takes different shapes too - religious, political, social, interpersonal and emotional. The element of betrayal running throughout the play makes for a fascinating study of the complexity of human motives. Therefore it is evident that Tughlaq's thematic concerns have a universal significance. Betrayal, coming as it does at various significant stages in the protagonist's life, traces the course of alienation, leads to anguish giving rise to cruelty and tyranny and finally results in the tragic failure of one of the most idealistic kings in Indian history.

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**A Post-modernist reading of Wole Soyinka with reference to
*Kongi's Harvest***

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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 other national societies, the relationship of the past to the present and national versus personal identity. His concern has been the man on Earth, his personality, his capacity for creation and destruction that makes him a political victim of his own ingenuity. As a writer he believes in human freedom and has felt that to detract from the maximum freedom socially possible is treacherous and has been pre-occupied with the process of apprehending his own world in its full complexity. His world is not African but universal. To him, the African in the post-colonial context is no way different from the African in the tradition. The freedom from discrimination unfortunately doesn't seem to have taught his native African the basic nuances of human life. Post – modern African has yet to grapple with the need of the hour when he can find himself existing in a global society defined by a complete rootedness in a native culture and finding opportunities to accommodate oneself in the mixed society of different culture, races and beliefs. But the freed African/Nigerian is involved in killing his own race. Wole Soyinka as an ideologist has given expressions to his theory of existence in the background of the post -colonial context in all his plays and *Kongi's Harvest* is one such play which was published in 1964 is a general indictment of authoritarianism.

The *Kongi's Harvest* is a well-known play of Soyinka, highlights the very existing scenario in Nigeria. *Kongi's Harvest* is usually understood as an attack on Kwame Nkrumah and Hastings Banda respectively the first post-colonial leaders of Ghana and Malaur. Soyinka has indicated that there were home grown Nigerian politicians propagandizing their own 'isms' or ideologies. It is his first major works to reflect directly on the Nigerian political situation.

The play takes place on the eve of the day of the national celebration of Isma. The action of the play attempts to replace Oba Danlola as the ruler who is offered and eats the first yam, thereby consecrating the new crop. By doing so Kongi would succeed to the traditional rulers' authority. It is significant that opposition to Kongi comes rather from Daodu, an uneducated 'been to' of the younger generation, than from the Oba and his followers.

The attempt to replace traditional customs by the modern ideology is challenged in the play by the younger generation, which has its own communal farm, combining modern agricultural techniques with what is understood to be the traditional African Socialism.

Portrayals of Evils of power

Kongi's Harvest depicts Soyinka's concept of kingship in western societies, where the king is chosen to bear the spirit of the sky. Oba Danlola the Chief understands the power of the sun in producing the Yam Harvest; Kongi the dictator tries to use Oba's mystical powers but while doing so, he comes under the wrath of the rain queen whose Goddesses live in the sea and confers life on the land. Kongi, the man of pride, ignores the power of the rain queen. The Oba has to abdicate in favor of his son and Daodu gains the love of Segi, the symbol of life and sex. There is confrontation in Segi's followers with Kongi at the Yam harvest, reminding one of Bacchae of Euripides. "It is all a bacchanal. The sad strain of the opening scene disappears."

"The play is not a political thriller, or a protest play. It is a poetic drama which seeks to penetrate the ephemeral surface to reach the eternalness....In a sense Kongi can be seen as a power, Danlola as pomp and Segi and Daodu with their love of music and poetry as ecstasy."

When Danlola and his retinue dance together for the last time at the portentous approach of doom, woven subtly within the dance and prolonging it, are threads of forbidding though we shall not grasp their full import until the end of the play observes Soyinka.

The play takes place on the eve of and the day of the national celebrations of Isma. The satire on make-up ideologies or isms is similar to Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forests*. The play shows the artists'

new function after independence as a critic of the ruling elite, especially of the politicians. Although the satire is primarily directed at Kongi, President of Isma who has attempted to take on himself the symbolism and authority of the traditional rulers, it is also directed at the tribal chiefs. Oba Danlola is pompous, ineffective and more concerned with liberty of government. Although condemned, Oba's lechery is likable. The traditional rulers were far from idea, have been replaced by those who blaspheme, one against African traditional culture.

Though Kongi's Harvest is usually understood as an attack on Nkrumah's rule in Ghana, Soyinka has indicated there were home-grown Nigerian politicians propagandizing their own 'isms' or ideologies who were more the objects of satire. Kongi's relevance to Nigeria was the tyrannical reign of Chief Akintola during what is known as the Western Region crisis. The split in the main Yoruba political party leading to a state of emergency, the imprisonment of many Yoruba leaders, a regional tyranny and the breakdown of law and order led directly to the first coup d'état and military takeover in Nigeria which in turn resulted in the massacre of Igbos and civil war. "Kongi's Harvest is the first of Wole Soyinka's major works to reflect directly on the Nigerian political situations." The actions of Soyinka's play focuses on Kongi's attempt to replace Oba Danlola as the ruler who is offered to eat the first yam, thereby consecrating the new crop. By doing so Kongi would succeed to the traditional rulers' authority. It is significant that opposition to Kongi comes rather from Daodu, and educated been to of the Younger generation than from the Oba and his followers.

The festival of the New Yam turns from a celebration to a disaster when Kongi is served, instead of the symbolic yam, the head of a man who he ordered to execute. A new cycle has begun. Kongi harvests death not life. Since mankind is doomed to recurrent cycles or patterns of history including tyranny there will always be authoritarian power but the difference between traditional government and the modern state is that the tribes had means to change their rulers whereas the modern dictator is much harder to depose. "The attempt in Kongi's Harvest may result in worse repressions; even Kongi's closest aides flee from his wrath.

It is customary in many West African cultures that a priest or ruler should eat the first yam during a harvest festival. For instance Achebe's *Arrow of God* the refusal of the priest symbolically to consecrate the yam leads to the villages' conversion to Christianity.

Daodu performs a sacrifice and initiates Ogun's mythic journey through chaos towards creativity.

"Daodu is like the artist, a mouth piece of the Gods who is redeemed by undergoing a potentially destructive experience. His behaviour represents the will and risk-taking necessary if the Karma of man's destiny is to be broken and the hope of a new age brought about."

"My prime duty as a Playwright is to provide excellent theatre to make sure the audiences do not leave the theatre bored."

So, says Wole Soyinka, a versatile and prolific writer, a teacher, an actor, a producer; an editor and controversial speaker. His critical comments are usually tense, exhibitionistic affairs written in impenetrably dense and pretentious language. His fiction alternates between passages of immense power and acute psychological insights and sketches of extremely tortuous and verbose writing. In his language, it is observed that there is a great feeling for words in his works; and in it one can see the Johnsonian richness and the weave of his language which continually suggests another word of sounds lying beyond it of some kind in his languages 'lapses into an ensnaring verbal faculty and mannered obscurities of expression. Eldred Jones talks of his language as having a self-conscious violence of imagery ranging from the beautiful to the observed.

True to these observations, in *Kongi's Harvest* Soyinka uses dances and music to the full and the play achieves an extra dimension that makes it certainly, the finest of his works. The language is enlivened and enriched by the clarity of movement and the comment of the music and Soyinka – basically a satirical writer finds new powers in the theatre.

"Kongi's *Harvest*, represents the end of Soyinka's exercise as a playwright and his move into a personal

style that is formed upon a basis of the traditional theatre of the Yoruba and elevated by his sophistication and genius.”

What Soyinka appears to say in the play is that every desirable act exacts its price; the new system as we see has changed the old and displaced it too.

The new regime is built on new political isms of Isma land.

To demonstrate the tree of life
Is sprung from bitter pear
And we the rooted bark spurred
When the tree smells its pot
The mucus that is snorted out
When Kongi’s new race blows¹⁴

The new regime depends on its own propaganda. The political machinery is central to it.

“Soyinka’s concern is with man on earth and Soyinka sees society as being in continual need of salvation for itself. This act of salvation is not a man’s act; it comes about through the vision and dedication of individuals who also doggedly pursue their vision in spite of the opposition of the very society they seek to save. They frequently end up as the victims of the society, which benefits from the vision. The salvation of the society thus depends on the exercise of the individual will.”

Soyinka’s life is inseparable from his work. Soyinka’s works celebrate life and depreciate its opposite. This opposite includes minor internal repressions, but it also embraces the general wastefulness of war. Individual will is important for Wole Soyinka. Any form of political repression to Wole Soyinka is a suppression of the individual will, the force through which new ideas and new life proceed. The suppression of individual will is the suppression of the very forces of light. This is the point that Kongi’s Harvest drives home. Human life represents constant challenges and constant choices and man has to

thread his way through all the contradictory alternatives. The acceptance of personality of Ogun is very much based on this.

“Ogun, in proud acceptance of the need to create a challenge for the constant exercise of will and control enjoys liberal joy of wine.”

Soyinka’s African sensibility gets further revealed in his inclusion of the Yoruba rituals in his plays. One such festival is the New Year festival which is portrayed as being celebrated in *Kongi’s Harvest* too. New Year is a virtual similar to Ocean festival in Nigeria. During this ritual the New Year is symbolically great. There is a lot of ritual to the festival and before it no one may eat the New Year. This festival has economic significances as well as bringing everyone together. In mutual communal participation; As it will be seen Segi in Kongi’s harvest and Simi in *The Interpreters*.

Soyinka through Ogun myth who happens to be his patron god demonstrates his political vision for Nigeria. He wants Nigeria to have a leadership that creates more than it destroys and a policy which protects the individual rights. Nigeria, he feels should adopt a political system which is indigenous and primordial.

The play is thus a study of how a corrupt post-colonial culture can sap the zeal and energy of some of its best potential leaders. The play is an illustration of the cobbling together of incongruous ideas in the name of science does lead to a tragic end. Kongi’s easy acceptance of anything that is opposed to tradition as a filtering philosophy for the new regime may also be regarded as a sign of the uncritical privilege of modernity over tradition that is the hallmark of Lakunte’s project.

Wole Soyinka, who in a wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones fashions the drama of existence, in these plays, has expressed his concern for human freedom and justice. Evident in *Kongi’s Harvest*, is the notion that efforts to remake the world. Is transform society are fraudulent and lead is catastrophe.

True to the post-modern concerns of all matters, Wole Soyinka also critically deals at his own evolved and freed society and identifies the problems that crop up in the process of human beings trying to accommodate the problems in the changed environment .Soyinka seems to suggest that man finds it difficult to accommodate himself in

his attempt to come out of the tradition. The African tradition and culture, to Soyinka should never be compromised in the African fight for existence.

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Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*: Profound expression of Human Nature

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Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, published on May 6, 1943, was the first novel that brought her wide fame and name and won huge following for the philosophy she called Objectivism. She explained that:

"My philosophy, in essence, is the concept of man as a heroic being, with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute."
(Appendix to *Atlas Shrugged*)

Together with Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), *The Fountainhead* has become one of the central texts of an Objectivist movement that emphasizes capitalism, individualism, and the pursuit of individual ambition. *The Fountainhead* illustrated this philosophy through the tale of Howard Roark, a visionary architect, who sticks to his creative convictions against massive public opposition. The book became the source of criticism in America, but it eventually became a best-seller.

The theme of *The Fountainhead* is the contrast of, and conflict between, persons of independent functioning and those of dependent functioning. The plot is an ideal vehicle by which to present this theme. The manner in which Ayn Rand blends the themes with other literary elements such as plot, characters and dialogue is important.

Howard Roark, an innovative modern architect, struggles against a society indifferent or hostile to his revolutionary ideas. He is an independent thinker. Those who reject him are dependent persons who, in one form or another, allow the thinking of others to rule their lives. They are unable to see the truth and value of the modern ideas. It is to be noted that it is impossible to discuss the novel's plot without introducing its theme. The two are inextricably intertwined, which can

be seen by analyzing the specific men who reject Roark. These men fall into three types and each is a variation on the theme of psychological dependence.

The first type is the *traditionalists* — those so blindly follow the ideas of the past that they cannot attach any value to innovative ideas. History abounds with examples of traditionalists: those who rejected Copernicus' heliocentric theory because of their commitment to the older geocentric view; those who could not see the truth of Darwin's theory of evolution because of their Fundamentalist religious beliefs. Of those opposed to Cameron and Roark are many traditionalists. The Dean of Stanton Institute believes that all architecture was discovered by the architects of the past. He believes that the job of modern architects is to only copy their ideas. Guy Francon imitates the designs of the Classical period and Ralston Holcolmbe of the Renaissance. The gradual acceptance of Henry Cameron's innovations is thwarted by the Columbian Exposition of 1893. The traditionalists believe that the age of an old idea is a conclusive factor certifying its truth. To them, truth is not a relationship between an idea and the facts, but between an idea and their ancestors. Their reason is shrouded by their blind commitment to the past. This is why the Dean, Guy Francon, and Ralston Holcolmbe are unable to recognize the merits of Cameron's and Roark's innovations.

The second type of men who reject Roark's ideas are the *conformists* — those who blindly accept the ideas of their peers. Many such individuals can be found in life. Most people who hold religious convictions do not study comparative religion, but simply accept the beliefs of their families. The religion of their family (parents) obviously becomes their religion. Some individuals compromise on their career preference or marriage in order to meet their parents' expectations and beliefs. Others may know the dangers of smoking and taking narcotics but, to please their friends, indulge nevertheless. Similarly, *The Fountainhead* is populated with such characters. Numerous individuals reject Roark's ideas solely because his thinking clashes with the beliefs of those around them. For example, Robert Mundy, a self-made man who grew up in poverty in Georgia, is one such person. Mundy asks Roark to build him a southern-style plantation house, not because he values it, but because it is a symbol of the

aristocrats who ridiculed him as a young man. Though Roark explains patiently that such a house would not stand for his own struggle and values, but for the values of his tormentors, Mundy refuses to acknowledge Roark's point. He wants to build the plantation house because others valued it.

Mrs. Wayne Wilmot of Long Island wants to hire Roark so that she can tell her friends she has Austen Heller's architect. She wants an English Tudor home because of "the picture post cards she had seen, [and] the novels of country squires she had read." Members of the board of the Janss-Stuart Real Estate Company refuse Roark's design because "no one has ever built anything like it." John Erik Snyte, an architect for whom Roark briefly works, differs from Guy Francon's commitment to the Classical style. Snyte does not endorse any specific school of design. He cheerfully gives the public whatever style it wants. Mostly, there is Peter Keating, who is driven by an almost uncontrollable urge to impress others and win acclaim. Keating seeks prestige, and his method is to fawn over others, especially those in authority, and give back to them their own ideas. He is an intellectual chameleon, who takes on the beliefs of others in order to gain their approval. Keating expresses his policy, "Always be what people want you to be. Then you've got them where you want them." He puts the beliefs of others above and before his mind. Keating's code is the perfect expression of a conformist's soul. Such an unthinking mentality is unwilling and incapable of recognizing the genius of Roark's work.

The third and last type of men who reject Roark are the *socialists* — those committed to the principle that an individual has unchosen moral obligation to serve society. The contemporary American welfare compels the productive individuals to support the nonproductive. Various socialist states in Europe and around the globe provide a similar, though much more extreme, example. Finally, Communism and Fascism — the fullest, most consistent political expressions of an individual's duty to selflessly serve society — still exist as ideologies and as forms of government in some countries. In *The Fountainhead*, Ellsworth Toohey is the refined essence of a socialist mentality. Toohey preaches socialism relentlessly in his column, "One Small Voice". He believes individuals are obligated to sacrifice for society, that a country needs a government to enforce those

obligations. He affirms the most creative and productive should be compelled to serve those less so. In Toohey's world, there is no room for those who will not obey. Independent thinkers will either be broken or eliminated. No Howard Roarks will be tolerated. Toohey makes clear his views in a "confession" speech to Peter Keating near the novel's end. In answer to Keating's question, "Why do you want to kill Howard?" Toohey minces no words. He doesn't want Roark dead, he says, but alive in a cell where he will finally be forced to obey. "They'll push him, if he doesn't move fast enough, and they'll slap his face when they feel like it, and they'll beat him with rubber hose if he doesn't obey. And he'll obey. He'll take orders. *He'll take orders!*" Toohey, the advocate of a socialist dictatorship, must break the spirit of freethinkers like Roark.

The three types of persons who reject Roark — the traditionalists, the conformists, and the socialists — are variations on the theme of second-handedness. None are independent thinkers. They permit others to dominate their lives in some form. The traditionalists copy the thinking of their ancestors; the conformists copy the thinking of their contemporaries; the socialists seek to annihilate innovative thinking in their contemporaries, transforming them into blind followers of the political leadership. The traditionalists and conformists are followers of others; the socialists desire to rule others, but in ruling must placate the crowd to keep it from rising against them. All copy from or cater to others. The fundamentals of their existence hinge on the society. All are psychologically dependent on other people. They are not willing to look at nature, to think and judge independently, to perform creative work. They are all opposite to Roark in cognitive functioning. Their thinking, in one form or another, is threatened by him and so all reject his originality and autonomy. Inexorably, all three types line up against Roark as his opponents.

The novel's story line is Roark's quest to design his type of buildings. Roark is opposed by persons such as the Dean, Guy Francon, Ralston Holcolmbe, John Erik Snyte, Peter Keating, and Ellsworth Toohey in a conflict pitting an independent thinker against psychological dependents. Ayn Rand's theme is perfectly expressed by her story. This integration of literary elements can be seen by examining

the characters in the novel. Each character is a carefully etched variation on the book's theme.

Howard Roark is an epitome of the creative mind. He is more than an independent thinker. He is a fictional example of the greatest minds of history. He represents the exalted thinkers who discovered important new truths only to be rejected by society. The Wright Brothers were scoffed at, Robert Fulton was ridiculed, and Louis Pasteur was bitterly denounced. In the field of architecture, Modernist designers like Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright fought a decades-long struggle to win acceptance for their new ideas. The histories of science, philosophy, and art are filled with examples of innovative thinkers whose ideas were rejected by the men of their times. His beliefs are evident in the courtroom speech when he says:

“Thousands of years ago, the first man discovered how to make fire. He was probably burned at the stake he had taught his brothers to light. He was considered an evildoer who had dealt with a demon mankind dreaded.....Centuries later, the first man invented the wheel. He was probably torn on the rack he had taught his brothers to build. He was considered a transgressor who ventured into forbidden territory.....Prometheus was chained to a rock and torn by vultures—because he had stolen the fire of the gods. Adam was condemned to suffer—because he had eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge.”

Roark's character, his struggle and triumph, are Ayn Rand's tribute to the great freethinkers who have carried mankind forward on their shoulders, have often met hysterical opposition, and have rarely received the recognition they deserve. The character of Howard Roark holds a place in the history of world literature as a model of human independence.

Keating and Toohey are also obvious variations on the novel's theme. Keating is a man so afraid to risk social disapproval that he willingly surrenders his mind to others. He is an example of the pitiable nature of conformity — the motives, the behavior, the consequences, resulting in a man whose soul is voluntarily turned over to society.

Keating is ultimately a pathetic person, not an evil one. His story contains a warning: A man betrays his soul at his own peril. The person who is dependent on social approval for his self-esteem sacrifices his values and his mind, and necessarily ends as shallow being. Keating is a literary example of conformity, of one form of dependence on others.

In the character of Ellsworth Toohey, Ayn Rand makes important points regarding the nature of the man who pursues power over other men. Conventionally, cult leaders and political dictators have not been viewed as weak psychological dependents, but as the opposite — as strong individuals whose control over others is a logical expression of their strength. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche is one famous example of a man who glorifies the conqueror's over-brimming strength and vitality — and, more generally, dictators are referred to as “political strongmen.” The society glorified conquest as human strength believed it to represent strength. In the characters of Roark and Toohey, Ayn Rand shows that this view is false. Roark is willing to accept the responsibilities of independent thinking. He looks at facts, he judges, he stands on his own convictions regardless of the beliefs of the society. Because Roark is a thinker, he is not wedded to social approval. He looks to the outer world, to nature, for truth, and consequently, he is able to build. This man, the one who conquers nature, is the man with power. This is human strength.

But Roark is stark contrast of Toohey. Toohey is scared of independent judgment and confrontation of nature. He is intelligent enough to realize that man's survival requires first-handed thinking but he nevertheless seeks its destruction. Toohey identifies the need of independent thought but he refuses to change his methods. He is unwilling to face the world of nature that cannot be bent to his wishes. Rather, he confines himself to the world of creatures like Peter Keating who can be molded to suit his desires. He refuses to devote his intelligence to the conquest of nature; instead, he commits it to the conquest of men. He exists solely as a parasite and he survives as a virus does, by invading the tissue of healthy organisms. He needs the Keatings far more than they need him, because they can build after a fashion, but Toohey can construct nothing. The Keatings receive approval from Toohey, but Toohey gains survival from his followers.

He is the most abjectly dependent creature inhabiting the universe of *The Fountainhead*.

Wynand and Dominique are also variations on the novel's theme. Wynand is a mixed case. A commonly held belief in our society says that, "there is no black and white, all are shades of gray." The characters in *The Fountainhead* show clearly that Ayn Rand disagrees with this view. Roark, Keating, and Toohey are not blends of independence and dependence, of good and evil. Rather, each is utterly consistent, fully one or the other. Roark is fully independent, possessing no elements of second-handedness. Toohey and Keating, on the other hand, are abject second-handers with no independent qualities. Wynand is the character who represents a mixture of incompatible elements. Through Wynand, Rand shows the disastrous consequences of any attempt to mix logically contradictory qualities.

In his private life, Wynand lives by his own judgment. He reveres human excellence, his personal life is filled with examples of man's achievements. He recognizes Roark's genius, Roark's integrity, and embraces him as his dearest friend. Despite Dominique's errors, he identifies immediately her nobility of spirit and falls deeply in love with her. Finally, he fills his private art gallery with works of only the most exquisite beauty. Wynand's private life is lived in faithful accordance with his own high standards.

But his public life is an example of the most distasteful habits and desires. *The Banner* is a lurid tabloid filled with loathsome values, directed toward the most vulgar tastes of the crowd, presenting none of Wynand's own high ideals. He inevitably fails in his noble crusade because his readership has no interest in the ideals he defends, and sincere idealists can no longer take him seriously. Wynand allows the values of others to dictate his career, making it, in the end, impossible to get a hearing for his own values. His decades-long dependence on the standards of others makes it impossible to successfully defend his own. In the end, Wynand is defeated by his attempt to live a double life — and the tragic lesson of his character is that there is no middle ground between independence and dependence.

Dominique is a woman thoroughly independent but who makes a serious, though honest, error. Dominique is a thinker, a woman who

sees with her own eyes and understands with her own mind. The beliefs of others do not influence her thinking. She recognizes that both her father and Keating are phony and she understands the genius of Cameron and Roark, though most of society rejects them. She, preeminently among the characters, comprehends Toohey's evil. But her first-hand method of functioning does not prevent her from making a serious error.

Dominique believes that virtue has no chance to succeed in a corrupt world, that great men like Roark are doomed to suffer the fate of Cameron, finishing as lonely outcasts. Phonies like Francon, manipulators like Keating, power-lusters like Toohey are the ones who succeed in the world. Roark, Dominique believes, is heading toward a tragic fate. Ayn Rand calls this pessimistic view of life the *malevolent universe premise*. Although Dominique's belief is grounded in the specific facts of her experience, her generalization is unwarranted. Ultimately, Roark does not merely succeed, he succeeds because he is a man of uncompromising principles. Keating does not merely fail, he fails because he sells his soul. Toohey does not merely fail in both his attempts to stop Roark and to control the Wynand papers; he fails because his corrosive evil has only the power to destroy, not the power to create. Dominique witnesses these events and, consequently, realizes her error. In the end, she understands that Roark is right: Only the good men can attain success, because only they possess the power to create. She accepts what Rand calls the *benevolent universe premise*, which is the realization that the world is open to value achievement by the good men and only by the good men.

Because Dominique is a thinker, she is able to identify her error, change her mind and her actions, and achieve happiness. She makes an error in the content of her thinking, but because her method is first-handed, she is able to correct it. The lesson of her character is that independent thinking does not make a person infallible, but it does provide a self-correcting mechanism by means of which to identify and eradicate errors. Her character is a variation on the theme of independence. Each character in the story is, similarly, a variation on a single theme, created by an inexhaustible imagination.

The plot — the struggle of an innovative architect to win acceptance for his ideas against the entrenched beliefs of society — is

a perfect vehicle to express the theme. Additionally, the specific antagonists who oppose the creator/hero — traditionalists, conformists, and socialists — are all variations on the theme of second-handedness, further dramatizing the novel's theme. Finally, each character — major and minor, positive and negative — is a distinctive variation on the theme. The overall result is a tightly integrated work of literature, expressing a profound thesis regarding human nature.

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Arun Joshi's Contribution to Indian English Fiction

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Arun Joshi (1939-1993) was born in a well-educated family in 1939 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. His father was a famous botanist and rose up to the post of the Vice-Chancellor, first of the Punjab University and later, of Benaras Hindu University. Arun Joshi had a brilliant academic career. Joshi attended the schools in India and the United States of America. He got an engineering degree from the University of Kansas and further he acquired a degree in the Industrial Management from M.I.T. Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1960.

Arun Joshi worked in a Mental Hospital in 1957 in the United States of America where his uncle was a Psychiatrist who dealt with chronic psychological cases. His sensitive mind was impressed so much that one can find his chief protagonists describing an inner life within the inner world of the soul divided against itself, its aspirations and conflicting urges turned on the will and action with the novelist's searchlight carefully scrutinizing it all in full focus. This is the reason why there is something deeper than empathy for such characters in his heart. Joshi says in an interview with M.R.Dua, "My novels are essentially attempts towards a better understanding of the world and myself."²

Joshi reveals in an interview with Sujatha Mathai that he has been influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and Jaya Prakash Narayan. The same questioning spirit, that is common to the heroes of his fiction, makes Joshi drawn to Jaya Prakash (JP) because of JP's uncontaminated, political career and the charisma of his honesty and simplicity. So, Joshi moved to JP Narayan's movement in Bihar. Joshi

is also attracted by the figure of Jesus Christ and is very much interested in the Christian ideology and thought. He is also influenced by the western existential writers. In an interview with Purabi Banerjee he says:

I did read Camus and Sartre ... I liked *The Plague* and read *The Outsider*. I might have been influenced by them. Sartre I did not understand clearly or like. As for existential philosophers like Kierkegaard, I have never understood anything except odd statements.³

Several influences upon him have made him a writer. His entry as a writer is not sudden happening. His family background, education, financial status, contemporary social values, political condition, circumstances and his own experiences play a vital role in making him a writer. Joshi returned to India in 1962 and joined the Delhi Cloth and General Mills Co. Delhi at a managerial capacity on the Recruitment and Training Department. Next he worked as an Executive Director at the Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources. After 1965, he started his own industries. All these events –his ancestry, his educational experiences in India and the USA, his working in a Mental Hospital and his entry into the industrial field --- paved the way for the future novelist.

Arun Joshi is one of those modern Indian novelists in English who have broken the new grounds. In his search for the new themes, he has “renounced the larger world in favour of the inner man and has engaged himself in a search for essence of human living.”⁴ An outstanding novelist of human predicament, Arun Joshi has explored the inner crisis of the contemporary human being in all his novels.

Arun Joshi’s contribution to Indian English fiction is in the form of novels and a collection of short stories. They are:

1. *The Foreigner* (1968)
2. *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971)
3. *The Apprentice* (1974)
4. *The Survivor* (1975) (Collection of Short Stories)
5. *The Last labyrinth* (1981) and

6. *The City and the River* (1990).

Had he not died (1993) prematurely, he perhaps would have written a few more works of distinction. The post-war period has witnessed a great spiritual crisis; therefore it has been rightly regarded as 'The Age of alienation.' In this age, man is brought face to face with confusion, frustration, disillusionment and disintegration. Though the alienation made its first appearance in 1935, it has already existed in the classical, sociological works of the nineteenth century and early the twentieth century writers like Karl Marx and others.

Arun Joshi's first novel, *The Foreigner* (1968) is his real life experience. He was hardly 20 years when he started writing this novel. He had begun to write this novel, when he was a student in America. Like Joshi, the Protagonist of the novel, Sindi Oberoi obtains his engineering degree from an American University. His other two protagonists Billy Biswas in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* and Som Bhaskar in *The Last Labyrinth* also study in the United States of America. The first three novels shows Joshi's personal experiences in India and abroad. In his other two novels *The Apprentice* and *The City and The River*, the characters in these novels are unfortunate in lacking the benefit of foreign education.

It should be fairly obvious by now that there is no repeat in Arun Joshi's handling of the themes in his novels, even though he confines himself to a limited segment of Indian society the urbanized middle-middle and upper middle classes. He displays impressive maturity and technical competence in devising appropriate narrative strategies to explore his themes. According to M.Schorer, narrative technique is "the only means (the novelist) has discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning and finally evaluating."⁵ The narrative modes Joshi employs are determined by the nature and needs of each novel. As Mark Schorer defines, if technique is "any selection, elimination or distortion, any form of rhythm imposed on the world of action by means of which our apprehension of the world of action is enriched or rendered,"⁶ then one can not profitably discuss the themes of a novel without closely attending to its narrative technique. In other and simpler words, matter and manner cannot be separated, in modern treatments of the art of prose fiction, the point of view from which the novelist tells his story is specially emphasized,

because the point of view is the means by which defines his theme positively. As M.A. Abrams explains:

Point of view signifies the way a story gets told – the mode (or modes) established by an author by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, action, setting, and events which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction.⁷

According to Meenkshi Mukherjee:

It would be of little help, therefore, to discuss situation, theme, plot or characters as they are separate elements existing by themselves, because there are determined by the author's point of view.⁸

There are different ways of presenting a story and a single work may, and often does, exhibit or employ more than one device. The problem of the novelist is after all adequate transmission of a story. Very broadly two predominant narratives, each with subdivisions or classes, have been classified by scholars' third person and first person narratives. The most recurrent in the Indian novels in English has been the first person narrative. As Meenakshi Mukherjee remarks:

Since the theme of some of the best work is the quest for self, this technique is often the most suitable and has been applied in widely diverse situations by the Indian novelists.⁹

The first four novels of Arun Joshi use the first-person narrative, and the fifth, *The City and The River* uses the third-person narrative. As in his handling of his themes, Arun Joshi does not repeat mechanically his narrative modes, and shows considerable skill and sophistication in this regard. In *The Foreigner*, *The Apprentice* and *The Last Labyrinth* the protagonists are the narrators, and all of them are engaged consciously or otherwise in understanding themselves. Each protagonist, who is the central consciousness of the particular novel, tells his story from his point of view, as he perceives, understands and assesses it. In *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* a variation of the first-person narrative is employed. Instead of the protagonist Billy Biswas his trusted friend Romesh Sahai (Romi) is made the chief narrator of his 'strange' story. That part of Billy's life about which, Romi has no

knowledge at all and which is narrated to him by Billy himself is faithfully reported in his own words by Romi. Thus there is a sort of braided narrative in this novel. In *The City and The River* unlike the other novels, Joshi employs omniscient third-person narrative. Joshi says:

I have never really plotted a novel. I know the plot of *The Apprentice*, in the sense there was a man who took bribe and hurt someone. In *The Foreigner* I know the American bit of the novel. The plotting got threadbare in *Billy Biswas* and *The Last Labyrinth*.¹⁰

The real experiences of Arun Joshi have been a recurrent source of all his novels. He has written all his novels and a collection of short stories with a vision to share his personal experiences with his kith and kin and the readers. Joshi has studied contemporary human being's predicament and his awareness and gives his study the shape of novel. Joshi himself observes:

My novels are essentially attempts towards a better understanding of the world and of myself... if I did not write, I imagine I would use some other medium to carry of my exploration.¹¹

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**Voice of the Voiceless in Manjula Padmanabhan's *Points* and
*Invocation***

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Manjula Padmanabhan's *Hidden Fires* consists of monologues like "hidden fires", "know the truth", "famous last words", "points" and "invocation". They were written after the first riots in 1992 in Bombay. Its scope is on violence-all kinds of violence-the violence of Hindus against Muslims, violence institutionalized by government, violence of poverty, violence on minority community, and so on.

The monologue "points" has nine points to discuss. They are :

1. the first point is that my country is not a political region.
2. the second point is that my country is a political region
3. the third point is about the ownership of the country
4. the fourth point is about the beginning of the country
5. the fifth point is about guessing about the existence of the matter
6. the sixth point is about rearrangements
7. the seventh point is about something else
8. the eighth point is about that which cannot be grasped-insubstantial essence.
9. the ninth point is about reality.

In the beginning of the monologue, "points" a young woman appears on the stage with an unlit candle and asks the audience to

identify it : “Can everyone see this candle?” (HF 26). Then she slowly lights it up and says : “The flame represents the spirit of my country” (26).

Then comes the first point to be discussed. She says that the phrase ‘my country’ is not a political jargon as the country has no boundaries. It is an earth on which she stands on while she comes out of her home. It is also an air that she breathes. She avers : To begin with it’s not a political region. It has no boundaries, no visa offices, no armies to defend it. My country is the earth we stand upon when we step outside our homes. My country is the air we breathe when we stand under the sun. (26)

The second point is related to the political region. In the second point to be discussed, she topsy-turves her first argument that country is not a political region into a political region as it has boundaries, visa offices, and an army. She says :

My second point is that my country is also a political region. It has boundaries, it sells visas, it has an army. But these things do not define it. These things are part of what it has. (26)

The third point to be discussed is related to the ownership of the country. The young woman belongs to her country but it does not belong to her. It belongs to nobody as no one can take it and give it back. It has volume, area, value which are uncertain qualities. One cannot define country. It exists in time as it has its beginning. She broods:

My third point is about ownership. I belong to my country. But it does not belong to me. Or to anyone else. Nobody can take it away or bring it back—it has volume, it has area, it has value—but all of these are uncertain quantities. They change from moment to moment. They are not what define my country. One dimension alone is important; my country exists in time, it has a beginning. (26-27)

The fourth point to be discussed is about its beginning. The country began to exist when the earth was made and plants and people came into existence.

My fourth point is about beginning. My country began when the earth of which it is made, began. The plants with which it peopled itself were its first citizens. We do not know by what stages its subsequent citizens arrived. We can only guess. (27)

In the fifth point to be discussed, the young woman wants to guess who are called people. She further says that matter is neither created nor destroyed. Matter is rearranged to exist.

My fifth point is about guessing. When we guess who we were before we were ourselves, we can only make mistakes. There is no saying which part of what we are today was there in the beginning. Matter is neither created nor destroyed, it is merely rearranged. We are all of us rearrangements of matter. (27)

Hence, the sixth point to be discussed is rearrangement. To her point of view, everything including, air, water, sunlight, organic molecules, animals who eat plants, animals who eat animals, and human beings who eat animals and plants are rearranged. Everything is rearranged in the world.

My sixth point is about rearrangements. Plants are rearrangements of air water, sunlight and organic molecules. Animals who eat the plants are rearrangements of the plants. Animals who eat animals are rearrangements of those who eat the plants. Human beings eat animals and plants. We are all rearrangements of something else. (27)

Further, the young woman admits that the seventh point is about something else. Human beings are something than the physical matter of which they are made. Human beings are words, thoughts, feeling, moods, desires, personalities, and breath. They are made of matter.

My seventh point is about something else. We are something other than the physical matter of which we are made. We are also the words we speak and the thoughts in our minds, and our feelings and our ideas. We are also our moods and our desires, our

personalities and our hopes. We are also the breath that animates our lives. We are also composed of matter that cannot be measured by weight or height.

What is the weight of a word? Or the dimension of a thought:'

How do we measure those things which exist beyond measurement? How do we capture what cannot be grasped. (27)

The eighth point is about something which is eluding / which cannot be grasped – the insubstantial essence of human selves. It is like the flame of the candle. The spirit of human beings is a living one. There is no value for it.

So my eighth point is about that which cannot be grasped. The insubstantial essence of our selves. Like the flame of this candle in my hand. Like the spirit of living beings. These are not elements that can be measured or quantified. No value can be placed on them in terms of money. Yet they are real and they exist. Like this flame is real, even though I cannot grasp it, tie it down or own it. (27-28)

The last point to be discussed is about reality. Reality cannot be grasped. It is everything. It is like a candle. Human beings are its wick. They burn and die.

My ninth point is about reality. We all know what reality is, even if we cannot grasp it, or tie it down or own it. Reality is the sum of everything without being anyone thing. Reality is the flame of a candle of which we ... are the wick. (28)

Then, she has no more points to make. Drowning the flame in wax is related to life and death. It is foreshadowed by the line “Reality is the flame of a candle of which we ... are the wick” (28). Thus, the voice of a young woman in “points” seems to be philosophical, metaphysical, sombre, melancholic, unhappy, full of wit and paradox of life. It is not happy. It is sardonic and pessimistic. It voices the

uncertainty of existence. It questions matter and substance and reality and existence. However, it has no concrete answers.

In the monologue, “points”, the voice of a young woman passes from country as not a political region through ownership of the country, beginning of the country, the existence of the matter, the rearrangement, and insubstantial essence to reality. It is the voice of a young woman who is corroded and smothered by the valid and meaning of existence. The voice relates matter with manner and thereby it questions the state of reality which is eluding. The voice of a young woman echoes existential despair and void of emotions. It articulates nothingness. It tries to cipher out the meaning of existence and substance. In fact, it can be taken as a castrated voice. The act of lighting the candle in the beginning of the monologue and extinguishing it by the end is an enactment of life – the very essence of existence.

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An Evaluative Study of English Language Teaching –Learning Materials at the Upper Primary Level (CBSE)

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English language teaching and learning in the changing scenario has taken different directions and dimensions. Language learning which was looked at as a habit formation is now being looked as a cognitive process which involves the learner in processing and reformulating the meaning achieved through the medium of learning.

Language teaching and learning scenario has undergone a shift and this shift is from teacher centeredness to learner centeredness. This shift in paradigm has led scholars and teachers to think of the need for redesigning the procedures of teaching and thus to cater not only to the needs of the learner but also to facilitate learning. Therefore, the teachers, policy makers, curriculum developers and material procedures have begun to think of language learning not in terms of achievement but in relation to those processes which cause learning to occur. The shift is thus towards looking at the process of learning and not the product of learning. Further the view of the language learning is effective if the learner is capable of managing the learning.

English language has been taught as a second language in India which is multi lingual, multicultural and plurastic in nature. English has been held in reverence since time immemorial. As an influence of Macaulay's reforms, English in India started with a colonial impact. The colonial India did witness the establishment of universities in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras besides the advocacy of compulsory primary and middle school education.

Language studies in India were based on the literature, grammar tradition and the application of grammar translation method, which was followed in the teaching of classical languages like Greek and Latin.

Observations of the National Knowledge Commission

Sam Pitroda, the chairman of the National Knowledge Commission advocates unshackling of education both in public and private firms. He even welcomes foreign participation in higher education in India. He points out that every year about 80,000 Indian students join foreign Universities and spend about 5 billion dollars. This huge amount could well be retained in India.

Sam Pitroda's next important observation is that India should give up looking at English as an intruder and usurper of the place of mother tongue. He recommends that English should be taught from the very beginning.

His most interesting and practical observation follows:

We need to look at education differently, from black board and chalk to talk model to technology drives web-based education, using so much of contents available on the net and benefiting from the teaching of Nobel Laureates.

The establishment of the National knowledge Commission is a great innovative idea. Sam pitroda as its chairman is deeply committed to the task undertaken with prophetic vision for the future of our nation.

The NKC engaged itself in informal consultations with a wide range of people in government, media industry ,some state chief Ministers, Members of parliament, Medical officers, Lawyers and civil society organizations and formed a working group, which arrived at the following consensus and recommendations:

1. English as a language should be introduced from class I along with the first language without the emphasis on grammar and its rules.
2. Language learning cannot be separated from and must be integrated with the content learning, therefore some non-language content subjects can also be taught in English in class III.

3. The pedagogy of the language learning as well as teaching should be suitably contextualized based on real situations in daily life.
4. The requirement of well qualified and highly proficient teachers of English with good communication skills and formal teacher training will be large in number. Hence proper recruitment procedure is to be followed.
5. Keeping in mind the diversity of English environment in India a multiplicity of English text books should be made available to meet the specific needs of the learners.
6. English knowledge clubs should be formed; adequate financial assistance should be given for developing English language Resources.
7. State Governments should become equal partners in the implementation of these ideas.

Curriculum is a course of study in which the interest and purposes of children determines the education programme and designed activities are cooperatively carried out by the teacher and the learner. The learner is obviously in the centre and all the other stakeholders connect to the learner though the administrative mechanism concerning language study, policy prospective, materials prescribed for the study and the teacher who initiatives and continues the process directly and indirectly effect and affect learning and have a tremendous influence on the learner.

The learners are to be made aware of the fact that:

- Language is a skill rather than a content subject.
- The process of language learning is interaction, and a good language learner is—
 - i. a willing and accurate guesser
 - ii. has a strong drive to communicate
 - iii. is uninhibited and willing to make mistakes
 - iv. Focuses on form by looking at patterns and using analysis.
 - v. Takes advantages of all practice opportunities
 - vi. Monitors his or her own speech and that of others and

vii. pays attention to meanings.

The following factors affect the design of the curriculum:

- Community
- Mass Media
- Literature
- Environment
- Policy
- Administration
- Materials
- Teachers

In the light of the observation made by NCF 2005 and the National Knowledge Commission, NCERT revised the text books for teaching English at the Upper Primary levels,(ie) class VI, VII, VIII. The text book committee in its preparatory note has very clearly mentioned the objectives of the books and it has also suggested a methodology that can be followed. The lessons that are organized, based on the structural and lexical tools are highly theme based.

To examine if the text content is matching with the objectives listed in, the text books were analyzed using text books analysis tool. This tool was used to analyse the follows:

- Skill based
- Theme suggested
- Activities
- The structure introduced
- Other related issues

The needs of language learners at the primary level include:

- Acquisition of a body of vocabulary useful for the classroom communication, understanding the content and social interaction.
- Acquisition of basic structural patterns of language which will enable the learner to construct accurate sentences.

- Acquisition of the ability to listen and comprehend.
- Acquiring the ability to express orally what is received through listening using appropriate words and structures.
- Decoding English through reading at the word, sentence and paragraph levels.
- Encoding the knowledge acquired through reading.
- Taking part in social communication and to fulfill this need acquiring a set of language forms and expressions to convey meaning.
- Acquiring the ability to be fluent, accurate and appropriate.

The role of a teacher in this context is to facilitate learning by providing opportunities for the learner to realize and thus get needs fulfilled.

Notes for the teacher: *Mystery of the talking fan*. (poem)

- Discuss the points given at the beginning of the poem.
- After completing the exercises, children may try the following activity. Ask them to rearrange the lines below so that it reads like a poem. The first line is the opening line-

*Once there was a talking fan,
Could with the confidence scan
And the way it talked, no man
The message of the talking fan,
However quiet, crazy or wild,
Or woman or child.*

- draw children's attention to the rhyming words in reordering lines.
 - Provide simple stanzas from the other poems for the same activity for the further practice.

Expert Detectives:

- Two detectives in the making with a talent for spotting evidence, more imaginary than discriminating, against a polite

recluse with a health problem, Nishad and Maya represent a special dimensions of the children's world of curiosity and creativity.

- Tasks 1 and 3 under “working with language” merit more time and attention. Ask children to separate idiomatic expressions with Tip form its non-idiomatic uses.
- She has the whole chemistry book at her fingers
- Draw the children's attention to some of the following uses of “Break”
- ✓ Now give children a break. Switch over to another task after a short break.
- ✓ Children will be keenly interested to play detectives under “speaking.” Prepare them for this activity with care and necessary caution.

Tasks and activities in the chosen materials include comprehension exercises for promoting reading, language exercises related to the text and for further development of vocabulary, structure and grammar practice that promote language use and develop accuracy in a learner.

There are activities which are non- text dependent, even they promote interest and creativity .The writing activities suggested in the books are both text dependent and free. The situations suggested for getting these tasks and activities either completed or done include the whole classroom, pair work, discussion in groups and so on. The different types of activities are completions, matching, identifying, dictation, WH- questions, Auxiliary type, rearranging and so on. On the whole, the tasks and activities suggested do have the potential to make the learners use language spontaneously and naturally.

It is found that the books analyzed have focused on the development of language skills (LSRW) with the very little focus on conscious acquisition or learning of either language structure or grammar. Developing the ability to extract meaning and convey meaning seem to be the sole purpose of the materials analyzed.

The materials are not however, without limitations which include lack of pictorial illustration, guidelines to promote self learning

and sequencing in terms of language gradation (Vocabulary and structure). It remains to be seen how far the inbuilt strengths will help the realization of the over all objective of language leaning at these levels.

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Kamala Das: An unbiased soul portraying life in its true shades

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Indian poetry has always been enchanting to both readers and critics and this is truer in the case of women poetry. One of the reasons could be, most of the times, emotions and sentiments have found a distinct flavour of expression in their compositions. Amid such focused women writers we find Kamala Das strikingly unique with an ardent loyalty in portraying sufferings and captivating expressions. Kamala Das (31.03.1934 – 31.05.2009), being born in a conservative Brahman Nayar family in Kerala, wrote both in Malayalam and English. Her childhood days in Ernakulam and exploratory days of her adulthood and middle age have provided highly interesting substance to her writing. Her boldness in expression is not confined to only the themes of love and sex as most of the readers and critics lavishly charge but remains truly honest even in portraying the plights of suffering individuals. Her committed social responsibility and human concerns have not received due attention and respect even by the serious readers of Indian poetry. As a result she is seen, most of the times, as a desperate married woman and her writings are treated as cries of a dissatisfied wife and a sensuous lover. It may also be because she has been viewed that way by the readers and critics in the early stage of her writing. Over the years, though her exploration of life and expression of experiences have had great shifts, the readers continued to see her poetry through the same old glass. This in a way delimited the literary world from understanding the true human concerns present in her poetry beyond a woman longing for love, sex and identity.

Undoubtedly, Kamala Das brought fresh water not only into the body of women writing but also into Indian writing in English in

particular and English poetry in general. As Vikas Sarang (2007) notices, ‘Along with the compelling intensity of emotion she has displayed a frankness of manner in dealing with love and sex which, in Indian poetry, was new and refreshing when she began to write.’¹ May be it is the reason that took her to the threshold of Nobel Prize in 1984. Being shortlisted for such a prestigious honour speaks volumes about the grandeur of her poetry.

There is a need to see any writer beyond a few established opinions, notions and preoccupations in order to explore various dimensions of his or her writings. In this regard it had been a great disappointment in case of Kamala Das. Over years and decades she has been viewed as a representative of unhappy women flying with the wings of sexual desires and stunning expressions of intense feminine experiences. In a way, it is a sort of injustice to the poetess of such stature. It is in this context the readers of Indian English poetry have to revisit Kamala Das and explore the other invaluable sides of her poetry portraying ‘displaced souls.’

These ‘displaced souls’ are nothing but individuals who have felt a loss of identity because of the inbuilt imbalances in the society or those who have not been understood properly by a fellow human being or those who lack an identity of human values and feelings independent of differences in terms of sex, caste, nationalism, etc.

Human suffering to Kamala Das is not a unique experience. It is something common across the race of mankind. Her poems on Radha – Krishna are not autobiographical if perceived from this angle. They are universal and a cry expressing the agony of an individual whereas to out-stand herself to the thought of the other.

Kamala Das has profusely responded to the occurrences of her social, cultural, economic and political surroundings. She has always been a sensible and responsible human being besides being a true woman. This could be noticed in many of her poems. Most of her poems hold mirror to human sufferings and the pathetic circumstances in which they survive. She has responded to various social aspects without any guise and preoccupations. She has been surprisingly natural and spontaneous in portraying every aspect of human experience as and when she came across. A sensible reader can notice that her poems

depict her as an honest reporter with an outstanding approach to miraculous expressions. Probably it is in this context K Satchidanandan (1996) opines that ‘she is many: her language speaks with a hundred tongues.’² She makes the readers visit a situation from different perspectives and possibilities. Suffering of human race has been the major substance of poetry across the world over centuries and Kamala Das is one of the remarkable artist of portraying human sufferings and aspirations. Thus she should be viewed beyond the delimiting frameworks of colonial-post colonial, modernist- post modernist approaches.

Although it is rightly noticed by N S Bhakt (2010) that ‘despair of every married Indian woman whose urges are aimed at excitement beyond the circumscribed limit of a nuclear family is gracefully depicted in the poems of Kamala Das’³ it is not the only aspect of Kamala Das’ poetry. She has extended her poetic capability to portray other dimensions of human life of a woman. The lines below prove how sensible and sensitive Kamala Das had been.

*. . . From behind the butcher’s lane I heard a goat
Bleat today. . . (A Hand Likea Bonsai.,pg.34)*

Every individual in the society feels displaced when his/her aspirations are neither recognized nor respected. Sense of non-belongingness is one of the primary sufferings of the human race. Many a times, individuals feel that they are placed in an unexpected and unbearable situation. This feeling of displacement is prominently articulated by Kamala Das in many of her poems. Sense of loss, feeling of rootlessness, craving for identity and promise of the future are a few elements usually found in her portrayal of such displaced individuals irrespective of their gender and social class.

*. . . They tell me, all my friends, that i am finished,
That i can write no more, they tell me
That the goose which laid the golden eggs can lay
No more . . . (Morning at Apollo Pier,pg.32)*

As a result of globalization, the world is now glowing with all fresh thoughts and outlooks. But still we fail to understand a person next to us in full.

. . . in this new world i lack coherence

listen differently for what i have to tell . . .

(Wood Ash, pg.28)

In spite of all sorts of developments, individuals remain less expressed and less understood. It is also true in the case of Kamala Das. She is understood differently and it high time to listen to her poems differently to unearth numerous unseen or less seen angles of her writing. Her selected poems in ‘Only the Soul Knows How to Sing’ provide a comprehensive view of her poetic genius at different stages of her writing.

‘The Dalit Panther’ is one of the prominent poems portraying the pathetic condition of displaced individuals. It brings the picture of a pitiable rag-picker before our eyes. Kamala Das finds that the time for revolution is ripe not only when most of the members of the society are suffering but it should be when even a helpless individual is seen homeless and hopeless. She gives an earnest call to the society as below:

It's time for a revolution, tumult the secret voices

Of the air, but the rag-picker, eleven years old, curled to

Foetus-shape on the pavement sleeps on . . .

(The Dalit Panther, pg.37)

Kamala Das had never been blind to the sufferings of her fellow beings in the society. Although she belonged to the upper strata of the society and enjoyed royal life all along her life her eyes could see life of orphans and destitute. In the poem ‘The Dalit Panther’ she continues to describe a roadside orphan and his pitiful morning. His parents have deserted him and his body bears the wounds given by the society. But still the life should go on and he hides his wounds in a skull-cap and uses his bandaged arm to drink his tea.

. . . He lost both his parents

Somewhere, now he doesn't care to hear the night air sing.

The young

*Man in a skull-cap that hides his wounds, lifts a bandaged
arm to*

Drink his cup of tea. . . (The Dalit Panther, pg.37)

The above scene is a representative one and such situation may be seen across all parts of the count. People talk of poverty and sufferings of the poor in the society but nobody raises voice to change the state of such destitute. Nobody becomes the voice of such individuals in the society and Kamala Das outlines the underlying reason for such situation. She says:

*. . . Fear
is our leader, leading us into
high exitless hills, standing tall
as a mountain goat upon the snow, and
all the languages paralyzed
on our tongue. . . (Terror, pg.41)*

Almost everyone in the society remains voiceless and helpless. We discuss the pathetic condition of the suffering human beings but fail to raise our voice against the sufferings. That is the reason why Kamala Das out rightly said ‘We are good at playing our games safe.’

Kamala Das is one such amazing writer who had understood the pulse of human race. Everyone seems to be happy for everyone pretends and Kamala Das, as any other sensible person, knew the game of pretension. She portrays the human mind very accurately in the following lines.

*. . .we recollect the ones
in jail and envy them their freedom
to be. . . (Terror, pg.41)*

On the other hand the above lines successfully depict the plight of the people in so called democratic society or independent country. Everyone feels that expressing dissatisfaction or questioning what is happening around could be a risky deed. As a result we see people whose minds can think but tongues are tied. And shockingly we feel that the ones in jail are more free and comfortable.

Sense of loss is yet another ever-troubling aspect of the individuals in the socio-cultural context like India. Losing has almost

become a part and parcel of human life. Modern society has gone more insane towards the past, nature and fellow beings. Gifts of nature are inhumanly snatched away from the present and the fore coming generations. An individual is left with no other way than mourning for the loss and similar mourning may be noticed in many compositions of Kamala Das. In the following lines from the poem ‘The Ancient Mango Tree’ the poetess has voiced the question of almost every individual.

*. . . But, oh why did they cut
down the ancient mango tree where I
had hung damp nets of dreams to dry? . . .*

(The Ancient Mango Tree, pg.46)

The acts of blind society are pushing both present and the future generations into a great loss of heritage. In the poem ‘The Ancient Mango Tree’ Kamala Das brings out the sense of loss in an artistic way. This loss is depriving the individuals of their joys and dreams. It is in the past that we have the roots of our happiness and the blooms of our future. Like an innocent child Kamala Das questions the cutting down of the ancient mango tree. But question remains as a question and the brutality of the society continues unchecked.

It is not that we do not know the consequences of our foolish, absurd and irrational ways. Individual gain takes an upper hand when the question of social responsibility arises. Escaping from these oddities becomes almost impossible. This drives a sensitive individual into an inescapable psychological torment. In such situation of mental suffering any individual looks for an outlet to discharge his or her emotional load. But quite surprising fact is that the suffering lies within but an individual feel pity for others in unavoidable suffering. Especially the pity towards the ones in lunatic asylum has caught the attention of Kamala Das and she says,

*. . . No,
Do not pity them, they
Were brave enough to escape, to
Step out of the
Brute regimentals of*

Sane routine, ignoring the bugles, the wail

Of sirens . . . (The Lunatic Asylum, pg.31)

In the real sense, the world, with all its absurdities, seems to be a big lunatic asylum. Pitying others comes almost natural and casual for everyone exhibits to be displaced. This sense of displacement could be geographical, social, cultural and above all psychological. Then, where is the solace or solution? The poetess goes bit sarcastic and says,

. . . A displaced generation

must find its comfort in tea; . . . (At Changi Airport, pg.46)

Besides sense of loss, yet another distinct feature of displaced individuals in the society is the sense of isolation. Individuals are more isolated in spite of being amid both known and unknown crowd. There are walls between every individual although the bonds of relation are plenty. Each individual in the society lives in lonely islands and the path of life's progression confirms that the loneliness is permanent and perennial. Inner feelings of an individual get echoed and we hear others telling how alone they had been, they are and they will be. The following lines reflect the psychological state of every individual in the busy society.

. . . I hear the mountain

speak: I was alone, I am alone, I will be alone... . . .

(The Anamalai Hills, pg.47)

But still, hope is a real force behind the going of life and the human mind finds solace in unearthing meaning from everything it comes across. Amid innumerable sufferings, tricolour becomes a matter of pride and honour. But the grave reality of life is portrayed by Kamala Das in her piercing words.

The orange stands for fire, for fire that eats

Us all in the end...

The white stands for purity that we dream of and

Never find

The green stands for pastures of paradise

Where ever the poor

May have a place. . . .(The Flag, pg.50)

Kamala Das is one among only a few women writers who dared to show the other faces of assumed happy state of mind and held a mirror to the grave realities. The above lines portray the hopeless and homeless state of the poor across countries and continents.

Pleasing change is found in every walk of life but not for the poor in the Indian society. The poor remain poor and their sufferings grow in geometrical proportions. According to the poet, the suffering of the citizens of the country is a matter of shame. The following lines exhibit the severity of Kamala Das' voice.

*. . . Your shame beneath this blood-drenched Indian soil
And lie there and rot
As those poor babies who die of hunger
And are buried, rot....(The Flag, pg.50)*

The sweat of the poor hardly gets transformed into their food. When it fills someone else's pocket, the poor are left with no other way to enhance the quality of their life. On the other side, desire and greed of the rich keep the poor in despair. As a result, there grow misunderstandings, and those misunderstandings multiply and destroy all sorts of alliances and tolerance. This is beautifully outlined in the poem 'Death is so Mediocre'. It may be both at individual and societal level.

*. . . The hundred misunderstandings that destroyed
My alliances with you and you and you... . . .
(Death is so Mediocre, pg.52)*

It is evident that any misunderstanding brings conflict and the conflict leads to further loss to the individuals on both the sides. In the race of life amid displeasing and destructive conflicts every individual turns into a loser. Losing becomes common and over years one realizes that almost everything is lost. Kamala Das articulates this in astonishingly simple words, at the individual level.

*. . . It is hard to believe
That I only lost,*

Lost all, lost even

What I never had . . . (Substitute, pg.53)

The above lines seem to be the utterances of a helpless individual. It is said that the poor person has everything to lose. Thus, losing becomes common and almost inevitable to an individual who suffers social and cultural displacement. Any protest or questioning of loss brings nothing but wounds; wounds to the body, wounds to the mind and heart. As a woman Kamala Das also had been in helpless condition in both social and cultural contexts. But compromise becomes inevitable to keep the life go on. Going gets difficult with the burden of tears. One needs to see the future promising and pull the legs along, with a smile like Kamala Das did.

. . . I shall carry with me only a laugh

I shall travel as light as I can...

(A Holiday for Me, pg.61)

In spite of dazzling hopes in heart there exists the fear of tomorrow which is indispensable. Sour and hard experiences certainly give an indication of what the future would be. An individual cannot take his or her smiles to be permanent either for oneself or one's own family as the society of vested interest always active to keep every individual in its control. As a result, chains wait every individual aspiring for the joy of freedom. Knowing this well, Kamala Das remarks,

Tomorrow they may bind me with chains stronger than

Those of my cowardice, rape me with bayonets and

Hang me for my doubts . . . (Tomorrow, pg.61)

Whether it is a woman or any other individual, being a victim of societal cruelty and absurdity is almost unavoidable. The above lines clearly describe the pathetic plight of the woman and other helpless individuals. Amid such grave sufferings one feels alienated for having no loving shoulder to lean on and no caring finger to wipe off burning tears. This state of life is unbearable and Kamala Das has given words to such dying state of living.

. . . Life's obscure parallel is death. Quite often

*I wonder if what I seem to do is living
Or dying. . . .*

(Life's Obscure Parallel, pg.83)

As both life and death seem to have no difference, individual or suffering bunch of individuals fail to understand the reason for the sufferings inflicted upon them without any mistake on their part. Consequently struggle becomes necessary for survival. This fight is not only with the outside world but also within oneself.

. . . Inside

My throat the inward breath combats the outside

One. And the sights, seen, reside not outside

But within. . . .

(Life's Obscure Parallel, pg.83)

Although the expression of sufferings seems to be highly individualistic in Kamala Das' poetry, it has the power to represent the pathos of suffering individuals in and around our society. It is the fact that makes Kamala Das grow beyond the boundaries of feminist writing. The words of K Satchidanandan (1996) thus haunt the readers of Kamala Das and he remarks, "She is a woman poet, acutely conscious of her femininity with all the contradictory demands made on it by the family, society and her radical companions. She is 'aggressively individualistic' according to K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar; yet full of social awareness, even political awareness to her more careful readers."⁴

The art of Kamala Das is seen in almost every piece of her poetry. Her style is distinct and thus N S Bhakt (2010) aptly endorses by saying, 'Her style is economical and the use of language is very precise.'⁵

Kamala Das had not confined her poetry to mere articulation of her personal passionate experiences. She had been sensitive to the happenings around her. She had been sensitive to social and cultural displacement, alienation and the resultant sufferings of individuals. No doubt, she had been a true woman but at the same time she also had been a true human being worried of the sufferings in her surroundings.

She did not write like a protest writer but she maintained stunning unbiased neutrality in her writing. Cool underlying tone of her poetry successfully exhibits her dissatisfaction towards infliction of sufferings on individuals and inhuman absurdities of the society. Any serious reader of her poetry could notice that her poetry inclines for the replacement of sense of loss and isolation with the feeling of belongingness and hope. Like all great writers, Kamala Das also had been sensitive to the sufferings of individuals and the society and portrayed the same with utmost sincerity and high degree of intensity.

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**Concept of Career in Post-colonial Literature: A Study of Jhumpa
Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth***

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Post-colonial theory is a discussion of “migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe...and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being. Unlike the other “post-isms,” post-colonialism does not reject what it contains; it does not signify a closure of colonialism, rather, it opens a world of inquiry and understanding. In 1970s, having gained prominence perhaps with Edward Said’s influential critique of Western constructions of the Orient in his book, *Orientalism*, the term “post-colonial” remains “a relative newcomer to the jargon of Western social science. Although discussions about the effects of colonial and imperialist domination are by no means new, the various meaning attached to the prefix “post” and different understandings of what characterizes the post-colonial continue to make this term a controversial one. 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. From a strictly historical definition, the concept of post-colonialism has stretched to the more encompassing and controversial sphere referring on the one hand, 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 form of economic and cultural oppression that have succeeded modern colonialism. Though these two senses are intimately linked, they foreground different aspects of a single process: the cultural homogenizing of ever larger areas of the globe as disparate as those of

White settler colonies such as Australia and Canada and of the Latin American Continent, whose independence battles were fought in the 19th century and countries such as India, Nigeria, or Algeria that emerged from very different colonial encounters in the Post-World War Two era. Nevertheless, “What the concept *may* help us to do is to describe or characterize the shift in global relations which marks the (necessarily uneven) transition from the age of Empires to the post-independence and post-decolonization moment.

Despite a basic consensus on the general themes of post-colonial writing, however, there is an ongoing debate regarding the meaning of post-colonialism – “The term post-colonialism – according to a too-rigid etymology – is frequently misunderstood as a temporal concept, meaning the time after colonialism has ceased, or the time following the politically determined Independence Day on which a country breaks away from its governance by another state, Not a native teleological sequence which supersedes colonialism, post-colonialism is, rather, an engagement with and contestation [sic] of colonialism’s discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies....A theory of post-colonialism must, then, respond to more than the merely chronological construction of post-independence, and to more than just the discursive experience of imperialism.

Importance of the Title - Unaccustomed Earth

This title of Jhumpa Lahiri’s latest collection is taken from a passage in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne presents the narrator as an autobiographical voice, and the quoted passage as well as the rest of the book thus reads as his personal remembrances and opinions.

Human nature will not flourish, any more than a potato, if it be planted and replanted, for too long a series of generations, in the same worn-out soil. My children have had other birthplaces, and, so far as their fortunes may be within my control, shall strike their roots into unaccustomed earth (13).

Hawthorne’s description of how and where his children will “strike their roots” is an image of settling down. These three points in Hawthorne’s statement correspond with central aspects of

Unaccustomed Earth and Lahiri's choice of an opening quotation thus serves as a fruitful context for her collection of short stories.

Jhumpa Lahiri's second collection of short stories, *Unaccustomed Earth*, presents a strong picture of life in the Indian American Diaspora. These stories not only show the obstacles that Indian Americans must overcome in order to pursue the lifestyles of their choice, but also show some of the advantages that come along the way. She describes the lives of the first and second generations of Indian immigrants who have settled in America, most of her protagonists being second generation characters, who face the opportunities and challenges of belonging to two different cultures. These characters strive to maintain ties with both cultures, identifying themselves as Indian Americans. Thus, no matter how predominantly Indian or American they fell. Their continuous renegotiation of their identities is the main concept in the short stories of *Unaccustomed Earth*. Each story offers an interesting perspective of life.

Unaccustomed Earth consists of eight stories that all feature second generation Indian Americans as central character. Many of the characters grow up to be high achievers and are raised in a traditional manner and taught to honor the tradition of marriage and to respect their elders. Thus growing up as Indian Americans has its own benefits. As Salman Rushdie notes, while discussing how "translation" is a fitting term for producing identities in the Indian Diaspora: "It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained" (Rushdie 17)., This section of the thesis is studied under four sub headings – Concept of Home, Family as a Unit, Successful Career, and Sexual Lust.

Theme of Career

Indian Americans have been described as a distinguished minority in terms of their successful careers, middle class aspiration and work ethic. In *Unaccustomed Earth*, most of the characters pursue ambitious studies, often leading to multiple degree and professional careers. Lahiri's own scholarly career consists of three master degrees and a Ph.D.

The story “Only Goodness” is well-suited for an exploration of career and establishing an Indian American identity. It tells the story of the Mukherjee family, from Sudha’s point of view. She relates her adolescent and childhood memories, and shows how her parents believed their family to be destined for success in America. They bring up two smart children who excel at school and are admitted in prestigious colleges. Thus, when Sudha’s younger brother, Rahul, drinks and drops out of college, and fails to live up to the high expectations of his parents sister, a conflict develops between him and the rest of the family. Sudha lives up to the expectations of her parents’ and symbolizes the Indian American success story,

Career is an important symbol of success in the Indian American community, and while Sudha has made her parents proud in this respect, here too Rahul appears as her opposite. Sudha realizes that she has become one of the many Bengali success stories, “her collection of higher degrees framed and filling up her parents’ upstairs hall” (151). Rahul, on the other hand, turns out as the exact opposite, dropping demanding subjects, bringing home mediocre grades and finally being thrown out of Cornell. This passage says it all:

Other Bengalis gossiped about him and prayed their own children would not ruin their lives in the same way. And so he became what all parents feared, a blot, a failure, someone who was not contributing to the grand circle of accomplishments Bengali children were making across the country, as surgeons or attorneys or scientists, or writing articles for the front page of The New York Times (151).

Sudha takes up the responsibility for her brother’s upbringing. She has done everything to shield her brother from the sense of otherness that she felt whilst growing up, and she has made sure that Rahul is brought up in a natural Americanized environment. When Rahul is old enough to celebrate Halloween, Sudha takes on the role of parent when she plans “elaborate costumes, turning him into an elephant or a refrigerator” (136). As they grow up, she continues to be cast, and to cast herself, in the role as a third parent to Rahul.¹⁵ At school she was aware of being different and remembers being picked on for the “funny things their Wonderbread green” (143). It is as if all Sudha’s

efforts at making Rahul's childhood and adolescence as Americanized as possible are her way of dealing with the sense of otherness that she felt growing up as an Indian American, making sure that her brother will not feel the same way. In a sense she is healing something from her own childhood and working through the feeling of being used as a mediator between her parents and America.

Here it can be observed that the characters are becoming acculturated to the host culture. They easily accept the concept of wine, sex, dating, etc in their personal life. Sudha waited until she was at college "to disobey her parents" (129). This included "going to parties and allowing boys into her bed." Both behaviours would be unacceptable to her parents, who are described as "puritanical." But while Sudha's college behavior goes on unnoticed to her parents, Rahul acts differently. Though he is not yet old enough to buy alcohol, he begins to crave it, even in the family home. Sudha comes to realize that Rahul "consumed the alcohol in stealth that he could not endure her family's company without" (153). Although Sudha does not explicitly say that she is responsible for Rahul's alcoholism and how he has turned out, the whole story is centred around her guilt. It is only in the final pages of the story that she reveals her secret. After Rahul has got drunk whilst minding their son, Sudha explains to her husband:

Rahul hadn't even liked beer, and then about all the cans they'd hidden over the years and how eventually it was no longer a game for him but a way of life, a way of life that had removed him from her family and ruined him (171).

Here Sudha finally lets on that she views herself as the prime corruptor of her younger brother that it was she who made him drink something that he did not like the flavor of, leading by example and showing how alcohol and independence from their parents went hand in hand. Saying that alcohol has "ruined" her brother is a strong statement, as it does not offer much hope. Something that is ruined is difficult or impossible to mend and must be thrown away. At the close of the story Sudha metaphorically throws away the hopes and dreams that she had of her brother. After her brother has left, she looks at a balloon that he has bought for her son, which has now sagged to the floor, a shrunken thing incapable of bursting. She clipped the ribbon

with scissors and stuffed the whole thing into the garbage, surprised at how easily it fit (173).

The balloon is a symbol of Rahul. It is an inflatable thing and Rahul, who was clever beyond his years and the hope of his parents, was in a sense puffed up beyond his real size. But just as Rahul is ageing, failing and disappointing his family, so as is the balloon sagging toward the floor, only waiting to burst and be thrown away. When Sudha clips the balloon off its ribbon and stuffs it into the garbage, this echoes how she must now make a clean break concerning her brother. He is obsolete, no longer a part of her family after her husband has forbid that Rahul should ever come close to their son again. Sudha is surprised at how easily she is able to make that break, finally, after a lifetime of guilt. By confessing her role in Rahul's alcoholism to her husband, it is almost as if she has considered herself responsible of her sins. To her, Rahul's alcoholism is not just a failure in itself, but also a moral failure of the entire family, and most of all, her own. The fact that she has chosen to keep this from her parents and her husband shows her moral corruption, her failure to be a good daughter, wife, mother and Indian American. Thus the story is centred around Sudha's attempts at dealing with her guilty conscience, and with Rahul's final drunken mistake, she cuts her ties to him and the story ends. The culmination of the story becomes a rite of passage for Sudha, where she finds closure with her childhood and with her parents. She has failed at Americanizing Rahul, who has become the worst kind of American and not the Indian American success story that his family had predicted.

In another short story 'Going Ashore', both Hema and Kaushik exhibit great passion towards their career. Even at the age of 37, Hema peruses her academic career as an excuse for not getting married. Similarly Kaushik is also far from his parents to pursue photography. Both of them live a breath their passion for work and even work on holidays in Rome. They don't rest but plan sincerely for their future. They are keen on their project and wish to leave a lasting impression in their respective areas of interest. Hema proudly describes her dissertation as "a bound, privately praised thing" (299). Getting his photographs published in international journal, is a source of pride achievement for Kaushik (306). Once Kaushik proposes Hema to accompany him to Hong Kong, but Hema rejects the idea about giving

up her career to go with him. (321) Here we can observe the strong passion for career rather personal life in both Hema and Kaushik.

Both the characters have chosen post-colonial careers. Julie Mullaney has rightly defined post-colonial writing as being occupied particularly with “vernacular achievers (rock painting, sculptor, music architecture, theatre etc..) in exploring indigenous histories and cultural experiences” (Mullaney 39). Hema was seriously studying about the Etruscans civilization that was subsequently suppressed by the Roman Empire. She worked hard enough to gather wide information so as to present a seminar about the Etruscan culture after returning to Wellesley. Kaushik was also equally career oriented in selecting photography in the war prone region of Salvador. He is found constantly in the violent conflicts of the nation that were under colonial rule. Belonging to an ethnic background was a useful resource to him. Similarly Rushdie’s background in the Inian diaspora was a strength to him as a writer (Rushdie 19). Hema and Kaushik are true professionals who are constantly making effort to excel in their career. They are passionate about their work and this speaks of their ability to highlight people an histories in a correct way. Sometimes they deal very effectively with other people’s problem and at the same time cannot negotiate their own personal issues. This aspect speaks of their extreme professionalism.

So finally it can be implied that Career plays an important role in the formation of Indian American Identities. Through the idea of career, people find and make ways to place themselves within American society and Indian American society. It is also observed that the second generation is ready to assimilate the foreign culture and identify themselves as Americanized Indians.

Finally, it is clear that career plays a vital role in the creation of Indian American identities. Careers offer the ways of finding a place within America society and Indian American society, their families and themselves.

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**Shimmering in the Darkness of Lost World in Ernest
Hemingway's Novels**

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American literature was very rich and diverse. The growth of American literature began with a search for creating a native literature of the country. The exploration began with the Democratic and Revolutionary writers during the period between 1776 and 1820. During this period American literature found a number of important fiction writers dealing with American subjects, historical perspectives, themes of change, and nostalgic tones creating a new trend of Romanticism. Fiction in America, in the 20th century, mainly dealt with the portrayal of the trauma and shock experienced in the aftermath of the First World War. Writers started seeing the world through the microscopic lens of enquiry through questioning, rational inquiry and reforming. They became increasingly involved in understanding the existential crisis. Writers mirrored America's religions, its pastoral settings, environment, and its ethnicity using techniques of realism and naturalism, symbolism and expressionism unravelling the psyche of the society. While the 19th century literature had been cosmic in its concerns, the early 20th century literature fused the two to an increasingly sophisticated discussion of fate and free will. The shift was from internationalism to isolationism. Life was at worst a lie at best a strategy and called for violence of form and thought. If the protagonists had been portrayed as surviving individuals they had been facing one kind of violence or another- the violence of passion or inhibition.

In this background, where American life was in chaos, Ernest Hemingway took to writing fiction focussing the cultural erosion and

the chaotic conditions in the continent. Hemingway affirmed the existence of physical and spiritual territory of some substance and some satisfaction. A genius for presenting Americans as they wished to be seen, Hemingway became a hero of a new consciousness. A stylist, Hemingway made his cowardice and his knowledge of it, the very stuff of his heroism and endurance. The principal element in his imaginative world—the quality with which all his best writing is concerned, is courage. Studied in the light of ‘Post-structuralism’ and ‘Deconstruction’ Hemingway appears to have focused on wounds, godlessness and ‘centrelessness’ in the characters. Although Hemingway depicts dignity and endurance in a small group of characters, they seem to live in a world lacking a vital centre, dislocated doubly from the root. Morris (1926:193) rightly says, “We have inherited a hundred mythologies, and our minds flutter among them, finding satisfaction in none.” While they realize the loss of traditional settled family life, they tend to create their own centre in the ‘centre-less’ life repressing their pain and agony.

The Lost World in Hemingway

Literature is the reflection of society. It replicates its culture, economy, dilemma, politics, ethnicity, and way of living. Society moves on its own course in normal conditions. Nevertheless, when any of the elements is disturbed, the whole humanity is troubled, and the populace becomes disillusioned. The more disillusionment in the people, the greater is the inner conflict. The more inner conflict of the members, the greater the loss of rationalism. The more less of logic, more the tendency to fight. The inner fight gets expressed in the behaviour that leads to the external war. War continues till it cannot be tolerated, and finally the fighter realizes the futility and comes to reality. In the mean time, there is loss of many human values—loss of faith in everything. Thus, this paper portrays disillusionment in the lost world as traced in the selected novels of Hemingway while in understanding life and death.

Disillusionment Leads to War

A sense of homelessness due to displacement develops a new tendency in life. The characters in the selected novels of Ernest Hemingway appear to be no different. The Novel *The Sun Also Rises*

(hereafter *Sun*) portrays early twentieth-century disillusionment of common people in America. The very beginning of the novel in the description of unsettled homeless life of Robert Cohn shows the disillusionment in life in general. Jake Barnes, the protagonist, a wounded war veteran who has been trying to cope with his personal wound, appears to be deadly disillusioned throughout his life. The novel begins with the confliction of characters in the novel, “He [Robert Cohn] cared nothing for boxing, in fact he disliked it, but he learned it” (*Sun*, p.5). *The Farewell to Arms* (hereafter *Farewell*) depicts the twentieth-century disgust and disillusionment. The novel not only expresses the horrors of the World War I disillusionment but also denotes the failure to achieve the nineteenth-century moral standards set on this early twentieth-century people in Europe. The disillusionment can be traced in the journey of the protagonist Frederic Henry, his aimlessness in joining the war, loss of faith, contemplation of evading duty confuse him under circumstances of irony of life. A story of disillusionment in post Economic depression in America the novel *To Have and Have Not* (hereafter *Have*) set in Havana, Cuban sea coast, and the Florida Keys, the novel delineates how Captain Harry Morgan acts as a fishing guide; witnesses sadistic murders of Chinese crook; the happenings of the Florida Keys on Labor Day [in 1935] and its political consequences; and subsequent fight against the struggle leading his loss of source of livelihood. The novel describes how the protagonist fights his single-handed battle against all odds. All his fight disillusioned him and comes to term with the hard reality of life by losing everything in life.

Wound is an important facet of impotency in thought and action in the life of an individual. All the characters in the novel *The Sun Also Rises* are fragmented and frustrated individuals with their cynical attitudes toward everything. They are all more or less wounded both physically and emotionally. Jake is a wounded person in the war. He expresses his sadness and a sense of loss while talking to Brett after the party at *bal musette*, (*Sun*:21). Robert Cohn was a wounded man both emotionally and physically. His fiancée Frances is a frustrated person. Brett is another character with the post-war year's disillusionment. Gorton Bill, Mike Campbell, and others are all wounded and sick. Greek portrait-painter, Zizi, the self style duke, is a wounded man.

Count Mippipopolous is a wounded man in the war. Similarly, expatriate Harvey Stone is a wounded person has been starving for five days. The novel *A Farewell to Arms* depicts how having been disillusioned, people have no specific purpose in their lives and actions. The protagonist Frederic Henry joins the war without having any specific aim in mind and being an American, instead of enrolling in American or British, joins Italian Ambulance. When Catherine Barkley comments, “what an odd thing—to be in the Italian army,... why did you do it?”, Frederic Henry replies, “I don’t know,’... ‘There isn’t always an explanation for everything” (*Farewell*, p.17). When the head nurse asks, “You’re the American in the Italian army?’... ‘How did you happen to do that? Frederic inquests if he could join them, “Could I join now?” (*Farewell*, p.21). This indicates that there is an aspect of disillusionment. Similarly, *To Have and Have Not* portrays how poverty betrays luck in common men. This treachery makes one impotent in thought which leads one to unlawful activities for survival. Harry Morgan maintains his dignity at the initial stage by not chartering his boat to Pancho, “I make my living with the boat. If I lose her I lose my living” (*Have*, p.9). Till then Harry Morgan has been forceful in his thought. Disillusioned due to poverty, however, Morgan says he would carry anything that can’t talk but not the people because “men can talk” (*Have*,p.10). Ultimately, he charts his boat to Mr. Sing for his concern for his family leading him to lose his boat.

Policies and rules create disillusionment in public. This diminishes faith of general public in the system. *The Sun Also Rises* is a depiction of such an expression of protest against the government of post-war years in the United States and an expression of the temperament codified in 1920s sentiment—an air of protest against legislation and prohibition, conservatism in the context of the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan. It is evident in Bill’s argument, “It’s enough to make a man join the Klan,” (*Sun*, p.67). Bill Gorton’s joke related to Wayne B. Wheeler, his having lunch in the natural surrounding with “‘moisture beaded on the bottles,’ ‘the little parcels of lunch’ and ‘rejoice in our blessings’” (*Sun*, p.92-93) would not have been possible in United States. These are all such sheer expressions of criticism. Bill’s use of the word “wonderful” so many times in a short span of text is an understatement of the post-war period and his protest against the

prevailing situation. This is a contrast between lives in America and lives in Spain among expatriate Americans which shows the brutal irony of the reality of the lives of people during the post-war period in America in 1920s.

Egotistical and crude resolution creates adverse affect down the line in the military. The decisions taken by the officials in *A Farewell to Arms* in the military and politicians seem to disenchant people. Once resuming his duty, Frederic Henry comes to know some confusing news of retreat which the officials in military at helm are not certain, “In the night word came that we were to prepare to retreat... Next night the retreat started.” (*Farewell*, p.167-168). The retreat which has been quite disciplined initially becomes very unruly as it grows bigger. There seem to be chaos due to killing at the river Tagliamento Bridge which repulses all Henry’s thought. Although Henry says that he does not think, “I never think, yet when I begin to talk I say things I have found out in my head without thinking” (*Farewell*, p.161) is actually an act of contemplation and criticism. This loss of faith in war in the great retreat compels him giving farewell to arms. Likewise, living life under the circumstances of poverty makes one think of alternatives as seen in *To Have and Have Not*. Harry Morgan after chartering his boat to Mr. Sing appears to be disillusioned and realizes how unknowingly he has been in trouble. He recalls, “Ever since I’d seen the Chink and taken the money I’d been worrying about the business, I don’t think I slept all night (*Have*,p.33). Thus, Morgan’s retrospection of his own action shows his disillusionment. He is critical about the policies and prohibition which turns lives morbid when “one of the three most important men in the United States...” ‘Frederick Harrison’ fixes him and he loses his boat.(*Have*, p.64). He understands how hard it is to find work and how the income can’t feed them properly. Al [Albert] earns “‘seven and a half’ [dollars] ‘a week’ [by] ‘Digging the sewer,’” (*Have*,p.73), with which Harry Morgan feels he cannot feed his family, and comments, “I don’t know who made the laws but I know there ain’t no law that you got to go hungry.’ (*Have*, p. 74). Similarly, Freddy reminds Big Lucie’s daughter about the prohibition of movement of girls at night, (*Have*, p. 72). Consequently, the prohibition and restriction incite the anger of the poor.

War Inside and Outside

Disillusionment carries conflict in minds shaking the established beliefs and values. Transition from conventional standard to a new value system sometimes creates war in psyche. Considering the rude awakening in diverse aspects of the characters and their reactions to those elements, it transpires that there is an inner conflict in the minds of them. Although they maintain ‘grace under pressure,’ they seem to represent a suppressed conflict which remains reticent in the minds temporarily. Nevertheless, these dormant mental conflicts turn into violent behavioural changes and ultimately grow to be physical war. The World War I and II, and the Civil wars, and rebellions and crises emerge to be the effect of these latent conflicts between the old and new values between nations and groups. Accordingly, it focuses different phases of mental conflicts and how they lead to physical war destroying human qualities, killing of people and creating a holocaust in the world—a sort of purgation of the characters’ disillusionment.

Inner Conflicts change the behaviour of an individual. The external behavioural changes are symptoms of interior mental excitement. In order to alleviate this chaos and confusion, characters seem to develop a tendency to move from place to place. Robert Cohn in the novel *The Sun Also Rises* wants to go to South America. This vacillation of mind is evident when Jake says, “‘Listen, Robert, going to another country doesn’t make any difference. ... You can’t get away from yourself by moving from one place to another.’” (*Sun*, p.11). Jake shares with Robert Cohn his own loss and his inability to overcome that by moving from place to place. He says, “It is awfully easy to be hard-boiled about everything in the daytime, but at night it is another thing” (*Sun*, p.28). Correspondingly, *A Farewell to Arms* delineates the bitter experiences of physical war and its impact on the protagonist Frederic Henry in the war on the mountain of Isonzo. External war creates commotion in inner psyche of Frederic Henry which reflects in his behaviour. The very participation of Frederic Henry in the Great War appears to be the result of his inner conflict of indecisiveness. Although he is quite sure that he would not be affected in the force, meeting Catherine Barkley and Helen Ferguson in Gorizia and their subsequent questions creates war in his mind. Thus, there is a suppressed battle in his mind. Henry who has already confused not being able go to Abruzzi, “we were still friends,” (*Farewell*, p. 13), falling in love with Catherine

Barkley adds to his mental conflict which turns out to be an elevated love of wishing later “to do things for... to sacrifice for... to serve” (*Farewell*, p. 66). Although, Henry washes away his hands in the war by jumping into the river Tagliamento and makes his private peace with Catherine, Henry seems to be still fighting a constant inner war which turns violent at the hospital during Catherine’s death at her child birth at Lausanne in Switzerland. Henry appears to be broken as he comes to the hotel in the rain. He ruminates, “the world breaks everyone ... they killed you in the end” (*Farewell*, p.289) seems to be very true and complete. Likewise, Harry Morgan’s fight is against poverty, inequality and indecisive policies of government, in *To Have and Have Not*, appears to be the battle in his own mind. Conversely, the war takes away everything from him. The inner conflict which has been tacit so far eventually emerges in open violence in the killing in the Gulf Stream, Cuban Coast and at Havana Coast. Subsequently, after losing the only source of livelihood, he becomes disillusioned. Before Harry could realize what dangerous trip he has been ready for, he is compelled to carry some bank robbers at gun point which is the pinnacle of his disillusionment. Although Morgan wins the battle by killing the robbers and bringing back the loot, he dies in the fierce gun fire. Thus, external circumstances which create inner conflict in mind, seems to have violent expression in open war.

Hope and Realization

Harsh reality teaches the futility and meaninglessness of life. The characters understand of their conflict at the end realize the futility of war leading them finding better ways of lives and peace. Consequently, the protagonists in the selected novels, Jake Barnes, Frederic Henry, Harry Morgan, and their counterparts Lady Brett Ashley, Catherine Barkley, Marie, seem to have realized the futility of war. This realization enables them to see reality accurately. Once they are clear in their mind, they rise from their situations shimmering in the darkness in their lives. It transpires in *The Sun Also Rises* which teaches the characters in the chaos of their lives to recognize themselves, reality and the new values to live lives in happiness. Thus, the initial conflicts due to their loss which have engaged them in some futile exercises seeking temporary relieve, appear to be resolved in their endeavour in the long run. Consequently, Robert Cohn understands his folly and

leaves for ever understanding of his misdeed. Similarly, Jake Barnes reconciles with his irreparable wounds and learns how to live with dignity. Lady Brett Ashley realizes her wrong quest of bitching around, comes to Jake Barnes wishing to have good time together. Thus, the realization of the artificial happiness in parting and drinking; and recognition of their true selves; and future hope are apparent in their behaviour and actions in the end. Similarly, *A Farewell to Arms* Frederic Henry appears to realize many aspects of his disillusionment. Henry's exclamation, "God knows I had not wanted to fall in love with her... but I felt wonderful..." (*Farewell*, p.85) enables him to realize that he is already in deep love. Henry is so happy that he hopes to live a married life and make a home. Likewise, cognizance derived after hard battle is worth preserving for benefit of all. In *To Have and Have Not* Harry Morgan's crude realization is attained only at his deathbed, "One man alone ain't got. No man alone now.' ... 'No matter how a man alone ain't got no bloody chance.' (*Have*, p.165); His awareness about people of different classes, harsh reality of life, pressure and temptation; phoniness and cheating; force and bickering make his understanding complete about the vainness of his fight. At the end, his consciousness permit him to hope that something better will prevail gradually when people will fight together.

Frustration disappears at the light of hope. In *The Sun Also Rises* Jake Barnes realizing the fact that everybody is sick someway or other accepts his life. Brett realizes her folly, presently has been trying to correct her way of living, "I feel rather good, you know. I feel rather set up.' 'Good.' (*Sun*, p. 186). The moment she come to her consciousness, she decides live with dignity. Similarly, Robert Cohn leaves for good to pick up his old girl (*Sun*, p.170). Frances understands her mistakes and contritely admits, "Perfectly my own fault." (*Sun*, p.39). Similarly, the matador Pedro Romero recognizes his own self and departs paying all Brett's hotel bills in Madrid. The Count appears to have already become conscious of values. "You must get to know the values." (*Sun*, p.47). Hence, recognition of self and understanding of what one truly wants make life happy. Jake Barnes' constant effort to bring contentment in his life, "All I wanted to know how to live in it. (*Sun*, p.113), is an instance of such principles to stick to so as to learn how to live in peace subjugating all those worries, and wounds.

Similarly, recognition of self is a source of great solace and happiness for Lieutenant Frederic Henry, Catherine Barkley and others in *A Farewell to Arms*. While Frederic Henry realizes his dilemma, and worthless actions, he ultimately recognizes his inner soul. Henry realizes that he has done a wrong thing by not going to Abruzzi as suggested by the priest for his holidays, “But I did not know that then, although I learned it later” (ibid, p.13). This seems to be his turning point in his life and making him conscious of his own self. In her disenchantment, Catherine seems to have decided to take up her nursing job dreaming to meeting her boyfriend in some hospital as a wounded soldier with bandage around his head. However, after hearing the news of her boyfriend’s death in the war, she realizes the senselessness of her action. Subsequently, she accepts Henry as her man, ““You will be good to me, won’t you?...’You will, won’t you?” (*Farewell*, p. 25). Although, Catherine being brave with Henry in all circumstances, at the deathbed, she realizes that she is no longer brave enough to release herself from her biological trap. Correspondingly, in *To Have and Have Not*, Harry Morgan understands his own self. Harry Morgan seems to realize that he has confidence and that is the only source of his courage in his battle of life. It transpires in his conversation with Marie. “I got confidence. That’s the only thing I have got.” (*Have*, p.95). Although in his deathbed he repeats that one man cannot do anything, he proves that one man can do a lot if he thinks he can and fight for that. He wishes that he could do something for Marie, “I wish I could do something about Marie” (*Have*, p.129). Morgan realizes that to survive in the circumstances of chaos, exploitation, and poverty, one has to have guts, “The hell with my arm.... And a man’s still a man with one arm or with one of those.” (*Have*, p. 75). Marie appears to have understood what Harry has to say to her. Marie ruminates, “I was so lucky all that time to have him.” (*Have*, p.188), and realizes that it is now her turn to start afresh. Hence, realization provides expectancy to have a better future even in the hardship of life. Hope only can uphold values of life and dignity of action.

Conclusion

Creating legendary characters representing all types of people found in the society and giving them their everyday language to express their feeling of disenchantment and worries, Hemingway has been

successful in creating a fictional world verisimilitude of a world of disillusionment in very existential predicament of lives in the context of war and violence in the twentieth-century Europe in general and America in particular. The American people have been depicted the way they were expected to be seen in the context of horror of live leading them to undergo the extreme of their disappointment both in their inner minds and external wars enabling them to understand the futile exercises for temporary alleviation of pains and recognize their real selves so that they can see shimmering in the darkness of their lost world creating a new world of hope, love and peace. The selected novels have been such a portrayal of the characters and events of lives in their lost world who strive to see the light at the end of the tunnel in which Hemingway appear to be successful.

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Modernism in the Selected Novels of Chetan Bhagat

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Chetan Bhagat is an Indian author, columnist and motivational speaker. He was born in New Delhi in a middle class Punjab Family on the 22nd day of April, 1974. His father was in the army and his mother was a government employee in the agricultural department. Bhagat's education was mostly in Delhi. He was attended the Army public school, New Delhi. He studied Mechanical Engineering at the Indian Institute of Management after graduation he worked as an investment banker in Hongkong. He had been working in Hongkong for 11 years before shifting to Mumbai to Punjab his passion for writing. He has written seven books, all of which are best sellers. His first 3 novels were written during his tenure investment banker. Bhagat met his wife, Anusha Suryanarayan at 11m Ahmadabad. They married, later; they moved to Hongkong and worked there. The love story of Anusha and Chetan Bhagat was the inspiration for the book "2 States: The Story of My Marriage." Chetan Bhagat went to Hongkong along with his family and started writing. It was his passion. He has seven novels against his name: Five Point Someone (2004), one night @ The call Centre(2005), Revolution2020(2005),The Three mistakes of my life(2008), Two States(2009),2 States(2010),Half girl friend(2014).By choice or by choice, titles of all his novels had numbers associated with them, Now he leads, happy life with his wife and twin sons. Ishaan and Shyam. Chetan Bhagat loves to become super heroes.

Chetan Bhagat is one of the most popular authors in fiction category in India. He has been a very active name in the recent and past. He is the author of many best sellers like 'Five point someone, one night @ the call center, The 3 mistakes of my life, 2 states, Revolution 2020, What young India wants, Half girl friend. Chetan Bhagat's debut novel Five point someone, which has seen a replied with the 2008 block buster's Bollywood movie "Three Idiots" he established his fame as an author of International repute. He got the Indo-American Society's the society young Achievers Award in 2004 and the publisher's Recognition Award in 2005. The New York Times called "The Biggest

selling English language novelist in Indian History. Chetan Bhagat novels represent the voices of the youth in emerging India. He has presented wide views about the Indian culture and how people live in this great country. He has successfully been able to attract the country's youth through his realistic and frank writings. The facts are real and the incidents are almost similar to the ones we face in day-to-day life. Chetan Bhagat has merged both highbrows and lowbrow genres into one, which is now approved as best sellers genre of the Indian English Literature. He has endowed the genre with healthy humor and sanguine approach to life. He chooses the personnel from the real-life metropolis. Chetan Bhagat novels go around the lives of the youth. He exactly depicts their real-life pictures and intentions all class and cadre of the people.

Chetan Bhagat believe in success comes to those who care for practicability not for mugginess in life. Chetan Bhagat's men and women both are undaunted; they are ready to take any risk for the sake of thrill and sensation in life. In his novels, Chetan Bhagat exhibits underbid spirits of the young people of this nation. He approach in youth calling that calls up only youths and also helps to realize their innovative vision.

In his first '*Five Point Someone*', his replicas Ryan, Alok and Hari fight against the patriarchal education system run by the old and absolute rules made by century old educationalists. These mighty methods of the old used to believe in wisdom of the world come through self penance, the more one penances one self, the wiser on more intelligent one becomes Chetan Bhagat believes that youth are the future of the country.

In his first novel '*Five point someone*' what not to do at IIT, the trio-Hari, Alok and Ryan are three icons of liberty. They enjoy their life to the fullest. They enjoying ever being called five points that is insulting for any students of IIT Delhi, but such are trivialities to these. Their concern lies specifically in the innovation of education system and their society as whole. They believe in success comes to those who care for practicability not for mugginess in life. According to them bookish knowledge is of no use if it is not practice based.

Five point some one –“What not to do at IIT” is a 2004 novel by Chetan Bhagat, an alumnus of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi and Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmadabad. This was his debut novel (1). It is one of the highest selling English novels published in India, and remained on the best sellers list until now since its releases in 2004, tied along with other novels by Chetan Bhagat. In this novel Bhagat puts emphasis on the observational teaching. He believes this technique must help the students in gathering rid of mugging. It must support them to apprehend the things in a natural way. The observational technique makes the students to observe things minutely and find out solution in the objects.

Bhagat grieves for the strike dogmatism of the education system. Chetan Bhagat is straight forward in his approach to life. He listen to the voice of himself, which he strongly believes in, is ever true. The man listening to the inner voice may suffer a big loss but finally emerges out victorious.

Bhagat's *the 3 mistakes of my life* consists of a profound story decked with beautiful rhymes. It is an example of an ideal novel which has ventured to include all the genres of the English literature. Chetan Bhagat has merged both highbrow and lowbrow genres into one; which is not approved as best-seller genres of the Indian English lifetime. He has endured the genre with healthy humor sanguine approach to life. He chooses the personnel from the real-life metropolis. His novels go around the lives of the youth. He exactly depicts their real-life victims and entertains all class and cadre of people.

Bhagat's *3 mistakes of my life* is novel of the dark passion. It unites the three friends to presence the national talent. This is the first time where an Indian English writer has elevated his characters above the trifles of the society such as castes, religion and idolatry. The novel in hand mainly focuses on the venture of three friends-Govind, Ishan and Omi. The trios have vowed to portray Ali as the approved cricket talent of India. Govind is the narrator in the novel. He is the artist-man in true sense. He believes in himself and his potentiality. He loves to do what his conscience allows him. He has been the city topper in mathematics in 10+2 exams. If he had willed to pursue an engineering program he could have done it successfully. He drops his further education and goes with business. Bhagat portrays his characters on

decision makes of the writers of the past have delineated their protagonists subjected to the will of their parents on their base. Bhagat advises to youth not to follow every word of their parents and the boss blindly. Revolutionary spirit of Bhagat thus appears in his comment: "He mainly wouldn't have progressed if people listened to their parents all the time". This is a message to the youth for taking decision personally for their own welfare and for the humanity as well. Bhagat has traced the shocking Causes for the dried up teams in the glowing eyes of the people of the glamour world. Omi lives in the temple but he never realized the presence of God there. He never found mental repose and bliss in the temple.

This artisito truth lies within sensing perception. It guides his readers to obtain self-enlighten. Character in the novel of Bhagat's novels the plot i.e., plot. His character are social novels who remind us the female characters of G.B.shaw for their vitality Viz natural formal instinct place of action of his novels is set in the hustle and bustle of metropolitans Indian Cities where life moves at fast speed.

In *One night @ the call center* the novelist introduces us with five advocates of individual liberty VIZ., Shyam, Vroom, Priyanka, Esha and Radhika. Radhika attends duty at the call center for 9 to 10 hours. Besides she works at home and attends all in-laws and pay especial care to her mother-in-law. Apart from all this, she puts up with the mean comments of her mother-in-law. Monethdess, she turns deaf can thinking that her mother-in-law in very old and of old thoughts. She follows the rites of Indian wifehood especially of a Hindu wifehood Vroom, Vroom malhotra fights against the wrongs of the system and save the lives of thousands of employees working in the Gurgon call center, connections. He and his friend shyam sacrifice their jobs for the happier of other colleagues and are hailed out the true legend of liberty. They make threat-plan which attract huge caller from the Americans. And then they fire the company to withdraw pay-offs. It is their self on the voice of the some which empowers them to take toughest decision @ their carrier and this voice is presented as the voice of the God in the novel. Priyanka raises voice against the wrongs in flicked by a mother-in-law ever her daughter-in-law, a true Indian wife, mother of two daughters. Her only Crimeless that she could not bear a boy to them. Rebuking her daughter-in-law, the old levy comments" look at the girls

of today: don't know how to talk –look at her, eyes made up like a heroine. There upon priyanka retorts:”The young girls know how to talk and behave. It is you old ones who need to taught a lesson.

He has presented wide vices about the Indian Culture and how people live in the great country. He has successfully been able to attract the country's youth through his realistic and frank writings. The story “*Revolution 2020* (2011) is one such effort by Chetan Bhagat. This is subtitled ‘Love, corruption, Ambitions’. These three aspects are very much covered through the various parts of the novel (4). The Story is a tale of two very intelligent boys who want to share the world in different ways. “*Revolution 2020*” presents the life style of Indian students and the Education system relevant her in the most correct ways. All the instants narrated here one part of our daily lives and hence it is close to reality. Also the story is a very inspiring one. The fortunes swing from riches to rages and disrespect.

I also depict the mortality of girls and boys in the modern world and their desperation to achieve anything they want. Bhagat's future novel 2 *states* (2009) is more antidote than fictional. In this novel he recollects his falling in love with his beloved and wife Anusha. Through his personal story he wants to marriage (2). Marriage is a very pious ceremony in India. It is treated and organized with preferred priority in all the states of the country. Through krish, Bhagat represents the voices of the youth who do not believe in social or economic disparities. All the people of the country should be free to settle a business, do a job or marry in any part of the country and there should not be any restriction in this regard. But due to social customs and case discriminations marriage outside the boundary is far cry. In this novel Bhagat beautifully deprecates the social and linguistic deferens in the people belonging to different states and also their discrimination on the basis of their color, face, language and styles. Chetan Bhagat introduced God as a cosy friend with mobile phone in his second block buster novel “One night @ the call center A phone call from God is as additional element in his works. No novelist has presented God using mobile phone to guide him devotes in the crisis. Here in God advises his friends-cum devotees(3).

In all the stories of ChetanBhagat we have observed a nail-biting climax. Chetan Bhagat does not take to the bombastic style of

working. His language is simple, lucid and quite comprehensive eve to the new bees of reading.

Bhagat advises to the concept of modernism in his novels personnel value life more than everything. He takes life for enjoyment not for repression. He advises the people ”to stop looking at pleasure and enjoyment as sin. He portrays his men and women as the true relevant of the human life. He trends to make the people firm and strategic in hand times.

His novel projects the tone spirit of nationalism. He has introduced some modernism in the Indian English literature. He has focused the interest of the youth. Modernism in his novels touches an emotional chord of the third generation.

The victories and defeats of the youth are trademarks of Chetan’s stories. Chetan Bhagat has shown the modernism to wind up his novels miraculously. Ever after the story is gone you are left with the shadowiness.

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A Critical Analysis of Caste in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

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Aravind Adiga acclaimed international fame through his debut novel, *The White Tiger*. He started his career as a financial journalist at Financial Time and he has published his articles and pieces of writing in his freelance time. His debut work, *The White Tiger* published in the year 2008 is followed by the short stories of *Between the Assassinations* (2008), *Last Man in Tower* (2011).

Aravind Adiga's the *Between the Assassinations* tells the assassination of the India's dynamic political leaders of mother and son Indira Gandhi and her son, Rajeev Gandhi. The novel is set in the fictitious town of Kittur and other places and it moves around the various set of characters. Mainly, Adiga's collection of stories shows India's natural beauty in rural areas and seashore places. He effectively focuses on the picture of pathos, injustice and ironies in Indian life. All his works depicts the sordid reality of new India. His debut novel, *The White Tiger*, points out the contradiction of new India. Which is encapsulated with the modernistic ideas challenging the decline of the under privileged who still cling between the poverty line, aiming to transcend the border that caught clutches of poverty.

The White Tiger, by Aravind Adiga is a clear representation of India, In many ways, most importantly the existing scenario in political, social, cultural, economic disciplines. Besides, the keen element in the novel can be asserted to the comparison of the 'real' image with the 'realistic' image of the country. M. Anwer opines that,

... faces ridden slums, villages infested by feudalistic ganglords, corrupt politics and dysfunctional hospitals, not only because he adds to annals of an orientalist discourse, but because such representation jeopardizes the myth of "India Inc," – the glamorous nation of manicured parks, coiffured business and the prettified charmed circle of glitterati. (306)

This means that the novel brings a common platform to both the existing realities like the social evils challenging the development of the country. In order to bring a literary fragrance the chapter analyses textually the above mentioned contemporary panorama of the nation through many major and minor characters, different themes and motifs, the simple plot that moves forward and backward with realities in the novel .

In the novel, *The White Tiger*, the narration is well organized as it follows the Aristotelian syntax with a proper beginning, the introduction of the characters and is progressed to the main plot and the end documenting the incidents in a systematic manner. The novel is a story told from the prospective of the main character Balram Halwai, the protagonist who narrates his life story in seven consecutive nights to a Chinese premier. It records all the major incidents in the life of Balram who is well attracted to the globalization and the decline of his life to a murderer and then to an entrepreneur. The protagonist is also a prototype representing the class / caste system existing in the nation since decades. Many social evils like religious rituals, the polluted mind of the upper class people illiteracy, corruption, politics, and adverse treatment given to lower class, dowry, poverty are well examined through the fictionalization of the respective characters in the novel. According to Dr. Shubha Mukherjee,

With the progress of Balram's story, the author takes the liberty of exposing a few essentials at times physical settings, at times political upheavals, and at times social turmoil. When Balram is nostalgic and retorts to his childhood days the author immediately intervenes and takes the readers into the wrap of the Indian village scene. Unbelievable they are but true to the core, strange they may sound+--+ but undoubtedly the correct music has been played. (28)

The novel *White Tiger* is the ninth Booker prize winning novel, by Aravinda Adiga taking its inspiration from India and the nation's identity. "This novel reveals the disparity between India's ascending as a prevailing international economy and the foremost character, which comes from crushing rural penury." (Ashok K, Saini 9)

In the novel *The White Tiger* the plot revolves around the main character Balram, who belonged to the sweet maker community, for which his name is also an indication. The novel is written in seven parts indicating Balram's narration of his life to the Chinese premier Mr. Wen Jiabo in seven consecutive nights. According to Dr. Ashok K. Saini,

The White Tiger – a tale of two Indias-tells the story of Balram, the son of a rickshaw puller in the heartlands, one of the “faceless” poor left behind by the country's recent economic boom. Thus it charts his journey from working in a teashop to entrepreneurial success. (11)

The story initiates from the life of Balram Halwai in a place called Laxmangrah, where the character is so small confine to the restrictions of the caste laid on him and it traverses to the stage of Balram as a owner of travels. Throughout the journey the life of Balram, he becomes corrupted and an addicted person to the changes occurring in the contemporary scenario.

The protagonist, Balram is an intelligent student at school. The boy is so clever as he wins the appreciation of the visiting education inspector who calls him “The White Tiger” a rare animal that is seen in India, symbolizing the token of his intelligence. In addition the educational inspector offers him a scholarship to meet his basic needs. But Balram is unfortunate as the scholarship he was awarded cannot be a favor to his education. On the other hand the scholarship is used to pay the dowry of his sister-in-law. From there onwards Balram goes in search of jobs to support to his family and finally finds a job in a tea shop as a tea server and wiper of tables. During the time course of his job he comes to know about the importance of a driver in big cities and also the good pay paid for them. His wish to become a driver is so big that in a reverie he becomes a driver. In order to full fill his dream he meets the rich landlord named Stork and begs him desperately for a job. Finally he was appointed as a driver to Stork's foreign returned son Ashok. Balram's mind that is being poisoned started of course from his wish to become a driver. Because before Balram meets Ashok, Stork appoints a person named Ram Persad to drive his son in Delhi. But Balram grabs this opportunity by revealing the caste identity of Ram Persad, a Muslim and deliberately dismisses him, that was Balram desire to become a driver.

During Ashok's period of life in America he marries a girl named Pinky madam. Pinky madam is alienated very much in America and hence Ashok decides to spend his life time in Delhi. Thus, Balram by hook or by crook got an opportunity to move to Delhi to drive the couple. There Balram is exposed to the American culture of the people and also he gets aware of the difference between life styles from his birth place to the place of job. He also comes to know about the corruption of his owner, bribes, barter girls that he gives in an exchange to wave his tax.

Once Pinky madam drives the car in alcohol intoxication and kills a baby. The whole family including Ashok gets worried about the circumstances that may arise due to the murder. Ashok also tries to convince Balram to confess him for the murder. Pinky madam also comes forward to support the baby's parents but none of them turns up. After this incident, Pinky madam deserts Ashok and leaves to America without informing anyone. Ashok in Pinky madam's absence finds solace in visiting different malls. In one of such visits Ashok meets his ex-girl friend and forms an illegal relation with her.

Balram who is always with Ashok in all his deeds begins to corrupt from the moment Ashok maintains an illicit contact with his girl friend. On the other side Balram becomes desperate for girls with white hair but his economic status did not support his wish. Balram, hence decides to become rich by any means. This awakens the violent angle in Balram which persuades him to kill Ashok while carrying a lot of money to bribe a minister. Balram then moves to Bangalore where he starts a travel business. Towards the end of the novel Balram is seen trying to bribe a police in order to disguise the sin committed by one of his drivers.

The novel is, so, an exploration of all the moods, emotions and ills of the people, of course, the lower class, who are attracted to the riches. In addition to this, the description of different aspects that are realistic, that happen in the day to day life, multi dimensional picture of the nation are well portrayed. It may be due to the fact that the novel is an exploration of all the key elements; it was shortlisted for Booker prize.

Our Indian society is cursed with a stigma, caste system. Caste system is a defining discourse forming the hierarchy in the society. It may be so good to say that there is no hierarchy prevailing in the society. But an important point to be noted is: if one questions about the caste hierarchy, the answer to that question may be in two ways. In the present days it is highly posh to say that there exists equality among people irrespective of caste religion and community. But this is confined to the text only. In general the caste system is still prevailing in a disguise form. Though the new brought ups of the caste system are abolished, the demon is still nourishing from its roots.

One among the features of the caste system is the people of the lower caste restricting themselves to their ancestral professions. For instance the chamma caste people generations restrict their life as butchers or foot ware maker. But how for this correct. A child in a high class is born to become rich from acquire education and occupy a good economical status in the society. Where is if a child is born in a low class he becomes a child labour doing menial job, starving and finding difficult for survival. This economical imbalance is never bridged since centuries. Where exists the term democracy, equality around people. The answers are open and are awareness by the people. It may be fair to say that in these days due to the agitation, revolt and awareness created among the people the generations clinging to their ancestral profession are shaken and children are coming out to possess education and acquire a good job.

If one examines the literacy rate in the nation, the percentage of children from upper caste acquiring education is comparatively more than the children of the lower caste. Paradoxically, the government had implemented various education policies for the betterment of the students of the lower class. But still a full pledged awareness is awaited for the acquirement of expected results. Due to the ignorance of the lower class people with regard to the education many families are thrown into the hands of poverty. According to Ashok K, Siani “Consequently, this novel gives the impression resembling a clear-cut pulled-up-by-your bootstraps tale, albeit given an incredible twist by the narrator’s sharp and satirical eye for the veracities of life for India’s poor.” (10)

Though there exists many schemes and policies for the betterment of so called corruption which stands in between the caste system and poverty is creating a gap between the two classes. The terms caste, poverty, corruption are interlinked with each other. Owing to the existing corruption among the people and the exploitation of the higher class many people from lower class are turn into monsters and Naxalites. “Halwai’s moral in *The White Tiger* is that dispossession originates masters, and he himself is immediately such a monster.” (Ashok K,Saini 10)

In the novel, Aravind Adiga makes a satirical comment on the existing social class hierarchy in the society. Vikram Halwai, Balram’s father is hit by poverty and tough manual work. His body tells the history of his life and sufferings. Balram reports,

A rich man’s body is like a premium cotton pillow, white and soft and blank. Ours are different. My father’s spine was a knotted rope, the kind that women use in village to pull water from wells; the clavicle curved around his neck in high relief, like a dog’s collar; cuts and nicks and scars, like little whip marks in his flesh, ran down his chest and waist, reaching down below his hipbones into his buttocks. The story of a poor man’s life is written on his body, in a sharp pen” (Adiga, 26-27).

With the above description of the tragic poverty one can question the existence of the so called democracy in the country. Even in the modernized period, the rich are becoming richer and poor are becoming poorer. The gap between these two classes are widening day by day.

According to Dr. Ashok K. Saini,

In his reportorial skill Adiga points his finger at the three pillars of modern India- democracy, enterprise and justice. For him they appear same, as instead of bridging the gap in Indian society they widen the gap between the rich and the poor, rural and urban, and allow a small minority to prosper at the expense of the silent majority. (11)

The following incident in the novel serves as an example. The protagonist, Balram Halwai belongs to sweet maker community as his name indicates. But there are no tinges in the novel that he worked in a sweet shop. Fortunately he was sent school but the poverty in the family compel him to discontinue his education and do job. During with search of his job he was firstly appointed as tea server but he wishes to become a driver. So in this context when he approached a rich landlord in the village, Stork he was firstly asked about his past. This is very common in the Indian society who check with the caste of the person who asks for a job. The world of Darkness abounds with social taboos, rigid caste distinction, superstitions, and caste and culture conflict. Man is known and recognized by his caste. The old driver of Stork asked Balram: “What caste are you?” (Adiga 56). Similar question is asked by Stork; “Halwai ... What caste is that, top or bottom?” (Adiga 62). Ram Persad, the servant of Stork disguised his identity because the prejudiced landlord didn’t like Muslim – he claimed to be a Hindu just to get a job and feed his starving family. On disclosure he was sacked from the job. While playing cricket, Roshan, the grandson of Stork calls himself Azaharuddin, the Captain of India. Stork reacts quickly, “call yourself Gavaskar, Azaharuddin is a Muslim” (Adiga 70).

This was the kind of caste addiction among the people. When the person is known to be belongs to lower caste there comes a sort of hesitation. In some cases this hesitation leads to the exploitation after the person is appointed.

This kind of condition is the realistic panorama in the country. In spite of the fact that there exists many awareness schemes to enlighten the people, the minds of the so called upper class are remaining to be unchanged. So, a renunciation is essential to strengthen the confidence of the working class to become a democratic country.

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Existential Dilemma in Arun Joshi's *The Foreigner* and *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*

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Arun Joshi one of the most prominent Indo–English writers of Post colonial Era of Indian Literary arena, has bequeathed five novels and a collection of dozen short stories to be embedded with widened thematic and stylistic scopes. Indeed, psychology has been used as a powerful instrument by Joshi to bring out the mental aberration suffered by most of his protagonists, but not more. Though his writings superficially resemble those of Western existentialist writers who harp on the futility and negation of life and existence divine, Joshi is deeply preoccupied with bringing out the essence of Indian ethos whose role is inevitable in all facets of life not only for the ancient ones, but also for the baffled contemporary youngster, whether he be Indian or alien. There is no denying that the root of existential thoughts is traced back to pre-philosophical era. Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament of the Holy Bible, Buddhism and Upanishads, mainly all oriental concepts contain deep existential insights of communion mode, not of fragmentation and desolation. Solomon, the preacher king says in Ecclesiastes:

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; yet the earth abideth for ever... The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the Sun... for in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increased knowledge increased sorrow... Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me. For all is

vanity and vexation. (1:4) predicament

So, bearing in mind that Existentialism in the modern context is an old wine in a new cup, a new name for an ancient method of Buddhism and Upanishads which insist only on the knowledge of self, this analysis is based on the fact that Man, being a victim of ignorance of his innate tenderness of morality becomes selfish which leads to a sense of blankness over the spirit that makes the world a waste and a vain show.

Etymologically, with its root from Latin, religion means that which binds one back to the origin, and not just following any single cult or sect. The aim of religion is spiritual, common to one and all, in spite of their individual belief system, is to discover ones' real self, ones' supreme inherent self. Hinduism deals with the process of the realization of self, one's identity after which Joshi's protagonists and main characters run after, with great anguish. One finds that Indian puranic literature, epics, and Upanishads are all full of aphorism, allegorical references, fables, prophecies, oracles, adventures of mythological mode, magical happening to such an extent that render them seemingly absurd not conforming to our reasoning faculties. But a Hindu devotee even though illiterate derives immense spiritual sustenance and supreme truth from them.

A. Parthasarathy states (in his *The Symbolism of Hindu Gods and Rituals*) that, "Hinduism is like a hospital with its many wards, sections and divisions. Each of them has a distinct purpose to attend to particular need of a particular disease... All of them put together cater to all types of ailments of all sorts of people so that every one of them can come out of the hospital as a healthy person" (2).

Joshi also revels in furnishing his art with ample sprinkling of the methodology of our ancient puranas and epics by inculcating The Naked King fable in *The City and the River*, folklore of Kalapahar in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, so many motifs and archetypal symbols in *The Last Labyrinth*, Hindu mode of prayer details of ancients in *Temples* in almost all the novels, especially in *The Apprentice*.

No other religion in the whole of human history has developed the symbolic representation of spiritual dogmas as Hinduism, except

the Old Testament and Jesus' parables. We can boldly assert that Joshi has impressionably handled all the esoteric nuances in his masterpieces bordering on real happenings. Joshi's great anxiety is to revive the Hindu symbols and idols of the supreme spiritual significance among the youngsters by removing from their ignorant minds the wrong notion of superstition imposed upon the artistic mode of revelation of Vedic Truth.

Precisely speaking, Joshi's maiden novel *The Foreigner* relates the psycho aberration of Surrinder Oberoi, called Sindi throughout the novel till the misled selfish protagonist turns into Surrender Oberoi after undergoing intolerable loss out of his false brutal detachment and egoistic stand. Being orphaned at an early childhood and eventual death of his uncle, his escapade in love-affairs in his adolescence, Babu's death, June's demise with her child in the womb have driven Sindi mad beyond retreat. Though, at last, in his ancestor's land, Muthu a simpleton drives firmly, the true *Karamayogic* spiritual principle bequeathed in *The Bagwad Gita* by Lord Krishna to Arjuna as well as to the whole human race in the past, present and future too.

A man owes much to the society into which he is born for having accommodated him. Evasiveness and escapism, as of Sindi never suits an honest person. One should render services in all possible and practicable ways in order to repay the dues to the world. Abandonment of all desire prompted action is true renunciation. Muthu says to Sindi persuading the latter to take up the dwindling business of Khemka saying that "sometimes detachment lies in actually getting involved" (225).

The Juke box song, "Who knows where the road will lead? Only a fool can say?" (*Foreigner* 193) simply reminds us of Vedanta which reminds one of the unpredictable happenings in the realm of the Eternal, over the world.

The Hindu scriptures acknowledge experience of sorrow and turmoil one undergoes as the greatest teacher. Sindi feels sad and unhappy about his brilliant academic career that teaches him not an iota of the

realities of life. Only his failure has initiated true understanding of life to Sindi. “Where Kathy and Anna had taught me to be detached from others, June’s death finally broke my attachment to myself” (78).

Ancient *rishis* stress that this planet is like a school, a learning place and here we suffer and grow which is also mentioned by the famous psycho-analyst Jesse Stearn in his *Matter of Immortality*. Sindi gets himself smugly accommodated with the fact that one does not choose one’s involvement and that the event of life that are uncontrollable by human endeavor are of therapeutic effect. The typical confused state of a postmodern youth, who is always amidst crowds but always alone, is depicted. When June Blyth sees him for the first time in a party with all the dancing and drinking around, wherein, Sindi is the ex-officio host she asks “Why do you look so sad?” (22).

The turbulent inner world of the protagonist is delineated. He is painfully aware of “twenty-five years largely wasted in search of peace, and what did I have to show for achievement: a ten-stone body that had to be fed four times a day, twenty-five times a week. This was a sum of a lifetime of striving”(92).

The contemplative Sindi, in spite of becoming complacent is not resigned to ignore the effect of one’s desire-bound involvement that adds up to his karma. He is sure that none can escape karma, which has to be answered by every mortal. He confesses to Khemka that in the past “I have sinned, and god knows, I have paid heavily for them ... But you can’t get rid of your sins by just turning me out. They will stalk you from every street corner ... We think we leave our actions behind, but the past is never dead” (229) and “it had only been a change of theatre ... the show had remained unchanged” (174).

J. Krishnamurthi states to people like Sindi that, “you are frightened to lose and you are frightened of something much greater which is to come...you think about it and by thinking about it you are creating that interval between living and that which you call death”(98).

The Foreigner reveals the author’s keen awareness of a deeper social reality of our times. Freedom in the sense of being unfettered, freedom from the craving for holding on to things and one’s ego, is the condition for love and for productive being. He later laments

“Detachment at that time meant inaction. Now I had begun to see the fallacy in it. Detachments consisted of right action and not escape from it.” The Gods had set a heavy price to teach me just that” (188-189). Sindi strives to walk out of his illusions.

In Joshi's other novel *The Strange case of Billy Biswas* the novelist explores the mystical urge, an ardent impulsive compulsion of the protagonist Billy Biswas, as against his brilliant academic career and belonging to a creamy upper crust of Indian elite society. Joshi utilizes Billy's strong primitive urge, a force *urkraft* to probe into the inner decay and sterility of modernism, materialism and non-abeyance with Nature, the great teacher.

Besides being a record of an existential protest against the superficialities of a grossly materialistic civilization it revels in a romantic nostalgia for the simple mode of life of the primitive people. Both the concepts get approval from our Indian traditional ethos. In support of these essential creeds Joshi has introduced esoteric themes regarding Primordial. Forces, Evolution of the universe according to Tantric system, Sankya system of union of Prakriti with Purush, impact of worlds beyond this planet upon the mortals, faceless God in ancient temples, birth and rebirth, incarnation, fate, significance of waiting, communion with nature and above all liberation from the fetters of mind consciousness reach out to the vitalizing spirit of Life.

The Strange Case of Billy Biswas is a captivating story wherein Billy Biswas, with sophisticated parents, beautiful rich wife and a handsome child, just escapes into the forests and is in search of his true inner being, urged incessantly from his teens by, a mysterious clairvoyant call of a primordial force unsuppressed in spite of Billy's hectic effort. “Come, come, come, why do you want to go back? Come, now, Take us. Take us until you have had your fill. It is we who are the inheritors of the cosmic Night” (*Strange Case* 21).

The above passage is the call of Nature's primeval force that keeps on influencing Billy to enter into a trance, driving him mad being unable to explain to others what he feels inwardly. Indeed spirituality is something to be experienced, not to be explained in words that are incompetent to convey the wholeness of the experience. Billy's is the most futile cry of a man who suffers from extraordinary obsessions for

primitivism which makes him insane to the onlookers. He had to chase the phantom that appears before him unknown to others, to the very ends of the earth, being unable to resist its faceless temptation.

In his struggle to get out of the rut of the degraded cultured humanity to the nature's primordial abode of infinite wisdom Billy suffers "like a fish out of water losing his staggering intelligence, spectroscopic interests, the sense of hum our snuffed out like a candle left in the rain, being primed down, like a dead butterfly". The deepest anguish felt by an aspirant, a *sadhak* is fashioned by Joshi in characterizing Billy's unrelenting quest to grab his true identity and self. The curious feeling of alienation is felt by a true seeker like Billy everywhere, making him feel like "a visitor from the wilderness to the marts of the big city and not the other way around".

Billy's soul-searching quest for identity in his questioning, "Who I am? Who are my parents" reminds us of Upanishad version of self-seeking *sadhak*. *Baktiyoga* which caters to the needs of the inquisitive but less intelligent, yet totally submissive aspirants called for devotees of the higher self. Devotees find enjoyment in paying obeisance to the Lord through hymns, sacrifices, ceremonies, rituals and celebrations, with gratitude in their heart for the infinite boons bestowed upon them. For such activities a common place of worship is needed which is called Temple. The temples mentioned in *The Strange Case Billy Biswas* are of a peculiar significance with sanctum sanctorum without idol, in the Maikala Hills, or an idol of god incomplete, devoid of face, symbolizing the incapacity of mortals to draw a face for the Almighty.

The call of Nature's primeval force keeps on influencing Billy that he cries his heart out, "in a little while I could feel the tears running down my wrists and forearms and getting soaked into my trousers at the elbows ... I was terrified, as a child is terrified in the dark" (*Biswas* 87). Billy believes that "Life's meaning lies not in the glossy surfaces of our pretensions but in those dark mossy labyrinths of the soul than languish forever, hidden from the dazzling light of the sun" (8). One has to listen to that which has not been uttered but indicated through visions, dreams and phantoms which Billy seems to understand. But the reasons for such delusions that torment Billy are not understandable, not to be conveyed by Billy also as well others. There are quite a number of

questions which had preferably been left alone, for, disaster awaits people who “see too much” (30).

Vethathri Maharishi, a great sage of modern times well-versed in Vedic literature, explains about *Yoga* and Joshi agrees with the same. The body is the outer expression of the soul. If the soul is cleared of unwanted imprints, the body would be cured of unnecessary pains and miseries. Whatever the perception that is enjoyed or experienced is always proportional to the previously conditioned character.

This experience of the soul and its behavior is the quality of the person. The imprint on the soul arises due to ones’ past-birth experiences. Billy reports that, “what appealed to me was the shades of the same spirit...the spirit was a much older force, older than the time when man first learned to build temples. Jess Stearns throws more light upon Karma, pre-birth and rebirth. He further states:

I myself agree that consciousness does not depend on the existence of bodily issues, and the death does not end consciousness. I derived the knowledge from my studies of Yoga philosophies, the experience gained in meditation and its related stages”(244).

There may be more of life than that which meets the eye. Joshi, along with many right thinking stalwarts regrets the malignant tendency of Indian youth in blindly mimicking materialism. No one is to get drunk on one’s own logic losing all value and respect for the exorbitant spiritual dimensions for Joshi believes that, generally, a person who is honestly oriented in the spiritual path gets well placed in a life of contentment and prosperity. There is only one.

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Gandhian Philosophy in Mulk Raj Anand's Novel *Untouchable*

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Gandhi was a man speaking to men; he was more than an agitator or politician, he was the liberator, the Messaiah, the Great soul. History is the theme of creative fiction seems indeed to exercise a special fascination for many an Indian novelist of yesterday and today. To Gandhi, national realization included the ending of political subjection and economic degradation, the removal of social inequalities and abuses like untouchability, caste arrogance, occupational prejudices, etc, the reform of education, and giving new life to language and literature.

One of the main duties of a great writer is to represent the society's mind and its various influences in his art. In other words, literature and society are the two facets of the same coin; they are interwoven both internally and externally. Mulk Raj Anand's insightful exposure covers nearly fifty percent of the areas of Gandhian philosophy in his novel *Untouchable*.

Living in the same age, and staying in the Sabarmati Ashram for three months, he revised the manuscript of his famous novel *Untouchable* and went through various sweet and sour experiences there. Anand's novels are immensely influenced by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, who fought for the cause of the down trodden, the marginalized and the defenceless.

Anand's personal love experience with Irene while reading Rousseau's Confessions guided him to write the novel *Untouchable*. "One day, I read an article in 'Young India' by Gandhiji, describing how he met Uka, a sweeper boy, found with torn clothes and hungry, took him to his Ashram. This narrative was simple, austere and seemed to me more truthful than my artificiality connected novel '*Untouchable*'. I told Irene this. And, in a sudden fit of revulsion against my extent, in elitist Bloomsbury, I decided to go and see the old man." (p.67). Since then Anand has kept up his own search after truth.

Anand's beginning in creative writing is also a beginning in his search for honesty and sincerity, the two basic values of Gandhian thought.

The theme of the novel is to free the outcastes from slavery and humiliation and injustice, exploitation and harmful religion of the nation. Anand's life was mixed with the *Untouchable* playmates in Bulasah which is part of regimental cantonment town Punjab and it led him to have a kind of social realism. His psychological approach towards *Untouchable* and the Hindu caste led him to view Psychological realism and sociological realism.

The writer, Mulk Raj Anand included his herideterical father's army nature of courage to be dare enough to expose social evils, emotional, sociological milieu experiences with Gandhi and ashram life, his understanding companion for the waif, his conception over ethical—in a word Daridra-Narayana (the Lord as incarnate Poverty). His feeling for suffering masses of India colours his novel experience of Political life, and cultural research.

The characters of MulkRaj Anand were portrayed by nature of their function carved with abusing and depressing on caste basis in the novel.

1. Lakha, Bakha, Sohini,Rakha Chota, Gulabo and Ram Charan are victims of injustice on caste basis among seven identified *Untouchable* categories in Bulasah.
2. Pandit Kali Nath, Havildar Charat Singh, Burra Babu's sons, the house wives, Hakim Bhagwan Dass JJ, Babu'wife, chapathi throwing woman in the Silversmith's lane represent the high castes.
3. Gandhiji, Iqbal Nath Sarshar, R N Basheer, the tonga-walla the Muslim, Colonel Hutchinson are the advisors and counsellors connected with the incidents in the area of silversmith's lane, Golbagh ground in ,the Bulsash town.

Mulk Raj Anand's character portraits view the cosmos. His characters represent micro and macro level to the whole modern universe. He demonstrates the satirical criticism in his sociological novel *Untouchable*. He justified the modernity and tradition of India via East-West themes in the novel *Untouchable*. His perceptions, being a scholar and devotee in both research and patriotic life led him to

challenge and to adopt the same by the critics in literature and also to the politicians.

The writing on untouchables made him Untouchable by the both colonial and Indian; literates, politicians, the orthodox and the then bureaucrats. Anand's humanism makes him a novelist with a mission, his mission being a writer for the betterment and upliftment of the under-dog of society.

Anand's hero, 18 year old Bakha, was designed as a non-violent, poor boy standing for truth, with innate qualities like modesty, sincerity, honesty, responsibility and punctual at work. His hidden features were of a fighter, helping nature, seeker of solutions to the Problems, but the leadership was futile due to lack of freedom.

When Sohini explains Kalinath's molestation on her, Bakha, like a tiger at bay, with clenched fists and blood-red eyes, moves threateningly towards him (p.54). Later he withdrew the idea of revenge against him with retaliation by his higher castes. It is therefore proved that Pandit Kalinath's attitude to outwit his religious hypocrisy.

Being exhausted with caste feeling at work with Hawaldar and the House wife, Chapatti throwing scene and another woman's humiliation, rejection abusing with filthy language during receiving food, and by all means he realised that it was for being untidy, unhygienic and nature of profession, and so he revolted to be imitated as sahibs which adore great respect. He even tried to shift the job of latrine cleaner to sentry duty (p.93).

By evening Bakha felt bored with prolonged unproductive messages by Colonel Hutchinson, Mahatma Gandhi and Iqbal Nath Sarshar. His face had paled with contracted thoughts, reddened in a curious feeling of despair (p.146). Bakha was smothered by miseries, the anguish of the morning's memories. He recollected the events since morning; the gist of closing message, confused for the Brahmin's scavenging in ashram that whether Gandhi approved Untouchable's scavenging or disapproved. The retrospect for the prospect of wearing sahib's dress as well as status in his life becomes a dream in his life. Anand's simile with the Sun from morning to Evening i.e ascending and descending nature of feelings of Bakha were exact in appearance and word to deed in Bakha's life (p.147). Bakha proceeded homewards

to explain about the speech delivered by Gandhi (p.148). Bakha's enquiry of Jesus Christ as saviour or Yessuh Messih (p.116) was rested as unredeemer of physical problems of Untouchables. His yearning for want of education was also abortive (p.31, 32)

Anand's autobiographical experienced character Mahatma Gandhi speaks on: Panchayat raj, true religion, modern world, God's love, Swaraj (Self government) (p.129, 140). Gandhiji kept his legs against the idols, as proof of his belief that god is everywhere (P.130).

Bapu said that panchayat can do good service. Gandhiji's speech on untouchables, Gandhiji's fast for the sake of low castes is subtly described (p.131). Harijans are not different to Hindus but their touch would mean pollution (p.132). Gandhiji wished freedom for untouchable but not separate legal political status (p.136). Gandhiji's suggestion on cleaning of lavatory is to serving of Hindu society but not for Musalman (p.138). In Gandhiji's opinion untouchability is the fault of people but not religion. The untouchable should be offered only grain instead of food for their work. He educated the public to declare open the public wells, temples, roads, schools, sanatoriums, to the untouchables (p.139). Gandhiji's ambition is that emancipation of untouchables and protection of cow would mean real Swaraj and he wishes the salvation with it (p.140).

Anand's view on Colonel Hutchinson was to assert religious tolerance in the Indian society. He was not an army chief but the Christian missionary and chief of the Salvation Army. Hutchinson too, in a way, is an outcaste: one alienated from the British residents of city and driven from home by his card-playing, hard-drinking wife and even for some time by non-believers of Christ for the conversion into Christianity. Both Gandhi and Hutchinson as liberators like the Messiah remained as uncleared answers of Bakha.

Anand's attitude creates solution to the problem in modern ways. Iqbal Nath Sarshas is a poet and editor of a journal called Nawan Yug (p.144). The poet discusses with others about the spinning wheel, replacement of machines and its opposition (p.142). The Poet condemns and shows remedial ways to modify, amplify for model and unbiased religious changes. The poet attributes to heredity inequalities among Hindu society by Brahmins, their philosophical beliefs, Karma, birth or

rebirth followed by their good or bad deeds. He wished that the old mechanical formulae of our lives and the old stereotyped forms must give place to a new dynamism. He suggested destroying the castes and destroying the inequalities of birth and unalterable vocations (p.145). The poet suggested to shift the sweeping profession duty by the Untouchables and not to remain as Untouchables (p.146).

Anand's predictability of Bakha's present agony in all his tribulations and sufferings being an Untouchable was for the betterment of his own section of society.

How deeply is he affected by Gandhi's genius to synthesize desperate elements, his stand on anti-mechanization and his philosophy of non-violence, becomes evident from Anand's analysis of the tenets of Gandhian philosophy, as for example, and is there is a contemporary Indian Civilization? Anand is of the view that "behind the mechanical civilization of the West was the ferocious man-eater of the profit system" (p.19 Rama Jha)

Being a rational thinker among the major Indo-Anglo novelists who were born between 1904 and 1906, and grew up in a period of significant socio-political change in India, the four writers Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Bhabani Bhattacharaya are related to Gandhian thought.

Anand's novel *Untouchable's* manuscript had undergone with several sittings of Gandhiji's corrections, eliminations and revisions. In addition to that Gandhian influence over the novel *Untouchable* even led him to have change in his personal behaviour as well as attitude to be a good writer and good social worker. During his stay in Sabarmati first he was asked to stop his drinking habit he borrowed from England, secondly that he should not look upon any woman with a feeling of desire which was exempted to his lover and thirdly that he would have to clean the latrines like other members. Gandhiji's piece of advice made him re-examine his assumptions on the grounds of refusing to accept social discrimination as a fact in social life.

Cowasjee aptly remarks: "Rakha is a living death as opposed to his brother who is life in death" He is dirty and unhygienic. He is lazy and always at plays. Rakha remained as an undefended and paralysed Untouchable in the ever changing world. Rakha is pessimist

by nature and stabilize for traditional where as his brother Bakha is optimist and rework for modern life.

How deeply is he affected by Gandhi's genius to synthesize desperate elements, his stand on anti-mechanization and his philosophy of non-violence, becomes evident from Anand's analysis of the tenets of Gandhian philosophy, as for example, and is there is a contemporary Indian Civilization? Anand is of the view that "behind the mechanical civilization of the West was the ferocious man-eater of the profit system" (p.19 Rama Jha)

He borrowed the personal philosophical longing and struggle to encounter the evils in the society in view of untouchables. The novel *Untouchable* was turned down nineteen times by publishers which moved him towards despair and contemplation of suicide.

Narasimhaiah aptly remarks: "... the word 'capture' does what whole paragraphs of description of Bhaka state of mind may not have does." The novel commences in the morning and concludes in the evening. The whole action is filled with spiritual anguish and suffering of Bakha which takes place during twelve hours from dawn to dusk and shows three clear stages of development and tremendous gain in concentration and intensity.

Each stage ends on a dramatic note and the fact that Bakha's course of moments on that day goes continuously through ups and downs, together ensure that suspense is maintained throughout. The first stage occupies arousing issues of class and its substantial consequences.

The second stage is of despair and discouragement on overcoming the in humiliation, degrading, incurred losses on caste basis of both material and immaterial, and the third one is unearthing of their solutions. ... Swaraj and therein lies my soul deliverance. (p140) Ultimately, prophetically it is said that the problem of Untouchables and its incurred knots are a part of the real attainment of Swaraj at national level and the individual in the Untouchable community of Bhaka, and its socio economic solutions are rested at its fulfilment of the prophecy by implementation.

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Globalisation in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*

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Contemporary Indian fiction has stamped its greatness by mixing up tradition and modernity while earlier Indian novels projected the tradition cultural past and moral values which are deeply rooted in the society in the novels published after the First World War modernism is traced. The Novels written after the Second World War are considered post-modern novels. Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Sashi Tharoor, Upamanya Chatterjee and Amitav Ghosh belong to the post-modern category.

Amitav Ghosh travelled widely and is immensely influenced by the political and cultural milieu of post-Independent India. He comments on the present scenario the world is passing through in his novels. As a post-modernist, he stresses more on the globalisation rather than on nationalism. Self-flexibility and confessionality characterize fictional works of Ghosh. Displacement, departure and arrivals have a permanent symbolic relevance in his narrative structure. Insecurities, disorientation and fragmentation the traits of post-modernism also find place in his works. His novels deal with insecurities in the existence of human life. National boundaries are a hindrance to human communication: they cause wars. His novels move around multiracial and multiethnic issues; The present paper focuses on the theme of globalization which is one of the traits of post-modernism in his novel, *The Shadow Lines*(1988).

The Shadow Lines, Amitav Ghosh's second novel, was published in 1988, four years after the sectarian violence that shook New Delhi in the aftermath of the prime minister, Indira Gandhi's assassination. *The Shadow Lines* deals with political freedom in the modern World. In *The Shadow Lines* people draw between themselves and nations. The line drawn is an absurd illusion. It is also a source of terrifying violence like a partition of India in to Pakistan and Hindustan.

The novel tells the story of the three generations of the narrator's family spread over Dhaka, Calcutta and London. He lines up

characters from different nationalities, religions and culture in a close knit, Palpable World. *The Shadow Lines* is the story of the family and friends of the nameless narrator who for all his anonymity comes across as if he is the person looking at you quietly from across the table by the time the story telling is over and silence descends. Before that stage arrives the reader is catapulted to different places and times at breath taking tempo. The past, present and future combine and melt together arising any kind of line of demarcation. Such lines are present mainly in the Shadows they cast.

The story revolves around the narrator's search to find out about Tridib's death which the family wants to forget, but the narrator can't because Tridib was his mentor and had given him- 'words to travel in' and 'eyes to see them with.' Through Tridib, the narrator learn using his imagination with precision. The novel also gives us the views of the various characters like Tha'mma, Ila, May, Jathamoshai and Robi and what boundaries mean to each of them.

Ghosh questions the real meaning of political freedom and the borders which virtually seem to both establish and separate. The novel traverses through almost seventy years through the memories of people, which the narrator recollects and narrates, giving their viewpoint along with his own. Though the novel is based largely in Calcutta, Dhaka and London, it seems to echo the sentiments of whole south-east Asia, with lucid over tones of Independence and the pangs of partition.

Amitav Ghosh stands out among his peers for the admirable directness and lucidity of his prose as well as for his brilliant perception of the complexities of human relations in the multicultural world. While *The Shadow Lines* explores the author's major concern about wider cross – border humanity with striking insights into the issues of ethnic nationalism and communalism, it also reveals new levels of his technical prowess. This paper aims at examining the signifying transactions in *The Shadow Lines* as well as the process by which Ghosh transforms his material in to the finished product.

Genette has also offered a comprehensive typology of narrators. According to him the extradiegetic narrator is the apparently distant third-person narrator while the autodiegetic narrator makes continuous use of the first person account. Applying genett's views on narrative technique and the typology of narrators to our discussion of Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, we notice that the unnamed first person

narrator in this novel is both an autodiegetic narrator and the primary agent of external and internal focalizing. By external focalizing mean reports on the activities of characters whereas internal focalizing suggests references to the thoughts and feelings of the characters including the narrator's own.

The boy narrator presents the views of the members of his immediate and extended family, thus, giving each a well-defined character. However, Tha'mma, narrator's grandmother is the most realized character in the novel, giving a distinct idea of the idealism and the enthusiasm with which the people worked towards nation building just after independence. It is chiefly through her character that Ghosh delivers the most powerful message of the novel, the vainness of creating nation states, the absurdity of drawing lines which arbitrarily divide people when their memories remain undivided. All the characters are well rounded. In Tridib, the narrator's uncle, Ghosh draws one of the most Unique characters of our times. Narrator's fascination with him is understandable as Tridib travels the world through his imagination. Ghosh tries to undo the myth that boundaries restrict as there are no barriers in imagination.

Ghosh explores the mysterious pull between Tridib and May and the abiding bond between the two families defying distance and physical frontiers even as the countries they belong to are pitted against each other. This search for invisible links and indivisible sanity, ranging across the realities of nationality, cultural, segregation and racial discrimination to counter the inherently in explicable ethnic distance. Lionel Tresawsen and justice Chandrashekaradatta – Chaudhuri, Tridib and May, Jethamoshai and Khalil rise above the Prevailing passion and Prejudice, racial hatred and communal bad blood emanating from a heightening of borders, that is a clash of national and cultural particularities.

Amitav Ghosh makes skilful use of narrationally framed free direct and free indirect speech to supply the structural frame for the memory's content. Ghosh's novels are for fewer than those in the novels of Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy. Unlike Rushdie and Roy are for that matter Chinua Achebe.

Amitav Ghosh's book might be, and no matter how appealing his humanist call for dissolving barriers between, nations, peoples and communities on the grounds that World civilization were syncretic long

before the divisions introduced by the territorial boundaries of nation states.

In my view Amitav Ghosh appeals to creative multicultural impulses whereby we can engage the other in the mutual transformation of dialogue without giving up the distinctiveness of our traditions. Edward said, “the new economic and socio-political dislocations and configurations of our time with the startling realities of human interdependence on a World scale. Also, Ghosh’s position on the militantly-charged communities is probably influenced by Rabindranath Tagore’s anti-nationalitarian” sentiment and his larger ideology of global human fellowship.

History operates as discipline to produce a conception of both time and space. As Walter Benjamin points out, “historicism rightly culminates in universal history”, that is a way of conceptualizing both space and time in the logical of capital, a logic that is both colonizing and parasitic. It operates in the empty homogenous time of nation and exchange.

In this novel, Ila has no right to live there, she said hoarsely. She doesn’t belong there. It took those people a long time to build that country; hundred of years, years and years of war and bloodshed. Everyone who lives there has earned his right to be there with blood: with their brother’s blood and their father’s blood and their son’s blood. All their Cathedrals and how all their Churches are lived with memorials to men who have died in wars, all around the World? War is their religion. That’s what it takes to make a country. Muslim or Hindu, Bengali or Punjabi: they become a family born of the same pool blood.

Memory is the history that determines our perception of the present and our identity. Since we cannot change the history, it depends on us to choose the memory that suits our point of view. But, the memories that we choose to forget are more important than the ones we choose to remember. This is what Amitav Ghosh is trying to communicate to the readers through this novel.

While the narrator’s grandmother becomes increasingly bitter after her nephew’s death in the hands of “nationalist” hooligans and submits to the idea of “we must kill them before they kill us”, the narrator’s uncle finds it impossible to forget and forgive the brutal killing of his brother in front of his own eyes. Every character ends up

feeling insecure and spoken by the wars. Amitav Ghosh emphasizes the danger of defining our very identity on the basis of our nationality.

The language used by the narrator is quite simple and easy to understand and the meaning of the text is beautifully conveyed, wherein lies the strength of the novel. The narrator also uses the technique of going back and forth in time which keeps the interest of the reader built in.

Amitav Ghosh ends with a fervent plea for developing a World, not merely states or nations. He emphasizes that the people of Warring nations often are as similar as mirror images of each other and the difference is merely a “Shadow”, an illusion and fantasy. He desperately hopes to find place where there is no border between oneself and one’s image in the mirror”. Only this can help in facilitating unity amongst people of one nation and then lead to World peace. The novel has multiple themes, and nationalism is merely one of the diverse themes of the novel. In each theme Amitav Ghose introduces and develops in this novel is unique and is a must read for all those who desire to bring about a change in the World scenario.

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College Politics in M.V. Rama Sarma's *Farewell Party*

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Prof. M. V. Rama Sarma, in the productive period of the development of his sensibility and intellect, came under the spell of the values generated by the freedom movement and acquired passionate idealism and intellectual commitment, and what is almost unmatched in the academic environment, a catholicity of outlook and breadth of vision which endeared him to his students over the many decades. A debater at heart, Rama Sarma was attracted towards Shavian ideas and set out to the United Kingdom with that zeal, but as destiny ordained it, he obtained his Ph.D from the University of Wales on Milton, whose unreachable dispose of highest wisdom he has explored with unremitting energy and steadfast devotion for nearly half a century now. His writings on Milton, pursued consistently and with a sense of vocation, have earned international recognition for him for their analysis of the intricacies of Miltonic thought and for their display of a rich Indian sensibility at work.

The Farewell Party is Rama Sarma's second novel. It was published in the year 1971. The novel presents the guest of professor Prakasam and his realization on the flow of perception mode of narration. The technique of the novel is based on Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.

At first sight *The Farewell Party* appears like a simple 'campus novel' or a kaleidoscopic reverie of recollections of an impressive professor on the particular day of his retirement. It also appears as if it is one of those novels, which portray the experiences of an ideal teacher like James Hilton's *Good Bye Mr. Chips* or E.R. Braithwaite's *To Sir*

with Love which give a detailed description of a loyalist teacher's triumphant struggle with himself and his pupils and his ultimate success in not only winning the students' hearts but also in changing their minds.

However a close study of *The Farewell Party* will make it incontestably clear that it effortlessly proceeds from the author's depth of vision and his mature skill and technique. The novel, *The Farewell Party*, throws significant insight on various facets like the profession of teaching, the changing role of a teacher, the effects of caste system on society, the freedom movement, the state of India after independence, the human angles in life, etc. It also touches upon the various themes of synthesis of the cultures of the East and the West, the ill-effects of war, etc. But a closer study of the novel reveals that college politics is prioritized at every stage in the novel.

The novel *The Farewell Party* revolves round the varied experiences in Prakasam's career as a teaching faculty. He started his carrier as a lecturer when he was twenty-four years old. The plot of the novel is woven completely around Prof. Prakasam's career from the beginning to the end. Sarala, one of the students of his first batches is impressed by him and marries him. The managing body was of the opinion that the professor was damaging the reputation of the institution by marrying his student. Thus politics enter into colleges and a notice of dismissal is served on him. His immediate response was that he shifts on to Hyderabad along with wife Sarala and starts a new life there. After three years of their stay together there, he gets a state scholarship to go to Oxford for higher studies. After studying for two years at Oxford he comes back to Hyderabad and joins New College.

There also he has to suffer mental agony because of his straight behavior. College politics disturbs him a lot. He does not get professorship until the then principal retires. To his great surprise his colleague Gupta supersedes him. Prakasam gets upset by the teacher-politician of the changing world and also the commercialization of teaching. He mentally feels that the human values have been touching the lowest level in those days. He was emotional and couldn't bear the injustice posed on him. However, he could console himself as there were a few positive factors in his life too. His only son Manohar was in the Indian Foreign service and his daughter Lalita was married to an IAS officer.

Finally vexed with all materialistic personalities and college politics, he resigns and joins a new rural university in Srikakulam. There he derives peace and contentment from the tranquil environment in the lap of nature on the fresh new campus. He works there for five years and though he has the provision to continue, he decides to retire at the normal age of sixty and to involve himself in philosophic and spiritual attainment and to serve the society as a philanthropist.

The novel discusses various themes, out of which the theme which concerns the campus novel is the ethical deterioration among the faculty in educational institutions. Here, faculty includes even the principal. The novel elaborately presents the duties of a teacher, methods of teaching, the profession of teaching in addition to the attitudes and behaviors of the professors. College being a miniature society it has to mould the students and make them proper citizens. But the protagonist Dr. Prakasam could not find such friendly congenial atmosphere there.

He was an upright teacher and he had chosen the profession of teaching, out of passion for it. His views about the profession of teaching and the duties of a teacher are discussed elaborately in the novel. At this point it is appropriate to refer to some of the interesting views of the great professor from the novel. The professor “....strongly felt that at the undergraduate level a teacher’s foremost duty was to get the student interested in his subject”.

Many of his colleagues differed from him on this point and felt that it would not be serious teaching. For this, Prakasam reply was that “...a good teacher could well fulfill both the objectives. He could make his lectures interesting as well as scholarly”. His opinion was that once the students got interested in the subject, at the postgraduate level, the students can be as learned and scholarly as possible.

It is hinted at the point that a good teacher must feel proud and satisfied looking at his students flourish both intellectually and spiritually. This is called all-round development of the student. To accomplish this ultimate goal is the only objective of establishing colleges and other educational institutions. Teachers like Mr. Prakasham consider students as their wealth. Mrs. Prakasam echoes his views- “It’s a great opportunity given to a teacher to shape and mould the future generations.”

But it is totally disappointing for Mr. Prakasham when he witnesses the teacher-politician entering the sphere of teaching. Power-politics had gained a high-hand not only over the administration of the college and universities but also over the lives of teachers. The dawn of commercialization of education is also hinted upon here. “The teacher-politician had entered the arena. Teaching was no longer a noble profession. It was getting commercialized.”

Characterization and the art of narrative technique used in the novel: There are many characters in this novel. But the entire story revolves round the protagonist Mr. Prakasam. *The Farewell Party* depicts how the individual's self perfection gets shifted from the physical plane to the intellectual plane with the tools of tolerance and detachment and how it establishes a healthy relationship with the society.

The theme of tolerance as one finds in Prakasam in *The Farewell Party* is another dimension of awareness to establish harmony and peace among the disjointed groups. Prakasam's tolerance and detachment serve as the life boat for him to reach his destination of self-perfection. When these two aspects of tolerance and detachment are properly blended together, it will earn the individual a permanent and lasting victory in the realm of marriage.

“Professor Prakasam was a thinker and finally a dreamer while his wife Sarala was a realist. He was a utopian, she was practical minded. The difference in nature did not produce any conflicting results; on the other hand supplemented one another”. Thus their love for one another increased with their years as they faced the storm and stress of life together. Their life is certainly a successful story. The tolerance of Prakasam has taken its fuller dimension only when it is made to interact with social beings, and in a sense this tolerance is one of the phases of the social consciousness to maintain a balanced relationship with the society to which he belongs. Even though the theme of tolerance has its seeds of growth in the individual consciousness its resultant success is not the individual's practice of it in personal life but in the practice of the same in the social plane.

In practicing this as a correct mental attitude he does not rise in revolt to root out evil from the phase of his campus community nor accept the same in total silence. This is because of Prakasam's humanism at the pragmatic level. He sees Sundaram, his colleague,

being deliberately treated as a kind of underdog on account of Suri's evil influence on the Machiavellian Principal Gupta. It is Prakasam who has found out in Sundaram certain brighter patches which are enough for a teacher to handle undergraduate classes. He takes up the task of getting some fair deal for Sundaram all in human terms. The theme of detachment is reflected through Professor Prakasam who is not expecting any material gain but at the same time wants to be useful to the society.

Professor Rama Sarma's narrative technique in *The Farewell Party* is in a way similar to that of Thomas Hardy. As a novelist his primary obligation lies in the presentation of something readable. But along with this he feels the purposefulness of his art is not a cheap entertainment or a didactic treatise. His selection of art strikes a middle path in between these extremes i.e., entertainment and moral preaching. Therefore in his novels there are some implied suggestions or message to make the reader comprehend a vision of life "The Farewell Party" is a recollection of the life of Prof. Prakasan. He occupies himself in cherishing those memorable days. All these recollections are due to the three letters he receives on the day of his retirement. His thinking is activated by the dialogue between him and his wife and the flash back technique of storytelling continues in its full vigour.

The entire portrayal of the novel about the corrupt contemporary academic atmosphere is realistic in a sense that the writer focuses his attention on not only the sick academic order like the "divide and rule oriented administrator, a faculty divided by notions of first class, second class and third class, besides the divisions of Ph.D.'s and non Ph.D's and the student body eager to learn and willing to co-operate on the slightest show of warmth but left hungry and unfed and hence indulging in mischief" but also suggests its remedy by its side in the human form that is Prakasam", a rare and dedicated teacher.

There by introducing the theme of the co-existence of good and evil. The profession was losing its sanctity. Some youngsters were entering the profession with mercenary thoughts. They were dissatisfied very soon because they did not possess "the spirit of service demanded by this profession."

As he author writes that in the changing world, ".....unfortunately the misfits got into it as a last resort. Some of them stepped in accidentally" such teachers had neither love for learning, not

love for students. They did not care whether the students listened to them attentively or just tolerated them for an hour. The pay was their main consideration but it was unfortunately not very lucrative.

It is said that there is not much possibility of going wrong in the profession of teaching. But in recent times, corruption has crept into the field of education and much ethical degradation is being witnessed. Even jealousy rules over most of the faculty. Many examples illustrating these have been given in the novel.

Sastry was one such teacher, for whom money was the only known God. For him the institution of private tuitions was a sacred one and he almost ran a school in his house. He always thought in terms of monetary benefits and used to argue that a poor lecturer would have been nowhere if not for the tuitions. His strategy was well organized. He would first spot out the rich students and would endear himself to them by tolerating all the lapses on their part. He called and flattered them and then hinted upon his tuitions. “It was often thought that he would get his private students pass. He approached the other examiners with a list of numbers and obliged them in return”.

One can observe how even in this noble profession, people can bring in corruption. It is ironical that the faculty themselves are instrumental in the mitigation of the sanctity of examinations. About tuitions Prakasam felt, it encouraged idlers to be more idle and stupid boys to be stupider. It killed initiative.

Thus, in this novel the theme of exploitation is found in the social behavior of academicians like Shastry, Sekhar and Ramesam. Shastry knows the weakness of his ward. Sekhar knows the weakness of the educational system. Ramesam knows the weakness of his colleagues. But none comes forward to rectify the sick and corrupt academic order. They never realize the importance of their holding such a responsible position that offers them ample scope to show the future generation the right path. Instead they all make the best out of the existing order by means of remaining themselves ‘blind mouths’ showing special care and attention for their personal gains and comforts at the cost of moral and social responsibility.

Rama Sarma, the hardened teacher, speaks through *The Farewell Party* to an extent where Rama Sarma the scholar seems inseparable from Rama Sarma the teacher. For this man who believed in the importance of simultaneity of twin pursuits of teaching and

research, all the insights communicated in the class room are carefully embedded in his work and vice versa.

To be frank, Prof. Rama Sarma is found everywhere in Dr. Prakasam. The ending of the novel speaks volumes that Dr. Prakasam is a successful teacher to the core. When his student Mohan was leaving, “Mrs. Prakasam looked at the teacher and the student leaving the house and slowly murmured ‘Professors are lovable’”

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Daniel

(A Poem)

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Obscurity of origin stands no bar to nobility.
Babylon, the glory of Kingdoms, symbolises Nimrod's pride
To such premier city of the pre-Christian world
Daniel, a conspicuous seer of noble descent
Carried was he captive from the Holy land.
Having renounced royal dainties
Unspoiled was he by the cult of comfort
Adieu, he bade, to Epicure.
Never wandered into God-forbidden paths
Blessed with bestowal of unspeakable accolades
Meteoric rise is his to matchless fame.
God's prophetic mouth piece
Marvellous success crowned his efforts
In such epoch, Nebuchadnezzar, a mighty monarch
Swayed the sceptre of a universal dominion.
Drunk with pride, he had dreams Daniel interpreted
Pride gone and humility restored
Lent his ear to divine commands with wisdom dawned on.
Belshazzar burst upon the stage at a profane feast
Feared neither god nor man

Abominable is his sacrilegious use of holy vessels
In the midst of the drunken orgy started toasting heathen deities.
 Appeared on the plaster of royal palace
Incomprehensible inscription Daniel alone could decipher
 That mysterious message spelled the king's doom
Found was he less when weighed in divine balances
 Incurred he the Lord's eschatological fury.
Darius, the Mede of royal stock bathed in Belshazzar's blood.
 The greater the faith the greater the trial
Defiance of Darius' decree lands Daniel in lion's den
 Decree engineered by envious satraps.
 The Lord's angel shut the lion's mouth
 Faith is the harbinger of hope.
 The deeper the faith the greater the grace
Guarded his godliness till he breathed his last
 Proverbial are his faith and piety.

The Divine Abode

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Amidst the dark and deep woods,
Darkened by thickly grown trees,
Seen a thorn covered way,
Hardly a path, we can say.

Swirling and whirling was the wind,
Covering the path with mud and sand;
One cannot be sure of the next step,
If one is not sure of oneself.

Alas! Wandering in this maze,
Was a man with heavenly grace;
Neither can he reach his destination,
Nor liked he, the human co-operation.

Without agonizing even at this juncture,
He delved deep into himself - his soul;
Burning in his charismatic soul bright,
Found the bewitching celestial light.

Miles it radiated its fine and pure rays,
Mingled with His Divinely Grace;
Now the man saw his path clearly,

Continued his strenuous journey cheerfully.

Obstacles may come on his way,
But nothing can make him sway;
For him faith in Almighty God,
Made him to reach His Abode.

Acid Test

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A flower soft, bright hued,
Single, vibrant and happy
A shining sole star in the
Face of the gleaming sky
A bird free and light winged
Bound by no known limits
I, the flower, the star and the bird
Smiled, danced and shone
With all my might and happiness of a child
Bloomed to adulthood, no, womanhood
With the pride of being a woman
Grown intense with the show of love
The chaste love of dreams
The dreams which were not near real
No rewind choice in the path of life
To change things I wanted to change
The child in me, the girlish innocence,
The soft gentle womanhood all scathed
Charred to death by masculinity
The happiness of my life effaced by a hand
A hand which rewrote my destiny
By a mind which misread the woman in me
Failed to feel the essence of a girl
Which took the life away from my life
Now, I'm a burnt flower,
A fallen star, no longer shining
A dead bird with broken wings
Whether to be or not to be
I ask of me of late,
Because I just exist in the memory of
My glorious past

But with a new found will
I continue to live with a phoenix heart
Now stronger than before, Man,
You can't take away anything more from me,
I'm made of a sterner stuff
My beauty, I realized, lies within...

Hudhut

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It had been four days since the devastating cyclonic storm Hudhut had hit the coastal city, Visakapattanam. The beauty of the city was gone. Nearly every concrete structure in the city was unspared. Trees were uprooted in the streets and on the road sides that lay dead like soldiers in a medieval battlefield. Electric poles were dislocated and wires were snapped. Huge hoardings were found twisted or blown to pieces or the ripped off part hanging down like bats. People living in flats were in shock and dismay. They could not believe that such a storm had hit this city and make life near standstill.

Along with the uprooted trees and electric poles, people's lives had collapsed. The NGOs, elders' forums of the city and the government officials and workers hurried to make new plans as they scavenged, infusing with new confidence. Broken window panes, doors, sign boards of shops, twisted electric poles, crushed roofs, headless toys and photographs inside ordinary houses came out of the rubble as souvenir of the crashed past. Stories about the storm, the wind, and the noise had rented the air, now belonged to a pantheon of retrieved objects. The rich had survived, the middle class complained and the ordinary bemoaned the loss. All of them had tried to weave a new fabric of meaningful life once again. Stories weighed heavy as the dead of the ordinary human beings and innocent animals bore little resemblance to what they had seen in life.

I travelled in a car and made my way on the broken road. After travelling a certain distance, my car could not make its way. The road was ripped off, making a deep crevice of the gushing rain water to flow. It looked like a tiny stream, over which a bridge was needed for the vehicles on either sides to pass. Streams of stranded vehicles bore the witness of tragedy.

There was nothing one could do; people were helpless. The sky was still overcast, the trail of catastrophe that the storm bore had

given a different look for the painters and poets. I told the driver to rest. Opening the door, I walked along the ridges of the fields to see the brunt for myself.

There sat an old woman on a rock on an elevated mound. She was safe there, she must have thought. The fury of the storm was gone, but the fury of the woman stayed.

On approaching, she sighted me but she remained motionless. There were none around her except the headless coconut trees, standing like obelisks. First I mistook her for a keeper of the fields. But the fields were filled with water. Or a solitary grazer of cattle! But there were none. I wondered why this woman was sitting alone on a rock on a raised mound.

“Have you come here to help me out form this destruction?” She asked me in curiosity mixed with doubt.

“No... but ...” I was rather defeated by her asking. After a while I said, “I don’t belong to the helping group. I am taking a walk around to take a look at the destruction after the storm. My car is stranded there due to the breaking of the road.”

Nevertheless I took interest in her plight as he seemed to be lonely there. She was not excited at my answer. Neither had she smiled.

“Why have you come here? Have you come here to see us dying?” I was put to shame by these questions to which I did not answer. I kept silent and she resumed in spite of it.

“I don’t want to live any more. I want to die. Do I have a duty to live in this world?” She asked what if someone had been living to die not like a soldier in the battle field. I told myself.

“No one has visited us so far. I am left with my dying old husband in my half swept hut. Do you want to see?”

“Yes.” I said unhesitantly.

Rising hardly, she tried to stand. I helped her lending my hand. Holding my left arm she rose and we made our way in the slushy ground. I followed her simply without transpiring.

“I don’t know who you are.” She said. I had not thought such

an encounter filled with misery.

We reached her hut that was totally submerged in a pool of muddy water. Other huts scarcely stood in water. The thatched door was half opened.

Leading me into it in knee deep water, I found an old man lay almost literally motionless on a floating cot. On the half opened door hung a small faded framed picture and a broken mirror on the other side of the wall made of mud. Right next to it was a wooden stand on which were found a dusted comb, small bottle of oil and a small brown plastic box.

Pointing at him, she said, “He is my husband, the only survivor. He is stricken with fever. We have no medicine. We have no food for two nights. We are drinking this water.” My own visual senses were fogged with such an encounter. I did not know what to speak. Neither had she paused. Even in that feeble condition, she was talking of her story.

“Do we have a duty to live in this world in this condition?” It was a good question but very difficult to answer. A deep desire to live, but not an obligation. A deep desire to stay but at the same time want to die. It was not possible for me to answer her question without taking a sledgehammer to my beliefs and wake out of it with dignified honour.

I did not ask any question but she spoke, just random facts. She seemed to have assumed the role of an interlocutor between her damaged hamlet and an unlikely outsider like me.

“My two daughters were swept by the current. I suppose. They haven’t returned to the hut since they left home a week ago. Nature has consumed them. The only son had a water bury. We are old. All our hopes have been shattered. I don’t know why God has wreaked vengeance on us. We haven’t done anything to God.” She paused. She was completely shattered. She wanted to pour her tears, but she was completely drained.

“God is a distant figure for me now. There is no temple for me. It is not salvation, it is an escape. I cannot sing, we are just waiting to die. We are clinging on to life tenaciously. Many have died of fever. Some have escaped the fury of water. No one has come to help us.”

She went quiet and cold. She collapsed in the water. Her husband seeing the plight half raised his emaciated body and like a thud fell on the cot that sank almost in the water. Notwithstanding the horrible sight, I ran away spluttering in the muddy water.

In the end, I began a long disingenuous sermon on hope: How cruel living is and how violent hope is. I had the visions of her crying for help but I had no guts to help her.

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