



# Literary Vibes

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A Refereed National Journal in English Studies  
(Bi-Annual)

Volume II, Issue II  
July 2013

ISSN 2320 – 6896

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# Editorial

The impact of the agitation against the division of the State of Andhra Pradesh delayed the release of this issue. We regret the inconvenience caused.

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.

We place on record our deepest sense of gratitude to Prof. W. Rajendra, Honorable Vice-Chancellor, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, for releasing our Journal with the impress of ISSN.





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**Cultural Identity in George Lamming with special reference to  
“*In the Castle of My Skin*”**

**- S. Venkateswaran & Jayashree Chetan**

Post-modern literary theories have given rise to a different yardstick and have set different parameters for analysing works of literature. One such theory is the theory related to culture studies. The proponents of cultural studies include Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall. Hoggart gave importance to the reading of everyday working class life, customs and habits as though they were literary texts. Cultural theorists focussed on the reading of any piece of literature in relation to the life style of the protagonist in the work and analysing the way in which the characters in the piece of work resisted their assigned social roles to rituals of dress dance and music. The resistance in the words of a well-known critic gave birth to what are called ‘sub-cultures’ which are symbolic of resistance to the pressures of living in an established society, in particular the capitalistic societies.

Sub-culture, they believe is a kind of distinctive norm within a larger social group. The sub-culture process begins with a crime against the natural order or through a deviation which ends in the construction of a style in a gesture of defence which also signals a refusal. Raymond Williams stresses on lived actuality or on what he calls ‘social experience in solution’. William’s concern is a relationship between elements in a whole way of life and any attempt to study the culture of an organisation or a society is discovering the nature of the organization – the relationship between the patterns that exists in the organization.

In this background, this paper attempts to identify the cultural nuances as portrayed in the novel ‘*In the Castle of my skin*’ The novel has been considered as a classic narrative of the black colonial experience wherein the writer juxtaposes the undeveloped, unencumbered life of a small Caribbean Island with the materialism and anxiety of the Twentieth Century. Autobiographical in approach, Lamming interprets through the eyes of a young boy the experiences of colonial education, class tensions and natural disaster.

West Indian Literature has come of its age since its beginning with the islands getting their freedom and independence. Literature that

was since then highlighting the need to be free, after independence focussed on expressing the Post Colonial conflicts in all genres. Caribbean literature in English began portraying the legacy of Colonialism and that became the centre of the thematic concerns of the works of all writers in the West Indian context. They have indicated many times that British Colonialism had created a fragmented society torn between its desire to emulate the mother country and their need to establish an independent existence.

The Caribbean novel, in particular, facilitated the national consciousness and challenged the Anglo-centric ideologies of colonial educators and cultural practices and it articulated the voice of the West Indian society and its community. The culture of the Caribbean has its colour from the black power movement in the Caribbean. This movement contributed to the forging of the sense of national consciousness and identity for the blacks and helped it to emerge as the dominant group in the Caribbean. Even when the islands became free, the impact of European Colonization was so severe that it wiped out the population and other ethnic communities, native culture and they were forced into their 'Diaspora'. Consequently the Caribbean experience became synonymous with Diaspora and exile. It has since then been a struggle wherein the histories of the different islands and the Caribbean identity in the context of Post colonial era jostling for space in accommodating each other. The literary world then had to portray the up rootedness of the native culture. This has since then been the objective of all writers. That is, the portrayal of the up rootedness of the native culture and identity crisis confronted as a result of the Diaspora environment.

The Caribbean community, as V.S. Naipaul says has been a dislocated one. Living in a borrowed culture, the West Indian, more than most needs writers to tell him who he is, where he stands. The most significant feature of West Indian life since emancipation has been its sense of rootlessness and of not belonging to the landscape. The problem of and for West Indian artists and intellectuals is that having been born and educated within this fragmented culture. They start out in the world without a sense of wholeness. In this borrowed culture, the writer is not only trying to reclaim his/her own history. He also needs

to do so for other lost histories. The emergence of a Caribbean literary tradition is thus an attempt at decolonising the culture and people from the literal and the literary colonisation of the Britishers. It is also an enterprise to reclaim and forge alternative cultural traditions for a people who were forced into their Diasporas. The writers who are involved in their project of cultural decolonisation and they started exposing and opposing the Colonial education.

Commenting on the overarching influence of colonial education, George Lamming writes in *The Occasion for speaking*: “The West Indians’ education was imported in much the same way that flour and butter was imported from Canada. Since the cultural negotiation was strictly between England and the natives and England had acquired somehow the divine right to organise the natives’ reading, it is to be expected that England’s’ export of literature would be English. And the further back in time England went for these treasures, the safer was the English commodity. So the examinations, which would determine the Trinidadians future in the civil service imposed Shakespeare and Wordsworth, and other names...How in the name of Heavens could a colonial Native within a strict curriculum...how could he ever get out from under this ancient mausoleum of historic achievement...”(254-255). In this observation one can notice Lamming’s voice of indignant protest and strident criticism of the control exercised by colonial education.

Like any other writer from the Caribbean land, the legacy of colonialism is at the centre of the thematic concerns of the works of George Lamming. Lamming has indicated many times that British Colonialism had created a fragmented society torn between its desire to emulate the mother country and their need to establish an independent existence. The cruelty that the Caribbean’s experienced has been without violence, according to Lamming, but it was a different kind of subjugation. It was a terror of the mind.... a daily exercise in self mutilation; black versus black in a battle for self improvement which invariably resulted in a fractured consciousness, a deep slip in its sensibility which raised difficult problems of language and values, the whole issue of cultural allegiance between imposed norms of white power represented by a small minority and the fragmented memory of

the African masses between white instruction and black imagination. In other words Lamming is trying to highlight in his works, the conflict within created by the external force. In the process, Lamming's objective has been to present a Caribbean vision for the world which has a universal qualification or acceptance. The need to him has been a movement dedicated to transforming the world into a place more humane and hospitable which seems to be possible only through a mutual fight for emancipation. The divisions of class, race, gender, sexual orientation and nationality can be overcome only through such a fight and thus, to establish a global community. Lamming's attempt in his novels is focussed on restoring the lives of the poor to a proper order of attention and to make their reality the supreme concern of the total society.

Lamming, in all his works grapples with issues that his country confronts with. His subject has been development of West Indian society. He seeks to give an imaginative insight into the growth of West Indian sensibility and through that to offer an interpretation of West Indian history. And this history of the West consists of a series of journeys explored by Lamming both as metaphors and as historical facts. *In the Castle of my Skin* is a re-creation of the world that came into being as a result of the first journey. It re-creates the childhood hopes and dreams of a poor West Indian boy with great tenderness and at the same time it traces the destruction of a village community and the emergence of a village community and the emergence of a new black middle class. 'The Emigrants' by Lamming looks at the meaning of a journey to England which was undertaken by thousands of West Indians during the 1950's. The book explores a clash between the idea of England and the reality as it was experienced by the emigrants. 'In the Castle of my Skin', at the centre is the growing of four peasant boys on a small Caribbean Island, but the theme of change and growth embraces an entire colonial society as it develops from dependence upon a decaying land owning family through labour unrest and social uncertainty towards political awareness and independence. In poverty and parochialism, with Empire-day, school parades, punctuating revivalist meetings, the boys nevertheless enjoy a pristine freedom as they amuse themselves on the beach, unravel in confused argument the life around them, steal into the grounds of the big house at night and

behold wonders: “Never ever”, said Boy Blue. “‘Tis like a next world, the musician’ the drink an’ all that, an’ particular the way they hold on to one another”. “‘Tis like a Christmas”, Trumper said.’ In biblical cadences the old people comment wisely and stoically upon the mutability overtaking them, while the boys and the community as a whole are shown clearly, often lyrically, undergoing inevitable, natural metamorphosis. A vanishing way of life is sympathetically recorded, without sentimentality, what is replacing it greeted with nervous expectation.

To George Lamming, the West Indian novel was one of the important tools that facilitated the rise of national consciousness and challenge the Anglo centric ideologies of colonial educational and cultural practices. The West Indian novelist articulated the voices of the West Indian society and its community. The West Indian writer always tries to highlight the notions of a separate and specific tradition, relationship between writer and society, themes of alienation and isolated individual, displacement and dislocation, the unhoused and unaccommodated individuals, the pre occupation with the landscape validating the local, the rewriting of his stories as a largely real tradition.

As an important representative of the West Indian literature, Lamming who is a product of the highest contemporary education portrays an agitated world and this world is not the arbitrary world born of civilization. In Lamming one can find whole world and for him the world is a whole. In such a world, everything is related to everything else. “To him there is no such thing as absolute freedom; freedom is ecstasy and bliss, and he means to be part of a whole to be receptive to the breath of the world.” (Gunter, 78)

Lamming who has fought against suppression and colonialism and for the political social freedom of his people is a rebel and yet a nationalist.

Nationalism is not only frenzy and struggle for the destruction of those forces which condemn you to the status we call colonial. The National spirit is deeper than that. It is the private feeling you experience of possessing and being possessed by the whole landscape

of the place where you were born., the freedom which helps you to recognise the rhythms of the winds, the silence and aroma of the night, rocks, water....the temper of the sea and the mornings arousing nature everywhere in the silent and sacred commission between you and the roots you have made in the island....and the freedom you sing....freedom... (Lamming; *Of Age and Innocence*)

The basis of African culture is the dance. Lamming has described the happiness and freedom of the dance thus:

‘There was only the body which was the dance itself, regulated, informed, nourished and dictated not only by its blood, but by some pervasive, measureless source of being that was its own logic of receptivity and transmission, a world that could be defined only through the presence of others, yet remained in its definition absolute, free, itself the body was part of the source of its being and at the same time, it’s being. It was within and outside itself simultaneously. Free, yet subject to the compulsion of its freedom, it strained beyond the limit of its resources’ (*The Emigrants*, 1954)

Lamming’s theme is of extra ordinary simplicity: it is the West Indies and England, black and white.

At the centre of ‘In the Castle of my Skin’ (1953) for instance, is the growing up of four peasant boys on a small Caribbean Island, but the theme of change and growth embraces the entire colonial society, as it develops from dependence upon a decaying, land-owning family through labour unrest and social uncertainty towards political awareness and independence. The novel is a recreation of the world that came into being as a result of the first journey. It recreates the childhood hopes and dreams of a poor West Indian boy with great tenderness and also it traces the gradual destruction of a village community and the emergence of a new black middleclass. The world present in the novel is a mythical, biblical, legendary world without a sense of history- on the one side the feudal landlords on the other side the black people who own nothing but fairy tales and the biblical hope.

Like children under the threat of hell fire they accepted instinctively that the others, meaning the white, were superior. This world of the others imagined perfection hung like a dead weight over

their energy. If the low down nigger people weren't what they are, the others couldn't say anything about us suspicion, distrust, hostility...

Every Caribbean, 'My people, the Negro race', he says had to emigrate to discover himself. In other words the self discovery is the object of mankind in Africa, says Lamming. The same is conveyed in his *The Emigrants*. The West Indian seeks his fortune in the West. He knows no hatred against the White. England is his hope. The coloured West Indian seeks love and understanding. He works for his identity. It depicts the epic journey of a group of West Indians who emigrate to Great Britain in the 1950's in search of educational opportunities unattainable at home. Seeking to redefine themselves in the "mother country", an idealised landscape that they have been taught to revere, the emigrants settle uncomfortably in England's industrial cities. Within two years, ghettoization is firmly in place. The emigrants discover the meaning of their marginality in the British Empire in an environment that is unexpectedly hostile and strange. For some, alienation prompts a new sense of community, a new sense of identity as West Indians. For others, alienation leads to a crisis of confrontation with the law and fugitive status.

'Lamming in all his works describes an historical world that is fixed in space and time and he has action' says Gunther. In all his works the present and the past overlap. One can find in the works of the writer, critic and novelist in the African Diaspora, the significant aspects of Colonialism, post Colonialism and other matters vitally important and our comprehension of the worlds in which we live. We can see everything well linked and connected. In his modern London there is a space in which everything is linked and where a separate individual cannot exist. There is a co existence of different cultures and as a result they find a new community emerging wherein the different cultures melt to form a new world human culture that is appealing and highly accommodative and compromising for the existence of a universal culture and thus a social environment where there is no crisis of identity or a feeling of alienation or marginalization and strains of tension. Even in this, the attempt is not just to redefine one's existence or oneself but a 'Universal Self' that can find space in any society or environment. This, in short seems to be the objective of Lamming, a cultural

ambassador to create a homogeneous ‘universal culture’ that does not attempt to fragment societies however differing they are. As Chinua Achebe, in his *The Novelist as Teacher* observes the objectives of a writer, is to help his society regain its belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self denigration. Lamming has his goal clear and to a large extent, succeeds in realising his goal through his plots and protagonists in his novels. Yet, in his journey to understand the human being, Lamming was always striving to reflect and interpret the anxieties and aspirations of a Caribbean sensibility at home and abroad – true to his nationalist spirit – but one can also find in him a search for a society that is free of racial discrimination accommodating ethnical diversities and attempting for a cultural synthesis leading to a way for understanding the universal self with the Caribbean as cultural cradle remaining the centre for seeing and depicting the world. As E.M.Forster would work for ‘Only Connect’, Lamming also works through a culture specific context to understand the relationship between human beings – both those natives in exile and the other. It is thus a reinvention of Caribbean spirit, landscape and a human situation with its creative resources.

A Caribbean consciousness needs to be the universal consciousness and it aims to restore the lives for the poor to a proper order of attention: to make his reality the supreme concern of the total society – the building of such a society seems to be the motive of all Lamming’s works.

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**Haunting Hungers: A Study of Bhabani Bhattacharya's  
*So Many Hungers!***

**- B. Bala Nagendra Prasad & M. A. K. Sukumar**

*So Many Hungers!* was published in October 1947, soon after India achieved independence. But, it covers the war years with their uncertainties, agonies, cruelties, and frustrations. The fusion of the traditional and modern values is the most conspicuous feature of Bhattacharya's writings. As K.R. Chandrasekharan observes, "With his progressive ideas and his vision of a glorious future, he has also great admiration for the spiritual and cultural heritage of the country. Like the great men whom he admired, particularly Tagore and Gandhi, he is also a builder of bridges between the present and past."

As to how he became a novelist, Bhabani Bhattacharya recalls, "The great famine swept down upon Bengal. The emotional strings I felt (more than two million men, women and children died of slow starvation amid a man-made scarcity) where a sheer compulsion to creativity. The result was the novel *So Many Hungers!*." The novel unfolds the story of hunger that killed two million men, women and children in Bengal. In fact, Bhattacharya succeeded in weaving "motifs of different types of hunger into a thematic fabric in order to reassert a positive faith in the basic human values. Hunger becomes a symbol depicting man in the midst of things, man set upon by things, man confused and facing that inner real self whose existence perhaps he never felt sure of. In this novel, the motif of hunger becomes the central metaphor."

The central theme of *So Many Hungers!* is the twin hunger for food and for freedom. The plot of the novel consists of two strands - the story of the young scientist Rahoul and his family, and that of the peasant girl Kajoli and her family. The story of Rahoul exemplifies the theme of hunger for freedom and the story of Kajoli exemplifies the theme of hunger for food. The two families live far apart. Rahoul's family in Calcutta and Kajoli's in a small village called Baroni. As G.S. Balarama Gupta points out, "*So Many Hungers!* is woven around the happenings in the lives of Rahoul and Kajoli and their families and these are meant to highlight and vivify the crushing effects of the cataclysmic consequences of the horrendous famine stalking the length

and breadth of the country.”

The fight of man against hunger produces two types of images – man at his noblest and at his worst as well. A destitute fights with a dog to take control of the leftovers in a dustbin. He defeats the lesser animal outside for the sake of the animal inside him, i.e. the hunger. In the words of the writer, “Destitutes and dogs in those days often fought for possession of the rich city’s ten thousand rubbish-heaps, in which scraps of rotting food lay buried. It was not every time that the destitute won, routing the dogs on the streets and the dog within themselves.”

The poor people and the peasants of Bengal take for granted that the famine is imposed on them by God. It is their fate that has made them repent for their past sins. But the fact is that hoarders and the marketers stored the food grains for a huge profit. This fact is made through the character of Samarendra Basu in the novel. Though he is a lawyer by profession, he belongs to the vicious circle that causes the mass human tragedy in the story. His trading company called ‘Cheap Rice Limited’ tempts small farmers to sell both their stock of rice and the unharvest crops, to store the rice safely in some places, so that the absence of rice in the market increases its price. Thus the famine is entirely man-made.

Rahoul, Samarendra Basu’s elder son is the opposite pole of his father. He is a great intellectual and a B.Sc. from Cambridge. Through Rahoul, the novelist expresses:

“The empty stomach was due to no blight of nature, no failure of crops Rahoul knew. It was man-made scarcity, for the harvest had been fair, and even if the Army bought up big stocks, with rationing at the right level there could be food for all. But there was no rationing”. (SMH, p.105)

*So Many Hungers!* chiefly focuses on man’s great hunger for food. Bhabani Bhattacharya artistically portrays this hunger as a main theme in two of his novels. As Dr. C. Paul Verghese rightly remarks, “Food is the primary requisite of human dignity; hunger debases and dehumanizes man. That is why hunger is the theme of a large number of Indo-Anglian novels. Bhattacharya has dealt quite forcefully with the theme of hunger and the concomitant theme of human degradation in

his novels *So Many Hungers!* and *He who Rides a Tiger*.”

The families in the villages suffer a lot due to the famine. They have no work to do and no food to eat. Bhabani Bhattacharya portrays the desperate condition of people through the story of Kajoli and her family. The living condition of these peasants worsens. They are reduced to the level of mere destitute searching for food in the City. Bhattacharya is at his best when he depicts the plight of the ruined peasants, their exodus to the City and their abject misery and degradation. He writes:

“A myriad vultures gazed down upon the countryside....corpses lay by the road, huddling together. Picked to the bone; only the hair uneaten-fluffy baby’s hair, man’s hair, the waist-long hair of women. A family group had sunk into sleep, and beyond the sleep were vultures. (SMH, p.137)

In the villages, people have nothing to eat, not even the roots of a plant. So thousands of people abandon their homes and start flowing to the big city of Calcutta, with lots of hope. The innocent villagers are in the wrong notion that the people of City are generous that they will feed the village folk. Their journey is described as:

“Streams of desperate men ventured out of their ancestral homes in search of food hanging on the foot boards of railway trains, riding on the sun-baked roofs. The police threw up barrier. Then the men trekked the meadows and roads ten thousand village streams following city wards.” (SMH, p.111)

The irony is that the city, where these people migrate, has been fully dependent on the countryside for food grains. The city has only consumed the food products of the villagers. The City is also affected by the scarcity of food grains. The Second World War has brought a calamity over the land. The following description in the novel shows hunger in the big city:

“He had died for lack of food, so it was reported, and the brief news flashed past almost unnoticed. A mere beggar.

No one of them felt that he was a premonition, a symbolic shape of things to come. Other men sank down and died.” (SMH, p.104-105)

The Novelist portrays a realistic picture of hunger by collecting the details from the newspapers. In the City, the horrible scenes are common place things; the mothers kill their own children for want of milk and food; the hungry infants are seen sucking the breast of their dead mothers; the mothers sell their daughters and even send to brothels for the sake of food and pregnant women die before they give birth to their babies. Malta Grover observes:

“Bhattacharya has portrayed the image of hunger on an epic scale in his first novel, *So Many Hungers!*, by focusing our attention on the story of a peasant family, and comparing and contrasting it with the story of an urban family living in Calcutta.”

Regarding the condition of common Indian peasants, Bhattacharya is moved by this miserable plight. They are reduced to utter poverty by the exploitative policies of the alien Government. Vulture-eaten corpses keep company of famished humanity, who move towards Calcutta in the hope of getting food. They see jackals eating hungry people lying unconscious, because of hunger. While giving a general picture of hunger all over Bengal, Bhattacharya particularizes it by showing the plight of Kajoli, Onu and their mother. Kajoli, a pregnant and hungry would go out with her mother to hunt for roots, which are boiled, salted and eaten, being difficult to digest. It is this unbearable hunger that drives Kajoli to eat the entire bread which the soldier gives her, without thinking for a minute about her mother and brother. She eats eagerly unaware of the indecent behavior of soldier; the result is her painful abortion. Like Kajoli, there are millions of peasants who groan due to unbearable hunger.

There are free kitchens run by public charity, yet thousands of poor folk die every day. Due to prolonged starvation, many people are not fit to solid food and need a special diet and glucose. So when they take the ordinary food, they die. The irony is that many die of the excitement, which they cannot bear, at the sight of food at free kitchens

in Calcutta. In this novel there is a pathetic incident of an old man, who died while watching food being served in the free kitchen.

The destitute in the City have to find out banana skins in the pile to eat. They eagerly approach the garbage for food. The peels of vegetables, rotten vegetables are the food for these folk. Some of them catch and eat even rats. They have to face heavy competition even for the dustbins. Often they fight among themselves like animals. Kajoli's brother Onu describes the awkward situation to his mother:

“Those garbage cans they are out food-bowls, Mother we pick out of them before the City's Scavenger folk come with their vans. Sometimes we pick at night – less competition. I saw two men fighting like animals over a dust-bin. It happened yesterday.” (SMH, p.162)

The unhealthy food habits result in Dysentery, among the destitute. The destitutes feel that it is good for them. Because they will be taken to sick hospital, nursed and given food. The sick-hospitals are already full with patients; hence many of them are left to their fate. People hurt by bombs during those days are promptly taken to hospitals, but nobody bothers about those who are hurt terribly by hunger. When a soldier gives half a rupee to Onu, he is excited and thought of buying cheap meals. But later he changes his mind and buys flowers for the Goddess. He prays:

“Mother I only ask this much; let a Japanese bomb hurt me, Mother. Then the motor-wagon with one red stripe down and another across will come and pick me up and take me to sick-hospital. They will give me an iron bed to lie on Mother, and a clean piece of cloth to put on, and may be a blanket to wrap myself in against cold, and food – all the rice I can eat, Mother.” (SMH, p.190)

Thus the poignancy of hunger is reflected more in the cry of a destitute boy, who wishes to get hurt in a Japanese bomb attack. Hunger makes human beings inhuman. Destitutes often fight with animals for the leaving in the garbage dumps. The theme of hunger for food is presented, not in fragments, but in its wholeness. Bhabani Bhattacharya not only describes the horrible scenes of famine in Bengal, but also

reflects its physical and moral aspects. The novelist assesses the overall impact of the famine, taking into account its physical as well as moral aspect. Through Rahoul, the novelist reflects the physical side of the famine:

“Death would claim two millions, perhaps there millions more would escape by the skin of their teeth, but they would never be strong again, especially the children and the rickety babies who had so little success, who had been exposed much to sun and rain.” (SMH, p.181)

The novelist brings out the inner degradation of the human souls as a result of hunger for food. Kajoli’s brother Onu has grown under the idealism of Devata. He is a noble and innocent young boy who is free from selfishness. He is in the habit of sharing even his best possessions with his friends. But hunger has degraded him. The novelist writes:

“Selfishness had been alien to his nature. He had always loved to share his best gifts with his friends. But hunger had debased his warm, innocent spirit. He had become a hoarder. He hoarded for himself and his sister and mother the wild green figs on tree-tops which none but he could reach.” (SMH, p.114-115)

Bhattacharya, in his novels describes many incidents which portray the moral implications of human hunger for food. Hunger makes the human beings put aside their affection, at the sight of food. When a soldier has given some bread to Kajoli, she forgets about her mother and brother for a moment. Only after she has finished eating, she feels very sad thinking about her mother and brother. There is another instance of depravity and degradation caused by hunger. A destitute woman gets some handful of rice after a day’s hard work. When at sunset she lights fire and is about to take rice with her three children, a hungry man seizes rice from her and runs away. There is another pathetic picture of a woman, who sat on the pavement, eating eagerly from a bowl, while her famished child sat near her and gazed.

As realistic novelist, Bhattacharya portrays both sides of the hunger-stricken people. The one side of them is their inner degradation,

while the other side is the moral uprightness. He has faith in the goodness of mankind. Shyam M. Asnani points out:

“Bhattacharya as a novelist always strives to portray the innate goodness of man. This is not so because he is a rationalist or a utopian, but because he gives an evidence of his acute awareness of the history of mankind and his unflinching faith in the essential richness and nobility of the human soul.”

The old mother of Kajoli is an embodiment of compassion, unselfishness, strength and hope. Once she comes across a young mother burying her child, though the child is alive. When she comes to know that the young mother has no milk in her breast for her dying child, she gives her cow, Mangala, which is their only asset. She not only gives her cow to save her and her infant life but also gives encouragement and hope.

Onu, Kajoli's younger brother, struggles hard to feed his mother and sister by plucking figs on the top of the tree. Though he first collects figs only for his family, he later realises the sorrow of his friends. He determines to collect a lot of figs so as to save his and his friend's blood relations. He is ready to share his secret treasure which he only could reach. He says to his friend, “Everyday we'll go halves, bhai, halves that tree has plenty left.” (SMH, p.116)

There is an act of self-sacrifice, when a big boy shares the jam tin with Onu after fighting with a hungry dog. This is the other side of the moral aspect of hunger. R. S. Singh says, “In *So Many Hungers!* no hunger is satisfied but the human spirit's sanctity, richness and beauty are fully vindicated.” The title of the novel reveals that there are many types of hungers apart from hunger for food. K K Sharma rightly points out, “*So Many Hungers!*, Bhattacharya's first novel is primarily devoted to man's hunger for food, though it also closely analyses man's other urges. It is a story not only about so many types of human hunger.” Though, in this novel the hunger for food and political freedom dominate, there are other hungers like hunger for money, for sex, for ethical values, hunger for social prestige, titles, riches and prosperity and hunger for self-respect.



G. S. Balarama Gupta observes, “*So Many Hungers!* has for its theme hungers – so many of them- both benign and maleficent. First there is the hunger as it is commonly understood, the hunger for food.... then, there is hunger for power which means enormous bloodshed, agony and exploitation... the third variety is the hunger for freedom and the 1942 Quit India Movement provides the novel with yet another thread of its plot.”

*So Many Hungers!* also focuses on man’s hunger for money and titles. This is illustrated by the life of Samarendra Basu and Abalabandhu. Samarendra Basu is an embodiment of man’s quest for money and titles. He has accumulated wealth and land by his black-market business. He never minds feeding on the sufferings of human beings. Ashok K. R. Bachchan points out:

“Bhabani Bhattacharya uses the device of contrast to highlight the problem of hunger. He presents the contrasting scenes of hunger for food and hunger for wealth simultaneously. Kajoli, Onu, their mother and the dispossessed suffer from hunger for food. On the other hand, Sri Abalabandhu and Samarendra Basu suffer from unquenching lust for wealth.”

The novelist portrays another type of hunger, the hunger for sex in the novel. This hunger spoils the life of Kajoli in the image of a soldier. The soldier who lives away from his family craves for sex in a moment of weakness. He rapes the pregnant girl Kajoli and causes a painful abortion. He satisfies his hunger for sex after satisfying Kajoli’s hunger for food.

In the great City, this hunger for sex is the cause for brothel business. During the famine, many young girls from the countryside move to City to satisfy their hunger for food by satisfying the sexual hunger of the rich. Sri Abalabandhu is a curious character obsessed by sex. Apart from this, there are many basic hungers which govern the lives of men and women. Bhattacharya throws light on these through Kishore and Kajoli in this novel. Kishore expresses his view that the man has several hungers like hunger for food, social status and hunger for family life. Kajoli strives to have a home for herself and her family.

But throughout her life this hunger is not fulfilled. That remains an unfulfilled till the end of the novel. In this way, Bhattacharya analyses the theme of hunger from gender point of view.

The hunger strike, the self-imposed hunger, is another type of hunger stated in the novel. Under the impact of Gandhi, many freedom fighters use ‘hunger strike’ as a powerful weapon to achieve freedom. While millions of people face starvation in Bengal, patriots resort to hunger strike, fast unto death. It is this news that changed Kajoli’s mind at the last moment and saves her from an immoral act.

The last three paragraphs of the novel present the greatness and richness of life. Rahoul, who has witnessed the endless miseries of the famished people, reaches prison thronged with people beaming with exultation:

“There was no defeat in the voices, but a secret, excited triumph.... Listening, Rahoul began to lose his sadness, for in that instant he saw past the clouds of pain – he saw the horizon of the east illuminated by a new dawn. Freedom could not drop from the skies, nor be asked from lands beyond the seas; but there, in the vast swamp of suffering and struggle, would it break into blown, growing out of the seeds of the spirit... And strong exultation burned in his eyes and a strange intense look of conquest kindled in his face as he gave his voice to the united voices, The more they tighten the chains, the more the chains loosen!” (SMH, p.204-205)

On the whole, Bhabani Bhattacharya has analyzed impact of Bengal Famine from all angles in *So Many Hungers!* deeper than his other novels. As Harish Raizada observes, "Bhabani Bhattacharya's first novel, *So Many Hungers!* (1947) is one of the first pieces of creative writing born out of the agonized torment of body and spirit endured by the sacred soil of Bengal during the hideous famine years and the early stages of the Second World War."

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## **An Analysis of the Theme of Escape from Hierarchical Supremacy in Black Vernacular Tales**

**- M. Anish Alfred Vaz**

The black vernacular tales were necessarily carried into the new land (America) from Africa and allowed the enslaved Blacks to reminisce their days in their homeland. Through these tales they could also share coded messages among them in a language that was incomprehensible to their white masters. The black vernacular folk tales include trickster tales, fables, plantation tales, slave narratives etc. In the trickster tales, various animals such as the rabbit, fox, bear, wolf, turtle etc. are used to denote the characteristics of the people amongst whom the Blacks lived. Of all the animals, the favourite one for the Blacks was the rabbit which is projected as using guile and wit to trick its enemies. In these tales, the rabbit invariably escapes from its enemies by being subtle. The blacks derived pleasure in telling such tales which showed the weaker animal outsmarting and outthinking the stronger ones. Their actions and means of escaping may not be moral, but, given the helpless situation in which they are, the means to escape mattered very little.

An analysis of the black folktales in the vernacular, especially the trickster tales, reveals the desire of the Black community to escape hierarchical supremacy enjoyed by different sections of the society over them. The blacks, generally, sought to escape from the hierarchical supremacy enjoyed by Whites who acted as masters and the black women had to seek the same against black men who enjoyed such status in the social hierarchy. This paper analyses the different means sought to escape such hierarchical supremacy.

### **Rebellion as a means to escape**

Instead of lamenting one's misery rebel against the tormenters is one idea propagated in the folk tales. For instance, in the tale, *Why Dogs Always Chase the Rabbits*, the whites are said to have settled with hounds and these hounds trouble the rabbit. The play says, "What pestered old rabbit more than all the rest was the white man's dog. It wasn't like the Indian dogs. It was...hound dogs...." ("Why Dogs Always" 10)

These hounds hunted all day and howled all night thereby, causing trouble round the clock. The black community attacks the whites as being troublesome and cruel all throughout. While many of the natives leave fearing these Whites and their hounds, the rabbit teams up with the squirrel to fight against them. Here rebellion is suggested as the means to escape torture rather than running away. In the end, the rabbit convinces a hunter to kill the troublesome hound dog . The weaker animal plots the killing of the stronger one and the rabbit, en route, escapes from the hierarchical superiority held by the hound.

In another tale titled, *Compair lapin and the little man of tar*, the rabbit competes with the lion. The lion, generally considered the king of the beasts, is challenged by the wily rabbit. Rebellion is again projected as the means to escape hierarchical superiority. The tale begins with the idea that God created all animals unique and distinct and not inferior or superior.

“God ordered them not to eat each other, nor to destroy each other...and it pained him when they killed each other.” (“Compare Lapin” 33)

God instead asks all animals to eat the same food: grass and fruits. If God asks all animals to eat the same food, they predominantly were meant to be equal. Thus the blacks, no doubt sought to reinforce the idea that God created all equal. So, equality was created by God and hierarchy was created by man. In this tale, the animals refuse to obey the creator, instead, start eating each other. Animals like the bear and the tiger ask the rabbit to submit because it was comparatively weak. The picture of the rabbit being taken bound reminds the readers the deportation of the blacks in fetters from Africa to the new land. Even when chained, the rabbit says, “I have not lost all hope” (“Compare Lapin” 36). In this tale too, the rabbit lies to the lion and having the fox for its ally, escapes. Such escapes may not be justifiable or believable, but no one could prevent the blacks from causing the weaker rabbit to escape. Cunningness and deception is the means of escaping hierarchical supremacy. En route to his escape, the rabbit rebels against dominance and government and resists all claims of superiority by the stronger ones.

## Material prosperity as a means to escape

Another tale often included in a black folktale collection is the tale of *Clever Jack*. As the title suggests, Jack the central character by being clever outwits the king. Jack a poor man tries to equal the king in status, if not replace him. He does so by trying to accumulate much wealth. The tale introduces Jack as a very poor man, a condition reminiscent of the blacks in America. While some accept it as their lot, Jack thinks otherwise and decides to become rich. In a country where the blacks were denied education, freedom of expression and recognition, the chances of accumulating wealth was always minimal. But, at least in their stories, they could make their weak heroes wealthy. The vernacular folktales often portray their weaker character accumulating wealth by unjust means. It is to be noted that, the blacks were not bothered of telling tales that showcased moral values. Moral principles, at times, mattered little while living in a ruthless society. The aim of the tale bearers was to tell subtly that they were not inferior to the Whites. To equate themselves with their more dominant masters who are placed at the top of hierarchy, attaining material prosperity is seen as one of the ways.

Instead of crying over his misery, Jack turns situations around. He starts out as a poor man and then is subjected by the king of the country (referring to Whites) to occupations such as herdsman (cattle keeper) and gardener. Trickery is once again the central concept in this tale. By constantly fooling the king, the poor Jack becomes rich. He makes wealth out of both the occupations. Such renditions of stories were meant to encourage the Blacks to change situations into their favour and not wait for changes to take place automatically. As the story progresses, the king attempts to get rid of Jack by killing him. Again, “Clever” Jack escapes. In the end, he returns from Europe mocking at the king’s verdict which read, “...I don’t ever want to catch your feet on my land anymore” (“Clever Jack” 53). He comes riding on a chariot similar to that of the king. His feet do not touch the ground, instead, he returns having increased his status and thereby implying he has reached a higher ground similar to that of the king.

A similar case of confronting a king of a nation is seen in the tale called *Jean Sotte*. Jean Sotte, the main character is described as a

fool. The tale says:

“He was so simple that everyone made fun of him. He would light the lamp in the daytime, and put it out at night.” (“Jean Sotte” 54)

He is immediately identified with the weak black man who was considered intellectually weak and foolish. The king summons him to his court so that he can amuse his courtiers. Often the blacks were used as objects of amusement and entertainment by the whites. To satisfy the whites, blacks even had to undergo lynching. This tale therefore identifies blacks with the foolish Jean Sotte. But as the tale progresses, the king says, “I believe that you are not so foolish as you want to make people believe.” (P.55, African American Folktales) This implies that the Blacks though perceived to be fools, in reality, are not fools but had enough wisdom to confront the Whites. Jean Sotte does outsmart the king by answering his riddle. He moreover throws a riddle to the king who boasts, he knows everything in the world. The White men’s attitude that they are superior in wisdom is frowned upon here. In the end, Jean Sotte gets the king’s daughter for a wife, his kingdom and all of his fortune. He thus equals the king by possessing the wealth of the king. Material prosperity gives elevates his status. In the end, Jean Sotte’s name is changed to Jean l’Esprit. From being John the fool he is accepted and addressed as John the spirited.

*The Son Who Sought His Fortune* is another Black Vernacular tale in which, the youngest son of a king leaves his father’s kingdom in search of fortune. The king finds all his three sons to be smart and finally decides to hand the kingdom over to his eldest son who enjoys the hierarchical supremacy. Instead of wallowing in disappointment, the youngest son breaks free from the family and travels to distant foreign lands. Finally, he settles in a country where, with the help of a wise man (conjurer), he marries the daughter of that country’s king. He gathers much wealth, marries the princess and thereby becomes the heir to the throne of that country. The son, though deprived of kingship in his native country, by means of finding fortune and fame equals himself to his elder brother who is the king in his homeland.

Most of the tales that talk of financial prosperity as a means to

escape supremacy have the central character escaping or displacing himself to a foreign land. It is in this foreign country that their fortunes are changed and they rewrite their destiny. As much as it is important to talk about the physical escape, so much is it important to concentrate on the shackles these character wanted to free themselves from. The main idea of mentioning these characters finding fortune in foreign lands could be to motivate the Blacks to find their fortunes in the foreign country they are in. They wanted to escape from the hierarchical supremacy that at times seemed unjust and inexplicable. How could the colour of the skin, the gender, the profession or the age of a person decide supremacy? Why should it be a norm that the weaker should serve the stronger when the weaker ones have their own strengths? What is the basis for categorizing the weaker and stronger ones? Such questions are raised in these tales.

### **Wisdom as a means to escape**

In the tale *Why Women Always Take Advantage of Men* the interesting case of the status of black women is discussed. While universally, women are given a lower status than that of men, the black women feel more deprived because of two-fold subjugation: as a black and as a woman. In the social hierarchy, men seem to be placed higher than women, and consequently, husbands enjoy hierarchical supremacy over wives. It may be argued, God designed it that way. But this tale, goes back to the very same story of creation where God forms Adam and later brings Eve as a helper to him. The author tailors this story to his convenience to illustrate his point. In this tale, God says, he created both man and woman equal.

“Way back in them days de woman was just as strong as de man and both of ‘em did de same things.” (“Why Women” 111)

After creating them, the Lord puts them in a beautiful garden in which there is a house. The trouble begins there. When the woman asks man to fix the stove while she hangs the curtain, he refuses. This results in a scuffle in which, neither of them wins because God has created them equal. Following this, the woman starts howling and blabbering which terribly upsets man. He is not able to do so. He thus



approaches God for a solution. God makes him more muscular and stronger. He thus uses his prowess to show himself as the boss in the house. In turn, Eve following the counsel of the devil obtains the keys for the kitchen and bedroom from God. Now she alone can open them. She thus gets man to cut wood and patch the roof to open both these rooms. The story, though funny, suggests that Man's supremacy was earned (from God) while woman's supremacy stealthily obtained (through devil's counsel). Though intimidated by man, the woman still finds a way to dethrone him. By holding the keys of the kitchen and the bedroom, the woman establishes her supremacy at home and thereby sends man to find supremacy in the world outside. Moreover, the woman also gets the man to use his physical prowess to complete certain manual labors instead of employing it against her. All these are achieved by being smart and wise in spite of her limitations. Her wisdom helps her escape from the hierarchical supremacy that men have and therefore avoid domination.

The story of *Sis 'Coon Shows Brother 'Coon Who's the Boss* again talks of power in social relationships like the one between a husband and a wife. Brother Coon and Sister Coon are described as poor, industrious people who leave for work early in the morning. While they leave their children at home and go for work, Brother Bear comes and eats up all their victuals. When Sister Coon decides to stay at home the next day and watch with the axe for the bear, Brother Coon orders her to go to work. He says, "Ain't you my wife? Well, you do like I tell you." ("Sis 'Coon" 103) Brother Coon tries to establish the hierarchical supremacy husband has over his wife. Sister Coon obliges to her husband, only to return home that day and find that Brother Coon too was so scared of the bear that he had fled the place allowing the bear eat off their victuals that day too. The next day, in spite of her fear, Sister Coon obliges to the orders of Brother Coon to stay home to tackle Brother Bear. Brother Bear comes and knocks the door. Sister Coon opens it and immediately splits his head open with her axe. The story ends with the following lines:

"And after that, Brother 'Coon don't order Miss 'Coon around these days, but from that day on Brother 'Coon he done been a plum henpecked man." ("Sis 'Coon"

103)

This fable suggests that solutions for problems at home could be provided by women rather than man and this ability gives her supremacy over her husband at home. Like the case in *De ways of de Wimmens*, men are asked to find supremacy in the world outside rather than at home.

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**Man-Woman Relationship in Shobha De's  
Second Thoughts : A Physical point of view**

**- Pratik A. Dave**

There are many types of relationships exist between man and woman in this world since the inception of the human civilization. Literature reflects its proof. Shobha De has delineated the man woman relationship, which she has been in knowledge. She has been a bachelor in the psychology and she started her career as a journalist in the film magazines which provided her an opportunity to peep into the reality existing beneath the façade of sophistication, snobbery, cant, sham and sheer materialistic values of the tinsel world of the film industry and she herself had been a model and therefore she has the first hand knowledge of the exploitation and sexploitation women has to undergo for their existence in the glittering world. Shobha De has projected the man woman relationship of the elitist class in her fiction.

Th. H. Van De Velde, the Director of the Gynecological Clinic at Haarlem writes in his very well received book 'Ideal Marriage- Its Physiology and Technique' about the four corner stones of the temple of love and happiness in marriage are:

- (1) A right choice of marriage partner.
- (2) A good psychological attitude of the partners, both to the world in general and to each other.
- (3) A solution of the problem of parentage, which meets the wishes of both partners.
- (4) A vigorous and harmonious sex life.

Scheffer also states, "Marriage is at once a concession and a demand. But if it is to thrive, there must be constant thought for the other partner!" It is also 'Perhaps the strongest educative factor in the whole school of life, and like all schools, Life is no idle game.' A woman is generally suffers more acutely than her partner from weariness, satiety, ennui and the resultant alienation. Vatsyayana has classified Man Woman which is also purely on the basis of the physical aspect of man's and woman's respective body to achieve maximum height of purely supreme physical sexual pleasures which is also a science in itself. Dr. Th. H. Van De Velde's book is based on his gynaec's experiences whereas Vatsyayana's is based only on his

deepest thinking on Man and Woman relationships. Since olden times when the first person Vishnu Bhagwan shew this world beautiful and expressed deep desire to be just as in the West the first couple of the world Adam tasted the forbidden Apple and thus enjoyed sex with Eve and from that date Man and Woman sexual relationship created the greatest revolution in the minds of Man and Woman, and in today's times it rules supreme among man and woman at world at large is also a science on experimental basis only because according to the classification of the most suitable couples according to Vatsyayana are as under according to the size of Men and Women reproductive organs.

Man- Rabbit, Bullock and Horse.

Woman- Dear, Mare and Cow elephant.

The formation of ideal couples are Rabbit and Dear, Bullock and Mare and Cow-Elephant with Horse.

Vatsyayana has given ideal classification of Man and Woman but he has not shown the way to find out the best and the most suitable match. In the same way Dr. Th. H. Van De Velde has not been able to find out the clue to unite ideal Man and Woman union that is why the problem of VISAMRAT – (Imperfect man woman relation) has been pervaded among the men and women through out the world. Vatsyayana has formed six types of unequal man woman reproductive organs and they are: Rabbit with Mare or Cow Elephant; Horse with Deer and Mare, Bullock with Deer and or Cow Elephant. All these are awkward couples and this has been disrupting the marriages since time immemorial. Dr. Van De Velde in his part 1 chapter 1 under sub title “Preliminary. Marriage, Actual and Ideal” notes in the very beginning as under:

“I show you here the way to Ideal Marriage. You know the honeymoon of rapture. It is all too short, and soon you decline into that morass of disillusion and depression, which is all you know of marriage. But the bridal honeymoon should blossom into the perfect flower of ideal marriage. May this book help you to attain such happiness?”

He has noted on the first page “Marriage-in Christian civilization at least-’ is often a failure. On that point there can be no manner of doubt. It can be the gate of an earthly Eden, but it is in actual fact, often a hell of torment.”

It is often said or believed that in the themes or at the back of the characters its creator as, he or she wished, supports his or her favourite characters in the mould of the themes' sequences, scenes and situations so as for in this study, there is an attempt to fathom whether Shobha De has been at the back of her favorite characters. This is because all sorts of themes and their characters male/female have the befitting classifications according to both Vatsyayana and Balzac's motto "Marriage is a Science" quoted by Dr. Van De Velde in his world famous book 'Ideal Marriage'. But above all this, there is another classification of characters which is quite different from above both- i.e. Vatsyayana and Balzac's) and it may be termed as No.1 divine classification, that is MALE and FEMALE heart to heart- mind to mind rapport and relation only in which no physical kind of pleasure, where as there is the second one is the mental and physical union of man and woman wherein they both become physically one and the third one is only unmatched physical unions only which are quite close to Vatsyayana's and that of Balzac's mismatched unions as he considered marriage as a science and science needs thorough research and at times there remains a fault/defect in research, where as this research relates to human body, mind and soul of the characters as explained in foregoing paragraphs of this chapter. In short, Vatsyayana's classifications of man and woman, of which three sorts of unions, he considers supreme and the other six sorts of unions he account as misfits. All these couples are matched for achieving maximum physical sexual pleasure no more no less. But Vatsyayana has not given the exact clue as to how to find Rabbit, Bull or Horse sorts of masculine gender and their matching of counterpart female gender.

In the same way Dr. Van De Velde, though he is a gynecologist in the modern science of female physique scientist, has also not given any scientific way to find or make proper matching unions of male and female so that they could achieve equal sexual culmination so as to make the couple's every day life and activities with new zeal and interest. Yet this sort of union will be only physical if at all suitable equal match is accidentally met with, else neither mind nor heart will be involved in the sex play.

Dr. Velde's analysis of man woman relationship is quite suitable to De's man and woman characters and this analysis also befits

The classifications shown by Vatsyayana. Average man performs his 'conjugal duties' regularly and with physiological satisfaction to himself and if his female partner does not remain satisfied, she constantly remains in the state of suspended gratification. This is applicable to both the partners. If either is remained unsatisfied, he/she terms the other as sexually frigid. In De's novels, the male and female characters do not know the 'delicate differentiations and modifications of sexual pleasure' and such characters divert their attention outside his/ her home. The average male female characters of De do not know his/ her sexual sensations and culmination. They do not know how to awaken each other 'with delicate consideration and adaptation.' This is what Vatsyayana mentions in his 'Kamasutra' that the equilibrium tilts in the marriage is due to different sizes of their sexual organs. The ideal groupings are Rabbit and Dear, Bullock and Mare and Cow-Elephant with Horse, but De's male and female characters never find their permanent perfect sized partner and it leads them to end 'in real debauchery in consequence!'

There are two types of feminist authors. One, who rebuilds the past questioning the misinterpreted and distorted cultural history. But the feminist author of this group does not challenge the concepts of reality, which existed in the patriarchal dominance. They fearlessly probe into the question of subordination and liberation of woman in the Indian context. Their female characters display a new sensibility and sensitivity, which enables them to protest against the strict patriarchal dominance. This group of feminist authors wants re-interpretation of Indian social and cultural history and they have made bold initiation in feminism in Indian English fiction.

The second group of feminist authors is more fierce, vocal and violent. This group also demands total liberation from the male domination and want to re-write the female discourse. They hate the male oriented standards of art, culture and history. This group has attacked on the seduction and betrayal of patriarchal system of thought. Compared to this second group, the authors of the first group are rational and preserve decorum maintaining the aesthetic taboos. The second group acts as revolutionary against law and order. Shobha De openly criticizes the conventional concepts of morality and decency, which prevail in the patriarchal social order.

Shobha De's fiction in general and 'Second Thoughts' in particular shows, as it seems, man and woman do not become one in marriage, but they remain partners. Economic independence, adultery and unbridled passions make men and women frustrated. Shefalee Vasudev backs this analysis in her 'The Outlook-Cfore survey' on 'Forbidden Sex', where she interviewed with ten to twelve male whores in Delhi and Mumbai, where she found that 'It is an invisible story which is familiar but not really. It's about desire and sexual passion. About frustration and need. Sex and money.... Of women who find neither sex nor intimacy in marriages.' The male prostitutes told Shefalee that 'Everybody, men or women, wants sex, massage is just a bahana (excuse). Many of my clients are women whose husbands are always busy.' Even the figures of the survey lead us to believe that taboos of morality, fidelity and chastity have been changed enormously in the contemporary society. Let us look at some of the figures. 41% of women think sex and love are not connected; 92% respondents (Both men and women) admitted in Ahmedabad to having sex with their boss or his/her spouse because of sexual attraction; 31% women from Bangalore say they would like to try a threesome with a close friend plus husband or boyfriend. Th. H. Van De Velde's analysis quite befits here and it gives a solution to inconstancy and infidelity in marriage, which is quite similar to what Vatsyayana has mentioned in his "Kamasutra". Velde believes that a husband and wife must have sound knowledge of sexual relationship for ideal marriage. He states, in Chapter XVII titled as "Psychic, Emotional and Mental Hygiene", 'Physical sexual relationship, through sound knowledge and appropriate technique, are directed and developed so as to give permanent and complete satisfaction to both partners, to intensify their mutual love, and contribute to a life of lasting happiness together.' 'Lasting Happiness' means SAMRAT Sambandha - (perfect man woman relation) as per Vatsyayana's terminology. In addition to this, the following reasons are also responsible in the disturbed man woman relationship and it leads to breaking up of family.

The institution of marriage, however, is now on the verge of breaking up and the chief causes of the nuclear or breaking up families are (1) stressful lifestyles (2) Intolerance (3) fast pace of life (4) assertion of individual space (5) changing social morals (6) Inflated

ambitions (7) Sexual incompatibility (8) Insensitivity (9) Inequality (10) Temperamental Differences (11) Psychological tiredness (12) Communication Breakdown. Shefalee Vasudev and Anjali Doshi state, “Careers at the cost of family, independence instead of domestic harmony, inability to adjust with joint families and extramarital relationships have made many marriages fragile”. Further adds Mumbai marriage counsellor Rajan Bhonsle regarding the increase of 30% in the splitting of marriages among the young couples below 35 that “The people are more scared of losing jobs than relationships.” Sexual promiscuity, woman’s economic independence, woman’s awareness of education are also the reasons leading man woman separation as a couple. The ancient institution of marriage has been in the revolutionary stage and its values and importance are redefined in Shobha De’s fiction in general and ‘Second Thoughts’ in particular. Her fiction reflects that marriages have not been made in the heaven. The upper class- neo rich and ultra modern class women, who are highly educated (!), financially sound or independent, confident and assertive socialites, have redefined marriage. The place of conjugal fidelity has been taken by sexual freedom. Marriage has simply become a license to lead an adulterous or promiscuous life. Mutual or conjugal fidelity of husband and wife has been vanished due to educational awareness among women. Their sexual behaviour is according to their whim and will. Shobha De’s characters challenge the historical concept as mentioned by Alexander Walker, who states, “History proves that marriage is essential to the well being of human society, and that celibacy brings ruin upon states”.

‘Second Thoughts’ again projects female gender as revolutionary, self-assertive, dominant and a woman betraying her husband, when her desires are not fulfilled and hopes not cherished. This novel is apart from De’s earlier novels as instead of the galaxy of celebrities as De comes up with a heroine of the upper middle class and her middle class psychology. Marriage is always a fountain of joy and hamper of dreams for any girl. It always fascinates young girls about the freedom and curiosity they will render from their future husband and married life. When the young girls of 21st century fail to fulfill their long cherished dreams after their marriage, they seek their own ways to compensate the loss they have borne in their marital life. Same happens with Maya, a 23 years old Calcutta based, degree holder of Textile



designing, with her less fair complexion. Maya has two dreams in her life to settle in Bombay and to make her career as a Textile designer. Maya dreams to get away from her native place Calcutta and her family, as she has been a child reared by parents, who themselves have disturbed married life. Maya never gets emotional support at her home. At this juncture, marriage proposal with a USA educated, originally a 28 years old Bengali bank executive Ranjan Malik. For Maya, ‘marrying Ranjan was like marrying Bombay, and she thought she was the luckiest girl in the locality, who had bagged a foreign-educated Bombay based groom.’ But soon Maya realizes ‘desperation and deceit’ when she finds that her dreamy husband Ranjan dots on her mother too much. He authoritatively denies Maya to opt for a career asserting, ‘I am earning well enough to support a wife and family. I believe it is a woman’s duty to run a good home.’ Seeming and Being is the biggest problem, 21st century India faces. The victims of this problem are the career minded, energetic young population of India like Maya, who faces the harsh reality that even a foreign educated person clings to age old out dated norms and traditions when the matter is related to his own wife and family! Ranjan imposes a number of restrictions on Maya like she is not free to go out, STD phone is not allowed to her, even AC remains on till Ranjan is in the room. Maya comes to know that she has to affix herself in the frame her husband likes killing her own feelings and craving. She echoes, ‘There are certain rules. You have to abide by them whether you like them or not.’ Maya fails to receive physical satisfaction from Ranjan. Maya and Ranjan go to Mahabalewshwar for honeymoon, where Ranjan never shows his sex drives. Maya thinks in the bed, ‘I was happy enough with physical demonstrations of affection. I enjoyed being held, stroked, kissed. But I also knew this wasn’t at all what married life was meant to be.’ Once she asked Ranjan whether he had sexual relations with any woman before he married her. Ranjan replied miserably, ‘I tried., I tried, Maya. But It didn’t work.’ She never experiences orgasm in her one year of married life and she asks Ranjan about his lack in sexual urges. But Ranjan reacts very strongly, ‘what’s your problem? You are beginning to sound like some sort of a nymphomaniac. Are you that sex starved? Nothing else on your mind? How can sex be so important to anybody, I’ve never understood.’ After one year of their marriage, Maya asks Ranjan, ‘Let’s talk’. This

question stuns Ranjan and he quips, ‘Talk? What about? Wives should realise that when a man comes home, dead, tired, he needs a little peace in the house, not poor jokes’. Such frigidity of Ranjan drags Maya to cultivate a bond of friendship with Nikhil, a 19 years old son of Dipankar and Pushpa, senior bank colleague of Ranjan. This friendship sets a stage for Maya to taste the fruits- a married woman tastes from the first night of her marriage. Bombay bred Nikhil dislikes to call ‘Didi’ to Maya and asks her, ‘Should I call you ‘Didi’?’ Maya replies softly, ‘Call me whatever you feel comfortable with.’ From the very first meeting, Maya assesses Nikhil as “Nikhil was all I’d imagined Bombay’s young man to be- good looking, confident, sporty, cocky, flirtatious, lazy, spoilt and quite, quite irresistible.’. De has shown Maya’s disillusionment about her marital life with Ranjan through the difference between the two cities of Calcutta and Mumbai. In Calcutta, Maya can expect an alarmed crowd around the corpse, but in Mumbai, she finds hardly any one has time. Maya first time discloses her within to Nikhil, ‘The truth is, I wanted to get out of Calcutta. I was bored. I wanted adventure. Bombay had always fascinated me. When my uncle suggested this match, I agreed immediately. Not because I felt head over heels in love with Ranjan at our first meeting bit because I was keen to come here and become a part of this city.’ With Ranjan, Maya feels leading a routine life. Ranjan’s too much mother fixation adds to Maya’s worry. Nikhil’s likings of blue sarees become Maya’s likings too and she starts wearing blue sarees, the blue colour which she used to hate. Even Ranjan notices this change and comments, ‘You’re wearing so many blue sarees suddenly. I thought, you didn’t like blue. You’ve always told me that blue doesn’t suit you because of your dusky complexion.’ Ranjan seems a deeply religious man with a high moral sense of righteousness and truth. In some way he reminds her of her father. Maya is certain that her husband is virgin. She speaks, ‘I’d married a virgin.’ On the other hand Nikhil finds in Maya a lonely lady leading a limping married life. Nikhil gets an opportunity to bring Maya out of the iron bars and cemented walls when Ranjan goes to Delhi first time for a week. Nikhil takes Maya on his bike to show Bombay Chaupatti and first beer sips at Naaz cafe and then he asks Maya, ‘How do you like Bombay now- without your husband in it? Is it better or worse?’ Maya first time tears away the mask of happiness; she has been

wearing since five years and replies, 'For the first time since my arrival in your city, I felt like laughing, singing, enjoying the salty sea air on my face. I looked at the sky and felt happy. Each moment was precious and I'd probably never experience it again.' On the one side Maya feels herself betraying her husband and on the other hand she justifies her act brooding, 'Is it a sin to want to go out and breathe the air? I can only say that I was helpless and wanted to go out with you very desperately.' Nikhil exhorts Maya to 'stop pretending to be someone you want the world to believe you are.' Maya longs 'for the perfect romantic companion' and she gets in the form of Nikhil. One day Maya and Nikhil are alone as Ranjan has gone to attend to his mother who has a heart attack. Nikhil has come to celebrate his birthday. He kisses her lips to lips. Maya feels, 'it was a kiss that involved Nikhil's entire being. A kiss so focused, so complete....' Nikhil's touch makes Maya alive. She becomes ecstatic feeling Nikhil. 'Every bit of me was suddenly alive to the feel of Nikhil's lips, hands, arms, neck, chest, knees, legs. An unknown recklessness started to sweep over me. May be I was going crazy. I didn't want to think of consequences. I refused to assume responsibility. I really didn't care one way or the other. I felt free. Lunatic. Wonderful.' Nikhil and Maya enjoy sexual act at the fullest crescendo and during the act a door bell and telephone ring disturb them. But Nikhil tells her to ignore them and she meekly obeys Nikhil. 'Nikhil was inside me now. He'd accomplished it painlessly. Smoothly, gently. As I held him prisoner within my body. I felt an overwhelming sense of power. He was my captive...his very being deep inside a dark, silent, mysterious tunnel that led straight to my womb. I would keep him there at my will.....I wanted to swallow Nikhil completely.... Suck him into my womb inch by inch. I wanted, oh, so desperately to make him mine, make him me.' Ranjan returns with his mother. Ranjan doubts watching the flowers which Nikhil brought. Maya lies that she brought them to cheer her ill mother-in-law. Nikhil's engagement is settled with Anshu, a Delhi based daughter of Pushpa Verma's old college friend. Maya cannot digest this news. She forgets her breath and the chicken soup boils over. The spilled liquid seems to Maya as 'thick, white, chalky mucous-like...so familiar.. or something I had seen before somewhere, not so long ago.' Maya shakes her body with mirth thinking if Nikhil has left her, so what, 'I knew I would have to make it

again from scratch. So what? I had all the time in the world now.’ Nikhil seems to be classified as ‘male prostitute’ or gigolo with a bit difference, who provides physical satisfaction to the unhappy wives of disturbed married lives. Nikhil has also maintained a diary with the information of the traveling times of working husbands and he always reaches in time to the houses of unsatisfied and dissatisfied wives. Maya is one such one night stand pass time for Nikhil. Maya’s all first thoughts shatter her hopes viz her first impression of Bombay on her first visit and her first reaction for Ranjan dreaming as her husband, but her second thoughts always provide her pleasure as is her case with Nikhil and even after Nikhil is wedded, she has already her third thoughts to find out other Nikhil as she has ‘all the time in the world now.’ Maya- Nikhil- Ranjan episode clearly indicate Vatsyayana was very much right in the selection of grouping. Here Maya and Ranjan are mismatched to each other so far as their harmonious and vigorous sexual life is concerned. Here Ranjan seems impotent and according to Vatsyayana’s analysis for the woman’s need for extra marital relations, the impotency is one of the reasons. Dr. Tapan Kumar Ghosh writes in his article ‘*No Second Thoughts About This One!*’ that ‘Maya, on her part, is just carried away by her own illusion. And that is why, during her sexual encounter with Nikhil, Maya doesn’t once open her eyes. She loves the illusion and clings to it, unwilling to break it.’ ‘I’m not quite sure if there is a D.H. Lawrence influence in the characterization of Ranjan- the archetypal Oedipus complex- I’d read ‘Son and Lovers’ when I was in college. But the Oedipus complex, which is a major force in the European context, assumes a distinctive character of its own in the Indian context. It takes on a different colour, shaped by our own social system. I have noticed that the Bengali and the Keralite mothers in particular, have tremendous control over their family lives. I feel that such a situation is very depressing and socially outrageous to any married woman.’

The study of Shobha De’s *Second Thoughts* focusses the physical view point can be summed up keeping in centre the above analysis of Vatsyayana, Dr. Velde, Kok Shastra and Vedic age that why Shobha De’s male and female characters- married and/or unmarried- undergo and entertain illicit, adulterous, pre, post and extra marital sexual relations because they ( her male and female characters) search

for the proper union of the matching couple. When Man Woman found 100% equal SANYOG (Accord), they should then be bounded in marriage and live a happy life, but her male and female characters fail to get a partner having 100 % SANYOG and SAMRAT union. Sexual satisfaction remains the pivot in the Man Woman relations, which is also backed in the Kok Shastra shlokas. Dr. Velde and Vatsyayana have also shown its prime importance in the human life and therefore Shobha De's characters making a search of the fittest partner through trial and error.

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**Understanding Native Resilience in Daniel David Moses's  
*Almighty Voice and His Wife***

**- K. Vishnu Divya**

The most exciting development in Native literatures during 1980s is the development of drama. During this period, within the realm of the theatre, there has been the emergence of Native literary movement. Native Canadian drama has inherited from the past the inclination to performance and participation. There were remarkable attempt by Duke Redbird, George Kenny and Nona Benedict in 1970s along with the emergence of Native performing groups during 1980s across Canada. Native Earth Performing Arts Co. of Toronto in 1982, Sen' Klip Native Theatre Company in Vernon in 1987, the Saskatoon Survival school, Awasikan theatre Inc. of Winnipeg, De-Bah-Jeh Theatre in West Bay on Manitoulin Island and Northern Delights Theatre in Sioux Lookout produced community based plays and have changed the very perception of Drama.

Unlike other literary representations, Native drama cannot be understood in isolation. It cannot be perceived as the creation of solitary individuals. It is a communal celebration both in performance and production. The entire community works cooperatively to fashion and shape the production. Theatrical productions comes out of collective effort rather than solitary endeavour. In many of the contemporary plays, members of the audience intervene in the play and decide the end of the play. Apparently, the inherent communal nature brings out the creative outlet and justifies the value of community to the diverse Indigenous cultures. Lauri Shannon Seidlitz in *Native Theatre for the Seventh Generation: On the Path to cultural healing* (1994) points out: "Many Native theatre Artists note that their choice of medium is well suited to the political goals inherent in reaching both their Native/Non Native audiences. The medium fits comfortably with their traditions, culture and ways of expression" (8-9). Geraldine Manossa and Floyd Fave Starr argue that Indigenous traditions are rooted in the Indigenous culture. Manossa in the article "The Beginning of Cree Performance Culture" says "a main distinction between contemporary Native performance and colonial western theatre is that the roots of contemporary Native performance can be traced to the lands of this

country” (Armand Garnet Ruffo. Ed. *(Ad) dressing Our Words: Aboriginal Perspectives on Aboriginal Literatures*. 2001). Examining the Native performance Favel Starr in the article “the Artificial Tree: Native Performance culture Research 1991-1996” claims: “ Native Performance Culture, could be described as developing practices of our ancestors. It came about not as a clearly formulated plan based on a clear vision, but as a feeling and intuition born out of personal, cultural and universal needs” ( Canadian Theatre Review 90. 1997. 83).

Opposing this view Monique Mojica and Ric Knowles in *Staging Coyote's Dream: An Anthology of First Nations Drama in English* (2003) write: “ Although performance has always been a fundamental aspect of First Nations cultures, drama and theatre as they are currently understood are European forms... the act of writing and staging ‘plays’ then, necessarily involves Native theatre artists in simultaneous activities of protection and translation; but this is why theatrical forms are so useful and necessary for contemporary First Nations artists” (v). It is understood though contemporary Indigenous theatre is different from traditional performances...it can still be compatible with Indigenous performance traditions. The quality of communal nature and the inherent intimacy are the reasons for the rapid development of theatre in Canada. The growth has developed into convergence and community professionalism. So the Natives have believed in the theatre and participated in it as if it is their way of life.

Natives have realized that theatre can be transformative and they can utilize to address their unresolved grief and trauma present in their lives. Elucidating this concern Philip Taylor in *Applied theatre: Creating Transformative Encounters in the Community* (2003) says that Applied theatre functions as a catalyst for healing. Native theatre is not intensely political nor is its focus on aesthetics. Its focus is more on healing and educational venues. The Indigenous conferences held to address the healing process feature community theatrical productions. The subjects of the most of the Native community theatres are consistently in relevance to the audience. So, most of the Native and Non-Native communities have believed in the transformative potential of theatre in advocating the issue of social justice.

The basic requirement for healing is to create consciousness to



understand the problems of Natives. Yvette Nolan in the article “A Revolution in Aboriginal Theatre: Our Own Stories” argues: “Healing can’t happen without understanding. Once there’s an understanding among the people themselves, like Aboriginal people doing Aboriginal theatre, then may be the white audience will get some understanding of people’s feelings, history and situations” ( Canadian Theatre Review. 66). Unless the settlers understand the damage caused by colonialism and the privileges they enjoy, they can’t be cured from the pathology of colonialism. The colonial agricultural policies that had devastated the lives of Natives have not become the subject of theatre. Daniel David Moses’s play *Almighty Voice and His Wife* deals with the profound negative impact of colonial agricultural policies on Natives. Obviously, the policies stand for the pragmatic approach of North America to rule the Natives. They have irrevocably altered the lives of the Natives. In *Almighty Voice and His Wife* Moses exposes the stupidity and irrelevance of agricultural policies applied to Natives as a result of the treaties they signed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He centers the play on a historical event and examines the worst outcome of colonial policies. The title *Almighty Voice* is the English translation of *kise-manito-wew*. This is the name of young Cree man who lived on the One Arrow reserve in central Saskatchewan. This is the site of 1885 resistance. In 1895, *Kise-manito-wew* killed a steer on the reserve to eat. According to the communal nature of Cree society, Kise-manito-wew is expected to share the meat with the other people of his community. From his perception, the steer belongs to him. Because, he believes in the perception that as per the terms of the treaties all the cattle given to the Natives become their property. The Colonial officials have often decreed that hunger among the Natives was not the reason for slaughtering the living animals. Believing that Kise-manito-wew had committed a crime by killing the steer, colonial officials order his arrest.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1895, Kise manito-wew was arrested by Sgt.colin.C. Colebrook and was incarcerated in the nearby town of Duck lake. Kise Manito-wew argued that the steer belonged to his father, not the government, but to no avail. The events that followed are considered as comedy of errors. One of the jailers in a funny conversation told Kise-manito-wew, that the construction taking place outside the jail was a scaffold for his execution. Failing to understand

the humour Kise-manito-wew escapes from the guard house. Escape from the custody is a prudent course of action met with execution by the colonial authorities. The North West Mounted Police claimed that they probably would have released Kise-Manito-wew the next day because of insufficient evidence. But this has not stopped them from capturing Kise – manito-wew. When Colebrook and tracker locate him, Kise –manito-wew after several warnings shoots and kills Colebrook. Kise –manito-wew believes that his act of killing is a mere self defence. This makes us understand that a tasteless joke sets in motion one of the biggest manhunts in Canadian history.

The escape of Kise-manito-wew becomes the national news and it invites the attention of the colonial regime in Ottawa. The secretary of the Govt. of Canada Sir Charles Tupper offers a \$500 reward for the apprehension and conviction of Kise-manito-wew. The description of Kise-manito-wew on the posters reveals the prevailing attitudes of the time: “He was described as young man of 22years of age, 5’10’ in height, of fair complexion, ‘slightly built and erect’ with ‘neat small feet and hands... wavy dark hair to shoulders, large dark eyes, broad forehead, sharp features, and parrot nose with flat tip, scar on left cheek running from mouth towards ear, feminine appearance”. This description connotes that his appearance is feminine and is suggestive of homosexuality. For two years Kise-manito-wew continually eluded the efforts of North West Mounted Police to recapture him. When the police found him near the One Arrow reserve along with his cousin, brother-in-law and two young men, the gun battle resulted into the death of officers and the postmaster from the Duck Lake. Finally it took an artillery team and hundreds of settlers to defeat Kise-manito-wew and kill him before his mother. This is all because of one dead steer. Daniel David Moses in the essay “How my Ghosts got Pale Faces” writes that “in the Cree communities of Saskatchewan, the story still has a life that’s almost mythical because Almighty voice ...became a symbol of resistance” (Simon J. Ortiz ed. 135). Agreeing with Moses’s perspective Robert Appleford in the article “The Desire to Crunch Bone: Daniel David Moses and the True Real Indian” says that Moses’s “work reflects a desire to fully explore the nature of such ‘wounds’ and dramatize the process through which people can begin to heal” (*Canadian Theatre Review*. 77).

For the creation of the play, Moses depends on his own historical research. But the play does not merely represent the historical events. In the first phase, Moses augments history with imagination. He makes the play into a kind of theatrical version of historiographical metafiction. He enables the audience to experience history from the perspective of Cree. He portrays Almighty Voice as an ordinary young man with his wife. He doesn't focus much on the historical representation of Almighty Voice with mythical significance. Robert Appleford contends that Moses frees the character with historical leanings and liberates it from the burden of romantic elegy. The Historical Almighty Voice was not a Christian. He is reported to have had four wives. But Native Women do not properly record their names and stories. In the absence of historical record, Moses creates an imagined wife and names her 'White Girl'. She addresses the audience directly: "I am the wife of Almighty Voice. You don't know my name. You don't even wonder if I have one. I'm only a crazy squaw" (20).

Through these characters, Moses brings in the human consideration to history and contests the accepted stereotypes of the silent, stoic warrior and the squaw drudge. The play begins with Almighty Voice courting the white girl. The Almighty Voice is in early twenties and the White Girl is only thirteen. The courting of the mythical warrior draws the sympathy of the liberal minded readers. But through her characterization, Moses proves that the White Girl is no naïve. She proves to be more than a match to Almighty Voice. As a reply to his courting, she sardonically replies: "I heard you the first time". She resists the sexual banter and innuendo of Almighty Voice and takes good care of herself. Almighty Voice speaks to White Girl's father to marry her and agrees to send his current wife Rump's daughter back to her father. Following the determination of Almighty voice, the White Girl quickly becomes his fourth wife and the mother to his son. On the whole, Moses makes White Girl as a formidable character.

The purpose for the creation of the White Girl is to endow his play with simple love interest. It is through the incomprehensible character of White Girl, Moses explores the rapid social and cultural transformation. He explores the reasons for encountering the rapid social transformation at the end of 19th century. White Girl is a fugitive

in one of the early schools and white dominated industrial schools. She is devoid of elders' advice from protecting herself from the loneliness and culture shock. But she was not a stranger to trauma as the Cree had experienced war with Dene, Blackfoot and Dakota. Accordingly, White Girl experiences severe emotional injuries related to the trauma experienced by her at residential schools. She displays the spiritual enslavement as her school officials' force her to convert to Christianity. Though she escapes the burden of White schooling, she finds it difficult to escape from the burden of White God. She believes that she is incurably 'crazy' but she smells no sign of Christian teachings. But fear effects every aspect of her life, including her relationship with her husband Almighty Voice. She tries her best to persuade him to fear the White man and the power of his God. Unable to follow Christianity as another belief system, White Girl accepts it as a truth and the Christian propaganda becomes her existing belief system. With all these influences, she becomes a layer of complexity. Justifying the belief of the Natives in Christian God Cree poet Louise Halfe in his poem 'Returning' describes Christian God as having "the eyes of a Roving Fly" (Bear Bones and Feathers. 105). White Girl believes in the omnipresence but do not believe in the omnipotence of Whiteman's God. The distorted understanding of Christianity by White Girl is also due to her sexual victimization at the hands of God's helpers, specially the priest at the residential school. The sexual exploitation experienced by her becomes an unresolved trauma diagnosed by White Girl as craziness. She explains her mental condition by theorizing 'bad medicine' in her before even the invention of the term 'post-traumatic stress disorder'.

In complete juxtaposition to White Girl's life, the life of Almighty Voice is surrounded by loving extended family and the adoration of women. He is invested with confidence, bravado and lust. But he suffers from the lack of political astuteness and analytical skills to cope with Native cultural situation. Though older in age, inexperience makes him younger to White Girl. He is denied of any opportunity to prove his might as a warrior. His life is frustrated and disdain under the colonial regime. But, Almighty Voice grew up listening to the stories of warriors and buffalo hunts imparted by his father, mother, and grandfather. He yearns to emulate his ancestors'

glorious deeds. Under the colonial rule he lives as a ward of the state. Under the command of colonial cultural hegemony, he is projected as a child in adult's body. He fails to understand the white man's religion, customs, laws and dismisses the things not understood as 'stupid'.

As an act of subversion, David Moses, creates the fictional Almighty Voice, on lines of historical figure, as a strong man and skilled athlete. The fictional Almighty Voice at the age of twenty two had secured three wives and discarded them. He boasts of his hunting prowess. Moses by depicting Almighty Voice noteworthy for his womanizing and athletic prowess, challenges the myth of Almighty Voice which depicts historical figures as a mythic warriors endowed with superhuman qualities. He merely presents Almighty Voice as a mortal, flawed human being, struggling to survive the insanity of colonial oppression. Appleford says: "Our pursuit of Almighty voice is the pursuit of the 'almighty Native Voice', and Moses' play emphasizes the chimerical nature of such a pursuit" (24). Through this character, Moses creates a substitute for bloodthirsty/noble savages of Western images in the form of homegrown Native super heroes. Moses succeeds in distorting the historical Almighty Voice and makes him resemble a mortal man.

Almighty Voice fails to comprehend the implications of colonialism. He dies but finds no relief in death. Moses sets Act II to present the afterlife of the characters. Almighty Voice is presented as Ghost and White Girl as interlocutor. Mr. Drum of minstrel show fame and a Mountie become the symbol of state apparatus. At first Ghost is confused, speaking in Cree, fails to defend himself from the incomprehensible interlocutor, who speaks only English. Interlocutor mocks at the language and says: "Come on, use the Queen's tongue, or I'll sell you to a cigar store" (30). Through this, Moses exposes the attitudes of White Society of Victorian era. He exudes sarcasm and self-conscious irony by exposing the colonial attitudes of that time. Moses makes the Natives to mimic the colonial minstrel in white face as they use to parody the African slaves painting their faces black. Through these mimicry of minstrel shows, Moses exposes the egomaniacal attitudes of the colonizers to reveal to his settler audiences how sick his predecessors were. Thus Moses succeeds in exposing the

flaws in the foundations of colonialism.

As the play progresses the Ghost of Almighty Voice and the White Girl refuse to remain in the role of victim. Ghost proves to be surprisingly adaptable and acquires imposing command of the English language in short order and engages in witty critique of the public policies that were the cause of his death. Moses conflates colonial and Christian propaganda to reveal the inextricability linked to the imperial objective. Towards the end, Ghost of Almighty Voice seizes control of the show from the Interlocutor making her to wipe off the white paint that masks her true identity, restoring her to her true self. In life, Almighty Voice could not cope with the colonial world, but in death he prevails with adjustment.

It is no surprise, that the story of Kise-Mamnito-wew has acquired mythic proportions in the Native culture. We regard him as an early resistance fighter and an inspiration for Natives of today and for future generations. As an act of ultimate subversion Daniel David Moses depicts Kise-manito-wew as a man who did not set out to become a myth and certainly did not set out to die. Like all of us, he wanted only the necessities of life that are thwarted by the oppressive policies of colonialism. In the very depiction of Almighty Voice as Ghost, Daniel David Moses illustrates the resilience of Natives against the onslaughts of colonialism and the influence of extraordinary people over the lives of the Natives.

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**Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Badal Sircar's *Evam Indrajit*:  
A Comparative Study**

**- V. Ravi Naidu**

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Badal Sircar's *Evam Indrajit* share more common features as both the plays belong to the Theatre of the Absurd. T. Nagamani in one of his articles to the journal of English Studies points out, "Badal's *Evam Indrajit* like Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* seeks to dramatize the disorganised and fractured life of modern man. ....He finds that modern life is too chaotic and fragmentary to have any meaning"<sup>1</sup>

Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* written and first performed in French in 1954, had an enormous impact on theatre goers due to its strange and new conventions. It consists of a barren set with a leafless tree in the background, clown-like tramps and highly symbolic language. *Godot* challenges its audience to question all the old rules and try to make sense of a world that is incomprehensible. At the heart of the play is the theme of "coping" and "getting through the day" so that when tomorrow comes we can have the strength to continue.

Sircar's *Evam Indrajit* written and performed in 1989 is recognized as a milestone in the history of Modern Indian drama. This play is a crystallized projection of all the prevalent attitudes, vague feeling and underlined frustrations drawing at the hearts of the educated urban middle class. *Evam Indrajit* is thought provoking play questioning the meaning of one's existence.

Both the plays were not originally written in English. "*Evam Indrajit*" was written first in Bengali by Sircar and translated into English by Girish Karnad, whereas *Waiting for Godot* was written in French as *En Attendant Godot* and was later translated into English by Samuel Beckett. Both the plays became famous and earned a good name and fame for the playwrights. As Sircar points out, "*Evam Indrajit*" was only play that I can call a hit. Judging by the number of performance that the first production received which was 250"<sup>2</sup>

Referring to *Godot* Stephen Spender states, "Beckett is an incomparable Spellbinder. He writes with rhetoric and music....."



that ..... make a poet green with envy”. Structurally, as the sub-title of the play *Godot* suggests ‘A Tragi comedy in two Acts’, is a two – act play which is primarily cyclical. It begins with two lonely tramps on a road side who are waiting for the arrival of a figure referred to as Godot and ends with the same way. Many Critics have concluded that Act II is simply a repetition of Act I. in other words Vladimir and Estragon may forever be waiting for Godot. Anthony Jenkins writes, “There can be no answers, Godot may or may not exist and may or may not arrive, we know no more about him than do Vladimir and Estragon.” Thus the play is structurally arranged in such a way as to make us believe that Godot will probably never come, and that we must accept the uncertainty of life.

On the other hand, Sircar’s *Evam Indrajit*, a three act play is also cyclical in structure. The structure and presentation of dialogue add to the theme of the play. In this play, the cyclical nature echoes the main idea of the play, the monotony of a mechanical existence. It traces the story of four friends and their trials and trivials from when they are 18 to 35 living in Urban middle class India. On the other hand it also traces the struggle of a writer who wants to write a play about these four friends.

In *Godot*, the play’s conclusion echoes the end of Act I. Even the stage directions reflect this similarity. So the beginning is the end of the play. The repetition of the final two lines from the previous act at the conclusion of the play shows the continued importance of repetition in *Waiting for Godot*. Vivian Mercier commented based on the summary of the plot “Nothing happens, twice” – but the act of waiting itself is a contradictory combination of doing nothing and doing something.

Stressing the structure of *Evam Indrajit* Satyadev Dubey in his introduction to the play reveals, “Structurally Sircar anticipates the hybridization of the period, for the complexity of *Indrajit*’s situation is such that stylistic punctiliousness must give precedence to what needs to be expressed with uncompromising honesty”.

The structure of both the plays altogether expresses the apparent absurdity of man in this hostile world. Coming to the setting

of the play, *Godot* deals with a barren set, with a leafless tree in Act I which was changed in Act II with some leaves hinting the hope exists in this universe. Whereas very few stage props are used such as cap, boots and a few backdrops. Sun set and Moon rise are used symbolically associated with the boy's appearance and departure.

In Sircar's play choral song is used to attract the audience. There are a lot of mime scenes in the play. Amol Palekar in one of his Articles states that. "Badal Sircar, like the polish director, Jerzy Grotowski, believed in minimalistic props and costumes, stressing that the human body, was the most powerful object in a theatre performance".<sup>3</sup> This is true with reference to *Evam Indrajit*. It is a play with four main characters playing nearly 20 roles in the completion of time. So most probably it is quite impossible for them to change their make-up so extravagantly. As Vasanthi Sankaranarayanan in her review pointed out regarding the setting of the play the actors should not in any way be overwhelmed or made to look punny with elaborate sets, loud music or any other supporting factors. Badal Sircar was totally against using technology as a prop for the actor.

When compared to the theme of the plays, both the plays deal with the predicament of man in this universe. Uncertainty of life, Meaninglessness, Death, Existentialism were presented through the disorderly world creates an environment where people are isolated, clown-like characters blundering their way through life because they don't know what else to do. Often, characters stay together simply because they are afraid to be alone in such an incomprehensible World. So in *Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon stay together even after their long desire to separate. Now and then any one of the two expresses his despair to move but they don't move until the curtain falls. This is akin to the character of Indrajit in *Evam Indrajit*. Indrajit, the typical middle-class youth who wants to deviate from others, as well as condemns others through the natural flow of life by getting settled by marriage, cannot go away lonely and needs a companion and surrenders himself to life in the society.

Fear as a dominating feeling in the mind of modern man is depicted through Estragon in *Godot* and Indrajit in *Evam*. Estragon was horrified by even the rustling of leaves and by the sight of Pozzo and

Lucky for the first time. Each time he hides behind Vladimir as a sort of protection. Likewise Indrajit fears because of this action of breaking the social custom, in his desire to marry his first cousin Manasi. Other characters such as Amal, Kamal and Vimal also share the same feeling in their aspiration to get good job, promotion and settlement in life.

Death-wish is yet another quality existing in the mind of man is depicted through the main characters in both the plays. In *Godot*, the desire for death as an escapism from this colourless life was expressed by Estragon in Act I and later Vladimir also does the same in Act II, in their planning for committing suicide if Godot will not appear the coming day also. The same kind of wish expressed by Indrajit in *Evam Indrajit*. He feels that Death will lead to ultimate happiness. But Sircar through the writer makes it clear that it's only an assumption never proved. Existential concept of trial of man to lead a successful life is depicted through the trials made by almost all the Characters in *Evam Indrajit*. In the case of Amal, Vimal and Kamala it is clear by their attempt to get a job. Get promotion get married and to make the two ends meet by providing everything for their family members. Whereas in the case of the playwright his trial to complete a play with an enduring theme. In *Godot*, this trials are symbolically presented through the trials made by Estragon to remove his shoes, the repeated trials made by Estragon and Vladimir to see Godot. But in both the plays all the characters' trials are thwarted akin to meaningless life they are having.

Repetition of action and sentences, adds to the cyclical nature of the play. There is an innumerable examples of such sentences in both the plays. For example in *Evam Indrajit*, Act III

Amal	:	How are you, Poet?
Vimal	:	How are you, Poet?
Kamala	:	How are you, Poet? <sup>4</sup>

All the three characters repeat the same one after another at the sometime by seeing the writer.

Likewise in *Godot* Act I,

Estragon	:	The Circus
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Vladimir : The music – hall  
Estragon : The Circus<sup>5</sup>

Repetition of action such as repeated miming in *Evam Indrajit*, one as interview, as school, as marriage etc. in *Godot*, we have the same kind of action as Estragon always struggling with his shoes and both the main characters waiting for Godot in both the Acts exemplifies repeated action in the play.

Anguish as dominating feeling of the absurdist can be seen in both the plays. The utmost suffering came in the form of man's realization of his inability to do things. In *Godot* it is represented through the hero Estragon, in Act II, "Let's go, we can't Ah!" The same kind of helplessness we can see in *Evam Indrajit* where the writer insists in saying that there is no escape for man in this World even through Death. In Act III,

And yet why do I insist  
That I go on?  
For there is –Oh! Yet there is  
No escape!<sup>6</sup>

Modern society is devoid of the presents of divine spirit and this is the cause for unfriendliness, Chaos and confusion existing in our world. Unfriendliness and man's nature of dominating and ill-treatment of others are symbolized through Pozzo as master and Lucky as slave in *Godot*. The prevalent confusion and chaos in the society are symbolized through the confusion and chaotic mind of the characters such as Vladimir and Estragon. On the other hand in *Evam Indrajit* it is depicted through the idea of lack of moral values, no code of conduct, pretention and careless life lead by man in general as well as the so called authorities.

Both the playwrights made their characters plead for salvation from their wretched life. They await for happiness in their life in the form of God. But Sircar makes it clear that there is no hope for such things in our life, that nothing is finite by picturing the endless road. The concluding lines of the play reveals this,

..... No shine for us

No God for us  
But the road,  
The endless road<sup>7</sup>.

The same idea is shared by Beckett in *Godot*. Indirectly hinting the useless hope of meeting Godot, Vladimir and Estragon decides to go,

Vladimir : well? Shall we go?  
Estragon : Yes, let's go<sup>8</sup>

They do not move. As the stage direction indicates the readers to assume, what happened in Act II because we find the same ending in Act I also, that there waiting is going to be continued in future. So the two playwrights bring out the utter hopeless life of man in this universe.

The characters of Beckett, Pinter and Stoppard make one believe that people have lost their identities or at least their contours. The human being appears no longer as an individual but he is more as machine. In *Waiting for Godot* there is a hint for the forgetfulness of Estragon, Pozzo and the boy. They cannot remember what happened the previous day. There is no fixed identities for characters. Because Vladimir, for example called as Didi and Mr. Albert by different characters. Likewise Estragon was addressed as Gogo and Adam etc.

In *Evam Indrajit* also the four major characters. They are supposed to play more than twenty roles. Sercar makes the writer to play the role of Boss and Peon in the office shows that all are same as human being and there is no difference in them

Both the plays deal with four main characters who represent the whole of mankind. In the play itself this idea was suggested. In *Godot* Vladimir in Act II while expressing his inability for action states that "all mankind is us, whether we like it or not". In *Evam Indrajit* Act III, Indrajit while talking about the meaningless life of man point out that "..... I am one among a million. The lie in my life is the lives of millions". Not only these sentences, there are more resemblances in the play indicating that these characters are the representatives of mankind in general.

Reality is yet another point which is common in both the plays.

In *Evam Indrajit* Sircar depicts the hard realities of life for example, in Act III the writer gives an elaborate description such as

No, there's no 'scape  
And yet,  
There's no 'scape

.....  
Is only a garland  
Of flowers that have been  
You know I end here  
I'm dead  
With in me.....<sup>9</sup>

As well as through the card game played by Amal, Vimal, Kamal in the beginning of Act III, Sircar exhibits the society after Independence upto present day society with giving man's life in particular. Similarly in *Godot*, Beckett has presented a final bleak image of life in the Universe; that of a woman giving birth astride a grave.

Trying to find answer for some irrational questions it is common in both the plays. In, Beckett's play it was about, 'What am I?', 'What are time and space?' and 'What are mind and matter?' Similarly in Sircar's play the writer tries to find answers for questions such as 'Who are we?' 'What are we?' and 'Why are we?' This indicates the pursuit of man to find a rational answer for his life. Sircar has aptly used the language in his play. Sentences and scenes are short, broken and at times, totally meaningless reminiscent of the Theatre of the Absurd. In Beckett's play language is not logical and it seems to portray the languages as a part of a failure to know where and what we are.

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## **Struggle of Women in the Select Novels of Alice Walker and Joyce Carol Oates**

**- D. V. Adhithya Joseph & P. Usha Rani**

Alice Walker, an African American women writer, poet, essayist, short story writer, novelist and also biographer, was the youngest of eight children to Willie Lee Walker and Minnie Lou Taullah Grant who were Share Croppers. Walker was born on Feb 9, 1944, a time where children of blacks were not encouraged to get education which was strongly opposed by her parents. She began her writing at the age of 8 itself. She wrote her first book on poetry while Walker was still a senior at Sarah Lawrence. She was identified as a writer who exposed the racism and sexism of the society she lives in. she gives special attention to the suffering of Black Women. Walker mentions her role as apologist and chronicler for Black Women. (*The fiction of Alice Walker : A study of Black Images*, page.3). It is no exaggeration to state that she is first among the Black Women writers to explore the problems of sexism where other writers declare that racism causes more difficulties to Blacks. Walker calls herself a Womanist rather than feminist.

Joyce Carol Oates, an American author, Novelist, short story writer, playwright, poet, literary critic, professor and editor, was born on June 16, 1938, in Lockport, New York to Frederic James Oates and Carolina. She was the oldest of three children to her parents. She was a raised catholic but now an atheist. She has grown up in the working class farming community of Millersport, New York. Oates quickly developed her reputation as a “writer’s writer” soon after her novels and story collections began to appear in 1960’s. (*Understanding Joyce Carol Oates*, page 3). For her ambitious books, she was honoured with numerous awards and prizes and even she remained as one of the America’s most honoured and respected authors and is certainly one of the most productive serious writers at times. Her novel *them* consolidated Oates’ reputation and won her the National Book Award for Fiction in 1970. Though Oates has been accused of using gratuitous or obsessive violence in her works, she insists that her violent materials accurately mirror the psychological and social conclusions of times.



(*Understanding Joyce Carol Oates*, Page 9).

Though both the writers are of different origin, one can find their central concentration on the struggle of women and the things related to it in different societies. The women in both the societies have witnessed suffering, pain, suppression and oppression. This resulted them to make a struggle for their survival. When one goes through the novels of these two writers, the idea of struggle can be identified at every situation.

In Alice Walker's first novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* published in 1970, one can notice the suffering of women characters like Margaret Copeland and Mem Copeland where one can identify the intensity of pain and oppression these women face for their survival. Walker has depicted Margaret Copeland, the wife of Grange Copeland as a family dog in some ways. Margaret was restricted always. She was given no freedom to express her feelings and emotions. The marriage itself is a mutual trap in the life of Grange Copeland. Being a share cropper's wife, Margaret has nothing to do except submitting herself to him and his life cycle. Her entire life has depended completely on Grange Copeland's moods. Even under such circumstances she submit's herself to Mr. Shipley, a white man, so that she can reduce the debts of her husband one must observe the self motivation of Margaret to uplift her husbands life so as to uplift her self.

Later on when Margaret gives birth to *star*, an odd coloured body Grange begins to desert her without understanding the intention of her submission to Mr. Shipley. Margaret could not able to cope up without Grange and even she finds a feeling of guilty in herself. As a result, she poisons her son, star and later on herself. Here Walker makes one to think how Margaret has been struggling to make her life which was unsuccessful. One must observe Walker's depiction of Margaret as a family dog is justified. Through out her life, she struggles a lot to survive some how or the other. Though she accepted pain, suffering etc. through Grange, she struggles a lot to uplift her self and Grange as well. But when Grange begins to isolate her, she meets death at once. Even though she fights with Grange at times it is done to overcome the oppression (*The Third life of Grange Copeland*, Page 13). Thus one can identify the struggle of Margaret.

Mem Copeland, another woman, Josie's educated niece, struggles a lot like Margaret. She was identified as a woman of proper talking and walking. Her relationship with Brownfield begins when the later tries to learn how to write from Mem. Brownfield, maintains two visions with men i.e., to be his wife loving physically and to be his mother, caring him like a child. When one tries to identify the reason why Mem was married to Brownfield, One can observe Walker's sense of giving strength to women like men. Though there was a good relationship between these two, the influence of racist society collapses it in no time. As a result, very soon Mem begins to witness suffering. Brownfield begins to torture her and ill-treats her in front of his friends which results to drop her educated dialect that stood as a source of power to women. (*The Third life of Grange Copeland*, Page.74). Mem becomes too weak physically and she cannot accept Brownfield's beatings any more. Though Mem was tortured she moves ahead as a woman of strength. She begins to make habitable to the children by cleaning the cow manure out of sheds as a mark of upliftment and this shows the idea of struggle in men. When Brownfield begins to neglect the family she steps forward and takes a house for lease and this shows once again her struggle for survival. But Brownfield brings her to the normal suffering stage when Mem becomes too weak as her health breaks down. Eventually, Brownfield kills Mem with the very gun through which she proclaimed her independence as she feels.

Though both the characters clearly show the intensity of suffering primarily one can witness the struggle they made to come out of the pain and oppression at least up to some extent. Here one has to remember that the Blacks being slaves, made their women as slaves to themselves Walker has portrayed these women with super woman strength which was eventually ruined by the influence of racist and sexist society.

Even in the second novel, *Meridian* published in 1976 Walker shows the struggle of Meridian a Black Woman. In the early life, Meridian can be identified as a pure, innocent and loving girl.

Her mother, Mrs. Hill, always insists Meridian to be sweet and never uses the word 'sex' in front of her. But unfortunately Meridian encounters a sexual encounter when a local funeral parlour Director

arranges the seduction of another girl by his assistant. Here one can witness the impact that the society creates on the women. Unknowingly when she begins to participate in sex with Eddie, her boy friend she becomes pregnant and shocks every one. As a result, her life transfers into a completely demolished way. She feels a negative experience when her physical appearance changes. She was remained at home. But unlike other Black Women like her mother etc, as she lives in an age of choice, she gives here child for adoption and begins her life in another way. When she grows up, she befriends Truman Held, a Black Political Activist where she too was an active participant in the Civil Rights Movement (*Meridian*, Page. 27). Once again she becomes pregnant and aborts when she finds Truman Held relationship with Lynn. Thereafter she begins to fight against the battles of life with revolutionary spirit. So, throughout the life *Meridian* struggles a lot. When she was young and pregnant, other black women force her not to do cardinal sin. But she does so to move ahead in her life and even when she was isolated by Truman held. She steps forward by tying her tubes. She even prepares herself to kill even for the sake of revolution which she begins to doubt about killing at a later stage. (*African American Review* Page, Page. 87). But she continues to struggle against the oppression of Black Women.

In Walker's novel *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, published in 1992, the struggle of women can be clearly witnessed when one refers to Tashi, the chief character in the present novel and a minor character in her magnum opus *The Color Purple*. Tashi an African woman is portrayed as a young girl with suffering. Here the suffering of Tashi can be identified as a struggle to satisfy (or) even to accept the tradition. Tashi, in her younger days suffers the death of her older sister Dura, due to circumcision (*Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Page 15). This incident makes her to develop a trauma related to blood and so she faints whenever she witnesses blood. Her mother thinks to convert her family by joining missionary. But Tashi begins to struggle with an inner feeling that she may be separated from the other black girls like her sister and may lose her identity even. She has a heated argument with Olivia her friend of missionary to keep far away from circumcision (*Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Page 21). But she feels that her clitoris may grow and identify her as a separate girl away from her own

tradition. Finally she undergoes circumcision and has cut away her clitoris. As a result, she loses her sense of self and ability of love making. Later on when she marries Adam and moves away from her living place. Here again she faces an internal struggle and changes her name even. Her name can be identified in various forms as Tashi – Evelyn, Evelyn – Tashi, Evelyn-Mrs. Johnson etc. When she gives birth to Benny a distorted baby (*Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Page.57) she was disturbed increasingly. Even when she was under the treatment with Raye and Carl Jung she was disturbed by her past memories. This struggle made her to kill M'Lissa the circumciser. Throughout her life from her childhood she faces the struggle and this made her to move ahead but eventually she was unsuccessful as she was hanged for killing M'Lissa.

Joyce carol Oates in her novel *A Garden of Earthly Delights* has depicted the ill-fated life of Clara Walpole. Her birth itself reveals the beginning of her struggle. She was born in a ditch at the side of the road when the truck collapses in which her parents was travelling. Her father was a very abusive person and he does not maintain a stable place for his family. This has resulted Clara to maintain restlessness and even she has no friends. This made her to search for new relationships women. As a result, she begins to run away with Lowry to escape her poverty and to make new relationships. Her struggle to make new relations forced her to do so. But later on when she was not satisfied with Lowry and his relation, she acquaints Curt Revere, a land owner. She begins to attain authority over the lands of Curt Revere by poisoning the mind of *swan* her son. This type of struggle for survival and to attain dominance makes *swan* to kill Curt Revere's son *Robert* by accident. Even Clara maintains illicit relations with some other men for her insatiable carnal pleasure. All these incidents reveal the struggle of a woman, which she thinks to attain the worldly pleasures. Eventually she was isolated when her son *swan* commits patricide and kills himself.

In the novel *them* published by Oates in 1969, Oates has depicted the social and economic levels in American society. Loretta Botsford is the chief woman character. Her early life reveals that her father was a drunkard and her mother was dead. Her brother Brock is

identified as a confused and alienated personality as well. Loretta's extremity of isolation can be witnessed when she spends most of her time in front of mirror and speaks lonely. This is the beginning stage of struggle where she tries to find out a support for herself. When she was sleeping with her boy friend Bernie she wakes up suddenly by a sudden sound resulted of a gun shot. Her brother kills her boy friend and as result she begins to runaway to save herself from her brother. Here, she finds out a police man Howard, who rapes Loretta again and takes to his home. Here Oates makes one to think her submission to Howard and she intends to survive. Later on she faces many problems throughout her life with Howard's mother, a domineering woman and other circumstances. Mean while, she moves to Detroit where she has a friend. But again comes back when Howard tries to generate a superficial family. Eventually, she remains alone and feels ashamed of the way she has grown up in her life.

Through the novels of Alice walker and Joyce carol Oates, one can find the struggle of women to attain their survival, identify etc. by overcoming their oppression, pain, suffering etc. Though the societies they live in are entirely different, one can find the struggle of women here. The struggle for life gave a fantastic output to be produced by these two writers. In several contexts these writers were discouraged and disappointed by the situations around them. But bravely they took a decision to lead the sufferers of the next generation to overcome by reading the works of art by these writers. Both of these writers gave importance to family and kinship because slavery has demolished several families and their relationship with the dear ones. When one tries to survive, there is a need for the support of the family as development of whole is the eventual achievement. Both the writers demonstrated that the need for survival is the key point for struggle of these women.

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## **The Theme of Alienation in Ernest Hemingway's**

### ***The Old Man and The Sea***

**- K. Usha Rani & A. Hari Prasanna**

We're born alone and we die alone. Our relationships and friendship create the illusion for the moment that we're not alone. People can experience loneliness for many reasons. The causes may be physical, social, mental and economical. Alienation depends on the status of the mind i.e., brain. Alienation is a feeling. Human feelings are controlled by the hormones that are released by the endocrine glands which influences the central nervous system. Apart from the basic physiology the social factors are attitude, behavior, character, and discipline influences the balance of mind. Imbalance mind creates alienation. Lack of good attitude, indiscipline, misbehavior leads to the aggravation or depression which in turn results into alienation. Conclusively alienation is a psycho somatic phenomenon.

Alienation has long been a popular theme in literature, but its rise to prominence came most sharply during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as humans moved farther away from the world of nature and closer to that of machine. The novels of 20<sup>th</sup> century have exposed the longing and heartache so common to the human condition.

Ernest Hemingway is a well-known American author who wrote in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He has written several novels such as, *The Sun also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *The Old Man and the Sea*. The huge success of *The Old Man and the Sea*, published in 1952, was a much-needed vindication. The novella won the 1953 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and it likely cinched the Nobel Prize for Hemingway in 1954, as it was cited for particular recognition by the Nobel Academy. It was the last novel published in his lifetime.

Although the novella helped to regenerate Hemingway's wilting career, it has since been met by divided critical opinion. While some critics have praised *The Old Man and the Sea* as a new classic that takes its place among such established American works as William Faulkner's short story "The Bear" and Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, others have attacked the story as "imitation Hemingway" and find fault

with the author's departure from the uncompromising realism with which he made his name.

The book was written from the point of view of Santiago, the character that was alienated. Santiago chose to be alienated. He chose to live a solitary life away from the villagers. Santiago suffers terribly throughout *The Old Man and the Sea*. In the opening pages of the book, he has gone eighty-four days without catching a fish and has become the laughingstock of his small village. He then endures a long and grueling struggle with the marlin only to see his trophy catch destroyed by sharks. Yet, the destruction enables the old man to undergo a remarkable transformation, and he wrests triumph and renewed life from his seeming defeat. After all, Santiago is an old man whose physical existence is almost over, but the reader is assured that Santiago will persist through Manolin, who, like a disciple, awaits the old man's teachings and will make use of those lessons long after his teacher has died. Thus, Santiago manages, perhaps, the most miraculous feat of all: he finds a way to prolong his life after death.

Ernest Hemingway did a fairly good job at presenting alienation in his novel. This was because throughout the whole novel, Santiago was alone. He fished alone, he lived alone, and the villagers didn't pay much heed to him. He wasn't alienated in a bad way, and he didn't seem to mind that he was often alone.

The old man is a character isolated from people – and in fact from the world of humans entirely – in his time on the sea. This isolation defines who he is, and emphasizes the unique nature of his character. Isolation becomes both a weakness (he suffers from loneliness), but also a necessary element to his battle with the fish. Although the old man accepts and admits help from others, it is alone that he does battle with the marlin, that he must prove himself and his capabilities.

The old man is unique in his relationship to and understanding of the natural world. He talks about the sea as though it were a woman, the birds as friends, and the sharks as personal enemies. He examines the relationship between turtles and jellyfish, between fish and birds. The creatures and the natural world become a lens through which we examine the old man; they become parables and analogies that allow us



to gain insight into his character. The lions function in this same way, as they have much to do with the way the old man views himself. This novel also incites discussion as to the natural order of things; the old man justifies and interprets his actions and the actions of others as things that they "are born to do." We see a sense of inescapability in these ideas.

The opening pages of the book establish Santiago's character and set the scene for the action to follow. Even though he loves Manolin and is loved dearly by the boy, the old man lives as an outsider. The greeting he receives from the fishermen, most of whom mock him for his fruitless voyages to sea, shows Santiago to be an alienated, almost ostracized figure. Such an alienated position is characteristic of Hemingway's heroes, whose greatest achievements depend, in large part, upon their isolation. In Hemingway's works, it is only once a man is removed from the numbing and false confines of modern society that he can confront the larger, universal truths that govern him. This opening section also begins the development of the theme of the novel - man's struggle for survival in difficult circumstances. Due to his bad luck and his alienation, Santiago feels isolated and alone; but he refuses to be defeated. He dreams of doing heroic deeds in order to restore his respect in the community. When he later catches the giant fish, he is determined to master it to prove his worth - both to himself and his fellow fishermen

It is important to notice that the old man is very aware of his loneliness and isolation. Several times during the long day he wishes Manolin were with him - to see this wonderful sight and to help him with the difficult task at hand. But it was not a matter of choice for Santiago; he was forced to fish by himself. At the same time, he realizes that his predicament has been caused by his own choices. He decided to go far out to sea to find a big fish. Now he must deal gracefully with the results of that choice.

*The Old Man and the Sea* is tragic in many respects, the story of Santiago and the destruction of his greatest catch is far from dismal. Unlike Frederic, Santiago is not defeated by his enlightenment. The narrator emphasizes Santiago's perseverance in the opening pages, mentioning that the old man's eyes are still "cheerful and undefeated"

after suffering nearly three months without a single catch. And, although Santiago's struggle will bring about defeat—the great marlin will be devoured by sharks—Santiago will emerge as a victor. As he tells the boy, in order for this to happen, he must venture far out, farther than the other fishermen are willing to go.

Santiago is Hemingway's code-hero par excellence, acting in the best tradition of a professional fisherman. As a critic has remarked, "He (Santiago) is a born fighter, to whom the consciousness of being matched against a strong adversary suffices and, who can dispense with success or failure." The individual and give himself only by self-reliance. "I'll fight them until I die," says Santiago. "I'll show them what a man can do and what a man endures." On the very threshold of defeat he affords us a glimpse of the valiance of the true human will. Santiago often talked about his hero. It was Joe DiMaggio, a famous and eminent baseball player. Joe DiMaggio directly and indirectly affected the old man. His actions and his attitudes contributed to the old man's life. "But I must have the confidence and I must be worthy of the great DiMaggio." Thinking about DiMaggio showed the old man the way to victory. His worship of DiMaggio woke the courage that was within the old man's heart.

In *The Old Man Towed by the Fish* Hemingway begins to significantly develop the plot, quickening the pace of the rising action. Santiago's luck has changed, and he has caught his big fish. The challenge now becomes to tire the fish, pull him in for the kill, and return him to shore. As Santiago thought the ultimate challenge was over, the worst was yet to come. The shark had sensed the Marlin's blood and moved after it. It approached and ate the Marlin. The old man had to fight back with them. "Fight them. I'll fight them until I die." Santiago used all of his supplies to fight with the shark: harpoon, tiller, etc. By the time Santiago came back to Havana, the Marlin now was just a carcass bone. The sharks played an important role in the story. Its presence determined the loss of prize to the old man and a moment of regrets. In fact, it also demonstrated the ideal that fame just came and slipped away.

Always in tune with the natural world, Santiago admires the giant fish from the very beginning, immediately establishing a bond of

respect. Even though he has never seen his giant catch, he appreciates its strength, power, and determination. He also pities the plight of the fish, which he sees as similar to his own; both of them are alone, in pain, and facing the possibility of approaching death. He believes they are worthy antagonists. In this portrayal, Hemingway indicates his fundamental belief in the partnership between man and nature. He also portrays his old man as having grace under pressure, as he exhibits exemplary strength, patience, determination, and clear thinking in handling his giant adversary.

The bond that Santiago feels with the giant fish continues, as he moves from pitying the fish to loving it like a brother. He identifies with the isolation and determination of the fish. He also believes it sets an admirable example for him to emulate in the way it remains calm while enduring pain. Respecting the giant creature and hoping to master it, Santiago brings out his own reserve of skill, courage, cunning, and intelligence. He knows that the giant fish has more strength, nobility, and ability than he does, but the old man still has the upper hand due to his intelligence.

Santiago has total identification with nature - bird, fish, and beast. He realizes that no man is ever alone, even on the high seas. Because he has an awareness of the workings of nature, he is comfortable with and optimistic about his place in it. His hope and vision link him not only to nature but also to the entire cosmos. As such, he ceases being an ordinary fisherman and achieves the grandeur of a universal hero. In fact, Santiago in Spanish means Saint James, referring to the fisherman apostle of Jesus Christ. The old man proves he is worthy of his name.

In conclusion, the story of Santiago was absolutely an example of life. Life was so precious. It just went up and down left to its civilization many deep scars. It also offered fame but swiftly retook it. On the other hand, with the loss of prize, the old man has been given another gift from life. The gift was called faith.

The novella is a parable about life itself; in particular man's struggle for triumph in a world that seems designed to destroy him. Despite the soberly life-affirming tone of the novella, Hemingway was,

at the end of his life, more and more prone to debilitating bouts of depression. He committed suicide in 1961 in Ketchum, Idaho. One may be lonely but not alone. The only way to get rid of alienation and be in tranquilized state is through the constant remembrance of the almighty.

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## **Alienated Hero in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms***

**- K. Madhu Murthy**

The term alienation often presents various shades of meaning both denotative and connotative, ranging from the positive to negative, which can be very broad as well as inconsistent. The term alienation is utilised in the fields as diverse as psychiatry, sociology, philosophy and literature and accordingly several exponents have tried to define the term from their point of view. According to David Oken, "it is possible to derive a useful working definition that alienation represents a sense of estrangement from other human beings, from society and its values, and from the self." (Johnson, Frank, ed. *Alienation* 84) Further, Frank Johnson points out, "...alienation refers to objective social conditions or just as readily be employed to describe two rather different subjective states, the first being a state of self-alienation inferred to be present by outside observers. Second, by contrast, it also refers to subjective states of alienation not detectable to outsiders, but felt by the person himself" (36).

Indeed, alienation has for a long time been a dominant idea in the writings nineteen and twenty century men. With specific reference to American literature, Blanche H. Gelfant states, "Alienation is the inextricable theme of modern American fiction." (Johnson, Frank, ed. *Alienation* 295) In particular, it is observed that fictional works of Ernest Hemingway, certainly one of the earliest and most influential twentieth century writers associated with modernism in literature, take note of the various characters present in those works from Nick Adams in *Big Two-Hearted River*, Harold Krebs in *Soldier's Home*, Jake Barnes and Brett Ashley in *The Sun Also Rises* or Frederic Henry in *A Farewell To Arms*, all of whom experience estrangement and alienation as a result of war, to the iconoclastic rebel Harry Morgan in *To Have and Have Not*, it can be seen how intensely the theme of alienation permeates throughout.

Similar to the characters in *The Sun Also Rises*, many of the individuals in *A Farewell to Arms* experience feelings of alienation that range from mild to acute, which serve to isolate or estrange them from themselves, other people, or society-at-large either temporarily or permanently. In addition to the protagonist, Frederic Henry, these

individuals include Catherine Barkley, the Italian surgeon Rinaldi, the priest from Abruzzi, various ambulance corps members and soldiers.

Nevertheless, the primary focus of attention in the novel rests on Frederic Henry, an American serving as an honorary lieutenant in the Italian army Ambulance Corps during World War I. And it is by his very relationship to other members of the ambulance corps and the army as a whole that Frederic Henry is an outsider to begin with, simply by virtue of the fact that he is neither an Italian nor a combatant as well. Clearly this initial sense of detachment provides a tone of isolation that permeates the entire novel.

Sheridan Baker has viewed Henry's role in Italy and says, "He is an officer – an officer in an army not an army, somewhat behind the lines of a secondary front: in the war but not of it. There is with Henry, from the beginning, a sense of uneasiness, of disillusion, about one's role" (67). And it soon becomes evident that Frederic Henry clearly places or regards himself as being outside and alien to his military position, in that he cannot take either his role or the war itself too seriously. This is apparent in a scene early in the novel which occurs in the town of Gorizia, when Henry views with absurdity the fact that he is carrying a pistol, since it is not essential to his job due to his non-combative status. He feels, "... the ridiculousness of carrying a pistol at all came over me and I soon forgot it and carried it flopping against the small of my back with no feeling except a vague sort of shame when I met English-speaking people"(29).

As Earl Rovit has observed, Frederic Henry "is an uprooted American disguised in an Italian uniform" (35). As such, Henry is in line with previous 'uprooted' Hemingway heroes such as Jake Barnes, Robert Cohn, Nick Adams and Harold Krebs. Or perhaps it is more accurate to suggest that Henry is the predecessor, though not chronologically but thematically in Hemingway's novels and stories of these other alienated heroes.

Just as Henry cannot but help to feel estranged or alienated from the war, "Well I knew I would not be killed. Not in this war, It did not have anything to do with me. It seemed no more dangerous to me myself than war in the movies" (37). He cannot accept the war as being

real, or his role in it, and subsequently experiences a dissociation from ‘self’, a characteristic of alienation. Further, he is unable to relate to his ‘self’ back home, which is apparent when he contemplates writing a letter to his family in the United States: “It was long time since I had written to the States and I knew I should write. But I had let it go so long that it was almost impossible to write now. There was nothing to write about” (36).

It is clear that Frederic Henry can neither relate to the world of the present, the Italian front nor the world he had left back at home, searching for heroic possibilities. As Ray West B.Jr., points out, “Frederic is the modern hero lost between two worlds, the world of tradition and certainty which he cannot wholly relinquish and the exciting but uncertain world of the twentieth century, where you only occasionally find something substantial to look at to make everything stop whirling, where you live for the moment, giving yourself up to sensations, for it is through the senses that you discover truth (19).

It is through his relationship with the nurse Catherine Barkley that Frederic Henry not only finds that substantial sensual something to make the world stop whirling, but the truth about his own identity as well. At the outset of their relationship, romantic love is outside the grasp of both Henry and Catherine. As he views their relationship, “I know I did not love Catherine Barkley nor had any idea of loving her. This was a game, like bridge, in which you said things instead of playing cards” (30). She too initially exists outside the realm of romantic love since her lover was killed at the front line and with it her innocent romanticism comes to an end. Catherine thinks, “I remember having a silly idea he might come to the hospital where I was. With a sabre cut, I suppose, and a bandage around his head...or shot through the shoulder, something picturesque... He didn’t have a sabre cut. They blew him all to bits” (20).

So it is that Catherin is estranged not only from her formal romantic notions concerning soldiers and war but from her former self also. Similar to Frederic Henry, she is caught between two worlds, the never-to-return past and the uncertain present.

Meanwhile Henry has found something new, in the person of

Catherine Barkley, which he does not fully appreciate until after he is seriously wounded and taken to the hospital. Being wounded physically removes Henry from the battle front and now he is psychologically alienated from it. As a result of this he has to face another isolating situation thereby becoming even more estranged. He has to end up his role with the ambulance corps, friends such as Rinaldi, and most importantly his new romantic love. But fortunately he finds Catherine nursing at the hospital where he has joined as a patient.

Love, however tends to have a dual and somewhat ironic effect on both Frederic and Catherine. For one, love serves to provide Frederic Henry with genuine warmth in an otherwise cold world, and security amidst the insecurities or uncertainties of war. Perhaps more importantly, love leads the protagonist away from self-absorbment or concern, since he now transfers his attention and thoughts to another person. Love, then, serves to temporarily remove from him the feelings of estrangement from others and the world, and more particularly, from the war. With Catherine, Frederic Henry appears to have found a new self, and perhaps a less lonely way of life.

Yet at the same time love serves to emotionally separate both Frederic and Catherine from others and the world at large in that they, as lovers, become one person. So instead of individual feelings of isolation, there results a dual sense of alienation in that the world is henceforth looked upon as a place where “they” are united as “us.” This is apparent when Catherine says to Frederic, “...there’s only us two and in the world there’s all the rest of them. If anything comes between us we’re gone and then they have us” (139).

Additionally, both do not even identify with other couples in love, as in the scene where, while walking through town, Henry notices a couple standing close against a wall of Cathedral:

“They’re like us,” I said.

“Nobody is like us,” Catherine said. She did not mean happily.

“I wish they had some place to go.”

“It mightn’t do them any good.”



“I don’t know. Everybody ought to have some place to go” (147).

What is evident in this conversation is not only the sense that the lovers, Frederic and Catherine are unable to identify with other pairs of lovers but also the awareness or belief that they are without a home, or nest, or a dwelling place to live. This lack of a place to go to appears repeatedly throughout the novel and serves as one of the most compelling characteristics of alienation. Frederic and Catherine remain wanderers, in search of a new home, or perhaps in a larger sense their true selves or a self that will find unison with another individual or a large society in general. Throughout the novel both are seeking dwellings that resemble a home. Their desire to identify a ‘home’ is so strong that Catherine refers to a hotel room later in Switzerland as ‘home.’

Henry’s withdrawal and final break away with the army and the war are realised by horror when he tries to escape from execution at the hands of the battle police or carabinieri. For Weeks, Henry’s desperate plunge into the Tagliamento River “signals the completion of his washing away of all social obligations” (122). This is apparent as he lies in the flat- car of the train carrying him away from the battle front. Henry is now totally alone, isolated psychologically, physically, socially and perhaps emotionally. He reflects, “You had no more obligation...Anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation. Although that ceased when the carabinieri put his hands on my collar... It was no point of honour. But it was not my show anymore (232). Now he is completely detached from the war. A little later again he feels, “I was going to forget the war. I had made a separate peace. I felt damned lonely and was glad when the train got to Stresa” (239).

Henry’s new role as civilian serves more to contribute to his dissociated self-image in that he feels awkward and uncomfortable wearing civilian cloth. That Frederic Henry is conscious of the estrangement from the normal everyday world that exists far from war is made evident again when he notes, “At a quarter to five I kissed Catherine good-bye and went into the bathroom to dress knotting my tie and looking in the glass I looked strange to myself in civilian clothes” (285).

Yet one would think that Henry would have realised already that the war was now outside of his immediate experience. Perhaps he has to remind himself of this fact before he can totally commit himself to Catherine, or because with her he can seriously forget the war, and his former self as well. Sheridan Baker has noticed the need for Henry to forget the war as an important aspect of his new self. As Baker writes, “Henry’s symbolic resignation from society, which we accept with lessened qualms...because it is only an Italian army. This leaves Henry the misgivings that he can forget the war only in Catherine’s arms. Like the war-numbed Nick, he stops his mind from ‘thinking’, but with Nick it was horror, and with Henry it is guilt” (71). Indeed, guilt, then, serves to dissociate Henry from himself in that he must not think upon his actions.

It is to the militarily neutral country of Switzerland that both lovers flee to since Italy, with its wartime society can no longer serve to house them. Their joy is short-lived as Catherine experiences difficulty in delivering her baby, and undergoes pain and frustration with underlying repercussions of danger and disaster. Henry remarks, “She was hardly ever sick. She was not awfully comfortable until toward the last. So now they got her in the end. You never got away with anything” (253). These words are somewhat prophetic in that they predict Henry’s own impending dilemma that of facing total loneliness and alienation upon Catherine’s death. The protagonist prepares himself physically and mentally to spend the rest of his life to be all alone.

With respect to the wider implications of the novel’s theme of isolation and death amidst a modern world at war, Ray B. West Jr., opines, “The romance of Frederic Henry and Catherine Barkley, their attempt to escape the war and its resultant chaos, is a parable of twentieth century’s man’s disgust and disillusionment at the failure of civilization to achieve the ideals it had been promising throughout the nineteenth century.” (Gellians, Jay. ed., Twentieth 15) In fact, Henry and Catherine exemplify the modern man and woman typically estranged and alienated in an age of anxiety and frustration in which man feels helpless in the wake of enormous technological and scientific advances, which tear human relations apart.

In fact, the last lines of the novel bring out the true significance of human life. After the death of Catherine, the protagonist expresses his actions in stoical manner, “It was like saying good-bye to a statue. After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain” (263). At the end, Henry is alone existing for himself. Of all the protagonists of Hemingway, Henry experiences alienation to the maximum extent. But it is mainly due to the protagonist’s inability to understand the ‘higher forces’ of life rather than individuals choice of action. However, it should be noted that Frederic Henry struggles relentlessly to come out of his estrangement by sharing his thoughts with others. Hemingway uses ‘first person reflective’ narrative technique to show that no man can be alone and every human being is a part of continuum of life.

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## **English Language Laboratories and ELT**

**- G. Reddisekhar Reddy**

English is the backbone for the success of any student in today's globalised world, knowing English is not just enough but it should be effective for the best communication. The need for good command over English language and proficiency with the best communication skills cannot be ignored. It is often heard in the recruitment corridors, particularly in the multinational companies, that numerous jobs remain vacant as suitable candidates with effective communication skills are not available. Effective communication skills not only decide whether one gets a job or not; but when one gets a job, they decide what sort of responsibilities one can be assigned and how handsome salary one can get. Hence, effective communication is not only the golden key to get a job, but also it paves the magnificent route to go up the ladder in the organization. As time advanced English acquired a significant and top place, and importance of English swiftly growing. The sprouting of new media added new scope to English, which stressed the necessity of new methods and techniques. The pace of change brought about by new technologies has had a significant effect on the way people live, work, and study world wide. It is necessary that students need to be ready for such changes and challenging world driven by technology innovations. In the present scenario a number of improvements to ensure that all the students and academic systems are up-to-date with the latest technologies. Hence the conventional patterns are gradually being replaced by updated materials, modern curriculum and with ever changing syllabus according to the systematic growth of knowledge. At this juncture introduction of English language laboratories to enhance English language and communication skills is a remarkable developmental change.

### **English Language Laboratories**

English language laboratories are very much helpful for the development of effective communication skills in English. Plenty of advanced software is available, which is a mixture of self learning and class room sessions to give students the freedom to learn at their own pace to complete with access to unique and well researched learning

material. The software provides students with a rich multimedia learning experience, using audio and video clips during classes and adds excitement to learn. It further analyses and rates their progress, providing valuable feedback. Most of the software focuses on language enrichment which is improvement in English grammar. The language laboratories also have soft skills for personality enrichment. Situation based usage of concepts and focus on enhancing verbal communication skills through free speech, role plays, activities and interaction. Other advantage with language laboratories is speech enhancement emphasizing on topics like speech sounds, pronunciation, voice modulation, and accent correction along with listening. Even the slow learners also can understand the concept at their own speed repeating the same topic again and again until they understand it. Language teachers should be up-to-date regarding the latest changes in the software and methodologies to use them effectively. It is an important aspect and they should be trained regularly. As it is the known fact that most of the competitive examinations are going to be computer based, hence the language laboratories provide immense help to prepare the students to cope with them successfully.

### **Language Skills (LSRW&T) for Effective Communication Skills**

It is crystal clear that without proper practice in language skills effective communication is an oasis in the desert. At first it should be focused on grammar and then ultimate focus should be on the practice of language skills to acquire effective communication skills. Listening is different from hearing and it is an important skill to be practiced to become an effective communicator. Ample opportunities are there in the modern English language laboratories with the help of sophisticated and advanced software for the practice of listening skill. Speaking is the ultimate solution to enhance communication skills. William Shakespeare's quoted words: "Mend your speech a little, Lest it may mar your fortune", and Francis Bacon's quoted words: "Conference maketh a ready man", rightly exposes the importance of speaking skill in the life and career of a person. English language laboratories are rich resources for the students to practice speaking skill as they have software for voice recording and replay feature to check it. A voracious reader can become an eloquent speaker is an apt statement regarding

reading skill. The quoted words of Francis Bacon: “Reading maketh a full man”, makes it clear that reading skill plays a vital role in preparing a person as the best communicator. The modern English language laboratories are very useful to the students to practice reading skill to sharpen their communication skills as they have lots of material and exercises on reading skill. Francis Bacon’s quoted words: “Writing maketh an exact man”, shows it clear that writing shows the power and personality of a person. As graphology explains the character and personality of a person, there is a need to consider writing as an important skill to be practiced by the students to make themselves the best communicators. But writing is not only the script but the sentence structure and idiomatic expressions should be clear, understandable and effective. Previously only the four skills LSRW are considered as language skills but thinking is added as one more important skill to the existing LSRW to witness effective communication. The four previous skills may be practiced during particular and allotted time for their practice. But the newly added thinking is the only skill that can be practiced round the clock because the human mind thinks all the time. Whatever a person doing and wherever a person, his mind always thinks something, all those thoughts should be converted into effective expressions in English. A person of a particular regional language thinks everything in his regional language at first then he has to try to convert all those thoughts into English. It will be very fruitful activity to improve effective communication skills in English. English language laboratories are excellent resources to practice these writing and thinking skills with the help of the advanced software.

## **Challenges**

The language laboratories play the significant role in imparting effective communication skills for proficiency in language. But there are certain challenges with language laboratories for the successful output.

## **Lack of Awareness**

Lack of awareness among the English language teachers as well as students regarding the effective use of English language laboratories has become the major challenge. They are unaware of the

advanced software available domestically and globally. It is the known fact that most of the English language teachers are not aware of the complete structure of language laboratories and the latest software available. For this cause of lack of awareness has two kinds of reasons they are; basically some teachers are not interested to update themselves with the latest methodologies and software instead of their traditional methodologies of teaching and the other reason is that even though most of the teachers are interested to learn the new things regarding the latest software and methodologies, the managements are not cooperative and it is bitter truth that even they not at all encouraging them in any way. It is because they treat English as a second rate subject comparatively with science and technological subjects. In spite of the significant role of English language in professional success in science and technology, it is being treated as a supportive subject by the managements in the professional colleges.

### **Role of Teachers**

Though it is bitter it is the fact that most of the English teachers are contented with the traditional methods of teaching with the teaching aids like piece of chalk, black board, text book etc., and recently a few teachers are using some slides with power point presentations. Most of the teachers don't have any association with any other English language teacher or teachers' associations. English teachers should be with receptive mind and should have touch with fellow language teachers to share their ideas and experiences to up date themselves. English language teachers have to realize their position as a facilitator to the students with up dated methods and software. They should develop great zeal to learn the things related to the use of language laboratories effectively with the latest available software.

### **Role of Managements**

It is fact that the most of the managements of educational institutions have become commercial but not service oriented. They are concentrating how to make enough money with special emphasis on science and technology but not on English language. It is unfortunate that most of the managements are treating English as a second rate subject comparatively with science and technological subjects. They

always emphasize on the core subjects but not on English language. It is bitter truth that managements spend huge amounts to establish laboratories and provide requirements to the science and technological laboratories but reluctant to develop the language laboratories. In many institutions the language laboratories are just for names sake, physically some out dated computers would be there but suitable and valuable software is a nightmare. Though the English language and English teachers are playing an important role to make the students successful in their field either it is science or technology they are being treated as degraded subject and people. The managements are not at all treating the English language teachers as equally as they treat the subject teachers. They have the despised look at English language and its teachers to provide them required training.

### **Findings and Suggestions**

- English language teachers should change their contented attitude and strive for new dimensions in the effective use of language laboratories. Further they have to update themselves with the latest software.
- English language teachers should have intimate association with fellow English teachers and teachers' associations to hone their ability to teach effectively.
- Every English teacher should become the members of the ELTAI, it is the best platform to share the views, interact with fellow teachers, and get guidance from the experts from different places all over the globe.
- Managements have to change their biased attitude towards English language and English language teachers.
- Managements should encourage and provide sufficient opportunities to the English language teachers to get effective training as the science and technical teachers get.
- English language laboratories should be improved in the matter of infrastructure and latest software time to time with equal importance to the science and technical laboratories.



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## **Tagore's Critical Appraisal in Nationalist Perspectives**

**- P. Sreeramulu**

Gora, the longest and the most widely acclaimed novel of Rabindranath Tagore has the theme of nationalism needed in a multi-racial and multi-religious community like India. It exemplifies Tagore's vision of new, syncretistic India, rising above the considerations of caste, community and race. At the beginning the central character Gora seemed to be a bigoted and xenophobic Hindu nationalist. But he undergoes a process of realisation of his ideals and achieves a liberal humanistic ethics at the end. So the novel has contemporary relevance. It is really a strong political and patriotic novel voicing the aspirations of the resurgent India. The central theme of the novel has a political under current. The novel reflects the patriotic zeal of Gora and also projects all the important political questions, the conflict of the ideals and aspiration between the East and the West. In the character of Gora, "Tagore has tried to bring about the fusion of the East and the West". The novel, covering a wide canvas, marks Tagore's "search for national identity". It also represents his efforts "at projecting an image of India which is at once historical and ahistorical". It is, "perhaps the most complete picture of the life of Bengal towards the end of the last century".

The novel has an epical sweep which has tempted more than one critic to compare or equate it with the Indian Mahabharata or Tolstoy's war and peace. Niharranjan Ray feels that "Gora has the amplitude of the ancient epic", and Sukumar Sen has viewed it "as....something like a Mahabharata of modern India". Annada Sankar Ray considers it "the greatest novel ever written in India". Krishna Kripalani designates it as "the epic of India in transition" and with some qualifications, equates it with "war and peace". Bhabani Bhattacharya finds that "Gora is contemporary and yet timeless" as is the case with many great literary works of the world and "it reaches out towards the universal".

Various factors contribute to make Gora a popular novel of grand scale. Firstly, it is "the only novel in Bengali which mirrors faithfully the social, political and cultural life of the entire educated Bengali middle class". Secondly, it does not suffer from the poetic

excesses of Tagore's other novels. Thirdly, the whole novel is filled with polemic which are not found in his other novels. As Krishna Kripalani feels, the presence of polemics in such a book is "Inevitable in view of its very theme, the author does not lose the thread of the main narrative whose interest is sustained to the end". Fourthly, it is the only work of Tagore where the life of the city of Calcutta forms an integral part of the story. Fifthly, the novel reveals to us Tagore's transition from nationalism to internationalism. Sixthly, nowhere else does Tagore use such a wide canvas, massive design, number of episodes and big galaxy of life-like characters. The most interesting factor is that for the first time in the novels of Tagore, a male character dominates the action. Nowhere else do we find a character like Gora, "so masculine in the whole of Tagore's writings". In no other novel does Tagore describe the Brahmo- Hindu conflicts and their fanaticism. No wonder then, Gora, is given the highest place in literature not only for its intellectual content or debates or its historical association but for its "skilful disposition of events, its masterly delineation of characters, the solid nature of its content and craft".

In spite of the above claims and comparisons, Gora lacks the awesome background and titanic struggle which could lend it an epic dimension. However it depicts a momentous period in Indian history when Hindu society was desperately striving to prevent its own disintegration in the face of challenges from within and without. What the novel brings out is the predicament of an active consciousness, exemplified in the protagonist, Gora who is driven to desperate straits in responding to the stimulus of orthodox revivalism on the one hand, and liberal reformism on the other, a predicament which seems inevitable in the case of any nation or society caught up in the march of historical evolution.

Tagore's novel *The Home and the World* deals with two themes, the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal (1903-08) and the extra marital love affair. The former theme forms the backdrop for the story wherein Tagore depicts how unscrupulous politicians, by their glib talk on patriotism, mislead the people to satisfy their greed and lust. While the first theme has political overtones, the second exposes the murky morality of high society. Through this "Rabindranath threw a veritable

bombshell on the conservative society” and it created such a shattering impact that for “three long years after its publication the critics continued to tear the novel to pieces”. On the basis of the first theme the novel may be viewed in the nationalist perspective.

Depicting the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal along with the portrayal of an impressionable, young housewife’s traumatic passage into the world outside the home and back, the novel carries the spirit of nationalism and humanism. Set against the stormy days of the revolutionary background of 1905 Bengal chocked with the war cries of “Swadeshi” and “Bandemataram”, the novel depicts the autobiographical sketches of three principal characters- Nikhil, his wife Bimala and Sandip, his friend. Bimala, who has lived sheltered life of a Hindu wife, suddenly hears the call of the outside world and thus she is torn between the pull of the “home” and the pull of “world”. Here Tagore points out how “love could come in conflict more narrowly, more fiercely with politics also”. He narrates the poignant story of a woman undergoing a terrible mental tension and turmoil by taking part in the Swadeshi Movement and being torn asunder by the conflicting loyalties to the house and the outside world. In this simple story of a love triangle, he makes Nikhil and Sandip, represent the conflict between idealism and realism, or truth and illusion. In fact, this novel is strongly ideological because of the implications of the critical debate between Gandhism and terrorist politics.

In this novel Tagore portrays the conflict between nationalism and universal manhood vividly and gives the most profound expression to his faith in the perfect independence and freedom for an individual irrespective of any particular nationality. He makes Sandip represent the pugnacious nationalism and narrow minded patriotism of the politically conscious Indians during the Swadeshi Movement. Sandip is as typical Machiavellian patriot who exhorts the people recklessly to burn British goods and resort to violence when opposed.

Tagore four chapters and written in Ceylon in 1934 raised a cloud of protest and controversy since the background of the story is the period of terrorism was an arid episode in Indian politics and its impact on Bengal in particular proved to be disastrous as Tagore had foreseen. Uninhibited emotionalism of the Swadeshi movement was

beginning to reap its bitter harvest. Hundreds of impressionable young Bengals – men and Women were drawn into the terrorist movement, which meant that scores of families were totally reined, many young men paying the penalty with their lives. Other wasted their youth in penal servitude or long periods of detention. Their sacrifices were destined to come to nothing...Tagore always spoke of them with respect. Sasadhar sinha, Social thinking of Rabindranath Tagore.

The time span between 1870 and 1910 saw diverse trends on the socio political scene of Bengal. In the last half of the 19th century, Propagation of Brahmoism was in the ascendant, Hindu revivalists became active in order to counter the onslaught of the nascent Brahmoism. Slowly this Hindu revivalism evolved into Hindu Nationalism as British oppression and tyranny were on the increase.

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## A Study of Women in the Works of Tagore

- B. Sreenivasulu

Rabindranath Tagore's contemporary India was under the British rule. The social conditions of those days were very complex. Especially the women's position was adverse. Social reformers such as Raja Rama Mohan Rai, Eswara Chandra Vidya Sagar, and Kesava Chandra Sen, who were also contemporaries to Tagore, were trying to reform the society especially the women's predicament.

Hinduism in those days, as Max Weber puts it was "A compound of magic, animism and superstition" when it comes to the women's position, in the words of Bepin Chandra Pal "The birth of a girl was unwelcome, her marriage a burden and her widowhood inauspicious". Attempts to kill girl infants at birth were not unusual. Those who escaped this initial brutality were subjected to the violence of marriage at a tender age. Often the marriage was a device to escape social ignominy and marital life did not turn out to be a pleasant experience. An eighty-year-old Brahman in Bengal had as many as two hundred wives, the youngest being just eight years old. Several women hardly have a married life worth the name, since their husbands participated in nuptial ceremonies for a consideration and rarely set eyes on their wives after that. Yet when their husbands died they were expected to commit *sati*, which Raja Ram Mohan Rai described as 'Murder according to every Shasrta'. "If they succeeded in overcoming this social coercion, they were condemned, as widows, to life-long misery, neglect and humiliation... Women even went to the extent of offering themselves to priests to satisfy their carnal pleasures."

These social conditions have a direct bearing on Rabindranath Tagore and his portrayal of women characters reflects the then prevailing conditions in the society. We find such diverse characters jostling together in the story-world of Tagore as the Bangali village girls, Giribala Mrinmayi, Babus of Nayanjore, and the members of the low caste Rui family. Pramathanath Bishi says that no other Bengali writer has given us such a variety of characters as Tagore. It is true that he has depicted mostly the joys and sorrows of middle-class life and drawn a large number of characters from this section of society, being

closer to it, but he is not indifferent to the masses. The people from the lowest caste have received his equal sympathy.

It is worth remembering that it was Tagore who for the first time gave honourable place to the humble and undistinguished fold in our literature. “Up to their time, the ordinary man and woman and more especially the poor and lowly, had not secured admission into our literature.” It was in Rabindranath Tagore’s stories that they were given their rightful place. Once when Tagore was criticized for his class leanings, his rejoinder was, “at one time, month after month, I wrote stories only of village life. I am sure that no such sequence of pictures about rural life had ever before appeared in Bengali literatures.”

Tagore, like Hardy, had an intuitive understanding of woman’s heart. In the galaxy of women he has created, a few deserve special mention. Bindya, the dark little amiable wife reminds us, ‘though the mortal rite of sati is ended, the spirit that led to it is not at all extinct’. Tagore had a deep love for the children and keen understanding of their mind. The secret of the ease with which he could probe into child’s world lay in his capacity to turn back to his childhood. His poems about children are among the best in the world of literature. His play, “The Post Office” does successfully what both Shakespeare and Kalidas failed to do. It brings on the stage a child who neither shows off nor is silly. Some of his great short stories too centre round the boys and girls of various ages. The charming little Mini, with her unceasing babble and irrepressible curiosity, has come to be a representative of the darling of every home the world over. Little Prabha assuming the role of the late mother, Uma secretly taking away her brother’s pen and writing in huge letters on his essay what she desires and Ashu playing the game. According to William Cenkner “One recent study identifies 219 women in Tagore’s short stories, novels, dramas and narrative poems.”

In the order of relationship, the women of Tagore’s fiction are neither primarily romantic figures, mothers, divine mother, nor even objects of desire but social beings growing through human inter-relationships within ordinary Bengali family life. Tagore consistently repudiated the female stereotypes of either goddesses or sex objects. He attacks the social injustices of his day by portraying the oppressed

women who become conscious of the social dimensions and resources of their own personalities. From his first short story, “Beggar Girl” (1877), to his final short story, “The Bad Name” (1941), woman undergoes change in personality within each particular plot and brings transformation to Bengali society and social consciousness. Woman is the most creative transformative factor within social life.

Tagore follows the footsteps of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894), the father of modern Bengali literature, who first introduced to the Bengali literary tradition a fresh perspective on woman and romantic love. Both aspects gradually develop throughout Tagore’s various literary periods. In his early period (1881-1897), his heroines submit to the injustices and hardships of rural village life and Tagore turns to mythological figures to show that woman need not be merely passive. Even so, the heroine of Tagore’s first novel, *Karuna*, was an illiterate. In his second period of writing (1893-1913), probably the most imaginative phase of his life, he portrays the urban and educated woman as a new force in Bengali society. A maiden heroine in “Bachelor’s club”, written in 1900, pleads for equal rights. Of some interest is the fact that the major heroines of Tagore’s novels are childless. Widows are especially important figures, and he uses them to express both the conflict within Bengali society and within woman herself. Binodini is a widow who struggles with her own passion and unfulfilled love; Damini is a widow who rejects social norms and marriages. In his mature period (1914-1941), Tagore’s fictional heroines become the vehicles for an explicit and radical critique of the caste system, untouchability and religious hypocrisy. Woman emerges as a catalytic figure in the dynamics of society, the nation, and even the world; Tagore finally images woman with a global consciousness.

What gives Tagore’s changing concept of woman coherence is the self-assertive and self-reliant character of his heroines. In a short story, “Laboratory”, written in 1940, a mother and daughter break all social conventions and values. The promiscuous daughter Nila never rises to her mother Sohini level of social consciousness, which violates all traditional values for the sake of science. His most powerful women are those who speak of the future and who forge a new personality for women. They are not heroines of the present.



Tagore's women challenge. The female personality challenges Bengali society and, more particularly, challenges the male figures that grow only in relationship to the heroines. The Images are drawn with vivid realism. Tagore ultimately achieves in fiction a realistic image of what women could be and how they could transform male-dominated society. Woman is imaged as a human being in the process of full humanization, and man finds in this image the creative principle of his own growth. "The playmate of the night aspired to be the helpmate of the day," characterizes the image of the woman in Tagore's fiction. No female figure in Tagore's fiction is the holistic woman: even the noblest woman is incomplete and in the process of development. The nature of the creative principle as imaged by Tagore is apparent: creativity seeks greater fullness because it is consistently unfinished.

The suffering of the Bengali wife is a recurrent theme in Rabindranath Tagore's short stories, and it should not escape our notice that the women are much more alive, authentic and attractive than those of men. It seems that Rabindranath Tagore gave a grudging attention to men, and that they are often stupid, insensitive and even ridiculous in his stories. But he went straight into the heart of the women, and discovered for us how much they suffered, how much they sacrificed, how little were they appreciated by the husbands or the family. A large number of his stories centre on the life of the middle classes, their complexities and pretensions, but it is the women – specially suffering women – who are at the centre of the canvas: mothers, wives, sisters and daughters. With a rare knowledge of human psychology he probes the nature of women – their spirit of sacrifice, their nobility, their genuine concern for the happiness of their home, their depth of perception of the finer aspects of life, their deep devotion to certain values.

The character of Kadambini embodies the spirit of sacrifice, nobility and genuine concern for the family and near and dear abundantly in the short story "The Living and the Dead". She has no one in the world, but she wants to be someone. She stays in the house of zamindar Sharadashankar. Suddenly one day she is found dead. For the fear of the police, the zamindar hastily arranges for her funeral in spite of the darkness. Four Brahmin employees of the zamindar quickly

carry the dead body to be burnt. While two of them, keep a watch in the darkness. The other two get back to collect firewood for funeral pyre. Mean while the “corpse” moves. Startled at the movement of corpse the two men run away. When they get back along with the other two for verification of the movement, they find the body missing. To save their skin they declared that the corpse is burnt.

From this point, the portrayal of Kadambini reaches its zenith. The character stays in a continuous and persistent dilemma, whether she is living or dead. Here Tagore tries to show to the world the ugly face of the society. The woman actually does not die. To quote the text “Kadambini had not died: for some reason, her life-function had been suspended- that was all”. When she regains her consciousness, she is not confident enough to get back to zamindar’s house.

This state of desperate and despondent thinking has not struck Kadambini at once in that night. It has been the result of neglect and carelessness and under treatment of Kadambini by the society. She is staying in the house of zamindar and the zamindar is supposed to look after the safety, security and welfare of the people in his zamin. But he fails even to take sufficient care of the very inmates of his house.

Here Tagore exposes to the world that the feudal class does not take care of the lower class. Even the four Brahmin employees who are the only witness for the missing of Kadambini do not try to trace the truth. Infact, the Brahmin community is supposed to spread the truth and guide the society in right direction towards perfection. But they fail to do so. Perhaps this kind of situation prevailing in Tagore’s contemporary India made him pray to the lord to lead his country to the heaven.

“Where Knowledge is free  
Where words come out from the depth of truth  
Where the mind led forward by thee into ever widening  
thoughts and action.”

The saying “woman is the foe of the woman” is declared by the male dominated society. The fact is that the male dominated society has created such a situation for women that they are forced to be permanent dependents on the males. Even when it is necessary, to help the inmate

friends women are forced to weigh their considerations in relation to their ‘family’.

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## **Locating the Self in the Diasporic Space**

**- D. Chaturvedi**

The story “We Are not in Pakistan” set in America focuses on the conflicting relationship between a school girl Kathleen and her grand mother Miriam of a hybrid family of Christian religion. Kathleen’s mother is a Pakistani-American, and her father is an Irish-American. Born in Lahore before partition, Miriam often tries to share her past with Kathleen, her memories associated with the part of undivided India, now called Pakistan. C. Vijayasree observes, “Ethnicity becomes an important concern as one shifts one’s location and becomes a member of a minority community in an alien environment. A shift in location and a change in locational status make one conscious of their ethnic identity” (133).

Kathleen is least interested in the matters about which her granny is highly enthusiastic. The conversations between them often end up in contradicting each other. The generational gap between them makes it difficult for Kathleen to see the logic in her grandmother’s opinions and attitudes. The grandmother tries to pass on the cultural traditions of Pakistan to her granddaughter, but Kathleen often rejects them. The old world views are unwanted and unwelcoming to Kathleen. Miriam, despite her long stay in USA, remains a Pakistani culturally, and Kathleen born and brought up in USA, wants to remain the child of America without the traces of her roots. She wants to free herself from the control of her grandmother and even wishes that her grandmother disappears. Whenever Miriam tries to reprimand, correct or advise Kathleen comes out with the catchy refrain, “We are not in Pakistan.” She is not at all proud of her roots and is ever eager to disassociate from the traditions of the country of her origin. She believes that the association with the cultural traditions of Pakistan deprives her of the kind of freedom the Native American teenagers enjoy.

The conflict between Kathleen and Miriam can be compared to some extent to Usha and Aparna in the short story “Hell-Heaven” of Jhumpa Lahiri. Aparna’s views on preserving the cultural traditions of India are rejected by her teenage daughter Usha. She hates her mother for trying to impose restrictions on her movements.

Asian children find it difficult to strike a balance in the diasporic space as they have to lead a double life, one in school and the other at home. The pressure to switch roles back and forth may lead to psychological stress. R. Radhakrishnan points out, “The two generations have different starting points and different givens. This phenomenon of historical rupture within the ‘same’ community demands careful and rigorous analysis.” (206).

One day grandmother Miriam disappears, and the reason for her disappearance is not known, and she is not traced. She is in touch with the Pakistani immigrants, and she might have decided to stay with one of them for a few days to teach Kathleen a lesson. It may be a strategic response to the not so respectful behaviour of Kathleen. It may be an attempt to make Kathleen realize the significance of grandmother’s presence in her life.

In this story, Baldwin concentrates on the diasporic consciousness and its effects on relationships. This is an open ending story, and the disappearance of grandmother, remains a puzzle. The other important aspect in this story is the plight of the Pakistani immigrants in USA after the destruction of twin towers on 11 Sep 2001. They have to face deportation under one excuse or the other. The immigrant officials check the place of birth and nothing else. Grandmother Miriam’s status is not questioned by the immigrant officials. However, she is marginalised both in her homeland and host land. Being a Christian she belongs to the minority community in Pakistan and being a migrant from Pakistan she belongs to the ethnic minority in USA.

Grandma Miriam’s lifestyle, her network of connections with Pakistani immigrants in USA, and her repeated attempts to make her grand daughter follow the cultural practices of Pakistan are all part of her survival techniques in the diasporic space. The story ends with the profound statement. “‘Everyone’s connected to everyone,’ Kathleen tells the Muslim girl. ‘We just need to figure out how’” (Baldwin 159).

The frequent questions of her class mates about her country of origin often trouble Kathleen as it is not enough to say that she is an American. Her features are different. She has to further explain that her

grandmother is from Pakistan. Her experience as a member of a hybrid family in USA, her grandmother's repeated corrective measures, the issues related to her racial identity amidst peers, and the Iranian school girl's isolation as no other girl in the school speaks to her make Kathleen contemplate on the fundamental aspect of the self and the universe. There is nothing in the universe which has no relation to the other. Those who lead isolated lives too connect themselves to others through their thoughts and feelings.

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## **Pinki Virani's Justification for Euthanasia by Attributing the Consequences to Brutality of Rape in *Aruna's Story*: A Study**

**- G. Aruna Reddy**

Pinki Virani, a national award winner, a journalist-cum-author, a human-rights activist, a controversial social campaigner, is a single-handed literary worker, has won critical acclaim for her four bestselling books "Once was Bombay" "*Aruna's Story*"; "Bitter Chocolate: Child Sexual Abuse in India" (which won the National Award) and "Deaf Heaven"

Pinky Virani was born in Dongri, Mumbai, India, on January 30, 1959 to Gujarati Muslim parents. She is married to noted journalist, public intellectual and author of 'Accidental India', Shankar Ayer. 'Deaf Heaven' is also the first work of fiction in the Indian subcontinent. Her father owned a shop, and her mother was a housewife. She attended school in Mumbai, Pune and Mussoorie. She went to the US to study for a Masters in Journalism, from Columbia University, on the Aga Khan Foundation scholarship. She did an internship at The Sunday Times, where she reported extensively on the race riots in Britain. She was recently recognized by the Indian government for her work in the field of women's empowerment and social development. Her tireless campaigning for human dignity has led to landmark laws for two of the most vulnerable times of a human being's life -- in the beginning as a child, and at the end as a terminally ill patient.

*Aruna's Story*<sup>1</sup> is about the rape of a nurse that left her in a coma. A leading critic described it as "India's answer to Truman Capote's 'In Cold Blood'." *Aruna's Story* is an account of former a hardworking, independent, and headstrong woman nurse in Mumbai, who was engaged to a doctor was brutally raped and assaulted by a coworker with a dog chain at her own hospital leaving her in a persistent vegetative state. Her attacker served a few years in prison but was never convicted of rape. As Virani takes initiation to plead for mercy killing of Aruna by asserting 'One man. Plus a savage twist of one chain. And the thirty seconds for his sperm to release' should not 'equal one broken woman'. Though in the beginning Supreme Court rejects, it later allowed passive euthanasia to be practiced in India, a big step that

availed because of this one woman and her even bigger. Everyone will do the best they can for Aruna Shanbaug, but the times are such that their best will just not be enough. Few laws have been drafted to regulate the delivery of death.

Though many people argue<sup>2</sup> that the decision to kill oneself is a personal and private matter, one that society has no right to be concerned with. However, this is said with the false assumption that everyone who makes the decision to commit suicide is doing so in a sane and rational matter. For the majority of people who commit suicide, the ultimate goal is not death. A recent study taken from the Journal of the American Medical Association states that, “ninety-five percent of the people who commit suicide, or request it, are clinically depressed. In Aruna case it is mental shock that caused her to force to think about suicide. Speechlessness following a rape can go deeper. Aruna Shanbaug's continuing silence is not the outcome of fear or shame: she cannot speak at all. That "muscle in her mouth" with which she played a subordinate for not doing his job no longer receives any signals from her brain. They have been knocked out. When Sohanlal Bhartha Walmiki choked her with a dog chain before raping and robbing her, oxygen supply to parts of her brain was cut off, and she became bereft not only of the power of speech but of the power to express herself in any other way.

Aruna's right of a competent, terminally ill person to avoid excruciating pain and embrace a timely and dignified death bears the sanction of history and is implicit in the concept of ordered liberty. She also became cortically blind, lost the use of her limbs and the control of her muscles, and suffered a kind of emotional disability, which is manifested in inappropriate laughter and bouts of screaming. Her memory and most of her other mental faculties were also gone. Now 50 years old, she exists in a kind of semi-conscious limbo. Solicitously looked after by successive batches of the nursing community and the doctors and the administration of Mumbai's KEM Hospital where she worked as an exemplary staff nurse a quarter century ago, she is permanently bed-ridden, curled up in an awkward foetal position

The evidence for the emotional impact of assisted dying on physicians shows that euthanasia and assisted suicide are a far cry from



being 'easier options for the caregiver' than palliative care, as some critics practice have suggested<sup>3</sup>. The emotional impact caused by 'that "rapist-as-animal", Pinki Virani's description begins awkwardly:

"His eyes glittering in the dark, the man waits. He touches the dog chain, it is there. Waiting to be used. Its metal links feel cold to the fingers, but cruelly comforting."<sup>4</sup>

Apart from the variety of practical consequences, whether one is a supporter of a positive or a negative right of self-determination regarding euthanasia is significant in principle. A positive right of self-determination regarding euthanasia cannot be introduced without simultaneously acknowledging that, in certain cases provided for in law, society is duty-bound to take the life of a human being. A negative right of self-determination regarding euthanasia, on the other hand, can be introduced on the grounds that euthanasia, under certain circumstances provided for in law, is a matter for the judgement and conscience of the individual. The fundamental difference is that the first form of legalization, more so than the second, turns euthanasia into a communal, general matter, which must be acknowledged by society as a whole as being worthy of aspiring to ethically.

Writers investigative mind searches for proof hence provided a carefully controlled, step-by-step description of a horrific ravishment.<sup>5</sup> It not only casts perceptive light on the motive but sensitively refrains from injuring the victim any more by this retelling. Pinki Virani stops short of describing the act. Throughout the otherwise graphically detailed book, she holds herself back whenever there is a danger of crossing the line into the voyeuristic exploitation of a real-life character. This delicacy extends to all the characters in the book, except Sohanlal. In the book, Aruna, who is of a fastidious and righteous temperament, tells her friend:

"That other horrible sweeper Sohanlal ... steals the dogs' mutton, like a vulture... I am just waiting for some proof. The next time... I will report him immediately."<sup>6</sup>

By logically arguing how the failure of law and police is also

another reason why women in India better commit suicide when raped. Searching for confirmation of her hunches about the nature of the run-in between the two, Pinki Virani presents the actual statements of Sohanlal's fellow cleaners, who reported to the police that Sohanlal had said that he would "take revenge by molesting her" and that he would "spend one month's salary to sleep with her." Such confirmations vindicate many of the writer's flights of imagination. They also provoke thought about the deep-seated resentments that sometimes erupt into crime, when they cannot express themselves otherwise.

By comparing rape as stealing flesh like a hunting animal, Virani questions the need of survival of a rapist. The doctor's assessment of the patient's suffering is not the supreme criterion, and self-determination should not be viewed exclusively as the patient's ability to consider and request euthanasia. Instead, it can be asserted that the perceived, limited opportunity a modern health service offers for exerting influence over decisions regarding one's own death is an integral part of the actual suffering for many autonomous patients who are incurably ill or even dying. Against this backdrop it can be argued that euthanasia is an option that makes particular sense for patients with unbearable suffering who are concurrently in a state where their ability for self-determination is intact<sup>7</sup>. By its very nature, euthanasia can be said to be a last resort that should be limited to those who have an altogether special need. In the book, Aruna, who is of a fastidious and righteous temperament, tells her friend:

"That other horrible sweeper Sohanlal ... steals the dogs' mutton, like a vulture... I am just waiting for some proof. The next time... I will report him immediately." <sup>8</sup>

Aruna had been assigned to the dog surgery research laboratory, where Sohanlal was a "tempoorwari" cleaner. In the book he is rough with the animals, drags them along with their chains. When she upbraids him (with "ice in her voice"), he says:

"Sister, you worry so much about dog hunger and dogs getting strangled. What difference does it make... when

doctors kill them here?"<sup>9</sup>

That is when the "muscle in her mouth" (what a phrase!) utters some immensely loaded words. She warns him to "keep to his limits" or he will be "sacked on the spot". She has already been warned by her cousin Ramdas of the possible consequences. He asks her to consider the fact that he is poor and "therefore hungry all the time."

As all her novels have earned her praise as a writer who is willing to take literary risks and experiments with literary arrangements, Pinki Virani is undoubtedly the best artist who is exploiting the art for art's sake and delineating the real meaning of literature. Pinki Virani has narrated a brutalization through meticulous and persistent research. According to the research<sup>10</sup>, the story is both sad and angry, scathing, restrained, an amazing effort in retelling a true-life tragedy.

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## Casualties of Freedom: V. S. Naipaul's *In a Free State*

- V. B. Chithra

The novel according to Bakhtin is the only mode left in world which "...reflects the tendencies of a new world still in its making."<sup>1</sup> It brings socio-cultural experiences. Naipaul's vision of the world, from his earliest works to the latest novel, *Magic Seeds* reveals his ability to translate the tendencies of one world into the history and story of others. Naipaul, always is haunted by his troubled destiny as a dislocated man culturally and historically. For him, fictional form means a 'sharpening and enhancing of transcendent aspects of one's ethnic and historical experience.' His rootlessness helps Naipaul to describe various aspects of human behaviour particularly that of Third World societies. His novels deal with the facts of confrontation between the third and first worlds in the colonial and post-colonial situations from the 1950s onwards.

The single change wrought over literary output in 1950s and 60s was the post-war liberation of ex-colonies. The decline of British Imperialism and the rise of American power bloc resulted in mass-migration and expatriation. This gave new shape to individual and national cultural experiences. In English literature and the arts, the colonial control found a new voice. The writers in exile have got the new ideas and their literary works have got new identities. Writing in a tradition which is not one's own and in a language which is one's own by acquisition constitutes the colonial self in its duality, in its ambivalence which form the core of the novel of colonial consciousness. For such writers, the problem of becoming a writer is in itself an assertion of independence and identity. The search for his roots became one of the major themes of West Indian writers. As Naipaul says: "living in a borrowed culture, the West Indian, more than most, needs writers to tell him who he is and where he stands."<sup>2</sup> His West Indian and East Indian elements of his personality make him an outsider even in England. After many years of his stay in England he says: "living here has been a kind of castration really."<sup>3</sup> This kind of painful experience due to lack of tradition remains the hallmark of his fiction.

*In a Free State* (1971) Naipaul's short novel, deals with the problems of expatriates – barbarism, degradation of personal freedom,

the exploitation and violence – in a newly independent African state besides linking the concepts of rebellion, flight danger, homelessness, dependency and fame. As Paul Theroux has remarked all these self-exiled people are as described by Naipaul in his prologue, “casualties of freedom.” Their lives are like Singh’s in *The Mimic Men*, altered by escape, but unlike Singh they can’t assess the difference. Their existence is like that of the souls in a classical underworld, as a series of purgatorial circlings. None is as intelligent as Singh or as resourceful as Mr Biswas or Ganesh. The novel reflects Naipaul’s travels through Asia, Africa, Europe and the America’s in the wide variety of places in which the stories are set and the focus on the advantages and dangers to those who travel, become expatriates or who are homeless. They appear to be uprooted, moving about “in a free state”. *In a Free State*, a work of his maturity contains three short stories – *One out of Many*, *Tell Me Who to Kill* and *In a Free State* – enclosed by a personal prologue and an epilogue. All these are compact in structure and vigorous in style.

In the prologue, an English tramp, “an old man, with a tremulous worn face and wet blue eyes,” is treated cruelly by his fellow passengers on a Greek steamer crossing from Piraeus to Alexandria. “What’s nationality these days?” declaims the tramp. “I myself, I think of myself as a citizen of the world.”<sup>4</sup> This clearly gives us the picture of a pathetic tramp who was treated badly even on his home-town. The steamer on its journey from Piraeus to Alexandria, with its motley cargo of passengers from every part of the world, is a perfect image for this book, about people who become “casualties of freedom.” In the epilogue, “The Circus at Luxor” Naipaul retaliates, at an incident, in Egypt, where beggar boys scrounging for food from Italian tourists are stage-managed by the whip of the camel driver, who puts up the show for the tourists’ photographs. Naipaul feels that in this world, distinctions are no longer in terms of white and black, colonizer, and colonized. The epilogue completes the cyclic design by suggesting the beginning of a new chapter in the history of imperialism. As always, however, personal freedom is paramount and political freedom seems largely irrelevant in the struggle for it. In an interview Naipaul has expressed the view that “the ‘iniquities’ of post- colonial societies are possibly even greater than those of colonial life.”<sup>5</sup> The prologue and epilogue are extracts from Naipaul’s journals where, as traveller, he

witnesses two acts of debasement, and feels the helplessness of his own anger.

The first two stories are set outside the third world and only the third story *In a Free State* is set within the colonial society. Homelessness is seen as a universal feature of the modern world, afflicting all races. Naipaul himself has said the book is about “power and powerlessness,”<sup>6</sup> and the powerlessness of all the central victim-figures is a consequence of their homeless freedom. The central characters in this book achieve a greater degree of freedom than Naipaul has allowed any of his characters previously. Boxill suggests that “his main characters upto now from Ganesh to Mr Stone have been pinned down by historical, environmental, economic and social stakes.”<sup>7</sup>

Naipaul as a colonial mirrors a universal condition in the modern world. As Gordon Rohler puts it: “The colonial man has become an icon of the displaced modern man.”<sup>8</sup> The five pieces of the book form a unity to inform a clear design. The prologue mirrors the themes to be explored in the three stories, the epilogue sums up the conclusions to be drawn from them. On the whole in this book the placelessness is global. Naipaul had attracted the interest of American publishers by writing this book and he won the Booker Prize, as was his subsequent book, *Guerillas*, another novel that has been praised for its exceptionally brilliant writing and insight. Both these books established Naipaul as a true master of literary fiction.

As one critic wrote, “For sheer abundance of the talent, there can hardly be a writer alive today who surpasses V.S.Naipaul whatever we may want in a novelist is to be found in his books an almost Conradian gift for tensing a story, a serious involvement with human issues, a supple English prose, a hard-edged wit, a personal vision of things. Best of all, he is a novelist unafraid of using his brains....He is the world’s writer, a master of language and perception, our sardonic blessing.”<sup>9</sup> Though he hails from a remote corner of the Third World, Naipaul belongs to the mainstream of the modern English novel. There remains hardly a literary award that has not come his way. Naipaul’s eminence as a writer of world status is really in no need of further attestation.

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## Vijay Tendulkar's Play *The Vultures*: A Treatise on Human Nature

- M. Sambaiah & K. Sandhya

From rock age to rocket age and from jungle ethics to cybernetics man explored the enigmas of the world and seems to control everything, but unfortunately not his own self. Although, the search for existence of self, purpose of life and nature of human personality is a long standing issue in the human history, needless to say that philosophy, psychology, science, religion and literature have presumed the ways for the betterment of it. Almost all of the above said tried to see the bright side of the human nature but a few artists only can directly bring us into large, close and fresh relations with the life and world. Tendulkar, who is named for his rage of a radical consciousness, for the first time, shows us that the real life as well as drama is dark and dirty. He feels that drama is no longer about putting make-up and delivering romantic lines. In *The Vultures*, the abuse being exchanged between a father and his sons is shocking. So is the naked language of the market place, and even the brothel, being used to describe human relations. It is like a slap on the face of all genteel pretensions so far associated with theatre. In *The Vultures*, the content was neglected but the language and idiom was criticized.

The paradoxical quality of human nature is not only the rejection of their evil mentality, but also the exhibition of manipulated outward behaviour. Outwardly they are saints, but inwardly they are sinners and sadists. Tendulkar's observations are penned out of unforgettable memories witnessed in his childhood days.<sup>1</sup> For him violence is all around us. When asked why there are scenes of atrocity, of bizarre sadism in some of his plays like *The Vultures*, Tendulkar reacts:

“In *Gidhade*, the cruelty is great because it deals with an exceptional family. As for what you call perversion; let us accept that human existence is full of it. We shut our eyes to it, or worse, don't recognize it when we can come across its manifestations. Does sadism exist only in the police officer or the state machine? I know many people who enjoy torturing their wives; it can be



physical and mental. They are outwardly decent folk and you don't suspect they have this dark side. So, when I deal with masochism or homosexuality, I am drawing your attention to something near you.”<sup>2</sup>

The play *Gidhade (The Vultures)* was produced in May 1970 and published in 1971. By using analogy of vultures the play dramatizes deep-seated unmitigated depravity, perversity, greed and diabolic villainy in the ravenous members of humanity. The play portrays a family of human vultures which consists of papa vulture, his illegitimate son, Rajaninath, Ramakant his elder son and his wife Rama, his second son Umakant and daughter Manik. Almost all characters in the play are corrupt and violent except Rajaninath and Rama. The symbol of vultures is used constantly in referring to the characters, their action and also the screaming of vultures at the end of almost every scene, where there is necessary. Violence as an inevitable ingredient in human nature is an experienced reality to Tendulkar.<sup>3</sup>

*The Vultures* has a two-act multiple scene structure. In the sequences, the chronological movement of the play is also suspended. Scene I of Act I starts with Rajaninath poems. His deep empathy for the victims of human viciousness flows like an undercurrent throughout the play. Rajaninath has two roles in the play. In the first place he is the chorus, for it is from his songs that we know of the past and present of the Pitale family. Pappa Hari Pitale and his brother Sakharam build up a huge business firm called “The Hari Sakharam Company”<sup>4</sup> — a construction firm. It is through sheer hard work they achieve this feat. As days pass by Pappa wrists the company from his brother by means of treachery and false law suits. As a result, Sakharam Pitale finds himself on the street. As a universal law like cause-effect and as old as human history — ‘as you sow, so you reap’ — Pappas’ sons and daughter plot against their father and waiting to drive him out one day.

Through Manik character, Tendulkar reminds us how the meaningless pursuit for pleasure makes her of easy virtue. She prowls and scavenges relentlessly through a variety of life styles in search of that all-fulfilling treasure. For although such terms as progress and wealth are common in the twenty first modern socio-economic lexicons, the reality is that the millions of people, though blessed by

material abundance and dynamic options in life, still seek liberation from their personal enslavement to habits and from pursuits that have brought disintegration within and fragmentation without. Manik's intention of being alone which results out of her feeling of insecurity is the essence of modern man. Novelist and writer Thomas Wolf, having himself lived an emotionally turbulent life, articulated one of the most deeply felt aches within the human heart:

“The whole conviction of my life now rests upon the belief that loneliness, far from being a rare and curious phenomenon; peculiar to me and to a few other solitary people is the central and inevitable feature of human existence.”<sup>5</sup>

The tendency of portraying a clash between the private loyalties of the household and the public responsibilities of living in society can be seen in Tendulkar's characterization. Hari Pitale is also a smoker. He doesn't have any respect for his two sons. He expresses his disgust for his selfish children of becoming 'ghost' and 'sit on their chest!' [209]. He is considered as a 'confounded nuisance' by his son and eats other's food and 'tries to act smart.' His diseased wife is an enemy to him and left three children with him. But he becomes a burden to them. Ramakant tells his brother Umakant that “a mangy dog would have made a better father.” [213] Umakant is only too ready to agree with his brother. And all these in the presence of their own father! They both hate their own sister Manik. For him lying for business is a convenience. He believes that money can buy anything like lawyers, courts and justice. Even when Ramakant and Umakant talk to their own sister about her affair with the Rajah of Hondur, they use obscene language, which is suggestive of their incestuous nature. Though Ramakant and Umakant have already received their share of the father's wealth, their plan to squeeze him to his best penny and planning a murderous assault on him to drive him out is a kind of heinous honour that could be given to a father. It is a rare incident one could witness in human history.

Rajaninath helplessly watches the ordeals that Rama undergoes in the house of vultures. The love and affection between Rama and Rajaninath is a kind of coincident that almost arises out of a sense of

helplessness and an attempt to escape from the ugliness of the internal and interpersonal family violence. Rama is like a helpless, submissive tender little bird among the vultures. Here, audience can see the similarity between the vulturic male characters in *The Vultures* and that of *Silence! The Court is in Session*. Tendulkar himself underscored the similarity between *Shantata* and *Gidhade*.<sup>6</sup>

Man is not only constantly failing in defining pleasure principle but also searching for it in wrong places. The people, who believe that they can enjoy the life with monitory pleasures, become more and more miserable in their pursuit. All the Pitale's drink, and liquor flows like a river in the house. It is liquor that makes them violent and ruthless towards one another. After driving away Sakham, Ramakant, Umakant and Manik make their Pappa drink to extract the truth about the money. The sons pretend to fight each other with the father getting trapped between them. Pappa gets injured. Though he defends "There's no more you devils! There'sn't!", later in order to escape from further assault, he admits to them that he has deposited some money in the Punjab Bank. In most violent and cursive way they get signed on the chequebook. However, his refusal to part with the money enrages his children who try to kill him.

Tendulkar portrays the barrenness of Rama and Rajaninath through their utterances. Rama declares to Rajaninath her intention of immolating herself. Rajaninath, sensitive to Rama's yearnings to become a mother, reacts positively. Rama's relationship with Rajaninath in the play has been interpreted and understood in diverse ways. According to Dr. Shriram Lagoo there is something archetypal and primordial in this embrace.<sup>7</sup> Veena Noble Dass observes 'an affair'<sup>8</sup> between them. As an approver, Kalindi Deshpande, tries to establish an eternal truth in this connection. She feels, "Because of this archetypal appeal although Rama's action may appear adultery in the eyes of the world, the reader/spectator does not disapprove of her"<sup>9</sup>

Tendulkar touches the most crucial issues of the contemporary society. Tendulkar as an exponent of modern psyche and human nature makes it clear that 'coercive abortions' and 'unjustifiable feticides' are the results of illegal relationships from any either party. He seems to have an opinion that any society which can tolerate these things has

been ceased to be civilized and signs of decadence. As Ramakant and Umakant exhaust their share of money and want some more, together they decide to blackmail the Raja of Hondur who is in love with Manik an impregnated her. When they fail to execute their plan, they think ‘son of a Hondur’s right in our clutches’ [244] So, they break Manik’s room open and Ramakant kicks Manik’s belly hard She aborts, and in sheer agony runs away. As it is felt by Gowri Ramnarayan “Each time we read him, he lives in the present,”<sup>10</sup>

Rama intuitively knows that material prosperity may give satisfaction but cannot be a solution to despair. Rama feels claustrophobic and says to her husband, “This house is devouring me.” [249] She begs him to be with her. This paradoxical nature of humanity can be clearly seen in the words Ramakant, who is intoxicated by egoism and male chauvinism. He cannot perceive the wisdom of his wife’s advice; nor can he understand her agony. So, he says to her:

RAMAKANT: “Look here, Rama! In this house, we’re not accustomed to listening to any smartness from woman! No man in our family’s been a bloody hen pecked husband, what? I know very well indeed what to do, what not to do. No need for a woman to teach me sense.” [251]

As individual degradation is increasing, the gradual disintegration of the family is also clearly seen. Ramakant becomes pauper. Ramakant and Umakant quarrel for sharing the business and property. Umakant learns that there is a double mortgage on their house. But Umakant demands him to settle their account about their father’s hidden property, their sister’s money and mother’s jewels. Then, he tells his brother that his wife is carrying in her womb the child of Rajaninath with chapter and verse. This enrages Ramakant, and he scolds Umakant and twists his hand. So, Umakant goes out. Pappa collides with Ramakant who has been eavesdropping. So, he runs away. Manik comes to the garage triumphantly announcing that she has succeeded in aborting Rama by black magic. Talking about the belief system of Pitale’s family Veena Noble Dass observes: “The play is of lower middle class beliefs in superstitions and black magic and whose intellect is blunted by their sadistic temperament.”<sup>11</sup>

Thus even when he is using a lot of violence in the play *The Vultures*, it is not really violence, because he also depicts how the characters rise above the brutality and violence. His persons are not quantity, but quality. Thus Govind Nihalani remarks:

“Tendulkar plays home this unforgettable quality to them they remain with you, grew into your psyche and sometimes even haunt you. And you never forget them because you know somewhere deep down, that it is the truth.”<sup>12</sup>

Thus, today, forty years later, it is possible to judge the play with objectivity. When Tendulkar was asked whether such vultures like characters exist in our society and also some incidents occur, like two abortions that take place in the play without any further implications, he said that: “There are some exceptions. We do not come across this often. But looking from another angle these characters do exist in society.”<sup>13</sup> The play is a ruthless dissection of human nature revealing its inherent tendencies to violence, avarice, selfishness, sensuality and sheer wickedness.

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## Caste as Tragic Flaw of Dalit: A Study of Joseph Macwan's *The Stepchild*

- S. Bharathiraja

Baldick defines that *Hamartia* is a Greek word for “error” or “failure,” used by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (4<sup>th</sup> century BCE) to designate the false step that leads the protagonist in a tragedy to his or her downfall. The term has often been translated as ‘tragic flaw,’ but this misleadingly confines the cause of the reversal of fortunes to some personal defect of character, whereas Aristotle’s emphasis was rather upon the protagonist’s action, which could be brought about by misjudgement, ignorance, or some other cause. This paper examines Aristotle’s emphasis upon protagonists’ “some other cause,” i.e. “caste as tragic flaw.” Joseph Macwan’s *The Stepchild* tells the simple tale of the weaver community of Vankars in Ratnapaar, Gujarat, and the shame of ostracism they bear because of high caste Patels. The protagonists are Valji, Teeha and Methi. African American tragic characters’ tragic flaw is Race; but, Dalits’ tragic flaw is “Untouchability.”

The fraternal bond between Teeha and Valji is not an ordinary friendship; in different ways, each sacrifices his life and joys for the others. The romantic love between Teeha and Methi is not common sensual attraction; it evolves into a purer, platonic love where each sacrifices his/her desires out of respect for a cause. Joseph Macwan also presented other major and minor Vankars -- the philosophical Bhavaankaka, the tender Kanku, the gentle Dano, the noble Gokal and so on -- as if to show that with their integrity and high ethics, the so-called untouchables are far superior to their oppressors and exploiters.

In *The Stepchild*, certain characters like Teeha, Valji and Methi who react firmly to the aged old hierarchal social order. They were protagonists of Dalit Literature. One day, they went to Shilapaar for their auction on selling of weaved clothes. Teeha had sold all his clothes by the eleven o’clock in the afternoon, he had managed to sell about twenty five piece of clothes. But Valji’s bundled had only remained a few pieces of material and handkerchiefs. They taught that to selling the remaining clothes by vending in different places on the way to their home. The May month heat was scorching, they felt too much of hungry so that they took breakfast in a leisurely hour. They were thinking

something and wrapping their remaining clothes, at last two swatches had gone.

“C-r-a-ash” a sound Teeha heard. Methi -- a low-caste young girl was carrying a pot of water on her head came to attack by a few upper caste youth hid behind the parapet of the building in an opposite auction place. They struck their pot by throwing stone. Her whole body became drenched completely. It is her caste that is her flaw. By the time, Teeha moved towards Methi as soon as the pot shattered. Methi’s companions and stood at some distance from them. Mathi was wet from head to feet. She stood rooted to the ground. The upper caste youths’ eyes roved over Methi’s breast and navel visible through her wet clothes, because the woman was an untouchable’s community in that village. So that bastard wanted to humiliate them in public place. Look at this caste that became a weak and means of under-estimation. Teeha was a low-caste man and an outsider was openly hit a Patel that is a burning issues. But a low-caste girl was assaulted is considered as sign of upper caste pride.

It was not simply having done. The Kshatriyas was irked. The fellow Teeha hit Megha Patel. The Patel had brought off fifty Praraiyas and instigated them. Dhoolsingh Thakore had no choice but to sit in the judgment place. Patel’s boys were bent upon doing away with Teeha in the village-square. Upper caste people wanted to rob his money as well as the unsold goods. They would also serve another purpose. It would appear as if he began the fight at the square and when it got bad, fled leaving his stuff behind. They are hoping to kill and ignite a fear at his village.

Since born in a weaker section, women were raped even on the evening of their wedding days. Marriage-rape is another brutal social injustice adhered by upper caste men. This weaker caste had endured it all out of powerlessness. What else could it do? Teeha was born in the same caste, then why did not vex only him? Just once had they had a glimpse of each in the main bazaar? Methi was buying a *saree* and the shopkeeper had smiled in an obnoxious manner. She was irked and Teeha had done with his auction, turned to the shopkeeper.

Usually, the least atrocity of upper caste is setting on fire to the least properties of Dalits. It is the evidence of *The Stepchild*. The next



day there was news about various kinds of damages had done in Moti's fields (Methi's father) and also many other farmers fields. Since Moti's field was on the outskirts of the village. He used to keep his haystacks in a make-shift store room and bring it to home in the month of May. His haystacks were set on fire. Heera Khana's mango tree trucks were mutilated overnight. Asha Harkha's heavy mango tree trucks were missing and axes and dhariyas went through Soma Tarshi's five years old mango trees. Upper caste people and Patels had blinded with anger, they destroyed three or four generation of Dalits source of livelihood in a single night. They hung a threatening note to the people full sight:

If you have anything to do with any of your community members in Ratnapaar or let any of them enter here, that will be your end. You will be thrown out of the village, without even a drop of water from the lake. If you wish to live in this village harmoniously, then let Moti Dhula and Heera Khana be ostracized and made to answer for their conduct! (31)

The Patels employed the low-castes people for the odd seasonal works. They worked and earned wages from Patels' farm lands. But the wages were too stopped after Teeha's fight with Patels in this village. Moti and Heera Khana's were considering as a social respectable person. The community members could not harass them as yet. But they would last one pressure from the Patels increased, once the Patels ruled out for them all the possibilities of their work. They brought a few persons from the village. Nobody from their wretched caste would think twice before ex-communicating Moti and Heera. The situation had still not reached at one point of preventing them. They were drawing water from the village lake. The Patel did not go to these limits because of Dhoolsingh Thakore and his tenants. It is what the social discrimination. Dalits claimed the rights, but excommunicated. Is this justice? Is caste a flaw?

Patels' evil intention is to rape Methi so that she could not show her face even to anybody else including her lover Teeha. Raping is revenge. There was no punishment worse than this. They had toyed with the idea of raping Methi and teaching a lesson to Teeha. Again Dalit women are the major target of upper caste men to spoil the

prestige of Dalits. Patels called Methi's child-marriage-husband Chunthia to an acquaintance's house in Keradia. They realized that in the very first meeting and he was far from manageable.

Dalit women had been killed in the baby delivery time. Doctors and nurses from Charitable Hospital had always been more willing to help the upper castes people than Dalits. Coming to the village was a nuisance for them. As a result, some contagious diseases infected either mother or the new born body. Sometimes the Doctors and nurses carelessness and shoddiness led to their death, people believed that it was predetermined. Hence younger pregnant women for the first time they were very apprehensive and had nightmares. For the most of the villages, nobody was more qualified midwife to attend their deliveries. Except Methi, they needed a strong, capable and skilful person to be good midwife. Many pregnant women breathed long during their first delivery. The hospital in the town was ten miles away from Shillapaar and at odd an hours. It was not possible to reach the town hospital and to find out the transport easily.

Teeha was being targeted for revenge by Patels. Teeha ducked and hold in his stick. In that tug-of-war, the village head defeated and embarrassment. Two of his front teeth broke and he was covered with in full blood. Mohan was Teeha's son. He had accompanied with his father to hold the other end of the bale for display, fled for his life. Eight to ten young Patels came to crashing down upon Teeha with sticks and punches. They left Teeha was a half-dead; two policemen were seated near the square. They did watch their fight as "Babar Masque Demolition." Finally they dragged him there and beat his remaining life out of his body and threw the blood died body to the outside.

On hearing the news from Teeha's son Mohan, Gokul, Kanku and Methi rushed to the village square. A few others followed by them on seeing Bhavaan Bhagat also went there and making a stretcher out of a bed sheet, they brought him into his home. Methi took the palanquin directly to her house. Teeha's ears, nose and mouth were still bleeding. His eyelids were inflamed; his body was swollen with continuous beatings. Bhagat gave some herbal medicine to him. But Teeha couldn't regain his consciousness till in the evening. Dana came back from the town. He went cold on seeing his condition. Kanku

alerted him that doesn't lose courage like this. Let's take him to the hospital.

The doctor at the Charitable Trust Hospital absolutely refused to admit Teeha. It was a criminal case. Doctors told them that you did take him either to the Public hospital in Kheda or Anand. They refused to give treatment to this sort of case. Bhavaan suggested away that. We would take him by cart to Anand. Dana, you would bring Master. He was in a dilemma but then he said firmly that I was not going to move from his side. Gokal did go along with Jaggu. He knew Master's house in Vadodara and then come directly to Anand.

Bhavaan pounded some herbals and put in Teeha's mouth but he was unable to swallow it properly. They laid him in the cart on three or four cotton mattresses. Methi, Kanku, Bhagat, Dana and a few other people walked behind the cart. The cart reached Anand at dawn. Master had already reached there before them. First of all, he went straight to the police station. The police said in no uncertain terms. The encounter took place in Ratnapaar. Therefore we could not register this case. You did go to Umreth then I would get papers ready to admit him into the hospital here.

The doctors would not ready to co-operate on grounds of humanitarian concern or that of Teeha's. Grave condition, Master knew their reasons. He came back disappointed. Dana suggested that Master should we take him to Kheda? There were also no differences at all Dana. Dhelavala was the Minister. Gandhism disappeared with Gandhiji. Even the D.S.P would not be willing to help, nevertheless let's try. But even a single taxi-driver was not ready to go to Kheda with Teeha's consciousness body in the car. If he died on the way, they did be in trouble that was their ultimate explanation.

Finally the parking the car underneath a Neem tree and they took him with this car, Dana and Master rushed to Kheda in a car. The D.S.P also used the legal argument; lodge a complaint in the police station near your locality. If they did not register in this case then come back to here! When Master described Teeha's condition in English and made an appeal on humanitarian grounds he retorted to answer. We had an order someone quickly in an angry and fury all the way from

Mumbai. He was a troublesome fellow and kept sticking in his neck out. Thank your stars that the village head had not lodged a complaint against him for assault, “Go away” (p.228).

Defeated and tried, they returned to Anand. By the time Teeha was in a critical condition. Come let's take him to the Mission hospital. Bhagat suggested that the white doctor felt sympathy on him but he was also helpless in admitting a case of physical violence. Yet he examined him. His abdomen, back, chest and head received fatal blows and there was a lot of blood loss as well. After his an elaborate examination, the doctor informed them that you brought him too late here and there was no hope of survival. Only after the post-mortem report it was considered as murder case. Master knew that, the police refused to take the complaint against Vankar caste. What could be done?

Master did not consider that it was an appropriate discussion further; in this case women lost all their courage. At six in the evening, Teeha's body was put into the cart once again, and everyone walked towards Ratnapaar. All through the journey, everyone was wordless. His lifeless body arrived at Methi's veranda at 2.30 in the night. Ratan was taking the lantern, Gokal looked at uncle's lolling head and let out a scream 'Ma...this...was...gone...Ma' Kanku felt unconscious on hearing his woeful, bad and extreme cry. Methi dashed her head against the pillar and Bhavaan Bhagat let out a sigh. His heart stopped beating exactly a half way. Our Teeha died on the way. He wiped his eyes. Dana's lament shook the village people and in on time. The entire village people gathered there. In the article *The Stepchild*, a Front-runner of Radical Dalit Ideology,” Krupa K. Gandhi says:

The language of the novel - *The Stepchild* is as Limbale has suggested in his essay, essentially rural and teemed with the colloquial words. But the major difference cited by Limbale in his essay is of radical element of which a Dalit narrator has taken care of while narrating the story of oppression and intimidation. But narrative in this remarkable novel cannot be claimed as of rural background alone since the agony of Teeha and his Vankar (weaver) community is deeply interwoven in it. Moreover the narrator's voice is also in colloquial tone. Because of this trait the novel differs from the other novels consisting of the rural background e.g. Pannalal Patel's *Manavi ni*

Bhavai. Limbale argues in his essay that it is the aversion for the established unequal social system on which Dalit literary have started to express in a radical fashion and hence such type of writing as Limbale specifically has termed “Dalit Literature” (23).

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**The Predicament of Women in Doris Lessing's  
*The Golden Notebook***

**- S. B. Radhika Bai**

Doris (May) Lessing is a Post-modern British woman novelist, poet, playwright, librettist, biographer, short story writer, the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2007, comes before us as a major woman novelist who has written eloquently about women's lives. Doris Lessing was the eleventh woman and the oldest person to ever receive the Nobel Prize in Literature. In 2008, *The Sunday Times* ranked her the fifth place on a list of "The 50 greatest British Writers since 1945". She is often considered as an outspoken post-modern feminist who has probed the inner lives of women and spoken out against political injustice. She depicts the world as a terrible place, people by terrorists, in which the women can be as violent as the men. Through her fifty books, she has always been intensely committed to active persuasion to reform society.

As a novelist, she has enthralled as much by ideas as people. Several of her novels are numbered among the modern classics. Central themes in Lessing's works are feminism, the battle of the sexes, individuals in search of wholeness, and the dangers of technological and scientific hubris. She has been described by the *Swedish Academy* in Stockholm as "An epicist of the female experience whose books - most notably *The Golden Notebook* - have delved into the human psychological experience and subjected a divided civilization to scrutiny." (*Nobel Prize Citation*, 2007-10-11).

Lessing's primary intention is to comment on 20th-century life - which entails significant pressure upon women - and to refer to humanity as a whole, with all its possible influences. As a novelist, she has enthralled as much by ideas as people. Several of her novels are numbered among the modern classics. Central themes in Lessing's works are feminism, the battle of the sexes, individuals in search of wholeness, and the dangers of technological and scientific hubris.

Lessing's writing covers many styles and approaches, ranging from feminism and Marxist theory to communism. In addition to that, she is also particularly concerned with psychology, politics, and

sociology and she always comes up with new spiritual themes and perspectives in her writing. She attempts different kinds of novels, often testing new ways of communicating with her readers.

Many of Lessing's novels resonate with the quest for identity theme. Whatever the genre, this runs as an undercurrent in all of her fiction. Thus one may say that Lessing is keenly aware of the crucial significance of this motif. And the implications are her particular and definite concept of woman's identity and, further, the idea of not only independence from patriarchy, but a wholeness of character which mark the delineation of her female protagonists. According to Lois A. Marchino,

Lessing in her works presents "the unifying theme of the search for self-identity: through knowledge of the self one also discovers one's role in society." (*The Search for Self in the Novels of Doris Lessing*, P.252).

The predicament of women gained its frontiers and new forces of feminism continued to surface, though modified slightly. Even Lessing's powerful novels testify to varying degrees of illusionment and betrayal. The so-called 'free-women' of Lessing were not so free, after all. In Lessing's novels the women's predicament is intense, as marriage turns out to be an entrapment from which escape lies through mental breakdown. Lessing's fiction crystallizes the mid-twentieth century women's 'ideological feet'; at another level, the predicament becomes a quest for independent and alternative identities for women.

Doris Lessing published *The Golden Notebook* (1962) in the company of Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark and Margaret Drabble. She is well known for having been a beacon of inspiration to a generation of feminists. Her *The Golden Notebook* hailed as the most important work that has left its mark upon the ideas and feelings of a whole generation of women. It is often considered by the critics as a later-day tract on feminist literature due to its experimental style and explorations of self, creativity, and feminine identity. As Zerine Aklesaria rightly pointed out,

*The Golden Notebook*, her best-known work, brought her instant fame and a cult following as the high priestess of Feminism. (*The Hindu*, P.4).

The novel presents a body of experience acquired at the crucial frontiers of modern life. It takes a close look at patriarchal gender arrangements which distort the quality of human relationships. It also deals with the crucial problems of freedom and responsibility, the predicament of the free women in the mid-twentieth century in terms of a novelistic structure which may be called ‘post-modernism.’

*The Golden Notebook*, arguably the magnum opus of Doris Lessing, becomes a feminist novel depicting a woman’s struggle with sex, politics, motherhood, creatively and success though the novelist declares that she does not intend for it to be so. It is an acknowledged classic in which the theme and the form are inter-dependent with each other. It deals with a novel entitled ‘free woman’ which is divided into parts, and between the parts are four separate notebooks written by the protagonist of the novel, Anna Wulf. Among the four note books, the ‘black one’ outlines Anna’s experiences in Africa, ‘red one’ describes her political experiences including her disillusionment with communism, ‘yellow one’ becomes a novel within a novel written by Anna about a woman called Ella and the ‘blue one’ depicts the emotional and personal dairy of Anna. Finally all the four books get integrated into a ‘Golden Notebook’ which the protagonist will be writing in the future. Thus the post-modern styling of the novel often makes the reader to focus on its form and leads him to pay only little attention on the serious themes of it.

*The Golden Notebook* relates the story of a divorced single mother Anna Wulf who works as a novelist in 1950s London. Anna is afraid that her bad experiences and relationships with wrong men may drive her crazy. To get away from the danger, she records her life and experiences in four different notebooks. ‘The black notebook’ deals with her life as a writer, ‘the red book’ records her political views, ‘the yellow book’ is about her emotional life and ‘the blue book’ deals with her everyday life. ‘The Golden Notebook’ the fifth and the most important note book records all the experiences to understand her own life and her search for a personal and political identity.

*The Golden Notebook* takes up almost all the issues related to the plight of women. Arguing about the right for women to be independent and to be her own person and not something that belongs



to a man. Lessing clearly presents how women are not regarded as capable of supporting themselves as they do not have the same rights as men. They are not given full education or a well paid if at all they get a job. Though the women in the novel are not represented all the occupations provided in the society, all the women mentioned in the novel are mostly full-time mothers or teachers, secretaries, cleaners. Though some women like Anna and Molly can support themselves, the society never thinks that the unmarried women are happy and comfortable and their life is not seen as perfect and fulfilled until they have a man.

Lessing presents the struggle of a sensible woman clearly and candidly in *The Golden Notebook*. She doesn't hesitate to show how many consider unmarried Anna and Molly as failures as they were no men to support them. Lessing presents the limits of the feminist movements by raising her two main characters, Anna, Molly, to condemn the traditional old views. They are instead raised as 'free' women; they grew up believing that a woman could do just the same things as a man could, especially when it comes to work and supporting themselves. They have learnt that no woman should rely on men to be able to have a decent life. Both Anna and Molly realize that their life changes drastically, the moment when they get married. Their new life with her husbands becomes more or less isolating and trapping. They are supposed to stay at home and take care of the household as the earning the daily bread has become the duty of the husband alone. But the irony is that these 'free' women do not experience life differently from the other 'traditional' women. "Being so young, twenty-three or four, I suffered, like so many 'emancipated' girls, from a terror of being trapped and tamed by domesticity" (P.130). Though they are women who are comparatively more 'free' than others in the novel, they still experience the same problems in the society.

Lessing portrays most of the woman characters typical representatives of the world they live in. Anna and Molly who are more independent than the other women as they are divorced and have learnt to live by themselves and support themselves. But they change and become reserved in the matters of dating with men. They do everything for that person cook for hours before he comes even though he tends to

cancel their date. They prefer to keep quiet about their affair so that no body including his wife can find out. They are ready to please that person even though they know that he already has a family. They know it pretty well that he never would abandon his family and even then they keep hoping and sacrificing themselves for them. Thus the novelist shows how independent even the so called ‘free women’ are.

The psychological analysis Lessing artistically indulges at every juncture of the life of Anna, transforms *The Golden Notebook* into a great work of art which can also be a propagandist work. Anna gets hurt when Michael expresses his feelings that he is happy as long as they have sex. But Anna wants much more than that; she wants his love and affection. She feels almost abandoned and hurt even when other man call her after breakup with Michael as she knows that the men who call her are all married, and they call her only because their wives are on holidays and they need an affair. “...they seem to think you're going to fall over yourself to get into bed. What on earth do you suppose goes through their minds? ” (P.398). She begins to wonder what men really think about her. She even becomes furious because they think that they have power to just call her and expect that she will be coming running. Then she doubts whether there are any normal men at all. But, at the same time, she feels very much satisfied to be sought after by the men as she experiences some kind of victory over their wives. She yearns for adventure and fun unlike the boring and dull wives. But she cannot but dream of getting married and having a nice husband one day - a man who will love her.

Lessing meticulously portrays the growth of the character of Anna by presenting her modern sensibility and traditional desires. Anna says to Molly, “our real loyalties are to men,' or when her lover Michael lays his face on her breast in his sleep and she thinks, 'the truth is I don't care a damn about politics or philosophy or anything else, all I care about is that Michael should turn in the dark and put his face against my breasts” (P.257). Thus she is not only traditional in her desires but also honest in evoking her desires.

In many ways Anna Wulf is an autobiographical extension of Doris Lessing who has strong analytical and introspective intelligence and takes up the vocation of a writer. Lessing uses more a dramatic

method to present the life and struggle of Anna Wulf. Thus the omniscient narrator of the free woman section is also revealed to be Anna Wulf. It is because of this reason that *The Golden Notebook* is considered meta-fiction - a novel about writing a novel- in which both the process and the form are examined by the writer.

The entire novel rotates on the two pivotal of extremities and similarities. It encapsulates the oppositions and loyalties of two generations and describes the nuances of the man-woman relationships. By juxtaposing the trauma of the individuals and the upheavals of the political ideologies, it presents the forces that shape the psyche of the individuals and the stance of the society. Anna and Molly in *The Golden Notebook* live 'free' of men and marriage and seek to find out what's-wrong-with-men and marriage thereby revealing the precariousness of freedom and the identity of woman they live same kind of life – 'not getting married (P.10) and 'bringing up children without men' (P.16) and neither of them was 'prepared to get married simply to give our children fathers' (P.16) and 'refused to live by the book and the rule' (P.16). Subsequently, they 'must take the consequences' (P.16).

Lessing portrays the sense of alienation of the woman in the lives of Molly and Anna. They helplessly allow Richard, Molly's ex-husband and son Tommy to bully them in spite of their awareness that the two men are hurting them. They unwittingly extend friendship to other men who also mistreat them, such as Nelson, de Silva, Willi, George and Paul. Lessing shows that all these men are sadists as well as misogynists. As Ellen Morgan observes, "Anna's responses to these men as humanistic in the profoundest sense-as evidence of a mature ability to see that no human being is all good or bad, that most have something to offer which redeems at least in part that which is ugly in them." (*Alienation of the Woman Writer in The Golden Notebook*, P.477).

Anna finds out the way, out of her split experience by presenting it in four different notebooks : "a black notebook", which is to do with Anna Wulf the writer, a 'red notebook', concerned with politics; a 'yellow notebook', in which I make stories out of my experience; and a 'blue notebook' which tries to be a diary" (P.406). There are many ways of reading the four notebooks of Anna and the

study of it from the point of view of Anna's quest makes it a genuine feminist work. All the four notebooks reflect Anna's piecemeal, inconclusive, ambivalent experience of a war-ridden world. Besides disclosing and revealing the splits and rifts that permeate Anna's psychic reality in the 'Black Note Book' which appears first in each sequence the two aspects of Anna's life as a writer 'Money' and 'Source' are discussed separately by allotting two divisions. In the first one 'Money' the financial and business details of her first and only novel is presented.

The 'source' reconstructs the real experiences which she had fictionalized in that novel. The 'Black notebook' reveals schisms in Anna's psyche also. The sexual ambivalence which has split her along several fracture lines are vividly presented. Anna compares her frigid marriage to a German Jew, Max Wulf, with the fictitious Willi Rodde of her novel; her ambivalent attraction to men like George Hounslow and Paul Blackenhurst recalls for her the inner conflict between the needs for submission and control in male and female relationships. The second segment of the 'Black notebook', emphasis 'Money' thereby recording her frustrated meeting with agents and editors of film or TV shows. She becomes more and more hysterical when she fights against the total misunderstanding of her own work.

The 'Black notebook' reveals Anna's private politics together with the politics of the idealistic communist group in Southern Africa. Both of them are equally characterized by schisms. Anna has the ability to recognize this split within herself at individual level, "And yet there were always two personalities in me, the 'communist' and Anna, and Anna judged the communist all the time, and vice versa" (P.66); at collective level, "inherent in the structure of a Communist Party or group is a self-dividing principle" (P.64).

The 'Red notebook' reflects the split in society and the protagonist's efforts to rectify it and bring back wholeness. Anna is conscious of her affinity with the communist party in Britain – "the dry, wise, ironical political woman, or the Party fanatic who sounds, literally, quite maniacal. And I have these two personalities myself" (P.141). Moreover she joins the party because there is "a need for wholeness, for an end to the split, divided, unsatisfactory way we all

live. Yet joining the Party intensified the split - not the business of belonging to an organization whose every tenet, on paper, anyway, contradicts the ideas of the society we live in; but something much deeper than that" (P.142). In the later segments of the 'Red book,' Anna gets disillusioned and admits that Stalin, once her hero, is 'mad and a murderer' (P.259).

The 'Yellow notebook' relates the progress of Anna by recording the dynamics of the laws of the dissolution of a long relationship with her lover Michael and the consequent psychic split in her at emotional level. Anna boldly investigates the different facets of the relationship, and tries to understand the reasons for its failure. Thus she tries to drive out the pain resulted from pain her psychic paralysis. By creating an alter ego in the character of Ella she transforms Michael into Paul Tanner, her friend Molly into Julia and her daughter Janet into a son, Michael. That she gives the name of her former lover to the son asserts her psychological obsession. The different circles of the themes are artistically connected as Ella, the character concerned by Anna is a writer and the Anna, the protagonist of the novel, is more or less an autobiographical extension of Lessing. The strength of Lessing as a woman is obvious in the way she portrays Anna and Ella with a lot of verisimilitude. Both of them suffer from psychic splits.

The confusion in the psyche of the contemporary woman who seeks for an identity is reflected in the woman characters of Anna's novel. Both Ella and her friend Julia have an instinctive human need to respect and identify themselves as human beings though they have a conditioned contempt against them as woman. "The two women", in the words of Morgan, "share a minority--group psychological orientation which compels them to depreciate their femaleness and their friendship and seek approval from and identification with men." (*Alienation of the Woman Writer in The Golden Notebook*, PP.472-473). This is evident when Ella vents her contempt for the magazine for which she works and the stories that she writes for the magazine because they are "sensitive and feminine" (P.149). Ella can't conceive a future without a man though she hates the parties that she has to attend in which she has to meet men. All those parties remind her the fact that she is 'on the market again' and that, she wants to get married again.

But, Julia tells her “It's no good taking that attitude - that's how everything is run, isn't it?” (P.149). But they have to dismiss their feelings as they have come to know that it is no use of complaining over it again and again. The ‘Yellow Book’ deals with schisms, splits, mental illness, and mental breakdown. They have firm bearing on the theme of identity crises.

Anna describes her disillusionment of her domestic life and her earlier sterile marriage in ‘Black notebook’ also in her novel, *frontiers of War*. Her breaking of the relationship with Michael results in a breakdown. She finds out that there is no fusion of a self and a body in her relationship with Michael. Thus Anna examines her disillusionment about erotic relationships through the fiction of Ella and Paul. By attributing her needs and desires and also her particular vulnerability to Ella, Anna traces out the incompleteness which she cannot notice in herself. She is able to notice the sexual vulnerabilities as the manifestations of self-driving patterns which permeate all of their involvements with her world.

Thus Lessing makes a candid analysis of the role played by sex in the life of man and woman. She points out that kind of sex offered to the woman is a threat to their self-respect and dignity and identity. They are not allowed to be either a political or independent. Thus their resentment of the man, as well as the patriarchal society is firmly recorded. Lessing presents the counter arguments for feminism through the character of Ella who is afraid that her perceptions are illegitimate and inconsistent with the broader humanism to which she is committed because of her feminist stance. By preparing the novel as a platform for an intellectual debate; she makes a strong for the equality of the woman by the other side also. She shows how illogical Ella's views are by presenting the consequences. Lessing sensibly dramatizes the misreading of Ella who finds woman as the sole causalities of the patriarchy and never realizes that the men have been living an artificial life through out. In her own balanced and perceptive method, Lessing shows how Ella “consistently tells herself that her oppression is her own fault or an unchangeable condition to which one must gracefully resign oneself.” (Ellen Morgan, P.474). By refusing to meet and deal with the anger under the surface and she regards men not as co-victims and never

sympathizes with them.

All the important people related to her struggle have a dialectical relation to one another as everyone contributes a factor essential for her development. *The Golden Notebook* connects Anna's experience of the past, present, and future, to unity the fragmented parts of the self. But Lessing's ingenious technique is obvious in the way she portrays Anna Wulf passing on her way to a reintegration of her personality with one extreme form of dissolving into other people's identities. She points out that Anna and Saul "breakdown' into each other, into other people, breakthrough the false patterns they have made of their pasts, the patterns and formulas they have made to shore up themselves and each other, dissolve. They hear each other's thoughts; recognize each other in themselves' (P.vii). Finally Anna identifies with Saul so absolutely that "when he leaves the flat 'to go for a little walk' my nerves seem to stretch out and follow him, as if tied to him" (P.492).

In *The Golden Notebook*, Lessing emphasizes and focuses on the self-division of a typical modern woman who is torn between and artistic objectivity and emotional subjectivity it is because of this struggle between the ideas and the reality, ambitions and pit falls, cravings and artificial joys and pragmatic sufferings that a modern woman is more prone to psychic disturbances. All these divisions get manifested in Anna's breakdown, in which such border; lines between subject and object are blurred and become indistinct. She tries hard to control the chaos overwhelming her by objectifying her experiences in various methods and struggles to keep a distance from them, throughout. As Roberta Rubenstein points out that 'though Anna "reaches the same area in the abnormal consciousness where earlier Mary Turner had succumbed completely, for Anna these altered forms of consciousness become essential stages in the eventual reintegration of her personality." (*The Novelistic Vision of Doris Lessing*, P.96).

Lessing proclaims that her "major aim was to shape a book which would make its own comment, a wordless statement: to talk through the way it was shaped" (P.xiii). Thus her critique of the world includes a major analysis of the plight of the woman besides an argument for the equal rights for them. By portraying a protagonist who does not know the difference between the reality and the fiction of her

experience, Lessing places the reader in no more privileged situation in relation to the novel as a whole. She never allows the reader to be a passive being and makes him a participant of the action through unconsciously.

*The Golden Notebook* basically deals with a politicized woman who experiences nervous breakdown from which she eventually emerges intact. Lessing shows that the nervous breakdown of Anna is largely but not entirely a response to the horrors of the contemporary world. Paul Schlueter rightly observes that: “Probably more than in any other novel, *The Golden Notebook* captures the authentic quality of what it is to be a woman, especially a woman in a man's world, and even more especially a woman who frankly admits the existence of her sexuality, her neuroses, her intellect, her desperation in living, her disgust at the mediocre, her refusal to compromise her essential being.” (*Doris Lessing: The Free Woman's Commitment*, P.58).

Though Lessing avows that she is not a feminist, she discusses such issues like menstruation, orgasm and frigidity, considered a taboo for any woman, without any hesitation like a staunch feminist. She does not care what the traditionalist calls the literary decorum and portrays a protagonist who has an excess of fear of her own body odours.

A careful reading of the work of Lessing shows that she never hesitates to discuss controversial issues like homo-sexualism and lesbianism. She disapproves them both. In *The Golden Notebook* Lessing depicts the conflict between the maternal and erotic life. She clearly portrays the plight of a woman who keeps alive in order to rear her child inspite of a power inclination to commit suicide. As a writer, she has experienced that the problems women writers face are entirely different from that of men writers.

To conclude, one may say that Lessing in her lengthy and ambitious novel *The Golden Notebook* that appeared in the early part of her career explores the inner recesses of a true feminist, maybe a radical feminist. But some transformation took place in her as she presents a moderate form of feminism in her latest novel *Alfred and Emily*. Perhaps in her long career as a creative artist and also as a woman, she depicts a different and at the same time convincing facet of feminism



in her apparently last novel.

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## **Feminist Discourse in the novels of Margaret Laurence - Y. Malyadri**

Feminism is defined as a bold criticism of the prevailing social conditions, which have excluded women from the dominant male culture, social, sexual, political and intellectual pursuits. The feminist theory rose to prominence in the 1980s with in the Women's Lib Movement. The strategies of the feminist theory are largely focused on politics, sexual oppression, patriarchal prejudice, wage inequalities, discriminatory employing practices, and women's universal invisibility within a male - dominated culture. The feminist writings of 1970s and 1980s have the raising of women's consciousness as central to the social and political movement. A convergence of female social activists, theorists, artists, writers, historians and critics evolved, whose aim was to understand modes of perception, psychological factors, and patterns of thought peculiar to the sex. Such male terms of endearment for women as the better half, fair sex, gentle sex, and soon, are denounced by the torch - bearers of feminism. In their eyes, woman is not only equal, but superior to man. Revolting against the Freudian theories of sexuality which emphasize male development, the feminist writers reject traditions of Western psychiatry, and elevate woman from a subordinate, derivative - the proverbial Biblical left rib of Adam - and political position in the family unity, in particular, and in society, in general. The fictional works of Margaret Laurence and Margaret Atwood are significant contributions to the world-wide feminist movement.

Margaret Laurence is a Canadian novelist and a feminist writer. All the protagonists of her novels contain womanhood. "Margaret Laurence's Women seek freedom from conventional roles" as daughters, wives and mothers; look to their past for answers about the present and "speculate about the cultural and literary tradition" by which they are shaped Laurence's 'Manawaka' world is dominated by a set of strong willed and freedom-loving women - Hagar Shipley in *The Stone Angel*, Rachel in *A Jest of God*, Stacey in *The Fire - Dwellers* and Morag in *The Diviners*. 'The women of Margaret Laurence are involved in a relentless struggle against the oppressive systems of patriarchy, religion and gender discrimination. In the

process of this struggle, they choose the path of rebellion for the realization of their cherished dreams of human dignity and equality”.<sup>1</sup> Margaret Laurence is aware of the dilemma and powerlessness of women, the tendency of women to accept male definition of themselves, to be self deprecating and uncertain, and to rage inwardly. In a concerted attempt at organising those trends of feminism which are applicable to literary criticism Maggie Humm makes the following observation: “Ellen Moers and Sandra Gilbert and Sughan Gubar take novels to be narrative about the location of gender identity. To them, novels and narrative poems allow women’s desire for affirmation to manifestation itself. These critics seek in women’s writings for a certain knowledge about the repressed unconscious features of women’s identity”.<sup>2</sup>

Margaret Laurence is a female writer of authority, whose central theme is a female’s quest for understanding of the self and personal fulfilment. This theme in Laurence is often linked with another theme i.e., the problematic relationship of the self with the community. Actually, the self, community or society cannot be separated. To define oneself, according to Laurence is to define one’s community and one’s past.

The Stone Angel is the first of the Manawaka works of Margaret Laurence through which she has tried to discover a woman in Hagar Shipley who could be any woman on earth. Hagar, the protagonist of The Stone Angel is one of the memorable characters created by Margaret Laurence. She is a woman of ninety years. It is her intricate personality that plays a major role in shaping her life and human relationships. She is the daughter of a rich man, Jason Currie, who belongs to the class of the provider of the society. She is brought up in luxury. She represents the white collar world. She is superior in physical and emotional strength, even to her brothers, who look after her mother. She has not inherited her mother’s daintiness but is big boned and husky as an ox. Hagar represents her father in body and mind. She inherits her father’s proud inexpressiveness, the ability to feel but not to convey to others.

The Stone Angel is a pathetic tale of the narrator - protagonist Hagar Shipley who wanders in a wilderness and undertakes a halting,

unwilling, rebellious journey towards self-knowledge, finally to acquire a state of bliss. Hagar Shipley struggles with darkness, being a victim of personal bias. Margaret Laurence aptly asserts her plight thus, “In that sense, a part of Hagar had been dead for years through pride and her strict sense of dignity even before she was old and sick. But in the hospital she comes to grips with the reality of dying both physically and spiritually. Hagar’s story is an attempt to survive as wholly as possible, emotionally and mentally, until the moment of death.”<sup>3</sup>

Hagar’s preoccupation with her unrealized femininity is reflected in the imagery which surrounds her acts and thoughts. She tends to see other women only in terms of the most uncomplimentary animal images, “Jess and Gladys, Bram’s daughters, are like “lumps of unrendered fat”; Doris is an “unwilling hen”; later, Arlene is a “pouter pigeon”; the old women at Silver threads are “ewes”. Paradoxically, the Great Mother is often depicted as the Lady of the Beasts (The Great Mother, pp. 268-80) and the feminine in its earthy and elementary dimensions is closely associated with the instinctive life of animals.

But Hagar’s denial of the feminine leads her to put the most negative interpretations on these images at the same time, even the smallest act of kindness from another woman, as when a young girl offers her a seat on the bus, brings unbidden tears to Hagar’s eyes. Moments like these, as when she wishes to reach out and touch Doris, are emblematic of her need to overcome her fear of the female and accept her own womanhood”.

The setting for this heightened sense of her own womanhood is the old woman’s public ward of a large modern hospital. Here, besides the nurses, she meets three ancient ladies who come to represent for Hagar a new view of womanhood. While symbols of frozen womanhood, especially the stone angel, dominate the early chapters, the last two chapters have the hospital and its female inhabitants, both patients and nurses, as their central symbols. Hagar sees each bed in this “bedlam” as containing a female “body”, not a person. Within moments she becomes part of this anonymous group, a kind of chorus of doomed women who cry their fear into a night-time

of delirium. The emotions, the voices, seem to come out of an unconscious dimension. The public ward is a mewling nursery of old ladies.

Laurence's *A Jest of God* is the story of an unmarried school teacher, Rachel Cameron, told in the first person narration, a story about an immature woman, infact, a gawky adolescent, caught in a prison that she had created herself. There are four people who play a major role in the life of Rachel: her mother: Calla, her friend and colleague, Willard the Headmaster, and Nick Kazlik, Nester's son. In the words of Rachel Cameron, (about herself), she is too much of a person thinking in a brooding way. The relationship between Rachel and her mother is typically Indian. Rachel does not even know her mother's age and she is not to ask. Sometimes Rachel ponders over this situation, for age to her mother is still as unmentionable as death.

In *A Jest of God* Rachel plays out her role as daughter and lover. Rachel's mother Mrs. Cameron is very possessive and cunning because of her loneliness. She tries in every possible manner to ensure the presence of her younger daughter Rachel. Apart from these, she is also bound by her vanities in costume, appearance and bridge parties. She is also a hypochondriac who cites her weak heart in order to gain Rachel's sympathy and attention. Rachel's mother is constantly worried about herself lest her daughter chose to abandon her for whatever reason at any point of time.

Rachel nurses visions of motherhood by coming to a hasty conclusion that she is pregnant. She lets loose once again her imagination thinking a lot about her anticipated pregnancy. She wonders whether it is going to be a boy or a girl. Despite her determination to mother Nick's child, she is unable to decide whether to keep the fetus or have it terminated. She finds it difficult to resolve this conflict and tension in her. Commenting on her dilemma G.D. Killam observes, "Here is the potential of life and death poised delicately in the balance, here is the ultimate "Jest of God". As it is her affair with Nick only that takes her back to her thoughts about how she had gone out with a boy only once in her life time. She is ignorant and inexperienced in sex. Though she is scared of pregnancy, still she loves and wants Nick and is happy being wanted and loved by him.

Margaret Laurence's "The Fire-Dwellers (1969) is primarily concerned with a frustrated and neglected woman's protest against her husband who, on account of the patriarchal values he has inherited, makes almost a virtue of not communicating with her, at least at the verbal level. Stacey Mac Aindra, the serio-comic thirty-nine year old protagonist is very peculiar in *The Fire-Dwellers*. *The Fire-Dwellers* is one of the Manawaka novels dealing, at one level, with the problems encountered by women in provincial Canada

When Laurence started writing the novel, she wondered how many people would be interested in reading about a middle-aged housewife, mother of four. However, resentful of the stereotypical images of such women in contemporary fiction, she decided to depict their life realistically. "I was fed up", says Laurence, "with the current fictional portraits of women of my generation - middle-aged mums either being presented as glossy magazine types, perfect, ever-loving and incontestably contented, or else as sinister and spiritually cannibalistic monsters determined only to destroy their men and kids by hypnotic means. I guess there are some women like the latter, but I don't happen to know any of them. There are no women like the former, they don't exist". The novel explodes the post second World war, North-American myth of the "happy housewife heroine", as strongly as did Betty Friend's classic work *The Feminine Mystique*, published six years before *The Fire-Dwellers*".<sup>7</sup>

*The Diviners* (1974), Laurence's last novel, completes the Manawaka cycle and enshrines and epitomizes Laurence's major thematic and socio-cultural concerns and preoccupations that run through all her earlier writings. As Barbara Hehner says: "The *Diviners* comes to grips with currently debated issues much more explicitly than Laurence's previous fiction: The search for a Canadian identity, the discrimination encountered by women. As in the other Manawaka novels, Morag Gunn, the narrator - protagonist of *The Diviners*, is at a critical juncture of her life when the novel begins. "Prima facie, Pique, her teenage daughter's yet another sudden disappearance on an unspecified journey west is the most immediate and apparent cause of her anxiety and distress. However, at a deeper level, Morag, forty seven and an established writer, is faced with

another and more serious crisis that is caused by her inability to apprehend clearly the precise significance of herself and her work in relation to everything else”.

In all her Manawaka novels, therefore, Laurence links the women-protagonists release from self - doubts and self-depreciation with the concept of coming to terms with the past and implicitly posits a viable means to resolve Canada's analogous problematic. Margaret Atwood provides a very perspective assessment of Laurence in *Face to Face* when she tells us that “she is not a safe person to underestimate”. What Atwood observes about Laurence as a person applies also to Laurence as a writer. For without making her fiction a direct vehicle for propaganda, Laurence, in her writing, examines two important issues rarely the female problems of a woman and the Canadian dilemma of identity, and attempts to discover, indictional terms, modes to reckon with both the problems. Her nationalism and feminism are not narrowly defined values, however.

Laurence's feminism is not “the man-hating variety”. Similarly, she does not encourage the view that a break with the roots or community is the primary means to find an identity. “The feminist archetype she posits is that of a woman who resolves her identity - crisis by relating herself intimately with her roots and her community. Laurence is less inclined to examine the politics of power in man - woman relationships and more with showing and stressing the need to accept and value what one has or has inherited to resolve the enigma of identity and survive with dignity. Laurence's feminism, in this respect, differs from that of Margaret Atwood's whose writings (deal with) exploration of the politics of power in interpersonal relationships”.

In contrast to the rebellious feminism of Atwood's *Surfacing*, Margaret Laurence presents in her Manawaka series of fiction a balanced attitude towards feminism and femininity. This is best illustrated by reference to her last novel, *The Diviners*. The childhood experience and dilemma of Morag Gunn are no less complex and bewildering than those of the drifting heroine of *Surfacing*. Seeking her own individual identity and recognition as a writer, Morag leaves the confining and suffocating society of Manawaka to achieve the

flowering of her intellect and creative sensibility at Winnipeg. Later, when she reflects on the plight of the pioneering colonial women of Canada, she makes the following conclusions: “Women working like horses. Also probably pregnant most of time. Baking bread in brick ovens, with a loaf in their own ovens. Looking after broods of chickens and kids. Terrible Appalling”.’

There is in Canadian literature today a preponderance of women writing about women, among whom Margaret Laurence is both pioneer as well as, in many ways, the writer of greatest stature. Laurence expresses what for many has been inexpressible: the growing need to reconnect with ancient feminine principles. These values, some of them implicit but neglected in our patriarchal inheritance, some of them long lost in pre-history, are increasingly emergent in modern life. “Margaret Laurence’s four novels are concerned with the masks of women and the bewildered real selves who peer through them at the world”. Margaret Laurence has written her novels with predominantly feminist views. Significantly, the novels do not envision the traditional man - woman relationship. The female protagonists are the empowered “new women” struggling to be free of the frames into which they have been immured, compulsively playing the wife - mother - daughter roles. Thus a strong feminist undercurrent emerges in her novels.

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## **Thematic Concerns in the Novels of Arun Joshi: A Critical Analysis**

**- P. Veena & G. Gulam Tariq**

According to Lionel Trilling, ‘Novel is a perpetual quest for reality and one of the most effective agents of our imagination’. The Indian novel in English has now become an integral part of Indian English. After Independence most of the Indian English Novelist’s shifted their focus from nationalistic zeal to find new themes and portray them. They began to delineate from their works and set about for the individual’s quest for the ‘self’.

One such significant contemporary Indian English novelist is Arun Joshi. He paved the way to explore and implement new themes in his novels. Theme is the central idea of the novel. It is not a plot or a story but we can rather say that it is an idea that comes to the mind of a writer, it germinates as a seed and the story, with a plot and characters is woven around it.

Arun Joshi is quite an exceptional novelist who has taken up the themes of human predicament and existential despair in almost all his novels. Joshi has been influenced by existential thinkers like Camus, Sartre and this can be observed noticeably in his novels. Existentialism is a modern philosophic movement that deals with man’s disillusionment and despair which originated in the philosophical and literary writings of Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus.

Gieve Patel in his poem “On Killing a Tree” describes elaborately how a tree is completely destroyed step by step. Patel narrates the cutting and chopping off, of the tree close to the ground. He says that it might sprout leaves once again. So they pull out the roots completely and it is left in the sun to be scorched. The tree does not know that may be a branch or the trunk is cut off and still imagines that it can still survive but outside forces do not leave it alone and see that the roots are destroyed completely .

The same can be represented for ‘man’. This can be explicitly observed in the novels of Arun Joshi. Joshi’s characters depicted in his novels experience this state of rootlessness. The protagonist leaves behind the moral values, relationships and social customs in search of

the quest for the meaning and direction in life in an atmosphere of utter chaos and meaninglessness. This state leads them to destruction of the individual 'self' utterly.

In his first novel '*The Foreigner*' (1968) he takes us to the lower depths of human suffering by bringing strongly to the fore themes like isolation, detachment, meaninglessness, existential despair, identity crisis. Sindhi Oberoi is the central character as well as the narrator in '*The Foreigner*'. He being the son of a mixed parentage i.e. his mother a British national and his father a Kenyan Indian, Sindhi knows that he does not belong anywhere. His entire view of life was a deep sense of insecurity, unreality and impermanence about things. He is not only a 'foreigner' to the new cultures between which he shuffled but also to his soul. He was an orphan both in terms of human relations and his emotional roots.

Sindhi goes to America for his doctoral degree in mechanical engineering. There he befriends Babu Khemka. He also meets June with whom he has a passionate affair and with also quite a few girls of whom he specifically mentions Anna and Kathy. Though he enjoyed these relationships he tries not to get attached. Sindhi was of the view that one should be able to detach oneself from the object of one's love. He did not want to get involved. To know that he had an opportunity to express his love and not utilizing that chance and completely detaching himself by not getting involved reveals the meaninglessness of Sindhi. Even though Sindhi observes Babu and June coming close, he does not make any attempt to stop them. One fine day June informs him that she and Babu are getting married. Sindhi is devastated and by this time his carefully cultivated detachment has vanished completely leaving him totally miserable.

Sindhi leaves America and moves to New Delhi. Sindhi, a man of non-involvement gradually gets involved in the business of Mr. Khemka. He behaves in a more confident way and the barriers of detachment gradually melt away. He is deeply aware of this new orientation and learns from Muthu that "sometimes detachment lies in actually getting involved".

Arun Joshi's second novel "*The Strange case of Billy*

*Biswas(1971)* is existential in nature and has recurrent themes like the crisis of the self, the problem of alienation, identity crisis and meaninglessness. Arun Joshi has carried his exploration of consciousness of hopeless rootless people a stage further and has revealed to our gaze new gas-chambers of self forged misery.

Billy (Bimal Biswas) like Sindhi Oberoi is in search of a human world of emotion, a world of meaningful relatedness. He seems to be a misfit in Delhi's smart society. It has been told that no other man perceived the tenacious thread of existence to its bitter end like Billy Biswas.

Billy is disillusioned right from the beginning of the novel and has a secret corner in his mind beyond the frontiers of ordinary human consciousness. He feels his life is meaningless. "Something has gone wrong with my life". (124). In America too at the age of twenty he had visions "of being in a place other than where I was, in a place very, very old, at times a wilderness, at other times full of strange primitive people". (180) He could not understand the precise nature of this call. Such visionary thoughts at that age indicate a loss of sensibility. He does not find meaning of life either in white America or in the upper class Indian society. Though he comes from the same society he finds it filled with pompous and mixed people.

It depicts a quest between the two ends of given civilization. It mediates between survival and affirmation between New Delhi and the Satpura hills. As contrasted to the primitive society this strange survival acquires contentment and peace. Billy Biswas is discontent against the superficially glammers 'civilization' to survive in the primitive world. He finds that life in the primitive society is an authentic life but only rare sensitive souls like Billy accede to its call. He is not sure whether he belongs to the "wilderness" or to the 'malls' of the big city (96). He feels that his soul had all along been clamoring for such survival which he calls it as "that other thing", which is "something like" God. (189)

Joshi while glorifying "the noble savage" celebrates the nature worship of the Vedas. He has delineated the charming simplicity of an authentic life in a primitive society, where the virtues of which may act

as affirmations to our money based culture. These affirmations though shrouded of fundamental importance may appear “strange” to the “civilized”.

Joshi's third novel *“The Apprentice”* (1974) portrays the exhaustive plight of the contemporary man, who is found sauntering in a confused society, without any norms, direction or any particular purpose in life. The protagonist Ratan Rathore belongs to an impoverished middle class family and has to struggle for existence on his own in this world. He was a providence child where his father was patriotic and courageous his mother was endowed with worldly wisdom. Bestowed with this unique inheritance and sometimes conflicting philosophies Ratan found it extremely difficult to live smoothly in this horrific civilization.

Ratan naturally faces tension and resentment in different situations as he has to keep up with two sets of social norms and expectations. He finds that there is no other way but to keep up pretences and do away with the normal world of ordinary decency. He comes to an understanding that life is full of misery, chaos, absurdity and materialism. Ratan who had imbibed the strict qualities of courage and discipline from his father feel crushed under the dehumanizing materialism, meaninglessness, and isolates himself from his innermost nature and surroundings.

Ratan's experiences humiliation and cruelty of the people when he goes in search of a job. He himself becomes “at the age of twenty one a hypocrite and a liar: in short a sham” (28). Later when he gets a job he works harder than anybody else in the department. Nevertheless he is always haunted by a constant fear of losing his job. He has a keen desire to get a promotion so that his preoccupation with work increases.

Such desire threatens to ravage his soul and deprive him of his identity. Ultimately he succumbs to the needs of his job though rewarded with, security and promotion, ends up accepting a bribe. Ratan is completely transformed. A person who stuck to his ideals once, grew violent and rebellious, and in due course becomes a wash out. He tries to seek solace from the annals of corruption trying to put up resistance at every stage but discovers the futility of his efforts.

Ratan tries to find out the purpose of his life in all his activities, but it takes almost a life time to free himself from the bondage of valueless urban civilization. In an attempt to cleanse himself, he visits the temple to gain support from the world of religion. To his horror, he discovers that corruption has also crept into religion. He is jolted out of his senses when he sees the faceless head of his friend the brigadier, who had died for no fault of his. He tries to restore his mental peace by undergoing the most difficult penance in the world by wiping the shoes of the congregation outside the temple every morning on his way to office. Old memories haunt him but he hopes to get rid of them by finding faith to work out his own rehabilitation.

Arun Joshi's fourth novel "*The Last Labyrinth*" (1991) won him the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award. The protagonist searches for some kind of meaning in life in the deep recesses of the human soul. The labyrinths in this novel assume the shape of a metaphor. "*The Last Labyrinth*" represents death. The novel juxtaposes rationality and faith, reality and dreams, materialism and spirituality. The restlessness of Som Bhaskar with his incessant cry of "I want, I want" is pitted against the relaxed life style of Aftab Rai. 'Lal Haveli' forms the backdrop and the beginning of Som Bhaskar's obsessions.

An illustrious novel "*Last Labyrinth*" depicts the craziness, the pain, agony and selfishness of love. It is the story of Som Bhaskar a unique character. The conflict in his character is apparent through his name itself – 'moon sun'. At the age of twenty five he has inherited his father's wealth and becomes a millionaire. He marries Gita, a devout woman who has borne him two children. But Som is attracted to Anuradha who is actually married to Aftab, a businessman. Knowing that she is married to another man Som finds her irresistible. Most parts of the novel Joshi depicts the obsession that Som has for Anuradha in a vivid manner.

Anuradha behaves in a mysterious manner accepting her love for Som at times rejecting him or fleeing from him without any warning. Som suspects sometimes that she must be colluding with Gita to arrive at a compromise. This mysterious behavior on the part of Anuradha confuses Som and drives him to the brink of death from a heart attack. He survives miraculously but Anuradha disappears without a trace. His

frantic search for her leads him through absurd situations. Som eventually learns that Anuradha sacrificed her love to save him from death. Som rejects this explanation and continues his vehement quest which leads him to the Lal Haveli. Here again in a desperate attempt Anuradha again flees from him disappearing in ‘Last Labyrinth’. Som is left doubtful whether she has committed suicide or has been killed. Thoroughly exhausted and alone Som addresses his thoughts to her in the form of a prayer.

*‘The City and the River’* Joshi’s fifth novel compared to other novels also deal with the existential predicament. Most of the characters, in the chaotic and spiritually sterile atmosphere, suffer from alienation, identity crisis, rootlessness, pessimism and meaninglessness in their lives. The novel depicts the existential dilemma of his characters in this hostile world which has been replaced by the socio political crisis of the city. The tale describes a huge modern city along the banks of the river for which a name is not given. The city does not have any similarity to other imaginary places like Malgudi of R.K .Narayan, Paris of Rajarao.

As the novel progresses there is a continued vagueness regarding the ‘City’. In the north, it has pyramids and the lowest plains of the City near the river are inhabited by boatmen who live in mud huts. A little above these people on a higher ground the brick people have made their homes. Beyond these abodes on the highest plane lives the Grand Master. The palace is built on the tallest hill and various other hills have huge buildings that are occupied by various offices of the City. These offices are kept under observation under the watchful eye of the Advisory Council. Beyond the pyramids, there is another mountain which is out of reach of the people. The depiction of the City, the way it has been structured renders the ‘City’ as alien and not identifying itself with the people. The city abounds in “tall structures of steel and glass” (12). But is “falling apart before our eyes”. (199).

The chaotic atmosphere of the city reminds us of T.S. Eliot’s *‘The Waste Land’*. The City particularly, the place where the King and other Officials reside lack vegetation and flowers. Thought out the novel lack of vegetation and flowers has been stressed. The road and the streets lining the palace, the government offices are neatly paved

but they are “treeless and without flowers” (31). The square of the Three Truths which has a marvelous fountain has “so much water and yet no grass or flowers”. In the winter season the entire landscape except the area adjoining the palace is covered with flowers and near the river bank too. This is the result of the City’s severance from the River leads to degeneration. The identity crisis that Joshi depicts is of the artificiality of the City representing the identity conflict and the meaninglessness in the city.

From the above description it can be observed distinctly that all the works of the writer center on the themes of meaninglessness, identity crisis, detachment and quest for the self. Joshi’s characters, in their search for the quest of the ‘self’, search to resolve by redemption in various ways. Joshi uses his inventions and discoveries to make his characters realize their conflict and brings about a keen awareness and deeper understanding of the meaningfulness of life.

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## Expatriate Motif in Bharathi Mukharjee's Novel *The Tiger's Daughter* : A Study

- T. Ramesh Babu

*The Tiger's Daughter* runs into four parts and each part is well-knit with one another. Part I of the novel gives a brief account of the early life of Tara, the great granddaughter of Harilal Benerjee, a Bengali Brahmin. Though it is short, it serves as the prologue to the story of the protagonist Tara Banerjee Cartwright. It is divided into four chapters. The first chapter describes the Catelli-Continental Hotel on Chowringhee Avenue. It is symbolical and is the meeting place of Tara's friends. It is the place where Joyonto Roy Chowdhary sees Tara and decides to protect her. It is an important symbol of Tara's expatriate sensibility. The remaining three chapters provide the background of Tara.

Part II deals with her stay in Calcutta after her return from the USA. It begins with Tara's arrival in India. The details of Tara's marriage and her married life in America are not given though a few hints of her life there are given in the part of the novel. Part III is about her reaction to the changed Calcutta and to its dirt, squalor and disease. It begins with a conversation between Tara and Reena. They are at the Catelli Continental and Tara confides in Reena. She tells her that little things have begun to upset her. She is troubled by the changed Calcutta and longs for the Bengal of Satyajit Ray – children running through cool green spaces, aristocrats despairing in music rooms of empty palaces. Part IV concerns itself with the reactions of Tara to the divisions in the society in those days. The novel ends thus:

And Tara, still locked in a car across the streets from the Cattily Continental, wondered whether she would ever hot out of Calcutta, and if she didn't whether David would ever know that she loved him fiercely.  
(*The Tiger's Daughter*)<sup>1</sup>

Tara did not feel quite at home in the city of New York. Her friends from Asia were being knifed in elevators in their own apartment buildings. Some were agitated over pollution of the city. She ponders ever the nature of her baffling foreignness of spirit. She

was unable to adapt herself with the outside world and situations. She sensed discrimination when her roommate did not share her mango pickle. She was so turbulent that she prayed Kali for strength so that she would not break down before others. She brought about a sort of contrast between India and America in every sphere of life. The conflict of tradition and modernity on one hand, the rural and the urban on the other troubles her mentally. In Calcutta love and sex were prohibited topics of girls. At Saint Blazes, she had not been permitted about sex, love was all right if it could be like the poetry of Francis Thompson or Alice Neynell ( 11). When she complained to her mother about her homesickness she could only pray to mother Kali:

She complained of homesickness in letters to her mother who promptly prayed to Kali to save Tara's conscience, chastity, and complexion.(13)

Tara took the bold step of marrying David who was westernized in his outlook whereas she loved India and her unique culture. Shobha Shinde makes the following comment on her marriage with David:

Tara's husband David was painfully western, she was dutifully devious in her marriage. She could not communicate the minor nuances of her family background and life in Calcutta. Her husband asked naive questions about Indian customs and traditions.<sup>2</sup>

These lines show Tara's struggle for adjustment with her husband in practical life. David was exasperated and excited at strange customs of India. Tara sometimes faced strong inconvenience in explaining them to him. She felt uneasy and insecure in this completely alien atmosphere. Life in Madison square was sometimes unbearable for Tara. With an excited soul and great expectations she landed in India, her motherland, she thought that India, especially Calcutta was a peaceful place and that her real happiness would be in India but not in America. As Shobha Shinde rightly observes,

*The Tiger's Daughter* reflects the confrontation between illusion and reality. But this novel had

adopted the technique of documentation to bring out the contrast between two worlds and two attitudes.<sup>3</sup>

She was soon disappointed in Calcutta. Her long stay in America made her feel inconvenient to the new culture in India. Now she feels alien in the city of Calcutta. In fact,

Tara longed for the Bengal of Satyajith Ray, children running through cool green spaces, aristocrats, despairing in music rooms of empty places. (105)

She felt hostile and alien in the city of Calcutta. Everything seemed to be artificial and unnatural. It was full of unpleasant scenes of beggars and business people. The sights made her feel sick and the culture of Calcutta was repulsive. She was unable to enjoy the company of her friends and relatives. She expected everyone to ask some questions about her husband. This made her painful as her Bengali sensibility was deeply hurt.

The reasons for Tara's feelings of alienation are varied and different. She was sent to USA by her father for the purpose of higher education. She almost tried to absorb the western culture. Her instinct told her that she must leave Calcutta and go back to USA. Tara recalled some awful situation in New York. In her own words,

New York was a gruesome nightmare. It wasn't muggings she feared so much as rude little invasions. The thought on the stranger said ablaze from Central park, a Hurlan Dante, a criminal could identify her. (57)

According to M. Sivaramakrishna, *The Tiger's Daughter* is "visionless because it is voiceless."<sup>4</sup> It is a half-truth. Tara's various questions about different modes of life are an attempt to communicate. Tara's journey from Bombay to Calcutta brings an equally disgusting experience to her. In Calcutta too, she finds everything changed and deteriorated. The Calcutta she finds now is under the grip of violence due to riots, caused by the confrontation between different classes of society. This shatters her dream of Calcutta and makes her react in a negative manner. Slowly her changed personality makes her a misfit

in the company of her friends and relatives and makes her unable to participate in the ritual functions of home. Her alienation is deepened as she is welcomed by her relatives as 'Americawali' and her husband a 'mleccha.'

The most important cause aggravating her discomfort and unease is her marriage which hangs on her heart as a burden: In India she felt she was not married to a person but to a foreigner and this foreignness was a burden. It was hard for her to talk about marriage responsibilities in Camac Street; her friends were curious only about the adjustments she had made.

Tara's mind is constantly at conflict with the two personalities – one of an Indian and the other of an American. During such moments she feels to go back to her husband David because she feels that she would be more at ease there. Caught in this gulf between the two contrasting worlds, Tara feels that she has forgotten many of her Hindu rituals of worshipping icons which she had seen her mother performing since her childhood. The phrase 'cracking of axis and center' symbolically points out the psyche of Tara which has come in her due to the loss of her own cultural heritage.

Towards the end of the novel, unruly demonstrations and riots occurred in the streets of Calcutta. A young man lifted a boy who had been knocked unconscious by the machine. There was chaos and confusion in the whole street. Joyob Rey Chowdhury, a symbol of the old world, was brutally beaten to death. Pronob tried to save him. But he himself was injured in the process. A few buses were burnt. There was confrontation between Joyob and the Harehars. The agitators kicked an old man, searched him, and tossed him like a ball. When Pronob tried to save him he was also put to task, Tara who witnessed the menacing scenes in the city wondered,

Whether she would ever get out of Calcutta and if she didn't, whether (her husband) David would ever know that she loved his fiercely. (210)

In *The Tiger's Daughter* Tara remains as an alienated individual. Outside the society, corrupt politicians make her unhappy. Her anxiety grows deeper when she sees the appalling crowds giving

vent to their animal instincts. In the presence of her mother she feels alienated. Within herself she becomes mentally turbulent and makes her return to USA. We may tune with Shobha Shinde and say that Bharati Mukherjee shows

A dual cultural shock. Tara leaves her country in search of her dream. This migration of cultural transplant leads to crises of identity and final reconciliation.<sup>5</sup>

The novelist employs the technique of irony to make her point explicitly clear. After a lapse of seven year stay in the USA, Tara yearns for a visit to her country. She, with a view to spending her time happily in India, finds everything disappointing. The very trial of rediscovering herself and also understanding India makes her unhappy. She neither discovers herself nor understands India. Moreover, Bengal Tiger too, remains passive as his daughter is at bay. The terrors of the city paralyzed her physically and morally. The irony is that the protagonist who pays a visit to India finds it difficult to unravel its muddle.

The attempt to understand India is clouded by the desire to interpret for foreigners, to judge India by their standards and value systems and the result in a kind of vacuum surrounding the protagonist. They belong nowhere.<sup>6</sup>

Tara's journey to India her own native land ironically proves frustrating slowly leading to his illusion, alienation, depression, and finally her tragic end. The greatest irony hidden in the story of Tara is that she survived the racial hardships of survival in a foreign country but nothing happens to her. Tara's journey to India is best represented in her mood presented in the following lines: "It was so vague, so pointless, so diffuse, this trip home to India." (130) The immigrant's return to her own country proves frustrating both physically and metaphorically.

Thus, in *The Tiger's Daughter* one finds the feelings of alienation of Tara. As it has already been pointed out, it grippingly presents the theme of adjusting to a new culture. This sort of alienation

in more exemplified in Bharati Mukharjee's another novel *Wife*.

Bharathi Mukherjee in her novels makes a concerted effort to conceptualize the image of the immigrants, who say their claim to an American identity by struggling heroically to reinstate themselves successfully in a strange cultural landscape. Here they strive to find a niche and give themselves a second chance to build their lives. Bharathi Mukherjee saw in immigration an opportunity to redefine herself as an artist in an immigrant tradition, and not as an aloof and alienated expatriate writer, concerned only with the subversive potential of life on the margin. Bharathi Mukherjee viewed immigration as an opportunity to the writer in her to represent the experiences and at the same time lend her voice to her belief that it signified a release from constructive social and cultural restraints back home. America is a country of immigrants, immigration being central to America. Every American who ever lives, with the exception of the native Indians, was either an immigrant himself or a descendant of immigrants.

Here in the novel *The Tiger's Daughter* explores the condition of being an Indian expatriate. In conceiving the character of Tara, Mukherjee had already begun to distance herself from the role of an expatriate. She models so well in her novel the deep and persistent undercurrent of nostalgia almost sensual in character. The writer did not attempt a family saga, but set about exposing how it feels for a young girl to leave a sheltered home, hedged by class privilege and wealth, return home, a fully grown young woman to come after breaking all social taboos by marrying a foreigner and see whether she can find a place at home again. She realizes that she could not communicate with that society simply because the society Tara rejoins is without a vision of the West.

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## Rabindranath Tagore as a Playwright

- A. Phaniraja Kumar & K. Janardhanreddy

Rabindranath Tagore began to write plays almost as soon as he began to write poems. They came out between 1890 and 1926. His dramas may be action- original or ideal and the symbolism does not fog the action. They are vehicles of ideas, powerfully filled with conviction; yet things happen in them, and usually happen rightly and naturally. The Second group plays are the brief dialogues of the late nineties. They are called Dramatic Monologues and Classical in nature. The third group of plays embraces Symbolism. His earlier dramas reached on achievement which he failed to carry to fulfilment.

Since, while translating from his original Bengali, Tagore made extensive changes in the text. These plays are virtually redone in prose, rather than being simple translations. The translations are done by the author himself. The prose of the plays is interspersed with songs and symbolism becomes a marked feature of Tagore's dramas. So, thematically the plays fall in to two broad groups: Thesis plays and Psychological dramas. In the first group may be included '*Chitra*', '*Malini*', '*Sacrifice*', '*Natir Puja*', '*Red Oleanders*' and '*Mukta Dara*'. To the second belonging '*The King and Queen*', '*Kacha and Devayani*', '*Karna and Kunti*', '*Post Office*', and '*The King of the Dark Chamber*'.

Tagore wrote his first characteristic play '*Sanyasi*' or '*The Ascetic*' (1884). It is the story of an ascetic who is brought back of ordinary life by consideration humanity. In the play, the girl to the ascetic appears as the untouchable girl, Vasanthi and the Sanyasi who thinks he has annulled the division of days and nights respectively. The central thesis of the play is the celebration of life. The ascetic in '*Sanyasi*' runs away from the orphaned girl, Vasanthi who clings to him, in fear that she will ensnare him into attachment to this world. In the end, he realizes when it is too late, that his affection for her cannot be rooted; when he returns, she is dead. The Sanyasi has learned the lesson of love and life, and there is now no danger of his returning to the deserts of mere ascetic negation. The Sanyasi is indeed redeemed. It is not life that is the enemy of man, but the wrong kind of egoistic possessiveness that debases and enslaves body, mind and soul. True love can emancipate and enlarge. It liberates, purifies and intensifies

human understanding.

“*The King and The Queen*” (Raja O Rani, 1889) published when Tagore was 28. It is Tagore’s first and perhaps his only, full-blooded drama. It is Tagore’s cast in the Shakespearean mould. The theme is that of Love and Patriotism. Infatuated with Sumithra’s (the Queen) beauty, the King Vikram neglects his duties and his subjects (people) are oppressed by the heads of officials who constitute the bureaucracy. The queen pleads in vain with the king whom she leaves in depression to go back to her father’s kingdom to join forces with her brother. The king sets out to bring her back using more ruthlessly to crush all opposition cornered by the king’s army, the queen’s brother, rather than surrenders in person at the cost of his honour, sends to the king his severed head by a messenger to secure place for the country. The play thus ends in conventional melodrama. Tagore reminds his chance of creating a tragic hero in “Raja O Rani” by allowing the play to end in melodrama. He seemed to realize his failure and wrote a revised version of “Raja O Rani” in prose, which was a vastly improved play.

But “*Sacrifice*” (Visarjan) (1895) Tagore succeeded in creating a tragic hero in the character of Raghupathi, the priest in a bitter conflict. The issue between them, which is the theme of the play, is the ritual sacrifice of animals before Goddess Kali. The king’s edict banning sacrifice moves Raghupathi to a protest which is at once impassioned and dignified. But the king is adamant. Fiendish in his fury, Raghupathi urges his disciple, Jaisimha whom he has brought up from childhood and whom he loves dearly to kill the king to appease the goddess. The climax is reached when the disciple immolates himself as an offering to the blood-thirsty Goddess. Raghupathi is utterly disillusioned; not only sacrifice but the very idol, to appease which he had resolved on the shedding of royal blood, loses all meanings for him. The agony of this realisation raises him to the stature of a tragic hero, perhaps the only one created by Rabindranath Tagore.

In ‘*The Cycle of Spring*’ (Muktadhara), the middle aged king, afraid of the approach of old age, is convinced by the poet, who stages a symbolic play before him, that change being the law of life, the secret of happenings is joyous acceptance. The play “*Chitra*” or “*Chitrangada*” deals with the story of the mother of Babruvahana of

the ‘Mahabharata’. Arjuna, in his world tour of twelve years, once reaches Manipur. Chitrangada, daughter of the king, has been brought up as if she were a boy and, wandering in the woods for hunting, sees him asleep in a spot and wakes him up. She falls in love with him and would marry him, but he does not want her, boy-like as she is and unattractive. Chitrangada comes home and decks herself like a woman and sees Arjuna asks him again to marry her. Arjuna declines and says he is under a vow of celibacy. Chitrangada feels hurt, goes back and prays to the gods of love and spring, and, obtaining a boon of faultless beauty and youth for a year, goes to Arjuna again. He does not recognize the Boyden in this beauty. He is infatuated with her. In the end, she resumes her original form, and Arjuna learns the lesson that the love transcends mere physical beauty.

After “*Chitra*”, came the play “*Malini*”. It is a play in the manner of “*Sacrifice*”. In it, religious fanaticism is exposed. Malini, the king’s daughter has Buddhist leanings and her banishment is demanded by the Brahmins “frightened at her heresy”. The Brahmins are collected in front of the palace, determined to be unyielding, when Malini herself appears. Most of them are dazzled by her beauty of holiness and are converted to the new faith and hail her as Goddess and Mother and the “divine soul of this world”. Chief among the agitators is Kemankar. Supriya, his friend is another of the agitators who however objects to excess anything. Seeing the beauty of Malini, people follow her. Supriya also would follow her but Kemankar stops him. The army which intended to take the side of the Brahmins before but now it is inclined towards Malini. But Kemankar’s is the stronger will; he decides to leave the country and try to secure foreign aid to root out the Buddhist heresy, and asks Supriya to keep him informed of developments. Presently Supriya is also drawn to Malini, and he betrays Kemankar’s secret to the king. Kemankar is captured, and the king is full of gratitude to Supriya. Supriya has realised that what he did was wrong and has no mind for happiness. The king proposes to get Kemankar beheaded, but Malini asks him to forgive him and Supriya makes the same request. Kemankar is beaten but does not admit that he is wrong. He asks Supriya why he has betrayed him. The friends exchange some words and then Kemankar says that what is past is past and invites Supriya to come and embrace him. In this act,

Kemankar strikes Supriya with his fetters and kills him. The king draws his sword and rushes on Kemankar to punish him but Malini supplicates to him to forgive the man and the play ends. The story is well-knit and true frame-work of the play is strong. Malini, Kemankar and Supriya are cast in a powerful mould.

The same motif appears in “*Natir Puja*”. Srimati, the Buddhist dancer in a Hindu court is compelled, on pain of death, to commit sacrilege by dancing before a Buddhist shrine. She makes her dance on the act of worship, thus inviting death. There is transcendent victory for her in defer for now queen Lokeswari—even the adamant elder princess, Ratnavai- is overcome at last, and mutters, touching martrayed Srimati’s feet:

I take refugee in the Buddha!

I take refugee in the Dharma!

I take refugee in the Sangha.

The play has an exceedingly well-knitted. The incident of Srimathi is also the subject of a poem by Tagore. Queen Lokeswari and Srimathi are portrayed at length in the play. The story is unhampered by any admixture of symbolism and is free to be true to life.

In “*Chandalika*” (1933), the ‘untouchable girl Prakriti falls in sudden love with Ananda, the Buddha’s youngest and best-loved disciple when he chances to meet her near a well. A few kind understanding words set aflame her self- respect and she is now his slave, though he has gone far away. But Prakriti’s love is a devouring fever of desire, and she persuades her mother to work the primordial earth spell on Ananda so that he may return and quench the raging fever. The spell drags Ananda with irresistibly force to the Chandalika’s hut, but it works at the same time a hideous change on his countenance, which is no more than the index of the destructive fury of the story within his own heart and soul. Prakriti’s final victory is also her supreme defeat, for although she has won and brought Ananda to her cottage door, she cannot bear the sight of his agonized face. So she cries in despair and implores her mother again to normalcy. Anand is pleased from the spell, the mother dies in expiation of the wrong she has tried to do, and Prakriti’s spiritual rebirth is completed.

In all three plays- “*Malini*”, “*Natir Raja*” and “*Chandalika*”- the stress is on the spiritual action in symbolic terms behind the physical action in human terms. Between ‘Sacrifice’ and ‘Raja’ (The Kind and the Queen) which has published in 1910, there is an interval of 15/20 years during which Tagore did not produce any major dramatic work, though he wrote several dramatic pieces. When he put his hand again to write a long play, he had developed into far more of a devotee of God. In the play that he then wrote he turned naturally to a theme of devotion. This was the play “Raja” rendered into English with the title “*The King of the Dark Chamber*”. The story is taken from a Buddhist Jataka which has undergone a transformation in Tagore’s hands.

The king meets his queen only in a dark chamber (hence the English title). The queen, a thirst for physical beauty, longs to see the king in light of day. The king agrees to appear in the crowd on the day of the spring festival so that the queen could see him from the top of her palace. Like the queen, none of his subjects had ever seen the king, and there were some amongst them who were doubtful of his very existence. Some fellow in the guise of a king comes out in procession and the crowd is misled. The kings of other countries, who came to the festival, make out that this fellow is a pretender and catches him and frightens him. The false king admits to them that he is false. He is not the king but a person named Suvarna and he promises these other kings that he will show them the queen and arranges with them that they will not expose him. Kanchi, the rebel, longs to possess the queen and sets fire to the palace which is seen ablaze from one end to the other. The queen in her fear seeks the production of Suvarna, but the latter proves himself a coward. At this moment, the real king appears before the queen in the lurid light of the flaming palace. He is terrible to behold, black as the sky darkened by a comet. Unable to bear the sight, the queen runs away accompanied by Suranguma, the queen her maid-in-attendance, a woman who had once strayed from the path of virtue but who is now completely dedicated to the king. The queen reaches her father’s home, pursued by seven vasaal kings, the seven deadly sins. Amongst them is Kanchi, attended on by Suvarna with whom the queen is still infatuated, though, she has lost respect for him on account of his cowardice. At this stage appears Thakurda (literally grandfather). The playful Thakurda, who appeared in festive obsession at the spring festival, has

now changed into battle dress, thus, emphasising the two aspects of his character. One by one the vassal kings surrender, but not Kanchi, the uncompromising rebel. But even Kanchi has to acknowledge defeat when the king appears suddenly like a tornado, tearing down the banner from the rebel's chariot, leaving him utterly helpless, and then leaves as suddenly without exacting any punishment. Meanwhile, the queen has made up her mind to surrender to the king, but the king does not claim her. So they are all out on the road seeking king; the queen with her attendant, Surangamma, Thakurda and the vanished Kanchi. It is a wide open road of the world, the pilgrim's path. In the last scene, the queen meets the king for the last time in the dark chamber and says: "You are not handsome, my lord, you are incomparable". The curtain drops as the king says: "I open the doors of the dark room today; the game is finished here. Come, come with me now, and come outside, into the light."

In its class, this play should become of the best ever written. The characters and the situations and the speeches indicate profound understanding of spiritual life and embody ineffable wisdom on the loftiest attitude. It was the first allegorical symbolical problem play in Bengali literature.

"*The Post Office*" which followed within two years of "*Raja*" is in the same genre. But it is proud to be less of a problem play owing to its gripping human interest. Amal is the adopted son of Madhava, a miserly creature. Amal's advent into his family seems to have slightly changed his nature, and he spends freely on the medical treatment of this sickly boy. The physician forbids Amal to leave his bed-room for fear of exposure and the boy grows restless. He is eager to see and know the outside world. He looks out his sick-room window at the colourful spectacle of life: a curd seller coming from a distant village near the hill, a little girl with a basket of flowers, troops of playing children, the watchmen going on their beats and the postman who brings letters from the king. Day by day, as his life ebbs out and he pines for the far away, the boy awaits a letter from the king which comes at last, so the boy believes, carried by the king's own messenger, the Royal physician, who comes to put the boy beyond the touch of all earthly pain. The moment of death for the child is the moment of his

union with the king. The child's unfulfilled longings are the source of pathos in the play. It is not till this moment the meaning of the play is clear to the audience.

The next play had the title "*Red Oleanders*", first published in 1926. Tagore takes up as his theme life in modern industrial areas and considers its effect on man's mind. The scene of the play is Yakshanagar, a modern and progressive locality. The story of this play is about a community, every member of which is forced to slave in the gold mines, under the vigilance of the ruthless bosses, associated with whom is sinister partnership is the priest. People here are treated as parts of a machine, having no names, only members. The least sign of intractability is a provocation for savage beatings. The only breath of life in this lurid lifeless world is Nandini, a young woman, who hurls defiance at the king who masterminds the operation of the whole diabolical machinery from his devil's den of workshop, secured behind a screen. Ranjan, the personification of beauty, is looked upon as the worst enemy of this industrial centre, and Nandini, the girl who loves him and expects him to make his presence felt in this dismal area. Vishu among the workers is a singer. He teaches his fellow workmen the doctrine of freedom and is imprisoned. Nandini talks to him and gives offence to the authorities. She goes further and with the help of the workers tries to rescue Vishu. Ranjan, who is in prison helps from inside and these people from outside break the prison open. Before they get in, however, Ranjan is dead, holding in his hand a red oleander, the gift of Nandini and Nandini herself, on seeing, him dead, dies. Vishu sings a song of victory. For a moment the play trembles on the brink of tragedy. Thus, '*Red Oleanders*' is a symbolic presentation of the triumph of humanistic values over soul-killing mammonism.

Tagore's English plays have a compact and neat structure. Tagore's principal characters tend to be symbolic and allegorical in the thesis plays and archetypal in the psychological dramas, and often attain certain universality. His setting is invariable non-realistic, being either puranic or legendary or federal or patently symbolic and the dialogue, time and again attains a true poetic flavour. Tagore's drama, firmly rooted in the Indian ethos in its themes and characters and eminently expressive of his deepest convictions in creative terms, is comparable

at its best with the modern imaginative drama of W. B. Yeats and Maurice Maeterlinck.

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## **Inter Textuality and Problem of Translation in Comparative Literature**

**- T. V. Surendranatha Reddy**

In the present age translation is assuming increase important because the distances between people and nations have been reduced by Science and Technology. Translation is very much important in multi-lingual society like India. Indian society and culture is not a homogenous and repetitive one as that of west. It is a complex and inter-woven fabric of beliefs, cultural practices, language diversities and regional disparities. This is admirably summed up by as “Unity in Diversity”. The modern Indian state is a legacy of colonial rule with its vast net-work of communications and structured administration. A centralized Government backed by the collective will of people led to political integration but did not result in integrating the cultural uniqueness of each region marked by specific literary effusions, in a new body left them standing on their own. The re-organization of states based on language helped to aggravate the situation leading to localism.

The contemporary situation reminds us of the responsibility of knitting the country together socially and culturally. At this crucial juncture the role of writers cannot be over estimated in generating a feeling of National integration through inter-regional understanding of their works. Literature from various regions became an acceptable and admirable via media through which the feeling of oneness and a sense of patriotism can be roused to be channelised into nation building. In the words of Prof. V.K. Gokak.

“Translation has Central role to play in a vast subcontinent like India, with fifteen major regional languages, each proud of its distinct culture and tradition-and countless dialects some of which are creatively as vibrant as any of our developed languages. If, therefore, our country is to evolve a national identity, it must encourage its translators. Translators can indeed, act as National integrators and cultural synthesizers”.

As in the words of TANKE: “Translation is the “transfer of a text from a source language into equivalence of meaning between the two texts”.

The richness of regional languages in collecting and integrating the valuable regional experiences need not be emphasized. They are formulated in terms of vocabulary, social usages, idioms and ways of life. There is a need to communicate this experience of life to other parts of country in order to avoid the closed feeling of regional Chauvinism. There is to doubt that regional literature plays a key role in creating cross-cultural awareness through translation in order to develop a positive response towards area other than its own. As observed by Prof. Srinivas Iyengar:

“Translation is both Science and an art. It is a means of International Co-operation and national integration. It is through translation that we can bridge the distances of culture and geography. The knowledge, trends, ideas, literary developments thoughts of one nation can be transmitted to the other”

Comparative literature is a discipline dedicated to the study of literature without national and linguistic barriers. The students of comparative literature study problems in genre, mode, literary period or movement. The comparatists probe the mechanics of literary form and engage themselves in the analysis of existing theoretical and critical approaches and the formulation of necessary critical distinctions. Of equal importance to the comparatists are questions of the interaction of literature with other arts and disciplines. The comparatist may study the political, social and intellectual contexts of literature so long as the comparative and literary emphasis is preserved. In other words, the main objective of the study of comparative literature is the proper appreciation of literature in a larger perspective, involving more than one literature and specially those growing across the national boundaries. In a multilingual country like ours we have two basic objectives for studying comparative literature.

On the Indian literary scene, comparative literary methodology can be extremely useful in developing a concept of unified Indian

literary history on a single level of organization. By Indian literary history, I mean, the history of the regional manifestations of Indian literature, giving Sanskrit its due place as a preamble to the whole structure, depicting a historically convincing graph of continuous literary emergence in terms of varying dimensions of our national experience. While a good deal of literature is produced in India, it has not yet been possible to develop the idea of a unified Indian literature since it is written in many languages. At present, in spite of individual studies of regional literatures on a broad comparative and critical scale, the idea of one Indian literature is yet to be developed in its proper perspective. Indian literature is still a mere collection of different literatures having diverse linguistic manifestations. Through comparative literary studies alone can we arrive at the oneness of Indian literature.

The other objective is to develop a fuller appreciation of western literature. Professor Buddhadeva Bose says that English being the most widespread foreign language in India, the unfortunate and incongruous situation for an ambitious student of Western literature is to concentrate solely on English and know Europe exclusively through England. As a result, we imbibe British prejudices, applaud Robert Bridges and denigrate D.H. Lawrence, and do our English literature without even hearing of Baudelaire or Heine, Ovid or Dante, Whitman or the great Russians. An obvious remedy for this is the dissemination of the knowledge of Western literature other than English, and it is here that comparative literature can fulfill a genuine need of our literary pursuits. This lengthy introduction in defence of the propagation of the study of comparative literature (CL) in Indian is to emphasise its role in evolving the idea of one Indian literature and understanding western literature in a more comprehensive manner. Coming to the means and methods of securing these objectives we are faced with the most important but controversial question of literary translations.

Literature being a creative work, the translation according to Henry Gifford can never be more than an oil painting reproduced in black and white. It is accepted that when the creative imagination works intensely-whether in a lyric, a play or a novel-it organizes the material with a degree of subtlety and comprehensiveness that no translation

may match. The unity of the completed work draws together a multitude of converging details but is bound to be impoverished in a translation.

A translator has to accept one of the two equations as the basis for his activity. One equation is  $A-B$ =Nearer to the original. Here 'A' indicates the original and 'B' indicates the degrees of loss. The second equation is  $A-B+C$ =separated quite away from the original. Here 'C' means the things added by the translator. The translator of the literary work generally goes in for the latter. But he must have the necessary training to keep a control on the second equation if at all he accepts it. This can be done by analysis of the textual material of source language (SL) and semantic analysis of referential and connotative meaning and restructuring it into equivalent textual material of target language (TL).

The question of taking liberties or freedom in translation is sometimes raised in the name of ease and pleasure. It is argued that a translation must be such as can be read with ease and pleasure, with the suggestion that if it is not so it is as good as redundant. The risks lie in the extent of the latitude which the translator permits himself. It must be admitted that there is a distinction between the original author and the translator because of two things: one, the translator has his own expression or style which is influenced both by his personality and by the period of history in which he lives and, secondly, the system of form and meaning in the source language may be similar to that in the target language, but is never the same. As a result there can be no exact translation.

In the study of comparative literature the necessity of translation is ineluctable. Inversely, comparatism can be of immense help for translation studies, i.e., for the discipline that concerns with the problems raised by the production and description of translation. A comparative study of the two referential systems (the particular linguistic and cultural systems of the writer and the translator) helps us understand the translated version of a literary text with reference to the translator's reading strategies, degree of objectivation, the extent to which the general is modified or replaced by the specific and the type of bilingualism.

In comparatism, the knowledge of language is important, but it

has no direct bearing on literary understanding. In many cases the study of translations becomes a comparative critical exercise of great value, even for readers who lack the original.

Comparative perspective looks at all literature as one organic process, a continuous and cumulative whole. That being the reason one can hope that the comparative method can be helpful in cross-cultural communication in translation. We all know that no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture, so the exact translation is a hypothesis only. We all know that translation is done for a unilingual community bound by its own cultural properties. It means that any discourse in the SL and its translation in TL should be accepted as two sets of possible worlds having a 'dynamic' equivalence' (Nida). The question of equivalence is related to meaning, to be precise-pragmatic meaning, 'Equivalent' does not mean identical: the response can never be identical because of different cultural, historical and situational settings. So it is always necessary to aim at equivalence of pragmatic meaning, if necessary at the expense of semantic equivalence. Pragmatics relates to the correlation between linguistic units and the user(s) of these units in a given communicative situation. We may therefore consider a translation to be primarily a pragmatic reconstruction of its source text. Only then the cross-cultural communication becomes feasible.

Telugu literature is one of the prominent literatures of south India which responded to all political and social struggles and created a heightened awareness among people. It is a virtual treasure-house of valuable experiences especially during the sixties and seventies on various issues like poverty, social inequalities, peasantry, exploitation and gender issues. It is highly assimilative and responsive to various genres in Dalit literature in tandem with feminism. Both are protestant in nature and try to rouse the public conscience against legitimized social evils. Both these emerging ideologies had a tremendous impact on Telugu literature.

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## **The Chronicle of Discrimination in India**

**- V. Hanumanthaiah**

According to Narendra Jadhav “Every sixth human being in the world today is an Indian, and every sixth Indian is an untouchable. For thousands of years the untouchables, or Dalits, the people at the bottom of the Hindu caste system, have been treated as subhuman. India, the cradle of civilization, is now beset with a number of social evils. They are so numerous that one shudders to think of them. Some social reformers fought against social evils but these evils were so deep-rooted that try as they did some of them persist to this day.

Discriminatory and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of a vast global population has been justified on the basis of caste. In much of Asia and parts of Africa, caste is the basis for the definition and exclusion of distinct population groups by reason of their descent. Over 250 million people worldwide continue to suffer under what is often a hidden apartheid of segregation, modern-day slavery, and other extreme forms of discrimination, exploitation and violence. Caste imposes enormous obstacles to their full attainment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Caste is descent – based and hereditary in nature. It is a characteristic determined by one’s birth into a particular caste, irrespective of the faith practiced by the individual. Caste denotes a system of rigid social stratification into ranked groups defined by descent and occupation. Under various caste systems throughout the world, caste divisions also dominate in housing, marriage, and general social interaction-divisions that are reinforced through the practice of threat of social ostracism, economic boycott and even physical violence.

Today there are 165 million untouchables or Dalits and they continue to suffer under India’s 3,500-year-old caste system, which remains a stigma on humanity. However Dalits are struggling against caste discrimination, illiteracy, and poverty. The weapons are education, self empowerment, and democracy.

Hindus believe that God created the caste system. The sacred

Rig-Veda, the earliest literary source in India, dating back to around 1000 B.C., describes how human stratification came about: a cosmic giant, Purusha, sacrificed parts of his body to create mankind. His mouth became the Brahmin, the priestly class; his arms the Kshatriya, the warriors and land owners; his thighs were made into Vaishya, the merchants; and from his feet were born Shudra, the servants. This fourfold division of society is called the Four varnas (Chaturvarna). The untouchables have no place in the chaturvarna, and are placed even below the lowest shudravarna.

Ancient Hindu law books such as Manu Smriti and Goutama Dharma Shastra did not allow shudras and Dalits to possess any wealth other than “Dogs and Donkeys”. The doors of education were closed to them. This is what the law books prescribe for untouchables who dare approach the sacred texts. If he listens intentionally to the Vedas, his ears shall be filled with lead. If he recites them, his tongue shall be cut out. If he remembers them, his body shall be split in twain.

In the Indian epic the Mahabharata, dated around 1000 B.C., there is a celebrated fable about Ekalavya, a tribal boy and an out caste. One day Ekalavya saw a group of young boys listening to the famed guru Dronacharya. He tried to befriend them but was surrounded by four armed guards, who roughed him up. The princes were learning the art of archery and warfare, and if ever Ekalavya had at any time dared cross into their territory seen again in the vicinity, they warned, he would be instantly killed.

But curiosity got the better of Ekalavya, who began rising at dawn to furtively watch the training of the young princes. He would strain to hear everything that was taught. By night in the moonlight, he would practice, reciting the instructions he had heard the guru utter. He soon mastered the art of archery” (*Untouchables*, p.12).

In the Hindu mythology, Shambuka, an outcaste ascetic, was slayed/slain by Rama for venturing to perform penance in cross violation of the then yuga dharma, and eventually resulting in the untimely death of a young Brahmana boy (The Valmiki Ramayana, book-7, The Uttarakanda Sargas 73-76). It is believed that Shambuka was beheaded in a hill cave at Rantek, near Nagapur in Maharashtra.



When Rama, a virtuous king is the ruler of Ayodhya, a humble aged Brahmin comes, weeping to him with his dead son in his arms. Sage Narada explains to Rama that an out caste has been practicing penance, and this is the cause of the young boy's untimely death. Rama goes on a tour of inspection in his flying chariot, and finds an ascetic doing austerities, and asks "who he is" and what he has been doing.

On hearing the words of the renowned warrior, the ascetic, his head still hanging downward (as part of his austerities) answered. "O Rama, I was born of a shudra an out caste and I am performing this rigorous penance in order to acquire the status of a God in flesh and blood in this life itself. I am not telling a lie O Rama, I wish to attain the celestial status. Know that I am a shudra and my name is Shambuka. As he was still speaking, Raghava (Rama), drawing his brilliant and stainless sword from its scabbard, cut his head off. The shudra being slain, all the Gods cried out, "well done! well done!" over whelming Rama with praise, and a shower of celestial flowers of divine fragrance fell on all sides, scattered by Vayu, the God of air.

In their supreme satisfaction, the Gods praised Rama saying thou hast protected the interests of the Gods, O Highly Intelligent Prince, now ask a boon. O beloved offspring of Raghu, Destroyer of Thy Foes. By thy grace, this shudra will not be able to attain heaven!.

Some critics interpret this event, as injustice meted out to Shambuka, and are of the opinion that Rama had slain Shambuka because of his birth as an out caste shudra. Dravidian movements hold the position that ford Rama murdered Shambuka to reinstate the apartheid varna system, which is an important feature of the Hindu Dharma. Ambedkar, in contrast, said that to conemn Rama based on this incident was to miss the point. The true purport of the story of Shambuka was that it demonstrated the un sustainability of the varna system, and the extent to which its existence depended on the harsh punishment of those who sought to transgress it. The apologists argue that One day the other guru saw ekalavya shoot a deer that was bolting at lightning speed. Amazed at the at the precision of a young boy

dressed in rags, the guru questioned him, and was shocked when he realized that this boy was a tribal out caste.

Ekalavya wanted to offer guru-dakshin the traditional gift offered to a teacher in gratitude, so he offered himself as the guru's slave. Instead, the guru asked Ekalavya for his right thumb. Ekalavya was caught off guard. In his right thumb rested all the prowess of archery. But Ekalavya calmly said that a guru is equivalent to a god and he would gladly do as the guru wished. So saying, he severed his thumb and laid his bleeding stub at Dronacharya's feet.

Every Indian child hears this mythological story about gurubhakti-devotion to the teacher. But, the tale must be seen in a very different light. Ekalavya is an outcaste-a dalit who was denied an education by the guru Dronacharya, who embodied the highborn. Dronacharya was protecting his knowledge and power as well as perpetuating a social order that was inherently unjust. For us, the moral of the fable is simply that power will remain the guarded possession of the highborn, striving to ensure that an out caste remains a lowly out caste. Paralyzed by the system, the out caste will never dare to question it.

“The 3500 – year – old caste system in India is still alive and violently kicking. In cities they will tell, The caste system is a thing of the past, it now exists only in villages. Go to villages, and they will tell, “Oh no. Not here, may be in some other village” (*Untouchables*, Narendra Jadhav, P.3).

Discrimination and untouchability was officially abolished by the Indian constitution when the country became a republic on January 26, 1950. Mercifully, today the untouchables are no longer required to place clay pots around their necks to prevent their spit from polluting the ground. They are no longer required to attach brooms to their rumps to wipe out their footprints as they walk. But while caste discrimination may have changed form, it has not disappeared. Consciously or subconsciously, most of the Indians, whether in their own country or abroad, still make judgments based on caste.

The fourfold chaturvarna and the untouchables are divided into more than three thousand castes and sub castes, with mind – boggling

differentiation built into the hierarchy. Caste is the defining factor in determining the course of life. The place from where he drinks water, whom he dines with, whom he marries, and whether he becomes a scholar or a scavenger – all depend on his caste.

The untouchables themselves were indoctrinated in the theory of karma, which states that they were burdened with demeaning tasks only because of their own misdeeds in past lives. Certainly, revolts against the caste system did take place – the most notable being the one by Gautama, the Buddha in the fifth century B.C., which questioned and discarded the chaturvarna and the caste system arising from out of it. Buddhism gained prominence over a large part of India and spread to other countries such as China and Japan, and Southeast Asia.

The bhakti movement established equality before God; its followers believed even untouchables shared the grace of God. As they reach God, they cease to be distinguished; as salt becomes one with the ocean, the untouchables become one with God. Even the compassionate saint – poets tended to uphold the divisive caste system in the social realm. While the Bhakti movement raised awareness, it was not radical enough to change the social system in our day – to – day life.

With the advent of the British Raj in the early nineteenth century, education, once the privilege of the upper castes alone, gradually became accessible to castes lower, down the hierarchy. Knowledge brought along with it the desire to be recognized and respected; it strengthened the resolve to struggle against discrimination.

“In a historic event in 1873, Jyotiba Phule, a teacher in a Christian school who came from the gardener community, established the first non-Brahmin social organization that emphasized education for the masses and advocated reduction of Brahmin virtual power. Phule educated his childless wife, Savitri, who started a school for women. Over the years, Jyotiba established many schools for untouchables and women” (*Untouchables*, Narendra Jadhav, p.5).

Woman in Indian society is always on the lower rung pedestal in the social ladder. She is not supposed to be free like men. Traditionally India had a male – dominate culture women was oppressed and was treated as cattle were. She was meek, weak and

humble and always was compared with the most humble and useful animal ‘cow’ for she knows only to give everything for her house but has no right to speak back under any circumstances whatever.

Woman was just no more than a commodity to donate in ritual performances and also an object to win in the wars. Her voice was but a subaltern voice. She was either a devi in highest esteem or a mere Dasi with no individuality of her own. Because of such treatment given to her by the male dominated society, it is thought woman that man is for God and woman for God is him. In other word as Milton would say in his Paradise Last Book?

In the scriptures all over the world and as also in Indian myths woman is depicted as a sub-human and not as a complete human-being. In literature also she was depicted as the mother, the chaste, suffering wife and son. Manusmti says Pashu, shudra aur Nari, yehsab Tadanke adhikai, i.e., animals the low caste born and women are worthy of being beaten. Here women ever in comparison with animal, is placed for below the animal.

In Anita Desai’s *“Voices in the City”*, Aunt Lila says “Our country belongs to its men!” It has been so for hundreds of years. Both her father and husband continue to treat her as their property that can be owned, controlled and disposed of the way they liked. But in Vedic period Indian women enjoyed the pride of place with great a women of intellectual Gargi, Maitrey etc., who walked along shoulder to shoulder with men.

From times ancient men have always been instructors and managers of not only public institutions but also administrators of family, occupation society economy and finally controllers of wealth in the social fabric. Women were not allowed to have anything to do with the organized social structure and with this inview our society had put in so many “dos”and “donts” on women such as Sati, Paradah, Child Marriage, Widow Remarriage, Dowry, inequality, Social harassment, Illiteracy, Untouchability, Child Labour, Prostitution etc..

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## Teaching English in a Literary Context

- A. Sharada

Teachers of English while planning their curriculum or instructional design for teaching second language learners need to bear in mind that there are different levels or outcomes of learning a language. In the Indian situation, it is believed that nearly 40 percent of students at undergraduate level require some remedial help with English. Nationwide, language educators are pressed upon to help students develop language competencies, essential for managing the rigours of college education. In preparing their instructional design or specifying outcomes, a teacher should focus on appropriate domains and be mindful of the level of operations being asked for. In the same class, different learners may be at different stages of learning. By knowing where a learner is starting from, a teacher can pitch his/her instruction at the appropriate level. Otherwise, the teacher may end up laying excessive stress on one level, often to the disadvantage of the majority of learners. Conventional methods have their own limitations. For instance, a teacher may teach a vast amount of grammar and vocabulary but never get around to teaching the students how to apply and synthesize this information towards becoming proficient speakers of English. The present paper suggests a way to overcome this limitation by applying the integrated method of teaching English through literature, for the realization of learning outcomes suggested by the Bloom's Model.

### Teaching for learning

The efficacy of teaching a language through literature is an issue of perennial interest to teachers of English. It has been widely debated whether a literary text can serve as suitable material, for teaching English. Often, advocates (those supporting use of literary texts as a pedagogical tool) of the method decry the skill and drill method or the formulaic method of the communicative approach, much in vogue these days.

Consider the following dialogue found in one of the current textbooks prescribed for language learning in the ESL classroom:

**Mrs. Sharma:** Will you look at my knee please?

**Doctor:** What's the matter with it?

**Mrs. Sharma:** Well, I'm not sure. But, it's not allowing me to walk, and it is swollen.

**Doctor:** We'll take an x-ray and find out what the trouble is.

**Mrs. Sharma:** Where can I get an x-ray done?

**Doctor:** Please go to the ground floor, and enquire at the reception counter, they will guide you to the x-ray section.

It is evident that there is not much information to be retrieved from the above text. How many such situational exchanges, would the learners have to go through before they can become competent users of the language? As the example illustrates, teachers need to recognise that merely focusing on functional usage in the ESL (English as Second Language) classroom may compromise the long term interests of the learners. At best, it may prepare the students into becoming mediocre users of the target language. Also, the conventional system of equipping language skills through teaching of grammar is too prosaic and unsuited for the new generation of learners. An over stress on the traditional language rules often proves counterproductive to the cause of language acquisition among the second language learners. Learners have to be brought to 'engage' with what they are learning so that they can assimilate what they are being taught.

Literary pedagogies appear to favour learning, and are more suited to the twentyfirst century learners. The method offers a scope for more creative exploration and enables the learners to look beyond the mechanical aspects of a language. By carrying out particular readings of a literary text and interpreting the human experiences in a text, the learners are able to inhabit and appreciate the native culture of a country whose language they are seeking to acquire. A popular work of fiction, thus, introduces the learners to the lived experience of characters in a social milieu, as vividly depicted by an author. Through creative participation in the confabulations of the varied characters and their lives students are able to grasp the finer nuances of the language as exchanged in a

natural setting of the real world.

Students exposed to the colourful idiom of a literary text find the individual lexical or syntactical items more memorable. For example, the lines from Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* - "I was blind, unforgivingly jealous of what had happened to him. The fact that I took it as a matter of course did not alter that any. I certainly did hate him" or the lines from Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* - "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known." A student coming across sentences like these in the reading of a literary text, gains familiarity with many features of the written and spoken language. S/He gains familiarity with the formation and function of sentences, learns to appreciate the variety of possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas etc. During the reading of a literary work, the teacher can set some of the interesting sections as prompts for initiating oral practice among the students.

Language activities can be made both challenging and enjoyable, as students attempt to tease out the meaning from the context of the text using the clues provided by the teacher. Students are able to appreciate an important lesson in the language class that a statement is to be understood in the context of the situation in which it is made. Extensive reading of a literary text and structured learning activities related to the text provide ample opportunities for the learners to reflect and actively discuss vocabulary and other important language functions. A teacher can evoke student interest and initiate a lively discussion of the text by first raising close ended questions on the story, characters, incidents and the denouement and later develop higher order language skills by posing open ended questions analyzing the motive, behaviour and actions of the protagonist(s) as well as the narrator's tone in the story. Here the teacher's questions serve as cues, prompting and guiding students to explore and stretch their language resources while answering them. Teachers, however, must avoid direct teaching and attempt to be more explorative.

### **Choice of a Text**

While assessing the suitability of a literary text, a teacher



should not merely look at the pedagogic convenience of teaching it. A choice of stories or novels that fascinate the youth, for example, J.K Rowling's Harry Potter fantasy series, like *The Philosopher's Stone*, *The Chamber of Secrets*, or *The Deathly Hallows*, R.L Stevenson's adventure series like *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped* or popular works of science fiction like Poppy Brite's *Lost Souls*, Lewis Carol's *Alice in Wonderland*, H.G Well's *Invisible Man*, *The Time Machine* etc., which are relevant to their life experiences, emotions or dreams may be eminently suitable for the purpose. Language difficulty, of course, has to be considered as well. After gauging the entry level competencies of the learners, a teacher should choose a literary work that is not too much above the students' current reading proficiency.

### **Applying Bloom's Taxonomy**

To engage students in the active reading of a text, a teacher can start with simple, close ended questions. The questions may elicit superficial responses from the students, but the teacher can progressively diversify the nature of questions to make them more open ended and challenging. In answering them, the students will be motivated to stretch their language resources. The teacher can develop his/her instructional design by bearing in mind Bloom's taxonomy of learning outcomes. For instance, the discussion of a novel like Stevenson's *Treasure Island* can be structured along the Bloom's hierarchy of learning objectives as below:

1. **Knowledge** – Teacher can ask the students the meaning of the word, 'pirate' and ask them to recall a previously read pirate story.
2. **Comprehension** – Teacher can ask the students to narrate the sequence of events starting with the incident where the narrator, Jim Hawkins meets the captain at the old inn.
3. **Application** – Students are asked to interpret metaphors like 'money' or 'island' and are guided to identify other sections of the text where figurative use of the language has been made.

4. **Analysis** - Students may be asked to identify and reflect on the specific narrative techniques, (like use of first person narrative) employed in the text.
5. **Synthesis** – Teacher can draw students’ attention to structural devices of the text and ask them to mark the major transition points in the development of the story, before asking them to write a summary of the story.
6. **Evaluation** – Teacher may ask the students to assess the merits and shortcomings of the work they have read. They may speak on why the book is great or not so great using certain criteria.

By performing the range of activities set by the teacher and answering the battery of questions on the content of the novel or a short story, students make a maximum use of the target language. Along the way, student attention can be drawn to how a language operates, both as a rule –based system as well as a socio-semantic system.

### **A Strategy for Effective Facilitation**

Teachers in the ESL classroom can strive for further success by bringing to bear, the scaffold theory of language pedagogy. First proposed by Vygotsky, the theory explains the notion of proximal development, a process where teaching and learning are closely intertwined. Citing empirical evidence gathered from parent-child studies, later thinkers like Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) described these helpful interactions between a parent and child as “scaffolding”. Eventually, the term came to signify a process that “enables a child or novice to solve a task or achieve a goal that would be beyond his/her unassisted efforts” (90).

Ninio and Bruner, 1978, explained ‘scaffolding’ in the context of story book reading demonstrating how mothers work together with their children. By switching between active and passive roles during story reading sessions, the mothers tended to provide more support when the child needed help reading and less when the child was experiencing success. Following the paradigm, teachers in the ESL context need to ask, “What can my students do

independently?”, “What can my students accomplish with assistance?”, “What kind of scaffold can I provide through prompts and questions so that my students struggling to acquire a second language can climb higher to achieve their learning goals?”.

A literary text can, thus, serve as a good tool for the ESL teachers to help the learners practice the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. A teacher can use the text to exemplify grammatical structures and introduce new vocabulary. By helping the students to unravel the literary text packed with stylistic devices like metaphors, puns, similes and alliterations the teacher can familiarize them with the figurative usage of the language. A little more advanced learners can be guided to explore narrative techniques like first person narration, third person narration, stream of consciousness technique etc.,

Also, students are able to assimilate vocabulary better when presented in a context. Assessing exactly how much vocabulary students need to acquire is something the teacher needs to determine beforehand. While monitoring classroom discussions, the teacher needs to be aware of the group dynamics at play and try to be unobtrusive. S/he is to exercise tact while dealing with reluctant and shy students. The teacher can nudge them into participation by referring to them by names and posing some straightforward questions to them.

### **Question as a Tool**

Asking a question is a teacher’s prerogative. When judiciously posed, questions direct students’ thinking and encourage their participation in their learning. Asking a question is both an art and a science.

Questions invite responses and stimulate exchange among students. The teacher should plan for the number of questions keeping in mind the time constraints. By minimizing his/her talk-time in the class, a teacher can pose questions to maximize the learner’s contribution. The instructional design of a teacher should reflect the different types of questions and the purpose of the questions, i.e., what skill of the learner is to be tested. Based on

Bloom's pyramid, a teacher can frame different types and levels of questions on the literary text under study.

'Closed' questions can be asked by the teacher to test the comprehension and skill of recall. They require almost no reflection or originality on the part of the learners as they focus on the form or meaning of language structures in the text. For example: a) What does the word, 'buccaneer' mean? b) When does Jim Hawkins meet the captain? c) What happens when Black Dog comes to see Billy Bones?

On concluding the reading of the text, the teacher can pose open-ended questions asking students to draw inferences, make predictions and summarise. The learners can be motivated to recall information, formulate opinions, or paraphrase important sections of the text. These referential questions are often broad, and call for a higher level of language skills. At this stage, the teacher may ask students to work in pairs and put their narrative ideas into practice through collaborative interviewing. For example: a) What are the foreshadowing techniques that the author, Stevenson employs in the first few chapters of *Treasure Island*, to highlight the theme of treachery? b) If you were in Jim's shoes, how would you have reacted on learning about Long John Silver's double-facedness? c) What aspects of Jim's personality do you think make him a real hero?

Through well planned and strategically executed outcome directed classroom activities, a teacher can nudge students to higher levels of language acquisition. Also, the teacher has to equip himself/herself by collecting right materials related to the text. First, the teacher should decide the aim of language teaching in relation to the needs and expectations of the students. Secondly, s/he should select the appropriate text that is relevant to the objective of teaching. While selecting literary texts the interests, age, sex, intelligibility and the scope for language learning should be taken into account, so that the text can inspire the learner to read. Literary texts with grammatical, linguistic and literary difficulties should be avoided. The selected literary texts should include structures and vocabulary that the learners are reasonably familiar with. Background details should be furnished before initiating the reading of

the text.

## **Conclusion**

Finally, the teachers need to be aware of the intellectual level, the social, and the cultural presuppositions, of the student group and their previous literary/aesthetic experience in prescribing an appropriate book for reading to them. For instance, students in India may find nineteenth century English literature closer to their own experience and how they lead their lives than much of the contemporary works of literature emerging from U.K , U.S.A Australia or Canada.

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## **Salman Rushdie, Potential yet Controversial: With Focus on His Religious Perspectives**

**- P. Athahar Samina Khan**

Sir Ahmad Salman Rushdie is a British-India Novelist and essayist. Much of his fiction is set on the Indian subcontinent. He is said to combine magical realism with historical fiction. He is a Booker Prize winner in 1981 for his work “Mid-Night Children” that catapulted the literary nobility. In 1993 and 2008, he was awarded the best of the Bookers as the best novel to have received during its first 25 and 40 years. Rushdie has published many short stories, including those collected in *East West* besides 9 novels, children’s’ books, essays and memoirs.

He is a novelist who would see the world, at the best he perceives. His fearlessness in dealing any aspect irrespective of controversial concerns of statehood affairs is something to understand beyond imagination. He is a novelist who enjoys to the fullest, speaks “I have always thought that it was lucky that I was a novelist. A novel is a thing that you can sit in a room and write”

Of eleven novels he authored, *The Satanic Verses*, his fourth novel got trapped into much controversial implications, also known as the ‘Rushdie Affair,’ was the heated one and witnessed frequently violent reaction of some Muslims to its publication. Many Muslims accused Rushdie of blasphemy or unbelief. The issue was said to have divided Muslims from Westerners and that it had pitted a core western value of freedom of expression. But the Muslim world was very clear about the issue and went against their views saying—no one should be free to insult and malign Muslims by disparaging the honor of the Prophet Mohammad.

Protest against Rushdie’s book began with the title itself. The title refers to a legend of the Prophet Mohammad. The Quran is not an ordinary book for Muslims, rather it is one which Muslims cherish and respect. As the author’s claiming that the book to be fiction, but to Muslims the book is not a work of fiction. Rushdie says, he was never intended to derogate Islam and tells-

“Even more important is the recognition of Muslim scholars that the book is not a deliberate insult. Had they felt otherwise, I might well have thought again. As it is I believe the book must continue to be available, so that it can gradually be seen for what it is.”

But the passages in this book are so offensive to a devout Muslim that they make it inordinately difficult for a follower of Islam to appreciate any value that might be found in this book. No one has any right to hurt the feelings of any individual religiously or personally either. No constitutional law/amendment will permit to hurt the feelings of others. Even before the law, sarcasms’ is no way employable for executing things in the wake of freedom of speech. When the novel *Satanic Verses* is completely read, one can understand that the author tried to convey beyond freedom of speech as per the arguments of conventional Muslims, because there were quite few incidents in the book where Rushdie criticizes the Quran. His blasphemy does not lie in his saying that the Quran is the work of Mohammad, rather it lies more in Rushdie’s suggestion that it is the work of the Devil. By the term, he refers more than an alleged incident in the history of Islamic revelation. Rushdie suggests that it is his common practice to use allusions to invoke connotative links. Within the book he referenced everything from mythology to one- liners invoking recent popular culture sometimes using several per page.

Rushdie was accused of misusing freedom of speech. As the controversy spread, the import of the book was banned in India and it was burnt in demonstrations in the United Kingdom. A fatwa, calling on all good Muslims to kill Rushdie and his publishers was imposed by the then supreme leader of Iran, Ayatolla Ruhollah Khomeini. On the other hand the book received favorable reviews from literary critics. In a 2003 volume of criticism, influential critic Harald bloom named *Satanic Verses*, “Rushdie’s largest aesthetic achievement.”

Mohammad Mushtaq Iben Ally wrote, “The ‘Satanic Verses’ is about identity, alienation, rootlessness, brutality, compromise and conformity. He says, it is a reflection of author’s dilemmas. The work is an albeit surreal record of its own author’s continuing identity crisis.”

Rushdie himself spoke confirming this interpretation of his



book, that it was not about Islam, but about migration, metamorphosis, divided selves, love, death, London and Bombay. He also said it's a novel happened to contain a castigation of western materialism.

Even before the publication of *Satanic Verses*, The books of Salman Rushdie stroked controversy. His second book *Midnight Children* angered Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, because it seemed to suggest that Mrs. Gandhi was responsible for her husband's death through neglect. His 1983 novel *Shame*, projected on the internal life and culture of Pakistan. Though Pakistan's culture does not reflect Taliban or any fundamental and orthodox convictions, the political scenario and its characters lead Rushdie portray as a family squabble with symbolic characterization of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as Iskander Harappa, his successor and executioner Zia-ul-haq as Raza Hyder and the Virgin Ironpants has been identified as Benazir Bhutto, a prime minister of Pakistan.

Rushdie's leftist ideas were no exception to erect him as a controversial writer. He condemned the US bombing raid on Tripoli in 1986 but found him threatened by Libya's leader Mohammad- Al-Gadaffi three years later. He even wrote a book bitterly criticizing the US foreign policy in general and its war in Nicaragua in particular, for example calling the United States Government, the bandit posing as sheriff.

After Salman Rushdie was pressurized not to attend the Jaipur literature festival he has been the talk of the five day event. Panelists quote him, attendees gossip about and the media is following every twist and turn that the story takes. The controversy continued when the Rajasthan Government where the festival is based, barred him from speaking at the event-via video link-without prior approval. This could be a credible thing on part of Rushdie as he takes his obligations with brevity.

Shoobha De says—Is the pen no longer mightier than the sword? and remarks, “Rushdie has behaved in a very responsible and matured manner. In absentia for the festival he will be the biggest star of the festival. I believe it's not an act of surrender, rather an act of courage.”

Salman Rushdie remained the overriding theme of virtually all the major events of the day, with audiences and speakers alike expressing their outrage at the way an artist's voice is still being suppressed and that in a free and democratic society. Author Hari Kunzru paid a tribute to him by reading from the *Satanic Verses* – “a book banned still banned in India and several other countries about to defy bigots and shoe throwers, reading...*Satanic Verses* on stage with all the respect and reverence.”

“Art is the most intense form of individualism that the world has known” said Oscar Wild. But Salman Rushdie’s saga has almost divided Indian Muslims with some saying The *Satanic Verses* was indeed offensive and preventing his India visit was justified while some called for more debate.

With inordinate haunting of Khomeini’s fatwa, Salman Rushdie was not confident that he would survive long enough to write any longer. Even his wife Padma Laxme is getting a divorce from her husband, author and British knighthood, Salman Rushdie. Difficult times hone over Rushdie that he once requested media to respect his privacy.

It is thus significant that the Anglo-Indian writer whose allegorical novels examine historical and philosophical issues by means of surreal characters, brooding humour, and an effusive and melodramatic prose style. His treatment of sensitive religious and political subjects made him a controversial figure.

In June 2007, Salman Rushdie was conferred on Knighthood by the British government but simultaneously provoked sheer complexities as it is the most controversial novel and released protests against the novel. In 1988 *The Satanic Verses* received positive reviews to win Booker prize finalist award and won the 1988 whitbread award for novel of the year. In 1993 Rushdie was given a special award ‘Booker of the Bookers’ for *Midnight Children*. His novel was considered the best among the novels that were given the Bookers award in the last 25 years.

Members of the Poets Club of Chicago raise their voices to express revulsion at the death threat to Salman Rushdie and the banning

of his book, “Without commenting on the character of the book, or its author, we reassert our belief in the right to free expression. The use of words is a precious right and should be preserved.”

Whatsoever the pattern might be, it is always intriguing component for the readers of such novels where the issues that interest the writer, may be considered in the shadow of freedom of expression but definitely not at the cost of sensitive feelings of the readers.

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## **Social Consciousness and Street Theatre**

**- B. Lakshmaiah**

Theatre has always been one of the most powerful media of sensitization and social communication in India. Communal violence and conflicts arising out of cast, religious, and gender identities have found a unique response representation in post independence Indian theatre. Badal Sircar contributed to the modern Indian drama and played roles as playwright, director, and actor to change the scenario of contemporary theatre. No other personality has had such a deep and pervasive influence on theatre practice and theory in post independence India as Badal Sircar. Sircar started his dramatic career with some comedies and came to the lime light in 1965 with his celebrated *Evam Indrajit*. His plays have been translated into English, Kannada, Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi and etc. The trend of experimentation in the theatrical world in the post colonial era came through the hands of Jerzy Grotowski of Poland. He introduced “the poor theatre” a new avenue where emphasis was given on actors’ control over their bodies, breathing and spiritual self. Also tried to create bonding between actor and audience.

During the Naxalite movement Sircar in 1970s started anti-establishment of play and brought the theatre out of proscenium to open arena. This new form of drama began to achieve popularity among both the upper class and the common folk. It was portable flexible and inexpensive. It was named after Third Theatre following the title of one of Sircar’s book “Third Theatre”. Before the introduction of third theatre there were two kinds of theatres in India. 1. Proscenium theatre (imported from British popular mainly in town). Folk theatre (Popular in village). Badal Sircar observed a great conflict between these two forms of drama and paved the path for the emergence of the new dramatic vogue. With this unique concept of third theatre, he revolutionized street theatre in all its forms, experimented with various genres and helped the age old norms of Bengali stage stand on their head.

Indian street theatre was developed as an art form to illustrate the feelings of common people. Street theatre is a powerful means of communication especially among rural communities. It is a tool to

enable them to develop social awareness and strengthen their process of political analysis. Sircar could not simply have embraced the rural theatre. He was a city-bred and he did not want to be an imposter in the rural theatre. So he created what he called the third theatre. This was a theatre that lived and breathed among common people that spoke, their lives that cried their tears and dreamed their dreams. This was a theatre of social change. Apart from propagating social reform, street theatre is also a political weapon used during elections in particular or to get across an ideology. Street theatre breaks the formal barriers and approaches the people directly. The object is mainly to convey a particular idea or to portray a significant meaning amidst the direct, intimate and effective means of dramaturgy.

When he was in Nigeria he wrote six serious plays. His plays express all the major concerns, aspirations and frustrations of the new ruthless urban generation through the plays like *Evam Indrajit* (And Endrajit), *Baki Itihas* (The Other History), *Trisangha Satabdi* (The Thirtieth Century), and *Shesh Nei* (There's No End). These four plays are called as Calcutta Quartet. After writing such plays for the conventional stage for twenty years during 1950s, and 60s he felt disappointed with proscenium theatre condition and the formulation of a Third Theatre grew out of Sircar's dissatisfaction with Conditions of the proscenium stage. Conventional proscenium theatre's over-dependence on expensive paraphernalia which has no relevance in the theatre was one of the reasons for Sircar's disillusionment with the format. According to him sets, props and costumes are used to create illusion of reality, but spectators have come to theatre ready to use their imagination and they are prepared to accept the stage as a stage. This condition of the proscenium theatre hits the direct communication between the performer and spectator. As theatre is a live-show, as in theatre live person communicates directly to another live person; this is the fundamental characteristic of the theatre which makes theatre differ from other art forms. Secondly bright lighting that blanks out audiences where audience-actor interaction is impossible because it separates performer and audience. Thirdly the sitting arrangement made in proscenium theatre i.e, raised stages, stage facing sitting arranged according to ticket prices these were other issues he had problems with.

Sircar's Agenda:

1. To bring connection between body and soul of actor
2. To create bonding between actor and body and making both of them active.
3. To bring theatre within the search of every strata of society.
4. To simplify the theatrical techniques so that it become perceivable to man in general.

The first step in his exploration was *Satabdi*, a theatre group. He established *Satabdi* in 1967. *Satabdi* first moved of the elevated platform to perform in rooms. This was alternately called “intimate theatre” or *anganmanch*. In 1972 *Satabdi* performed *Spartacus*, in a room at Kolkata's Academy of fine arts. This was the first major experiment in the direction of third theatre. The other plays written for the third theatre are *Michhil* ( procession), *Bhooma*, and *Basi Khabar*( Stale News).

*Satabdi*, a new wave troupe that took Sircar's plays to Kolkata's Surendranath Park, now renamed Curzon Park, to involve the audience. In 1971, Badal Sircar and *Satabdi* reached the crossroads. The group could not afford to rent a theatre to show their work. Unwilling to give in to the stasis, Sircar started questioning the very concept of theatre. He realized that while cinema was a popular medium and could show much more than theatre, it lacked one fundamental element that was inherent to the theatre-liveness. He explains:

“Communication is essential in every art form; the artist communicates to other people through literature, music, painting, acting. But the methods of communication are different. A writer writes-he does not have to be present when his writing is being read. So it is with the painter and the sculptor. In cinema, the film artists do not have to be present when the film is being projected. But in the theatre, the performers have to be present when the communication takes place. This is a fundamental difference. Theatre is a live show, cinema is not. In theatre, communication is

direct; in cinema it is through images”

Sircar and his group realized that liveness is definitive, then the proscenium arrangement was entirely unsatisfactory. Sircar saw a need to inhere the audience in the performance. The actor and spectator had to share the same space and acknowledge each other’s presence. Direct communication was to become the cardinal feature of the third theatre. This new theatre depended entirely on acting- the performer’s body on one hand and the spectator’s imagination on the other. Sircar says:

“We realized that if we do theatre we are doing away with all the costly and heavy items of theatre. So a flexible, portable, and inexpensive theatre is being created. Flexible, portable, and inexpensive theatre is being created. Flexible means we can do it in any condition. Portable-we can carry our theatre easily to places where we want to perform. We don’t have to charge any money for that lyou see. Voluntary donations will do. So the basis of free theatre is laid.”

Third Theatre turned into “free theatre” in three ways: First, there was free expression it promoted direct and therefore uninhibited communication: second, it was free from the paraphernalia of conventional theatre; and last, it was offered at no cost of to the audience. A logical development leading to truly free theatre was the *gram parikrama*. A true theatre of the people therefore would have to go where the majority of the population lived *Satabdi* went on its first *parikrama* in 1986 for three days and two nights. Free theatre is also often loosely used synonymously with street theatre because both are flexible, portable, and inexpensive. Sircar clarifies the distinction. He and other members of *Satabdi* define street theatre as a quickly, created short performance, which has some topical value. Street theatre in a way is Third Theatre. But all Third Theatre is not street theatre. Sircar’s innovations in the use of public space have and a profound impact on Indian theatre. Even though experimentation for its own sake was never his intention, his example encouraged many others to explore different styles.

Music plays an important role in this sort of drama. Sircar

thinks that music and song can easily attach audience to the play as well as the actors which is one of the main principle. But in terms of music there is also individuality. Here the songs are mainly of folk culture, namely Panchali, Kobigan, vatiali song which help the rural folk to feel connected with the play. The musical instruments are also essentially traditional dhol, harmonium, kantal, pakhawaaj are some among them.

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**Blended Boundaries of Fact and Fiction: Historicizing Kittur  
through Literary Narration in  
*The Queen of Kittur* by Dr. Basavaraj Naikar**

**- Sumathi Shivakumar**

**Introduction**

Postmodern historical novels, regarded as historiographic meta-fictions, permit different voices and alternative, plural histories essentially by subverting the historical documents and events that they refer to. However, not all historical novels subvert history to give vent to the creative imagination of the writer. An actual record of historical facts in the form of a third person narrative can lend greater interest in the reader than archival material or a text book with the same information. Such an historical narrative is usually written from the fictional character's point of view or perhaps as the story of a real person from history who has participated in the event. The novel, *Queen of Kittur* is a retelling of history from neither a contemporary of the event / times, nor an historian, but from the eyes of a creative writer, through the reconciliation of several binaries like historical objectivity vs nationalism, cultural present vs cultural history, historical facts vs literary imagination etc., What distinguishes a successful historical narrative from the rest is the presence of an engaging story without meddling with facts. Historiographic understanding of history forms the nucleus of this paper, claiming that it not only represents past events but unravels the underlying meaning in them as well. As a signifying system, therefore this narrative converts historical events into historical facts. The paper analyzes Basavaraj Naikar's *The Queen of Kittur* as an example of a historical narrative where the blending of fact and fiction is convincingly accomplished.

**The narrative as historiography**

Historiography is the history of history. It can be a literary narrative that does not subject the actual events to historical analysis. Conversely, the subject of historiography is the record of the *history* of the event: the way it happened. It may, at times reflect conflicting objectives followed by different writers of different eras. Such differences arise more from perception of the times, rather than the

events themselves. Therefore, such factors do influence the shaping of our understanding of the actual event, besides the nature of history itself.

Historiography, while constructing historical facts, selects certain past events and omits others, for ideological reasons. This reflects the fact that a select group is unintentionally denied an official voice by the dominant ideologies. Hence, history is relegated to being mono-logic, representing the dominant discourse and therefore as Orwell says: “History is written by winners”. Hayden White, in “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact” vehemently argues that historians recreate history through “historical imagination”. In other words the historian employs narrative strategies of a literary writer to convey his/her message. He coins the term “meta-history” which very succinctly blurs and sometimes blends the boundaries of facts and fiction. He further claims that history is essentially narrative prose, an amalgam of literary conventions and the historian’s imagination. In the process, perhaps historical narrative can include types of “plots” or “emplotments” that include the tragic, comic, romantic, and satiric elements. (Ricoeur, 31). Such an ‘emplotment recalls Aristotle’s claim that Poetry (Literature) tends to express the universal, history the particular. White questions the existence of the balance between factual reconstruction and imaginative recreation of the events. He probes into the “value neutral” aspect of retelling events. He endorses the need for examining fiction in history, a point raised by Orwell too.

As is clear from the above, it is possible to infer that the underlying attitude of historiography is one of skepticism. This stems from the belief that historians, particularly as writers *do* have agendas and *do* select sources with the intent of *proving* certain preconceived notions. History is, in this sense, never really *objective*, but is always deemed a construct that presents the historian-writer's perception of events or things. At its objective best - which is contestable - history (re)presents basic *facts* (dates, events etc., as recorded in the available sources.); the task on hand for the writer would be to *interpret* these supposed facts. This very *interpretation*, which, by definition a subjective mental process renders the product – a book, novel etc., as less objective as possible.

Historiography permits foregrounding history as it unfolds in

the literary narrative. Unlike historians, litterateurs do have the license to dwell deeper and unravel a profound historiographical insight. However, debatable its veracity may be, such insights help in forming a certain perspective about historical events. These are especially true in the case of colonialism when recordings were indeed one sided and whose authenticity may be questioned. The natives somehow never really worried about serious documentation processes that have coerced both historians and literary writers to rely on the colonizers point of view.

### **The story of Kittur: Fact versus Fiction**

*The Queen of Kittur* is a post-modern historical fiction that glorifies the heroism of the Rani, while combating both internal (Peshwa kings) and external (The East India Company, later day British colonizers) forces. The novel deals with the life of Rani Chennamma, the second wife of Raja Mallasarja of Kittur a small kingdom beaming with pride in tradition and culture.

The plot may be captured in a nutshell. Kittur, as a kingdom, is not overwhelmingly powerful in comparison to more prominent Mughals and many other neighbouring kingdoms. However, Raja Mallasarja has led the land with impeccable integrity, despite clandestinely escaping from the clutches of the Peshwas. His son Sivalingarudrasarja, not as able an administrator as his father, is issueless. Therefore, Rani Chennamma, decides to adopt a child – Sawai Mallasarja - from the village. As the king dies even before the formal adoption takes place, the ceremony is held before the final rites are performed for the king. This invites the attention of the British, as the ‘Doctrine of Lapse’, wherein, any king who dies without an heir to the throne forfeits the land to the British, had just come into effect. Thus begin the confrontation of the natives and the colonizers. The Queen sends emissaries with positive yet firm statements, refusing to give in to their demands. Notwithstanding the loss of Thackeray, two other generals and several others imprisoned, the British army repeatedly attacks Kittur. Displaying courage even in the face of defeat, the Rani symbolises ‘shakti’ in terms of female valor. Having tasted victory once, she is motivated to continue her confrontations with the British, consistently defying their orders. Her countrymen loved her audacious attitude and were highly supportive of her actions. Unfortunately for

her and India, the internal feud and self-destructive betrayal by her own courtiers and the deceit and foul play on the part of the Company soldiers, ensure that the brave kingdom is brought to its knees. The ruthlessness of the colonizers, forces the helpless people to surrender. The valiant Queen is eventually imprisoned in the Fort of her own town, though the imperialists found it hard to subdue their admiration for her bravery. She dies in confinement.

### **The story of Kittur's history**

Kittur's history is very much the story of Indian history, recorded in the view of the outsiders rather than the internal players. Several factors have influenced the course of documenting the history of this kingdom. Dearth of archival material, rigid imperialism during the Colonial regime that lasted for more than 300 years, a ravaging independence struggle that destroyed several human lives, lack of authentic documentation in the native language, and the eventual collapse of the kingdom have left the people of Kittur and India both powerless and speechless. Ignorance of English among the natives, and ignorance of Kannada or any other Indian language on the part of the British, rendered communication or a two-sided dialogue impossible between them. The conflicts within Kittur are of a varied nature and incomprehensible to the colonizers who lack an in-depth knowledge of the complexities within Indian cultural history. Lack of unity among the neighbouring kingdoms as they disagreed intensely on the issue of nationalism vs. beneficial subordination, compounded the problems; thus making it extremely difficult for a collective fight. The failed attempt by the British to overawe the natives "by exhibiting the military wealth of the Company government" (Naikar, 168) resulting in the death of Thackeray himself reflects a total lack of understanding of the native strategising abilities, particularly in war. Such incidents forced the colonizers to resort to cunningness to conquer both lands and minds of India. Perhaps, this is the impetus for the author, Basavaraj Naikar to intensely preoccupy himself with the colonial past of India in this novel and reveal the richness of the Indian cultural history that encompasses the intellectual superiority of the people.

The novel projects loyalty, patriotism treachery of the natives and the scheming shrewdness of the British - the essential ingredients of an intriguing novel. It is this quality that demarks historical writing

from literary writing.

The narrow divide between historical discourse and literary discourse, which, at times, is almost a slippage, as pointed out by Hayden White, is very relevant here. This enables reading the novel, primarily as a literary artist fictionalizing history solely for the sake of keeping Kittur alive and seeing it in books. In order to achieve this, he draws heavily from historical and quasi-historical sources for firsthand information. Such a method should provide an authentic historical dimension to his works.

Much of the action that is described in the novel is faithful to recorded history. Both in terms of dates and persons, the novel merely weaves the happenings into the narration. Some of the more easily accessible sources do mention the actual events as sequenced and presented in the novel. But the literary sources, mentioned at the beginning of the book give a clue to the role of imagination in effecting the narration in particular, the stringing of the different events. Starting from the first meeting of Raja Mallasarja and Chennamma as a brave girl capable of hunting and archery, their marriage, the rituals, their personal relationship, and many other socio cultural revelations do carry colourful imagination. It is in these instances that the author's creative energy releases full steam.

The fascinating recreation, nevertheless offers the writer the choice of facts and the fictional element to interweave. It is only natural that writers conveniently omit certain facts to suit their contexts and perceptions. However, this novel transcends such methodical omission and presents history as 'it happened', with clear cut literary overtones. This novel can thus be described as a double-voiced discourse where, the people of Kittur, led by their Queen's impeccable authority and power, are subverted by the cunningness of the Company regiment. The dominant voice of imperialist eventually subverts the voices of the people. The author's expertise in blurring fact and fiction is at its creative best in these contexts.

The alternation of facts and fiction is seamless, and one needs an understanding the ethos of the land and its people to tell the difference between the political or historical clime from that of the cultural and social. For instance, the hurried coronation, with its intricate rituals are presented almost as a live coverage that we can see

in the modern day televisions, though it is ostensibly true that the details could not have been recorded. It originates from the author's knowledge and understanding of the cultural milieu rather than extracting them from authentic sources. The songs sung during the wedding rituals of Chennamma and Raja Mallasarja is a classic case in point. This vindicates the intensity of the literary discourse as against the historical discourse.

Naikar provides a fictionalized history of Kittur in particular and India at large during crucial historical moments: the reign on Raja Mallasarja for nearly thirty four years,(Naikar,68), his meeting with Bajirao Peshwa of Pune and the Raja's subsequent arrest and later his death, the controversial administration, illness and death of his son Sivalingarudrasarja, the 'quiet' but brave adoption of Sawai Mallasarja II, Rani Chennamma's war with Company regiment outside the fort of Kittur, the consequent arrest of Company Officers - Stevenson and Elliot, the democratic administration of the native Queen that earned the respect of the opponents, the eventual destruction of the Kittur palace and the death of the Queen.

Naikar's fictional space 'Kittur' is not an artistic construct born out of the narrator's imagination. It is the very embodiment of the first serious struggle for independence from foreign rule. He is intensely passionate with the history of Kittur and for posterity to have access to its recorded history as well. The urge to bring about the richness of Kittur's history is one of his foremost concerns, particularly when the nation's history seldom recognizes the Queen's prowess and patriotism. In contrast, Jhansi Rani Lakshmi Bai, who under very similar circumstances, defied the colonizers, apparently, is better known throughout the country. Writing, is Naikar's way of opening out to the outside world, at least to the present English speaking India, to become aware of the earliest instance of patriotic and anti-colonial wars. The novel yields very valuable insights into the complex and intricate history of Kittur. The need to fictionalize actual events is inevitable on the part of any writer living in politically distant times and conditions where writing is the only medium of expression. This is especially true at a time when we receive lies as truth, war as peace, and impoverishment as development. Under the circumstances, it's only just that a writer chooses, however unjustly, to offer truth camouflaged

as fiction.

### **Conclusion**

The general acceptance that popular history is something which we already know, or that the victors write/ rewrite the history, does decimate the entire pursuit of history appreciably. However, a keen sense of historiography can intensify the writer's historical sense, thus enabling re-creation of history through a narrative. Establishing a rapport with the historical events through interrogation and interaction, will engage the writer more deeply with the historical events, may even necessitate consultation of additional sources to get the answers. It is precisely in this context that Basavaraj Naikar's *The Queen of Kittur* blends the boundaries that demark facts from fiction. The narration dovetails with the facts woven into literary imagination as is revealed by the historical events and socio-cultural activities. The ratio of facts and fiction can vary with each author and therefore the outcome may not comply with everyone's view of things. Nevertheless, it will allow a better appreciation for the many factors including, one's bias and prejudice, that contribute to the understanding and interpretation of an historical event. This appreciation, in turn, will enhance the quality of historical researches.

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## Maugham's Quest for Happiness in The Razor's Edge

- S. Markandeyan

The Sharp edge of a razor is difficult to pass over: thus  
the wise say the path to salvation is hard.

- *Katha - Upanishad*

The above saying from *Katha - Upanishad* sets the tone for W. Somerset Maugham's final novel, *The Razor's edge*. The quote is actually a translation of a Vedanta text, the *Katha Upanishad* of the Taittiriya School of the Yajur Ved, Which is a religious story in the Hindu Culture that culminates with a poor and pious Brahmana's search for Enlightenment. In Maugham's work, this quest is carried out by the novel's protagonist Larry Darrel. However, the story is not only a search for faith, but also a satirical view of high society and a reaffirmation of the American Spirit. These factors thrust *The Razors Edge* onto the bestseller list, and made it the most successful work of Maugham's great carrier.

Maugham's major novel, *The Razor's Edge*, published in 1944 was a departure for him in many ways. Much of the action described in the novel take place in Europe. Its main characters are American, not British. *The Razor's Edge* tells the story of an American fighter pilot (Larry Darrell) traumatized by his experiences in world war I, who sets off in search of some transcendent meaning in his life. The novel is supposed to be based on the life of Guy Hague, an American mining engineer.

*The Razor's Edge*, is about a spiritual quest. In his introduction to the Novel Maugham says "This book consists of my recollection of a man with whom I was thrown into close contact only at long intervals and I have little knowledge of what happened to him in between William Somerset Maugham, *The Razor's Edge* William Heinemann Ltd. London. 1944 (p.1)." The protagonist of the novel, Larry Darrel, forsakes wealth, security and personal relationships to seek spiritual meaning in life. Travelling to India he finds it in the Hindu religion in the belief in transmigration of souls and in a highly personal mystical experience when he returns to America. Having given up his annuity, he is content to accept the life of an ordinary working man.

Larry's quest is a struggle for spiritual certainty, but not as hard and long as Philip Carey's. Willing to try any faith once, Larry lives with monks, flirts with atheism and finally finds his soul and peace of mind in a mountain retreat in India. His search had taken him to Germany where he worked in a coal mine with a huge fellow named Kosti. A heavy drinker, Kosti turns philosophical at times and in many respects suggests Philip's old friend, Cronshaw. His new acquaintance awakens Larry's interest in metaphysics and, speaking of him, Larry says:

"....he said that the world isn't a creation, for out of nothing nothing comes, but a manifestation of the eternal nature; well that was all right, but then he added that evil is as direct a manifestation of the divine as good. They were strange words to hear in that sordid, noisy café, to the accompaniment of dance tunes on the mechanical piano".(W. Somerset Maugham, *The Razor's Edge* Piladephia: The blakiston company, (c,1944) p.86). Going to India, Larry finds his questions answered one morning. Larry described it in these words.

"...The Sun caught the lake through a cleft in the heights and it shone like burnished steel. I was ravished with the beauty of the world. I'd never known such exaltation and such a transcendent joy. I had a strange sensation, a tingling that arose in my feet and traveled up to my head, and I felt as though I were suddenly released from my body and as pure spirit partook of a loveliness I had never conceived. I had a sense that a knowledge more than human possessed me, so that everything that had been confused was clear and everything that had perplexed me was explained.... How can I tell you what I felt? No words can tell the ecstasy of my bliss."(p.266).

Larry explains in detail his beliefs, but admits there are some things he still cannot fully understand, evil, for instance. His exposition of his new found religion is too long to explain, and it suffices to say that he is satisfied with his new power and his search is over. Larry also has mystical powers which are not explained, such as his ability to cure a prolonged headache of Isabel's husband, Gray Maturin. Larry's adventure in India has parallels in the personal experiences described

by Maugham in his *A Writer's Notebook*.

Isabel is another character, While Larry and Isabel love each other deeply, they have very different goals in life. They break their engagement, and Larry becomes a wanderer, traveling world in a quest to find absolute. Isabel returns to America and marries the son of a successful stock broker, settling in to the role of a wealthy mother. Isabel search for social acceptance. She is vain, selfish, shrewd, and thoroughly convinced of her place in upper society. She tries to convince everyone of her self-sacrifice in giving up Larry, and she cultivates an attitude of self-pity. But the shrewd Maugham is not fooled when Isabel says:

“I gave Larry up for the one and only reason that I didn’t want to stand in his way. Come off it, Isabel. You gave him up for a square – cut diamond and a sable coat. The words were hardly out of my mouth when a plate of bread and butter came flying at my head.” (p.166)

Isabel’s cruelest act is to place a convenient bottle of liquor in the same room with Sophie, whose only hope is to give up drinking which she has done. However, Sophie yields to the temptation, returns to her old life and later is found dead in a river with her throat cut. Maugham blames Isabel for her death, but the woman shows few signs of a guilty conscience. The other two women, besides Isabel, in the book, Suzanne and Sophie, are prostitutes, and as usual, Maugham has compassion for them. They are not condemned, only pitied.

Interesting as Larry’s story may be, there is another character vividly portrayed, who almost steals the spotlight. Maugham’s hopes are with Larry, but his friendship remains with Elliott Templeton, an elderly American social climber who has taken upon himself to join the European aristocracy. Elliott’s chief delight is in giving and going to parties. He is a comical figure, slightly repulsive, yet. “..Maugham makes him likable in a curious way, not only for his loyalty to his sister’s family, but also for his innocence and single-mindedness in pursuit of trivialities..”. Elliott resurrects an old coat-of-arms and adopts it as his own; he also joins the Catholic Church probably because of his love of pageantry and contributes large sums of money to build a small

church for his memory. Growing older and unable to attend so many functions, Elliott realizes that his popularity is waning. A prolonged sickness adds to his inability to get around, and Maugham's description of the few weeks before his death is masterful. The reader feels a deep pity for an old man and a contempt for the type of society he loves. The final insult occurs when a noble lady does not ask Elliott to her party. Elliott, with the grave yawning in front of him, exclaims:

“...Oh, it's so unkind... I hate them, I hate them all. They were glad enough to make a fuss of me when I could entertain them, but now I'm old and sick they have no use for me. not ten people have called to inquire since I've been laid up, and all this week only one miserable bunch of flowers... I wish to God I'd never left America”(p.183-184).

Maugham, knowing Elliott will never be able to attend the party, steals an invitation for him, and presents it to the old gentleman saying that the lady had sent it herself. This makes Elliott happy, but knowing his fate, he dictates a return note: “Mr. Elliott Templeton regrets that he cannot accept Princess Novemali's kind invitation owing to a previous engagement with his Blessed Lord” (p.192). Of course, Maugham never delivers the message. He is true to his standards and his catholic faith and dies in peace.

The technique of using the first person singular also gives a certain reality to the characters. Allowing that the character development is better than usual, there are several weaknesses. Larry's search is not uncommon and even to those “...readers whose concern with the Absolute is strictly limited, Larry's quest will be neither implausible nor ridiculous” Though the search is not ridiculous, the struggle within Larry and the conflict of conscience is not convincing. Maugham tells that he is having a conflict of conscience but does not succeed in portraying Larry's emotions successfully. He seems to be more interested in describing the type of religion Larry obtained rather than how he achieved it. As one critic remarked. “..... his ineffable young hero is neither believable as a person nor reasonable as a bringer of a message...”. Isabel is probably more complete because she becomes more vicious and uncompromising as the story progresses, but

the others, Suzanne and Sophie, are relatively vague.

The narrator of the story is Maugham who makes no attempt to conceal his identity and in fact admits it. He has small influence on the outcome of the story, but tells his tale in a conversational tone, and acts as a referee between the contending factions as he meets them in Paris and London. He is a type of observer as is Dr. Saunders in *The Narrow Corner*, but slightly more interested. Maugham meets Larry and his friends at a party in Chicago, and the story proceeds as he meets them, accidentally and otherwise, through the next several years.

Maugham's characters were all very complex. No one was especially good or evil, but each character is a unique blend of virtues and vices. Several of the female characters, too, seemed very masculine. Isabel, Susan and Sophie were very open about their sexuality and embraced the earthier side of their nature. It makes the novel seem quite modern even though its now nearly seventy years old.

*The Razor's Edge* is a subtle novel. The action is slight while the character development is not visibly apparent, and yet, each of the characters has matured and grown in such a way that the reader is left feeling completely satisfied upon finishing reading it. The end result is a lush novel revolving around the search for happiness and what it means to different people. Maugham ends his narrative by suggesting that all the characters got what they wanted in the end. 'Elliott Social Eminence, Isabel an assured position ... Sophie death, Larry happiness.

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**A Study of Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock* and *Fire On The Mountain***

**- K. Rama Krishna Reddy**

The Article discusses the numerous ways that help a novelist to represent his/her story to the readers with special reference to Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain*. The telling of stories is such a pervasive aspect of our environment that we sometimes forget that stories provide the initial and continuing means for shaping our experience. Thus, it is not surprising that a great deal of scholarly investigation has focused on both the nature of stories and their central role in human affairs. This Article describes how Anita Desai enriches the novel and lifts it above the mere narration of a story or depiction of a character and provides it the very life blood and the soul. Form and structure in the novels Anita Desai take the shape of an exquisitely designed tapestry. The article explains that the aspects of theme and technique in Anita Desai's novels are not isolated elements. They are inter-related at many levels of structure and texture. In order to convey her theme the novelist judiciously uses character, situation, dialogues and other elements in relation to the plot. Narrating a story is a primitive instinct of every novelist and in this Article we will see how story is narrated in Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain*.

Stories are the repository of our collective wisdom about the world of social / cultural behaviour; they are the key mediating structures for our encounters with reality. Indeed, without stories our experiences would merely be unevaluated sensations from an undifferentiated stream of events. Across many disciplines – including linguistics, literary criticism, anthropology, psychology and sociology-researchers have begun to see how the analysis of story structure is fundamental to our understanding of individual intention and potential.

As a mental representation, story is not tied to any particular medium, and it is independent of the distinction between fiction and non-fiction. Basically, story is the fundamental instrument of thought. It is a literary capacity indispensable to human cognition generally. Story must be about a world populated by individuated existents. This world must be situated in time and undergo significant transformations

and these transformations must be caused by non-habitual physical events. Some of the participants in the events must be intelligent agents who have a mental life and react emotionally to the states of the world. And some of the events must be purposeful actions by these agents. Along with action sequence of events is also important and it must form a unified causal chain and lead to closure. The occurrence of at least some of the events must be asserted as fact for the story world. To conclude we can say that the story must communicate something meaningful to the audience. In fact, story is a fictional reality in which the characters of the story are supposed to be living and in which events are supposed to take place. Every story begins with a beginning. This is a more important point than it may seem all stories move only in one direction, forward through time. If there is a knowable beginning, that's where they begin. If there is a knowable end, that's where they end.

Anita Desai has emerged as a very serious, skilled and promising novelist in India today. Of all the contemporary Indian English Novelists, Anita Desai is undisputedly the most powerful novelist. Desai is well known for her use of technique. The method adopted by a writer to present life in the process of living may be described as the narrative technique. Though the novel gets its main sustenance from the story it intends to tell, its success depends on how it is narrated. The quality of readability, the most important of all the desirable qualities of a novel, may be achieved when there is compatibility between the narration and the narrative technique. Wayne Booth said, "Narration is an art not a science, but this does not mean that we are necessarily doomed to fail when we attempt to formulate principle about it. There are systematic elements in every art and criticism of fiction can never avoid the responsibility of trying to explain technical successes and failures, by reference to general principles"(Booth, 1961). Desai's experiments with non-traditional materials and technique give her a distinct position among the Indian English novelists.

Desai's style or technique of delivering the thematic thrust is the vital agent. She has tried to present her themes organically with appropriate adjustment and adaptations in spheres of style and point of view. Her technique enriches the novel and lifts it above the mere

narration of a story or depiction of a character and provides it the very life, blood and the soul. Narrative technique is a matter of predominant concern for Anita Desai. She expresses her views on the skill of writing: “That my temperament and circumstances have combined to give me the shelter, privacy and solitude required for the writing of such novels thereby avoiding problems, a more objective writer has to deal with since he/she depends on observation rather than a private vision”(Desai, 1978).

The process of telling is the story's narration and the person who narrates it is known as narrator. The distinction between story and narration is also important. It is an implicit acknowledgment that a story is understood as having a separate existence from its narration. As such, it can be told in different ways by different narrators. Because the narration of the story would differ, with different words, different emotional inflections, different perspectives and different details. These narrators might even contradict each other. But the usual presumption is that there is a story to be told and that the story itself, going inexorably through time, can no more correct itself than can events in real life. The distinction between plot and story, like that between narration and story, is an implicit presumption that a story is separate from its rendering. Just as a story can be narrated in different ways, so it can be plotted in different ways. This analytically powerful distinction between story and its representation is the founding insight of the field of narratology. If story, plot and narration can be called the three principal components of the overarching category narrative, the distinction between story and how it is communicated is so fundamental that scholars of narrative often bring narration and plot together under a single heading, narrative discourse. The distinctions between story and story as discoursed have proven very helpful in understanding how narrative achieves its effects. But nothing is tidy in the study of narrative. This is largely because narrative happens in the mind, with its empirical spoken or printed, pictures on a screen, actors on a stage-transformed by cognitive processes that are still largely mysterious.

For this reason, the nature necessity and adequacy of these three enduring concepts-story, plot and narration have never been completely assured, however fruitful controversies they have stirred up



of these three key concepts, story is the sturdiest. Scholars may not agree that a story must have a beginning or an end but this is a common fact that a story is composed of action and characters and it always proceeds forward in time. Story was first analytically set off from the manner of its rendering in the wake of Saussure's distinction in linguistic between the signified and the signifier. The spade work for this adaptation was performed by Russian Formalists, who, in the 1920's introduced the distinction of fabula (story) and *szuzhet* (its rendering). Tzvetan Todorov gave these terms their rough equivalents in French, *histoire* and *discourse*, and Gerard Genette greatly elaborated the distinction in his landmark narratological reading of Proust's *A la recherche du temps Perdue*. From there, Seymour Chatman's foundational work, the corresponding distinction of story and discourse made its way into English where it is how widely deployed.

Two aspects of narration that always have significant consequences are the sensibility of the narrator and his or her distance from the action. Narrators can be brilliant, dumb, deranged, passionate or cold as i.e. they are as various as we are and their constitution inevitably affects how they mediate story. Gerard Genette identified two types of narrators. First types of narrators are those who are also characters in the story world and therefore remain close to the action. The other one are those who stand outside the story world. The latter tend to have greater reliability inspiring more confidence in the information and views they convey and often deploying third person narration throughout. It is not the case always. Sometimes these narrators have clearly developed personalities and refer to themselves in the first person. Plot is even more slippery term than narration, indeed so vague in ordinary usage that narratologists often avoid it altogether. In common English usage, plot is often identical with story. But in the discourse on narrative, the term has been deployed in at least three distinguishable ways. But the most frequent use is E.M. Forster's use of plot to indicate a story that is not merely one thing after another but events connected by cause.

Anita Desai has adopted a controlled method of manifesting character's consciousness and evaluation of the events and characters of

the story. Anita Desai uses the technique of contrast between various settings, situations, characters and even between different stages of the same characters. Her fiction is not at all transparent and predictable, unlike the fiction of R.K. Narayan and Kamla Markandaya. She does not use the traditional plot structure with linear movement in terms of exposition, conflict and resolution. She does not indulge herself in self-conscious story telling. She often uses simple plot elements and her narrative art depends upon deconstructive devices for creations of meaning and atmosphere in her novels. She does not create the story outline of her novels. She, in fact, creates people within the existential framework with dreams and wills. Those people in turn create the story, action and dreams of the novels. There is an unusual attraction and factory in her narrative technique because it combines the realistic and the romantic modes. In her novels incident or situation is more important than character. In Desai's hands imagery becomes a very powerful mode to create the story line of her novels. Symbols also have a vital role to play in displaying different states generally the symbols used by Desai are a part of the circumstantial details of the narrative. Her symbols acquire significance because there is an appropriate correlation between the object and its symbolic meaning.

In the story, the events are arranged in a sequence which can differ from the chronological sequence. The locations where events occur are also given distinct characteristics and are thus transformed into characters. Events have been defined in the field of narratology as the transition from one state to another state, caused or experienced by actors. The word transition stresses the fact that an event is a process, an alternation. However, trying to establish which sentences in a text represent an event is not so easy. The difficulty arises not only from the fact that too many sentences refer to elements that may be considered processes, but also from the fact that these elements may often be considered objects as well as processes, depending upon the context. In the field of narratology, the events are distinguished between two categories: functional and non-functional. Functional events open a choice between two possibilities, realize this choice, or reveal the results of such a choice. Once a choice is made, it determines the subsequent course of events in the developments of the story. Events have been defined as processes. A process is a change, a development

and presupposes therefore a succession in time or a chronology. The events themselves happen during a certain period of time and they occur in a certain order.

This sequencing of events is the aspect of presentation of information in a novel. It can be chronological, psychological or presentational. While the first two are self-explanatory, the third i.e., presentational sequencing requires some explanation. As Leech and Short describe it, “The best order of presentation, if one wants to facilitate the reader's processing of information both in fiction writing and in general expository writing is to go from elements which presuppose the least prior knowledge to those which presuppose the most. In presentational sequencing as well as in the other aspects of sequencing the authors artistic sense often shows in the way information is withheld, rather than in the way it is revealed” (Leech & Short, 1981).

The next step in packaging the story is the study of location. Events happen somewhere and the place where events happen is known as location. Mieke Bal has explained that when the location has not been indicated readers will simply supply one. They will imagine the scene, and in order to do so, they have to situate it somewhere, however vague the imaginary place may be. The Russian critic Lotman has explained this by pointing out the predominance of the dimension of space in human imagination. In support of his contention he lists a number of convincing examples of spatial terms we use to indicate abstract concepts, such as infinite for an immeasurably large quantity, 'distance' for a deficient relationship between people. Incidentally, even the word 'relation' itself would seem to support Lotman's contention.

It spatial thinking is indeed a general human tendency, it is not surprising that spatial elements play an important role in story packaging. It is, for instance, possible to make a note of the place of each story, and then to investigate whether a connection exists between the kind of events, the identity of the actors and the location. The subdivisions of locations into groups is a manner of gaining insight into the relations between elements. A contrast between inside and outside is often relevant, where inside may carry the suggestion of protection, and outside of danger. Another, related, opposition is the between the

centrally located square, which functions, as the meeting place where actors are confronted with one another, and the surrounding world, where each actor has to fend for her-or himself. City and country are contrasted in many romantic and realistic novels. The opposition between city and country can take on different meanings. Sometimes city is presented as the sink of iniquity as opposed to idyllic innocence presented by country. Sometimes this contrast is presented as a possibility. of magically acquiring riches in contrast to the labour of the farmers; or as the seat of power against the powerlessness of the country people.

Beginning with *Cry, the peacock*, in this novel the sequencing is more psychological and presentational than chronological. The novel has three parts to it. The first and third can be considered as the prologue and the epilogue of the novel. The first part of the novel describes an event which reveals the inherent qualities of the protagonists and yet the reader is not told anything about their identities. In other words, the death of a pet is all that the novel reveals in the beginning at a point of least supposition, and ends on a point where the reader feels that he knows all about Maya and Gautama, and hence he is not shocked by the end. *Fire on the Mountain* is divided into three parts, 'Nanda Kaul at Carignano', 'Raka comes to Carignano' and 'Ila Das leaves Carignano.' The very first sentence of the novel suggests the ironic juxtaposition on which the novel is framed, Nanda Kaul's present and past interwoven into a pattern of image scenes result in a consummate presentational and psychological sequencing. In this novel, she makes use of the flash back technique in narrating the story. The novel centres on the character of Nanda Kaul, the widow of vice- chancellor who is compelled both by choice and circumstances to live in seclusion in an old bungalow in Kasauli. The novel also makes use of fantasy and it is Nanda Kaul who lives in the world of fantasy. It is interesting to note that it is a grown up person and not the child who goes into the world of fantasy. This is how Anita Desai has described the use of fantasy and various purposes for which it is used in the novel, "self-revelation is not the main thrust of fantasy in *Fire on the Mountain* which uses it in an entirely different way. It is not bordering on hallucination. Two kinds of fantasy would exist side by side; one which is consciously and deliberately woven by Nanda Kaul to interest her great granddaughter Raka, the other which

is shared by Raka and Ram Lal and is based on his belief in the supernatural .....Raka's private world of fantasy is somewhere between the two-it is neither wholly and naturally accepted fact as the Churails are for Ram Lal, nor is it a lie woven for self-preservation-in Fire on the Mountain, fantasy also exists purely at the level of imagery as a part of the self-analysis which some of the characters carry on” (Jain, 1987).

Every art-form is governed by its specific laws, but there are certain general principles which apply to all of them the most fundamental is the principle of harmony between form and content. Or in other words we can say that there should be harmony between the theme and the structure of a work of art. No study of thematic pattern alone can be useful unless we pay attention to the structural components of a work of art. Almost all the major critics on the form of fiction have underlined the correlation between theme and structure. David Cecil has observed that the novel, “.....should have the formal qualities common to all good words of art, unity, pattern, harmony. But it must also seem probably in the sense that other fiction need not; it must give an illusion of life as it is on has been lived in the actual world. To achieve both these objects at the same time is hard. Real life, as we know it, is not distinguished by unity, pattern and harmony. On the contrary, it is a heterogeneous, disorderly, indeterminate affair full of loose ends & false starts and irrelevant details. How is the novelist to reconcile these two claims, how keep the delicate balance between the demands of life and art? This is his central, special problem as a craftsman” (Cecil, 1967).

It is evident, therefore, that any novel which is faithful in recording the impressions of the novelist will be artistically unsatisfactory if it is merely a collection of incidents and episodes. We can't accept it as an artistic piece of creation if there is not a sense of equilibrium and design is imparted to the arrangement of the impressions.

The city in Cry, *the Peacock* is best presented by the minor characters such as Mrs. Lal, the prim lady at the party, the Sikh, the cabaret dancers, Gautama's mother and sister Nila. The protagonist Maya is presented by the novelist as a victim because she remains in

the constant tension between the vain glory of the city and her tendency or desire to recreate the childhood world of innocence and purity. City plays a crucial role in the marital life of Maya and Gautama because it widens the gap between the two of them. Gautama is the busy lawyer who does not want to be interrupted by such trivial matters as the death of a pet dog. Maya feels the absence of Gautama in the house for long hours and whenever he comes, he gets busy with clients. Maya feels rejected and utterly lonely in the house: "His coldness, his coldness and incessant talk of cups of tea and philosophy in order not to hear me talk, and talking reveal myself. It is that-My loneliness in this house" (Desai,1980).

Nanda Kaul, the protagonist of *Fire on the Mountain* earnestly longs for loneliness. She wants to escape from her busy and hectic life in the city. She comes to Carignano where, "she wanted no one and nothing else whatever else comes or happened here would be an unwelcome intrusion and distraction"(Desai, 1977).

As the Vice-Chancellor's wife and the center of a large family Nanda spends a life of duties and responsibilities. She has been ordering about too many servants, entertaining too many guests and tending so many children. After the death of her husband, Nanda vacates the Vice-Chancellor's house and comes over to Kasauli. She identifies herself with the lonely pine tree. She likes the bareness, the emptiness of the garden of Carignano. This place is presented in this novel as a contrast to the life of the city. Nanda Kaul's dislike for the city life results in her escape to Carignano.

In spite of its indifference, filth, dust, noise and crowd, the city becomes an inescapable part of the artist's perceptions and vision. Desai portrays the present crisis of man and the enduring human conditions in the perspective of the urban metropolis. As no man's life is an island, man has to exist in society amidst all troubles, pain and suffering. The problem before him is "how to exist" and not "how to exit". As Desai herself asserts, "Personally I do not think anybody's exile from society can solve any problem. I think basically the problem is how to exist in society and yet maintain one's individuality rather than suffering from a lack of society and a lack of belonging, that is why exile has never been my theme" (Jain, 1979).

The novels of Desai reveal her unique world view but at the same time they also reveal the existing tendencies in modern fiction. Her novels are technical innovations and combine features of both novel and lyrical poetry. They shift our attention from mere characters and events to the formal or basic design of the novel. Anita Desai prefers the word pattern to plot when she says: "I prefer the word 'pattern' to 'plot' as it sounds more natural and even better, if I dare use it, is Hopkins, word inscape while plot sounds arbitrary heavy handed and artificial, all that I wish to avoid" (Rama, 1990).

The city has been the focus of all modern literature and much of the sensibility that has gone into the creation of great literary works. T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land* and James Joyce's *Ulysses* have been shaped by an acute awareness of the decadence of human values in the mechanical life of the modern metropolis. The great Indian novelists such as R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Bhabani Bhattacharya look at Indian life from the perspective of its traditions and values that are rooted essentially in villages and village folk. But Anita Desai, like her contemporaries Kamla Markandaya, Arun Joshi, Ruth Prasad Jhabvala and Nayantara Sahgal, look at life with its essential rootlessness fostered by the growth of the metropolis. Desai's novels embody a realistic view of the city but at the same time she presents it as a metaphor of existence. The city becomes a symbol that reflects the existential dilemma of the tormented souls who are in constant quest of selfhood. The characters constantly feel the pressure of the urban milieu which provides a sense of vacuum and choose. At the same time this urban milieu intensifies the sense of despair and alienation in the individual.

The greatness of a novel as an artistic creation can be judged by determining the extent to which its theme and the resultant structure are inevitable and interdependent. Thus this principle of vital unity between form and content may be taken as the basis to measure the artistic worth of any work of art. The degree of their organic integration determines the degree of its artistic success. The point is made clear by the writers of the book *Understanding Fiction* in their observations, "He (the novelist) knows that, when he sets out to write a story, he is really engaged in a process of exploration and experiment: he is

exploring the nature of his characters and the meaning of their acts, and, too he is exploring his own feelings about them. He knows that any shift in the organisation of his story, or any variation in style, will alter, however slightly, the total response” (Brooks & Warren, 1981).

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***Daaham: A reflection of unfair domination and exploitation of the Dalits***

**- Mercy Vijetha**

Modern Indian Literature deals with identity movements. Groups with many reasons are making efforts to prove their identity. Dalit movement is one of the movements. The chief aim of the movement is to lead the victimized social group i.e. Dalits emancipate from social restrictions to have equal rights and opportunities. 'Thirst' is a play originally written in Telugu as 'Daaham' by Dr. M. M. Vinodini. Translated into English by Prof. Sunitha Rani. It is a play written in Dalit perspective. In the play, the action revolves around issues like caste-system, superstitions, inequality, injustice etc.,

The play 'Thirst' opens with a conflict. The conflict is between a Dalit woman and an Upper caste Reddy woman. The conflict is the result of a Dalit woman Souramma breaking the custom. Customs and traditions must be followed for the welfare of the society or a group. Here the purpose of custom is lost and a group of people are deprived from water. In the context of the play the custom imposed on a particular group is out of conspiracy. The custom in the play dictates that lower-class people should not go on to the well. Giving reason Pedda Reddy says:

..... We started this custom because  
When the untouchables go to the well  
and put the rope the well go dry.  
When you come to the well, our people  
draw water and give you. (Scene 5. Pg. 507)

The main reason for depriving the rights of the others is treating themselves as superiors and grading others inferiors. Such complex gave rise to the practice of untouchability i.e Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vysya and sudra is made by Varna System according to Manudharma sastra. According to Varna system people are divided into four groups. They are so called 'Untouchables' (Dalits) does not fall in any of these four groups, they are discriminated. They are not at all considered as human beings. Racial discrimination and class discrimination exists in other parts of the world but discrimination within the race is termed as

casteism found only in India, the country known for ‘Dharma’ and ‘Shanti’. In the name of custom Upper-caste Reddy superiors interiorized Dalits, deprived all their basic and fundamental rights and natural resources. Obviously Dalits could not excel due to lack of education, opportunity and lack of resources. The wide gap between the Upper caste people and Dalits gave rise to inequality.

Souramma steps on to the well to draw drinking water. Reddy Women suddenly rushes to the site of the well. They are angry because she has polluted the water of the well. They pull her down abuses her using filthy language, manhandle her brutally. Souramma is alone and helpless. In a moment of helplessness, pain and agony she too abuses the Reddy Women. They are arrogant, Towards a Dalit Woman. Violation of them need to face dire consequences. They intend that Dalits should not have any freedom they enjoy rights and resources. Upper-caste people imposing punishments on Dalits is quite common. If they do so the other member of the group the victimized dare not to raise their voice or do action against them.

Later Souramma is given punishment by the head of the village to pay ten thousand rupees as fine if not she will be stripped off clothes and paraded naked around the village. Because breaking the law is connected to the tradition and restrictions followed in this village. The Upper-caste Reddy’s themselves are the law. They have their own system to execute power. The punishment given to Souramma reflects how uncivilized and brutal they are towards their fellow beings in the name of tradition. When Dalit youth came to know the second option of the punishment they could not resist themselves and outraged with anger. They considered the problem not only of a woman Souramma and her dignity and respect of the whole Dalit community.

All Dalits meet to discuss Souramma’s issue. After a long discussion Dalits recognize that villagers exploited them and victimized them all through the days. Now they wish to change their lives, they no longer want to bear any atrocities over them. They resolved to be united at any cost to free themselves from Reddy superiority.

When it’s the day and time to pay fine at an assembly, the whole Dalit community attends the assembly on behalf of Souramma.

When Pedda Reddy asks for fine saying it is the sake of village custom. Dasu, Souramma's son questions the head of the village

.....you'll fine us if we go up to the well  
But why shouldn't we go there?  
Who has made this custom should be?  
Who has decided the amount of money to be paid as fine?  
Who gave you the right to do this? (Scene 5 Pg 506).

Knowledge is power, Dalit youth are educated. They are empowered to question the system. Now the youth are in a position to distinguish good and bad. They realized the conspiracy in the name of custom Villagers are taking advantage. When some elders alert task with Reddys is like the idiom of the thorn and the plantain leaf. Dasu is firm bold enough to speak the fact he says:

.....you made this custom, that's all.  
You cling to these so called customs  
so that you can manipulate people,  
make them do what you want,  
play as you want, and make the village play.  
You decide the wrong and right.  
You punish you impose the fine..... (Scene 5 Pg 506).

Dasu and other members of the group are dare enough to declare that they are going to fix a log for fifth pulley to the well, put the rope and draw water. He also demands that the Reddy women must apologise for beating Souramma who is like any other woman of the Reddy group.

Pushpamma responds when Pedda Reddy says that "When the untouchables go to the well.....the wells go dry and Mother Gangamma disappears into the depths". She says:

What? Will the well go dry if  
we go to fill water?  
Will Gangamma go down into the  
Depths if we put the rope?  
Who digs the well in the first place.  
.....who brought Gangamma up from the depths. You,

Your father or your Upper caste people? (Scene 5 Pg 507)

All the time, for years or centuries Dalits were quiet, bearing villagers atrocities. They have never questioned. Tata says:

How many times we've been beaten up  
how many humiliations we've faced,  
how many difficulties we've borne,  
But, we've not opposed.(Scene 4 pg 502).

Victimization continued endlessly there is no chance for sympathy or realization. At least to bring change in their and future generation questioning is inevitable. Another woman of Dalit community Punnamma also adds:

What's the use, keeping quiet even now?  
After so many years, the Whole world  
has changed but this village has

Not changed; our lives have not changed.(Scene 4 pg 502).

Dalits life is ever the same, since the past it is so miserable. The life of others is fast changing, there is tremendous change in their lives. There is advancement of science and technology aiming to reach international standards. Rapid growth in administration and economy not make much effect on Dalits life. In the play Dalits are firm until justice is done to them.

When the argument is at high pitch, a woman arrives at the assembly to take Gangamma. Because she feeds Pedda Reddy's grandson timely. Due to Gangamma's absence the hungry child is unmanageable. But either Gangamma or the Dalit people are ready to feed the child. As the condition of the boy is worse, they bring the baby-boy to the assembly. The villagers as usual try to manage Dalits in all possible ways fail. Members of the Dalits are well aware of exploitation, by Reddy people. This time Dalit people are much cautious. When the situation is beyond the control Pedda Reddy assures Dalits, he says to Gangamma and the group:

Mother, all right. We have been  
at fault, I admit, this will

never happen again.

Dalits want not only Pedda Reddy's assurance, but they want the Reddy women who are responsible for the conflict must apologize. The Reddy women in rescue of their baby-boy reconcile for their ill-treatment of Souramma. At this juncture the playwright intends to say that the needs of the people are mutual. They are interdependent. So one need not feel superior while the chance is at their hands.

The playwright co-ordinates all the events successfully. The pathetic condition of Dalits in the play is so realistic. She opposes the Varna system which is the root-cause of caste ridden societies and evils. The play is an eye-opener to the readers. Education (awareness), boldness, intelligence and perseverance all together quench their thirst for water. In the play Dalits are freed from clutches of superiority to enjoy freedom, excel in life and reach the Zenith.

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**Towards Self-Actualization: ‘Janie’ and ‘Maya’ of Zora Neale  
Hurston And Shoba De**

**- M. Pankaja**

In this patriarchal society, man can think about his life without a woman but a woman cannot do the same. Irrespective of the country or the society they are born, women have to settle for jobs that comply with their obligations as wives, mothers and homemakers. Most of the average woman’s life particularly in African and Indian communities is spent in marriage. Though women are exploited at various fronts by men, women do not have right to speak out because in the respective societies, it is a part of culture for women not to argue with men. But what can a wife do when she is ignored and neglected for all her feelings? Some mutely endure this situation and spend their whole life in suffocated atmosphere.

The literary world of the fiction has spread a red carpet for woman writers. Consequently, more and more women writers are articulating anxiety and concerns focusing on women’s issues and creating a body of ‘literature of their own.’ One of the major concerns of the women’s literature all over the world has been to highlight the plight of women, their increasing problems, their physical, financial and emotional exploitation, and their mental anguish of the contemporary society in every sphere of life.

Feminism is a kind of revolution that seeks transformation in the attitude of the society towards recognizing equal rights for women. The gender discrimination and male domination are heinous acts in the eyes of feminists. Feminism advocates a decent living for women folk on all aspects such as sociological, political, economical and philosophical.

In fact, the desire to lead a more independent life is an innate urge in women of all times. Seeking liberation from male dominance is one of the vital issues of feminist writing. Feminist issues transcend all limits of nationality and there exists an unconscious common bond among women writers of the world – white, black or coloured. To mention a few, Janie the protagonist of *Their Eyes were Watching God* written by Zora Neale Hurston an African-American writer and Maya

of *Second Thoughts* written by Shoba De, an Indian novelist who are taken into granted for the present study are not ready to accept the roles assigned for women by men.

To elaborate, Zora Neale Hurston (1901-1960) is considered the literary foremother of African-American women writers who has the credit of writing *Their Eyes were Watching God*, a classic in black literature. It caters around the theme of liberated black woman. The heroine, Janie Mae Crawford, is the first black woman in American fiction who is not stereotyped as either a slut, a ‘tragic mulatta’, a mammy or a victim of racist oppression. The novel explored primal relationship between men and women which was a rare subject in those days. Her relationship with various men provides the structure of the novel. Zora projects Janie, as a very strong female who defies all the social codes and lives a life of her own. With the depiction of a positive heroine, Zora gave a new beginning to African-American literature and in Janie Crawford, she gave black women a fictional heroine, with whom they can identify themselves. Henry Louis Gates Jr. describes the novel as the story of “a quest of a silent black woman.... to find a voice.”

Like Zora Neale Hurston, Shoba De an Indian novelist fought spiritedly against all the traditional beliefs and moral values by denouncing them. She opines that since the ancient age, women have written novels in plenty but their novels attempted pictures of life as it is seen through the eyes of men. But now Shoba De breaks this world of English fiction by shifting from man’s angle to woman’s angle and emphasis from the external to the internal world. She has scaled new heights of success as an Indian woman “who breaks through rigid barrier” in her *Second Thoughts*.

In the novel, Shoba De attempts women as the central figure and succeeds in presenting the predicament of urban modern women with extraordinary ability. Like Zora, who was successful in creating a new black woman like Janie, Shoba De’s novels indicate the arrival of new Indian women eager to defy rebelliously against the well entrenched moral orthodoxy of the patriarchal social system. In her own words she says, “I did write with a great deal of empathy towards women without waving the feminist flag. I feel very strongly about the

women's situation.”

*Their Eyes were Watching God* is a love story, explicating the love and need for true freedom. The action of the novel begins when Janie is sixteen, beautiful and eager to struggle with life, but unable to articulate her wishes and dreams. Her sexuality awakens as she watches the mystery of blossoming pear tree in her back yard. She understands it as a marriage and has summoned to behold a revelation. This is the idea of marriage that she carries with her and for which she searches for nearly thirty years.

Janie identifies herself with the pear tree. As a blossoming pear tree Janie remains “petal open” for love. Before she is properly pollinated, she is desecrated many times. The desecrator comes in the form of people whose notions of marriage differ drastically from that of Janie's but not from each other. Janie's grandmother and her first and second husbands all see marriage as a materialistic security venture.

Nanny Crawford sees marriage as a way out for Janie. It is an escape from poverty and abuse, a chance to sit on a high place. So, in an attempt to give Janie a similar marriage she chooses Logan Killicks, a middle aged, dirty, unloving and looks “like a skull head in the graveyard.” But this does not matter to her. All that matters is that he has sixty acres of land, a house bought and paid for, and that he offers protection and ensures a stable future. But actually Killicks being obsessed with his property never treats Janie like a real woman. Instead, he treats her like the livestock on his farm. He soon measures her value in terms of how much work she can do and how much time she spends doing it. Ironically, her role is like a servant. Thus Janie's first dream was dead, and so she became a woman.

Now, flight seems to be her best option and when Jody Starks, an ambitious young man, asks her to be her bride, she decides to escape with Joe, after perceiving the commanding threats by Killicks. Above all, he offers to fulfill her dreams if she will run away and marry him.

Jody takes Janie to Eatonville, and as he thinks he becomes a big ruler of things. Later when all his ambitions are realized, he starts forbidding Janie in participating in the main entertainment of the town and assigns her the role of “Mrs. Mayor Starks.” Jody obviously



believes that women are to be seen and not heard. Starks first imposes this rule during a ceremony marking the opening of the store. At the end when Janie was invited to speak, Jody responds:

Thank yuh fuh yo' compliments, but mah wife  
don't know nothin' bout no speech-makin.' Ah  
never married her for nothin' lak dat. She's uh  
woman and her place is in the de home.....(TEWWG, 69)

This attitude makes a feeling of coldness and fear takes hold of Janie. She felt far away from things and lonely. By the end of their seven years of married life, Janie is twenty-four years old. It is at that age Janie recognizes that Joe required her total submission. He prohibits Janie talking to common folk and demands her to wear a head rag to hide her beautiful hair. Thus parts of real Janie are all wrapped up literally and figuratively. Jody Starks is too much like Logan Killicks to make Janie happy. Starks, like Killicks, feels that Janie ought to be proud and grateful for what he has done for her. After all, he has lifted her out of the valley and placed her on his mountain top. She never wants to be above anybody but just wants to be equal.

Things come to climax sixteen years later when Janie who has been constantly and publicly reminded of her aging by Jody, decides to strike back. With this fatal blow, Jody is shattered and literally stops speaking after encountering Janie's new found assertiveness. Shortly afterwards, broken hearted Joe falls on bed. When Joe was on his death bed, Janie confronts him with more painful truth. This attack of Janie on her dying husband is not an act of gratuitous cruelty but an essential step towards self-reclamation. Independent for the first time in her life, she exults in the "freedom feeling." Jody's death gives her another chance to be free from male domination.

All of her life, Janie has been in search of a right bee to pollinate her buds but in vain. Right from the beginning she is interested in people and love. But all people who have controlled her life such as her grandmother, Killicks and Jody have been interested in wealth, and the responsibility each seemingly brings.

However, at the end Janie realizes what she craved for through Tea Cake, a happy-go-lucky man who accepts her for herself and as an

equal. Tea Cake makes her feel alive, vital, needed, wanted, loved, and unlimited and she gives herself freely. With Tea Cake, as her guide, Janie has explored the soul of her culture and learned how to value herself. On the simplest level, Hurston's novel is about a woman who knows the value of love and who is determined, despite her many errors, to settle for nothing less.

Similar to Janie, Maya an attractive young girl is the central character of Shoba De's *Second Thoughts*. She is a young – middle-class Bengali girl born and brought up in Calcutta makes an arranged matrimonial alliance with a Bombay-based, foreign-retained Bengali boy, Ranjan. Maya is highly impressed by Bombay's life, full of glamour and freedom. Marriage ushers glamorous fascination, freedom, love and joy for young girls. But alas! All their dreams come crashing down and they are doomed forever.

After marriage, Maya feels herself trapped in a neglected and passive life because of her husband's conservative nature, superiority complex and insensibility to all her feelings. After marriage Maya wants to pursue a career in Textile designing but Ranjan rejects that plan. Behind this decision lies Ranjan's ego and he projects himself as the lord and master and Maya has to abide by his whims and fancies whether she likes it or not. Like Jody Starks of *Their Eyes were Watching God* Ranjan always reminds of her duties as a married woman. He says: "... a housewife's duty is to stay at home and make sure everything is tip-top. That is where her true happiness lies." (Second Thoughts, 56)

If Ranjan reaches out for Maya, in her words "it was a gesture devoid of any passion. And impersonal friendly sort of gesture which always left me feeling like a well-trained dog being rewarded for his good behavior." (Second Thoughts, 251) Maya is constantly depressed because of her neglected and lonely life.

Ranjan always expects her to be content with a decent house, four square meals, enough money and plenty of time for leisure. For him sex is not an important issue in life. Perhaps she would have overcome the sex factor if she had been satisfied by Ranjan in other spheres of life. All her attempts to build up a relationship based on love,

companionship and equality with Ranjan fails.

Moreover, Ranjan being the only son of his mother moulded and shaped by his mother. He fully confides in her. In brief Maya wishes Ranjan to confide in her talk to her about his inner world, love her and have feel for her. But when Ranjan fails to satisfy her physical and emotional needs, and when she can't even bear any child because of her husband's lack of interest in physical-gratification and on the top of that, when she has nothing creative to do in that city she feels:

“Nobody needed me, absolutely nobody. My parents no longer thought I belong to them. My husband belonged to his mother. It was unlikely that I would bear children who would belong to me. And I did not have a single true friend to call my own.” (Second Thoughts, 166)

With her husband and house she never finds a sense of belongingness. She sadly admits, “it was never a home. My home. Our home always ‘the house’ – impersonal, distant, cold.” (Second Thoughts, 227)

It is this moment, where Maya needs someone to love her. So, like Tea Cake of *Their Eyes were Watching God* when Nikhil meets her and shows his interest in all minute outlooks of Maya, she turns to him. He is kind, helpful, sympathetic and full of life who cares for her. This feeling comes to her as a soft breeze as a contrast to her predictable existence.

One of the most structured pattern of the Indian society is the role assigned to a man and woman- woman is the follower, man the leader, woman is the sufferer and the man is ordainer. In contrast to this expression, Maya through her own education has been made aware of her individuality. From a passive role she emerges to the point of discovering and asserting her individuality, liberty and identity.

Thus both the characters Janie of *Their Eyes were Watching God* and Maya of *Second Thoughts* suffer owing to the lack of experience, maturity and the neglect and non-cooperative attitudes of their husbands. But through their self-actualization they recognize themselves better as independent individuals. The development of their women characters as realized persons brings the yearning for a life of

fulfillment, which comes after self-actualization. In the process of development, they first appear in an inhibited form and later on they become fully aware of their own bloom.

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**Use of Classical Sanskrit Theatre Technique “Word-Painting” in  
Mahesh Dattani’s *Final Solutions***

**- C. S. Srinivas**

Mahesh Dattani is one of the foremost practitioners of the art of theatre in India. He is India’s first playwright in English to be honoured with the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award in 1998 for his significant contribution to the field of drama. His unique dramatic vision took the Indian English drama away from being a faint reflection of the European traditions. Dattani has infused a new life into modern Indian theatre. He had adopted various forms of drama to represent the actual depth as well as the vitality of the human experience.

Mahesh Dattani’s “plays are primarily written to be staged—not to be read as stories in the drawing rooms or classrooms” (Das 169). Being essentially a man of the theatre, Dattani wants his plays to be a living experience, a communication realized on the stage, a message which is transferred from the page to the stage so that they offer a rich variety of visual, aural and emotional experience to their audience. In fact, some of his plays were staged first and printed afterwards. Dattani’s natural inner urge to stage his plays carries a lot of conviction when he says: “I see myself as a craftsman and not as a writer. To me, being a playwright is about seeing myself as a part of the process of a production. I write for the sheer pleasure of communicating through the dynamic medium” (Nair).

Dattani has penned several full-length plays and what renders the most charismatic quality to his plays is the method he has adopted to make his plays stage-worthy. To make his plays artistically meaningful and simultaneously entertaining to the audience Dattani, as a free-thinker, incorporates various modern styles and techniques of production that suit his dramatic requirements. At the same time, he is very familiar with the techniques of his native dramatic tradition. In many of his plays, classical Sanskrit theatre techniques have been used in an improvised fashion. This paper makes an analysis of one such ancient Sanskrit theatre technique called “word-painting” employed in his play *Final Solutions*.

The Indian dramatic tradition begins with Sanskrit plays. The

classical Sanskrit dramatists never approved of realistic settings in their plays despite the fact that they were very much aware of its utility in a play. They deliberately stayed away from using a realistic setting because the themes were non-realistic. Further, the actor himself described the whole scene by the use of words. E.W.Marasinghe, a renowned theatre critic coins a phrase for this technique “Word-painting” (283).

Certain incidents of the plot may not be dramatically significant to be visually represented on the stage but needs to be known to the audience in order to facilitate their understanding of the story. Further, all that is to be intimated to the audience may not possibly be put to visual display on the stage for many reasons. If certain scenes are prohibited from enactment on the stage on the grounds of dramatic impropriety, certain other scenes are not visually represented due to the technical limitations of the stage such as want of space and time. On the other hand, the dramatist may, sometimes, deliberately avoid the visual representation of a scene to economize on space and time. In such situations, the ancient Sanskrit dramatists invariably employed “word-painting” technique.

Dattani’s award winning play *Final Solutions* presents the theme of communal hatred and spiraling fundamentalism, especially after the partition of India. Mahesh Dattani, in the third act of his play *Final Solutions*, employs the word-painting technique to give a vivid verbal description of the protagonist Daksha’s pleasant memories of her first adventurous visit to her Muslim friend Zarine’s house. The narration of the incident is significant for the understanding and the development of the plot because it begins to reveal Daksha’s second traumatic experience with the Muslim community. But, it is neither practically feasible nor a wise idea to put up a complex and elaborate stage setting for producing a visual effect on the stage. Hence, Dattani exercises his creative power and paints a grand spectacle in words thereby giving a fair opportunity to the actress doing the role of Daksha to exhibit her acting talent. Also, Dattani gives his audience more work. The audience is busy picturing in its mind not only the scenery but also the characters connected with the scene that are not actually present on the stage:

DAKSHA. I went to their house! I finally went to their house! I got a good excuse. Kanta had mentioned that Zarine's mother was now doing some embroidery work. To meet household expenses, I suppose. . . . I asked Kanta to stay inside the tonga while I went in and met them. I didn't want her repeating everything I said and did to Gaju. I opened the gate slowly, trying not to make a noise, so I wouldn't disturb her father and the other men. But he heard. I had never seen so many bearded men with tiny topis. Except in Hussainbad. I tried not to think about all that. I walked in while the men tried to continue talking. I halted, wondering whether I should speak to them or go inside. He sensed my indecision and called out for his wife. He didn't look at me even once. The men were talking but I knew they had changed the subject. What were they planning? It seemed so long while I waited, trying not to feel uncomfortable. I was frightened. What was I doing there? Then Zarine's mother came to the door. She smiled at me. Thank God. And she called me in. Their house wasn't very different from ours. She led me to a room inside and there was Zarine, sitting there doing her embroidery. She smiled. Everything was fine! I gave her mother the saree I had brought for embroidery. Any design she pleased, I told her. Zarine and I talked and laughed for at least ten minutes before I mentioned the gramophone. I told her my in-laws didn't allow me to play our gramophone. She laughed again and took me upstairs. She asked me what I would like to listen to. Noor Jehan, of course! She seemed pleased with my choice. She wound up the machine and played my favourite song! We both listened and sang along with Noor Jehan. Three voices singing together in perfect unison. Every now and then our eyes would meet and we would smile as we continued singing—as if, if we stopped, Noor Jehan would stop singing for us. I even danced a little and spun across the room and leaned against the window looking out into the bright sunlight, like the heroines do in the talkies. Hoping I would find a koel to coo-coo along with me for the rest of the song. I saw Kanta instead, stepping out of the tonga, looking up at me with

disapproval. (*CP* 202)

In the same act, when the accusations and counter-accusations that are exchanged between Ramnik and Javed intensify the feelings of hatred between them, the audience also becomes more and more curious to know why Javed hates the Hindu community. Consequently, when Ramnik Gandhi expresses his displeasure at Javed's belligerent attitude and finds his actions "repulsive", Bobby tells Ramnik, "You are also—in some way—partly responsible" (*CP* 200) and narrates an incident from Javed's past that had completely changed his perception of Hinduism and eventually turned him into a Hindu-hater. Though the incident is a minor one, it is absolutely necessary for the development of the plot. It is only when the details of the incident are revealed that both Ramnik as well as the audience understands the real reason behind Javed's antagonism. Dattani always makes sure that the connection between the actor and the audience remains intact throughout the performance of the play. As Bobby gives a graphic description of the incident, the audience is again made to form in its mind the mental pictures of the scenery and the people involved in the incident:

BOBBY. . . . There was the cricket match. Not much of a match. We were playing cricket on our street with the younger boys. The postman delivered our neighbour's mail. He dropped one of the letters. He was in a hurry and asked Javed to hand the letter over to the owner. Javed took the letter . . . and opened the gate. Immediately a voice boomed, 'What do you want?' I can still remember Javed holding out the letter and mumbling something, his usual firmness vanishing in a second. 'Leave it on the wall,' the voice ordered. Javed backed away, really frightened. We all watched as the man came out with a cloth in his hand. He wiped the letter before picking it up, he then wiped the spot on the wall the letter was lying on and he wiped the gate! We stared at him as he went back inside. The postman came out of the next house and grinned when he saw this. 'Take no notice,' he said. 'That man is slightly cracked.' We all heard a prayer bell, ringing continuously. Not loud. But distinct. The neighbour had been praying for quite a while, but none of us



had noticed the bell before. We'd heard the bell so often everyday of our lives that it didn't mean anything. It was a part of the sounds of the wind and the birds and the tongas. It didn't mean anything. You don't single out such things and hear them, isolated from the rest of the din. But at that moment . . . we all heard only the bell. (*Pause. Quietly, in a matter-of-fact manner.*) The next day, the neighbour came out screaming on the streets. Yelling at our windows. We peeped out. He was furious, tears running down his face. We couldn't understand a word he was saying. I found out later. Someone had dropped pieces of meat and bones into his backyard . . . I didn't speak to Javed for many days after that. I was frightened of him. For months, whenever we played cricket and heard the bell, we remembered that incident and we avoided looking at Javed. And for Javed, he was—in his own eyes—no longer the neighbourhood hero. (CP 201)

Here again, Dattani calculatedly avoids the visual depiction of the incident on the stage. Apart from technical limitations, the visual representation of the incidents of the play may amount to dramatic impropriety which is also against the convention of the Classical Sanskrit theatre. The sensitive dramatic action involved in the incident if visually represented on the stage, may offend the religious and cultural sentiments of both the communities. Hence, Mahesh Dattani makes a deft use of this ancient dramatic technique not only to economise on the number of characters and settings but also to maintain politesse on stage.

Mahesh Dattani's plays are characterized by many theatrical as well as thematic innovations. His plays are a unique blend of art and craft. He utilizes the Indian dramatic devices and techniques in a very adequate way. He has made sincere efforts to make a stage befitting to the Indian milieu. With originality of vision, fearless conviction, awareness of the predicament of human destiny and a remarkable innovative conception of the nexus of stage and audience, Dattani has given a new direction and dimension to the modern Indian theatre in general and Indian English drama in particular.

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## **Revisiting History: A Post-Modern Approach by Bapsi Sidhwa**

**- P. Sobha Rani**

Bapsi Sidhwa's latest narrative venture *Water* is the portrayal of a bold young widow, called Chuyia. Set against the backdrop of 1938, Colonial India and written on the basis of a film by Deepa Mehta, this narrative focuses the environment of the pre-independent India as also the immense self-confidence of an eight year old widow called Chuyia. It vividly catches the social geographical and ritualistic settling of a small, anonymous village on the Bihar-Bengal boarder. It was more centrally engaged with human suffering at large, transcending borders and evoking themes relevant to all human beings as traditions should never become rigid, they should flow like good water (Mehta 2005).

As an eight-year old girl, she witnessed first-hand the horrific violence of the Partition, later becoming a supporter of women's rights. Emblematically, the novel is set during the 30s at the time of Gandhi's Freedom Movement against the British Raj, which also focused on social justice, particularly the expansion of women's rights and untouchability, thus promoting new forms of knowledge. "A give carried within her the seeds of dishonor and the burden of irresponsibility was to be borne by her parents until she was married" (15). The story opens with a prologue through which the main character Chuyia, a six-year old girl, is introduced to the reader through her carefree and playful time in the jungle near her village on the Bihar-Bengal border. "Her hair which already fell to her waist spread about her in a velvet tangle of curls" (16). The joyful atmosphere of the first pages vividly contrasts with the unfolding of the somber events into which she is forcefully thrown by the orthodox customs of her Brahmin family. "She talked to her dolls as she tipped the contents of her toy box and lined up the miniature cooking utensils in front of a brick, which served as a make-believe stove" (21). Her father Somnath, a poor Brahmin priest, decides to marry her off to a 44-year old noble Brahmin, ignoring his wife Bhagya who has no say in family matters as the sacred scriptures already clarify: 'a girl is destined to leave her parents' home early or she will bring disgrace to it. She is safe and happy only in her husband's care. In the Brahmanical tradition, 'a woman is recognized as a person only when she is one with her

husband’ (p. 8). Chuyia is hardly aware of the implications of this predicament and when she is seen pampered and celebrated during the numerous wedding rituals, she innocently enjoys wedding, Chuyia lives in her parental home as was the custom with wedded pre-pubescent girls. Not long after, news of her husband’s near-death reaches her parents and they feel heavily burdened by her daughter’s fate. They know that in Brahmin culture, once widowed, a woman was deprived of her useful function in society – that of reproducing and fulfilling her duties to her husband. She ceased to exist as a person; she was no longer either daughter or daughter-in-law. There was no place for her in the community, and she was viewed as a threat to society’ (24). Here the author attentively observes how Chuyia’s father reacts helplessly to the harsh reality of sending her daughter to a widow colony (*vidhwa ashram*), highlighting the fact that in rigid dominator systems every human being is a victim of the violence and un-humanness that support them:

Somnath gazed at her as if he wanted to fix her form forever in his memory. Every line in his weary face reflected his grief at her untimely widowhood and the parting that loomed ahead of them like a curse. Finally, giving way to the pain that seemed to have squeezed his heart into something wrung-out and dry, he lay his head on the stone and began to weep, releasing his anguish in half-stifled sobs that racked his body. (31)

The cruelty of Chuyia’s descent into her enforced widowhood is powerfully depicted by the smashing of her glass bangles, tonsuring and being dressed in a homespun white cloth: ‘as the razor scraped across her scalp, Chuyia’s teeth were set on edge. Somnath noticed her toes curl, almost reflexively, in mute protest’ (35). Within the dominator and androcratic Brahmanical view, the widow constitutes a threat to society as she is perceived to be inauspicious and polluted—because of her association with death—and sexually dangerous as she becomes desirable and uncontrolled by a male counterpart. In her seminal study of widowhood in rural India, Martha Chen points out that because they have lost their roles as wives the disfiguring of the body is enforced in order to reduce their attractiveness as women by

transforming them into neuter or asexual beings by prohibiting them from wearing the symbols of marriage (vermillion mark, bangles, marriage pendant) and, more deeply traumatic, having their heads shaven (2001: 136). The brutal transmutation of Chuyia's body being shorn as a trademark of her civil death and the strict severance from old ties marks the beginning of the miserable life that awaits her in the destitute Widows' House: 'with her white sari and bald, yellow head, Chuyia was a very different child from the girl who had ridden in the bullock cart' (44). She comes across a new world populated by various characters, each one animated by their own humanity transpiring from their stripped and primal state. They all have a past, which saves them from utter despair and oblivion. The taming tyrannical presence of Madhumati sternly reigns over the house, dictating instructions to the widows with the help of Gulabi, a eunuch (*hijra*) who arranges the side business of prostitution to financially support the colony. Madhumati had "an abundance of slack flesh that made her look much older than her fifty-odd years . . . she was clearly the ruler of the dilapidated ashram" (51). Chuyia is not prone to conforming to the oppressive restrictions which regulates the whole community. Madhumati reminds her that 'when our husbands die, God help us, the wives also half die. So how can a poor half-dead woman feel any pain?' but Chuyia's untainted logic makes her defiantly reply 'because she is half alive?' (42). She is too young and feisty to conform to the pressures of the dominating orthodox traditions and, unwilling to resign to her fate, she inevitably creates a change in the lives of other widows. She particularly connects with Kalyani, the young prostitute who is forced into selling her body to financially support the Widows' House, and Shakuntala, a literate middle-aged woman and a very devout Hindu who is aware of the injustices of their plight. Their presence enriches Chuyia's new life from the beginning through their demonstration of caring and bonding. Even in their forced isolation from the world, they seek companionship and build up collective strength to make their lives more meaningful: 'You must say the japa, Jai Shree Krishna 108 times a day and you will soon fly away home' (54), Kalyani encourages Chuyia to never lose hope. Similarly, Shakuntala reads her the story of Dushyanta, reminding her to be brave and strong like him who grew up alone in the forest. They all enjoy a caring and affectionate friendship

that is subsequently preserved only by the motherly figure of Shakuntala as tragedy befalls Kalyani.

The novel unfolds into deeper dramatic dimensions when Kalyani meets Narayan, a young upper-class Gandhian idealist and follower of the 'Quit India Movement' whose love for the beautiful widow poses a threat to the social and moral order of the colony. He stood "transfixed, completely enchanted and stared at her as if she were the first woman created by God" (77). Yet, the couple secretly meets until Kalyani discovers that she used to visit Narayan's father as a prostitute and decides to end the relationship. This and the rejection from the Widow's House as she is discovered breaking the colony's rules, pushes her to commit suicide as an ultimate refusal of any further exploitation. Madhumati finds a substitute for prostitution in Chuyia who is taken away to a client by Gulabi. It is too late when Shakuntala finds out, yet, knowing that Gandhi and his followers are visiting the city, promoting his ideas of peace and a casteless society, she courageously resolves to take Chuyia away from the colony and gives her to Narayan as his train departs, confident that the child will be taken care of, symbolically, under the Mahatma's custody.

In *Water*, the serious challenge to the male-dominated traditions is posed by the indomitable spirit of Chuyia who refuses to be enslaved by the oppressive limitations of the monolithic patriarchal system. Animated by her inquisitive innocence, and too young to succumb to the gender norms imposed by society, she persistently asks Shakuntala why there are no male widowers and why only women have to spend their lives in renunciation. She bites Madhumati when the latter orders her around sternly and defiantly shouts 'I don't want to be a stupid widow! Fatty!' (42). In contrast, both Shakuntala and Kalyani reveal a deep-rooted patriarchal conditioning that makes them more obedient and conformed to their widowhood. As soon as Chuyia enters their lives, both women undergo an inner change that moves them to interact fluidly and unpredictably to the rigidity imposed by the colony dominator system. This is clearly shown in the unfolding of two sets of relationships based upon the partnership values of love, care and respect: Narayan-Kalyani, and Shakuntala-Sadananda. The first couple meet by chance when Narayan helps Chuyia to bring her dog back

home. Their love is pure and their romance is symbolically reinforced by the cultural signifiers of their names: Kalyani is another name for Lakshmi, the Hindu Goddess of abundance. She is in fact the financial support for the Widows' House and her beauty radiates the purity of the lotus flower, unsullied by the dirty water in which she resides. Similarly, Narayan derives from 'nara' (water) and 'ayana' (moving) and represents Vishnu, the all-pervasive preserver of the Universe. In the novel, Narayan is a Gandhian and also a rationalist who questions the archaic patriarchal laws and points out at the end of the story, after Kalyani's death, the injustice laid down by the law-makers of the ancient age that have institutionalized male dominance over women. The purity of the Kalyani-Narayan romance reaches its highest celebration when Narayan expresses his love by reciting the Sanskrit verses of Kalidasa's classic *Meghaduta* ('The Cloud Messenger'), a poem about the pain of separation between lovers, foretelling at the same time their future parting. In the novel, their relationship serves as a powerful contrast to Kalyani's enforced prostitution, which is enjoyed by Narayan's father, a wealthy landowner (*zamindar*), who had secretly used her for his pleasure and then hypocritically calls her a whore. Here his condemnation of Kalyani's prostitution is even more perverse as, in the usual dominator fashion widow exploitation is condoned for men's sexual needs, including child rape, as in the case of Chuyia. Conversely, Narayan's love for Kalyani is far removed from his father's lust, his feelings being even more, noble as motivated by the Gandhian ideals of emancipating her from widowhood by making her his wife. Like Chuyia, Kalyani has been led to prostitution unwittingly. After having fallen in love with Narayan, she finds herself no longer capable of living as a passive victim of patriarchal oppression. She knows that 'cast out in the streets she would die, but to live without Narayan and return to a life of forced prostitution would be a worse kind of death' (177). When she makes a final attempt to rejoin the ashram, she is cruelly mistreated by Madhumati who does not show her the slightest affection. She becomes aware that 'nothing had changed. And yet everything had' (177). By meeting Narayan, her consciousness has expanded to the extent that she would never be able to subjugate herself again to a life of exploitation. Here, Sidhwa invokes rich implications of rebellion—the defiance of institutionalized segregation, the

challenge to enforced oppression, and the rejection of patriarchal demands on a woman's body. For Kalyani, this freedom comes at a tremendous price and suicide becomes a desirable and honorable option, which she lucidly embraces: 'she clasped her hands in prayer for a moment. Then she calmly walked into the river until her short hair floated in an inky stain on the water' (178). This act situates her death outside of patriarchal discourse as a legitimate and free—albeit dead—woman, and has also a powerful and subversive impact on Narayan, which makes him aware of the hypocrisies of his family and he leaves home.

The same movement from dominating relationship is traceable in the relationship between Shakuntala and the priest Sadananda. Shakuntala is a very devout and discerning Hindu whose conscience is oriented in finding spiritual liberation. She can read, write and has a good knowledge of sacred texts, and her seeking spirit makes her believe that 'there must be a reason for it. Why are we sent here?' (181). She ponders over the meaning of life with the priest Sadananda and courageously asks: 'Pandit-ji, is it written that widows should be treated badly?' (157). She entered the Widows' House as a marginalized widow who escaped the cruelty of her family as 'she was not only viewed as responsible for her husband's death, but also as a threat to her husband's family and, most of all, to that of her dead husband's spirit, simply because of her vital womanhood and potential sexuality.' She felt all eyes were constantly watching her, waiting for her to commit some sin that would bring curses on them and consign her husband to hell' (149-150). Like the mythical Shakuntala, the foster girl of the sage Kanva, she suffers on account of respecting her duty and deeply hopes that one day she can find love again. She asks Sadananda why widows are treated so harshly and he tells her of the possibility of being remarried: 'a law has recently been passed favoring widow re-marriage'. 'A law? Why don't we know about it?' Shakuntala responds. Sadananda's concern deepens. 'Men ignore the laws that don't suit them', he declares solemnly" (157-158). As Sadananda gives Shakuntala the right support in discerning true faith from blind superstition, her loyal adherence to Hindu orthodox laws gradually widens to the extent that she is capable of breaking the shell of the ideal upper caste Hindu widow, and becomes the agency for alternative



scenarios beyond the regime of the Widows' House. Through courageous actions, she sets Kalyani free when she is locked away by Madhumati and eventually saves Chuyia by handing her over to the care of Gandhi, thus signaling the beginning of new journeys, including hers as an emancipated middle-aged widow, and indeed for India at large on the cusp of its imminent independence.

Although the figure of Gandhi appears relevant more for its functional significance as a saviour who, by promoting social change in the country, in saving Chuyia at the end of the novel, it constitutes a powerful subtext permeating the whole story with the possibility of a more humanistic future over traditional oppression and violence. Even if left predominately in the background, his presence intensively reverberates through the diverse comments, at times trenchant, given by several characters such as Madhumati and Gulabi who see him as a dangerous man ruining the country with his efforts to abolish untouchability and caste discrimination:

‘Didi, have you heard?’ Gulabi asked in her deep, affected voice.

‘What?’

‘About that Mohandas?’ she said.

‘Mohandas who? Is he a new client?’

‘No, Mohandas Gandhi! He’s from the jungles of Africa. He doesn’t sleep, he doesn’t drink’.

‘Why? Doesn’t he feel sleepy?’

‘Nooo! He doesn’t sleep with women. He lies beside them, but he doesn’t sleep with them. Self-discipline, he says’ (p. 71)

‘This Gandhi is going to sink India’.

‘What’s he done now?’

‘Gandhi says, “The untouchables are the children of God!”’

(. . . ) Disgusting! Before he came, everything ran like an English clock. Tick tock!’ (103).

Even Narayan’s parents criticize their son for being a Gandhian idealist, and one of his friends, loyal to the British Empire, openly sees the Mahatma as a nuisance. Conversely, Chuyia’s mother asks her

husband to get her a picture of this ‘holy man from far away’ to place it along with her pictures of gods and goddesses, while Narayan expresses the revolutionary impact of Gandhian ideals in his reformist commitment to widows remarriage and emancipation. Most importantly, we should at the same time keep in mind that both Mehta and Sidhwa have constructed the holy city of Benares and Hindu society from a specific angle that, although highlighting the backwardness of Hindu orthodoxy in colonial India, it does not pay due attention to the flexibility of Hindu tradition and the changes that were taking place in the same period. As some other critics have pointed out several inaccuracies in the depiction of Hindu widowhood, which allegedly fail to frame their plight in the right socio-cultural context and anchor the narrative to Orientalist discourses (Arora *et al.*, 2005; Rai, 2007). However, to read *Water* as a mere critique of Hindu patriarchal orthodoxy is as much detrimental as it is a denial of its universal appeal in evoking the redemptive potential of all human beings for social change and renewal. Far from representing a precise portrayal of socio-cultural practices and outlooks of Hindu widowhood in pre-Independence India, both authors are legitimately correct in their interpretation of the novel and the film as being against violence, beyond the boundaries of time and space. As they have stated in many interviews, the exploration of the widows’ plight served as a main background for a deeper questioning of the difference between moral conscience and religious conservatism, thus transcending local and national boundaries and symbolizing the revolt of all women against physical and psychological violation (Phillips 2006; Mannoni 2007). Such an approach is creatively expressed in both the novel and the movie through the central message of arousing women’s awareness and overcoming dominating hierarchies.

The existing evidence, although more limited when compared to the socio-economic-cultural conditions of colonial India, provides enough reasons for considering widowhood in India as an ever-present social problem. As we have seen in the analysis of the novel, although oppressive dominating values are firmly institutionalized through blind religious indoctrination, gender inequality and enforced sexual exploitation, they are shown to be questioned and unsettled by the partnership values of love, mutual care and respect, which *link* rather

than *rank* human beings in their common pursuit of freedom. Both female and male characters appear to be enslaved by unjust social institutions, yet they are shown to gain agency only when they are willing to subvert the restrictive values of their brutal orthodox set up. Far from representing themselves only in ways dictated by Hindu patriarchy, Chuyia, Kalyani and Shakuntala subversively move beyond the oppressive social world that they experienced by establishing overtly dissident partnerships, which project them towards different futures. As Anindita Ghosh puts it, ‘everyday’ and ‘small’ (even failed) rebellions are shown as complementing larger meta-narratives of the more successful women’s movement, reopening and enriching questions of agency in the process’ (Ghosh, 2008: 20). More importantly, though the ideology of dominator discourse displays its power to control, a challenge to its content and a courageous resistance to its normative system become equally empowering.

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## **Dramatic Techniques and Theatricality of Mahesh Dattani**

**- R. Devarajulu Reddy**

Playwright, director, actor, screenplay writer, film maker, dancer, teacher, Mahesh Dattani is a man of multiple aspects, creativities, and identities. He occupies a very distinct and illustrious place in Indian drama in English. He is the first Indian playwright writing in English to be awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award. The producers of Dattani's plays praise him highly because his plays are great in performance and also for his treatment of contemporary themes. His presentation of problems from real life situation impresses a lot. He takes up serious problems prevailing in urban India. He, very successfully, gives voice to the problems and sufferings of marginalized people. His plays are meant to be performed, not just to be read as literature. It is important to note that Dattani does experiments with all his plays in his theatre Playpen before being performed and gives finishing touches on his dialogue only when it is spoken aloud by actors in rehearsal.

Passing through the phase of poetical, philosophical and political drama, Indian English drama as a potent public voice got a safe mooring in the dramatic art of Mahesh Dattani. To eliminate the distinction of page and stage and to make theatre a place to articulate the voice of marginalized in the shifting codes of morality, Dattani carved out his passage beyond the canons. He not only writes plays but also directs them. And what is more, he conducts and organizes workshops on play-writing and stage production. That is how he has gathered vast experience on the dramatic art and stage craft. The innovations he has made in the area of themes make him popular both at home and abroad. In order to make his characters life-like on the stage, he too makes certain innovations in the techniques of his plays. To make the inner thought in the minds of his characters, he introduces the technique of 'thought' instead of 'asides' in his plays. 'Thought' is followed by 'Speech' in commensurate with the themes of the play. There is a lot of code-mixing (i.e. Hindi words, for example written in English spelling without making an attempt at translation, even when translation is available) in his plays. Hence, an attempt has been made to analyse the techniques employed in his plays. In his 'preface' to

Collected Plays (2000) Dattani states, “I know that I am an artist. I don't need to underline it in my works. I write for my plays to be performed and appreciated by a wide section of the society that my plays speak to and are about.... I am certain that my plays are a true reflection of my times, place and socio-economic background.”

As a playwright Dattani was influenced by Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* When he read it in his teens and opined that it unleashed in him an ability to set up his male and female characters against each other. There is a vital difference between drama and other forms of literature. Unlike other genres, such as poetry, fiction and essays, drama is a performing art. Hence, technique matters a lot in a play. Dattani says, “I see myself as a craftsman and not as a writer. To me, being a playwright is about seeing myself as a part of the process of a production. I write plays for the sheer pleasure of communicating through this dynamic medium.” What matters most in a play or drama is performance. Julian Hilton, a theorist, almost discards the audience and the text and concentrates on the performance of the characters. He writes “....in the theatre any plot or action exists only in the moment or performance and has no stable meaning or identity outside of the performance process.”

Mahesh Dattani believes in the magic of the spoken word and therefore lays emphasis on the performance of his characters. In the preface to collected plays he says, “Every time the audiences (critics too!) have applauded, cried or simply offered their silence in response to some moment, in the play, I am completely aware that it is my character that has done the work for me.”

In Dattani's plays, characters play the vital role to reach out to the audience. Most of his themes, rather unusual themes like homosexuality, bi-sexuality, lesbianism, and disease like HIV positives (AIDS), are brought home to the audience through the acting of the characters – not through the words on the page. To see Dattani's characters acting on the stage is to be aware of contemporary reality that stares us in our face. Dattani says, “If you look at my plays, you would find that each character, every character has, you know his or her space in the play, which an actor can develop.” Since the emphasis is not on printed words but on the utterance of words through the mouth

of characters, Dattani takes a play as a craft. In an interview he explains, “I write to do plays...that is probably where my strength lie,... What I see around and within me...I think its craft. Craft first and craft next. That's what theatre is about.”

A good example of stagecraft comes across in *Tara*. Dattani's portrayal of the character of Dan (protagonist) brings to mind the perceptive observation of Kenneth Pickering on drama: “When we speak of a 'character' in a play we think of them as a living person but, in reality, until an actor begins to work on the play, the character is nothing more than a series of speeches and stage directions on the page....” To lessen the grim reality and tension, Dattani often tries to introduce some humour to the plays. The play is performed on a multilevel set. The lowest level occupies a major portion of the stage. It represents the house of the Patels. It is seen only in memory and may be as stark as possible. The next level represents the bed sitter of the older Chandan (referred to as Dan) in a suburb of London. This is the only realistic level. Behind, on a higher level is a chair in which Dr. Thakkar remains seated throughout the play. Dattani takes pains to make his stage look as close to the real things as possible.

In *Where There's a Will*, Dattani employs an innovative technique of bringing a dead man, Hasmukh Mehta back to the stage to speak to the audience directly about his feelings to his family. In his plays, it is known that ghosts do appear and speak as in Elizabethan drama but to make a dead man talk to the audience without the knowledge of other characters, is surely an effective mode of presenting a play as performance. In the play Dattani makes the principal character, Hasmukh Mehta say his feelings directly to the audience even after his death. Both in life and in death, Mehta speaks the text directly to the audience because the play exists in its performance. His agony springs from his inability to set his house in order in his life-time and therefore, he wants to do it through his Mistress Kiran after his death.

Since dead Hasmukh is talking to the audience directly it is called a soliloquy in death. Hasmukh also speaks directly to his wife and mistress after his death. By making dead Hasmukh speak directly to living characters, Dattani wants to bring the subconscious mind of

the dead protagonist to the surface to say what he thought when he was alive. His depiction of a visible and invisible and audible and inaudible ghost extends the scope of naturalistic drama. He uses unstressed symbolism in this play. The baby's kicking in womb of a woman is symbolic of a new life for all the living members of the Mehta family. The banishment of Hasmukh's ghost is indicative of the exorcism of the past. The dialogues in the play are sparkling.

In *Bravely Fought the Queen*, Dattani makes use of a new technique to bring out the discrimination against woman. Here the play is less in the text but more on acting and performance. In the introduction to the play, Michael Walling writes that this is a play about performances and uses the theatre to demonstrate how, in a world of hypocrisy, acting becomes a way of life. Paradoxically, it is only by the overt performance of the theatre that such acting can be exposed for what it is.

The play has an extensive use of symbols. Lalitha's passion for growing bonsai is symbolically reflective of her own mindset. The wiring and trimming which she does to growing plant reflects the restriction and control of her life. The result may be quaint and attractive, but it can also become ugly and grotesque like the bonsai Sridhar keeps on his office table which is a clear symbol of the deformed relationship the brothers Jiten and Nitin (protagonists) have with their wives. Other symbols are also apt in this play. Baa's wheelchair, never use in the course of the play, signals more than her paralytic condition. The beggar woman represents the guilt laden burden of the past which Jiten would destroy if he could. Dolly's facemask, which she is careful not to crack by laughing but which nevertheless cracks a little later, is also symbolic. The thumris of Naina Devi played over and over again on the stereo-system simultaneously evoke and comment on the yearning for love and fulfillment experienced by the major characters in the play. Symbolically, the writer also highlights the inset story of Naina Devi, a paradigm of heroism. In spite of all these symbols the most potent symbol is the fantasy of Kanhaiya who is both present and not present in the empty space beyond the kitchen door, like Radha's eternally young lover in Indian mythology. The other technique Dattani employs in the play is



incorporating the house and the office in the same stage. The play moves from without to within, into a sort of internalized terrain. In fact, Dattani has to edit his original script heavily for this production, once again revalidating the value of theatrical interpretations in concrete terms.

So far as technique is concerned, Dattani lays emphasis on four words: 'Silence', 'stillness', 'sound' and 'movement'. Characters in intricate situations remain 'silent' and continue in 'stillness' for a moment, then speak out—that is, 'sound' and finally make the 'movement'. This varies from play to play. All these four—'silence', 'stillness', 'sound' and 'movement'—are brilliantly worked out in *Dance Like a Man*.

The technique of 'thought' and 'voice-over' is clearly shown in the play *Do the Needful*. The old method of 'aside' is done away with. The play begins with 'Exterior'. Alpesh is in his car driving through a bus-street, when Alpesh goes to see Lata for his marriage. The movement of the play is quick from 'Exterior' to 'Interior' (Lata's house). Dattani uses the technique of 'Thought' to express the character's mind. The minds of Lata and Alpesh are known the audience from the beginning of the play. Lata is in love with Salim, a terrorist and Alpesh is a homosexual, who has come to choose Lata as his wife. This is how Dattani presents, these two characters.

Elaborate stage direction is an important device of Dattani's plays. Through stage directions, Dattani explains the situation of the plays and the moods of the characters. In *Thirty Days in September*, Shanta and Mala (mother and daughter) are depicted as victims of sexual exploitation by their blood relatives. The theme of incest is central to the play. Mala's taped conversation given in stage direction and her phone call explain their plight. During Mala's taped conversation, audience can see the back of a life-sized doll of a seven-year-old girl propped on a chair. Dattani works out with the voices of the characters recorded on tape and that is used appropriately as and when required. This technique is largely used in this play in case of Mala when she wants to exhibit her true identity with her mother for the first time.

Dattani employs flashback technique in *Morning Raga* to bring the past of Swarnalatha, Vaishnavi and Abhinay to reinforce the present situation in which Swarnalatha being pursued by Abhinay, fulfils her life's ambition. Dattani gives elaborate stage directions to show how personal relationship between individuals can be transcended through music. In this play, Swarnalatha, a carnatic singer has a desire to sing in a city, which can not be materialized earlier because of the death of her friend who was Abhinay's mother, a singer. It is Abhinay who with the help of Pinkie brings Swarnalatha's desire to fruition in the end. The ending of the play has elaborate stage directions in which through the flashback technique Dattani brings a union between the dead and the living by the music performance of Swarnalatha.

The techniques in Dattani's Plays are in commensurate with his daring portrayal of sex relations and sexual preferences in his plays. If in the past gender, race and class were the determining factors for character analysis, in the nineteen eighties and after sexuality is taken as the most important factor that governs this socio-cultural lives of the people in the metropolis. Dattani's technical virtuosity lays in building tension in context—social, personal or covertly political—involving characters and resolving it in the end to the satisfaction of all characters as well as audience. Therefore, his plays evoke sense of empathy among the readers and audience.

The 'time' in Dattani's plays is short. The plays are set in the present and the action takes a very limited time—varying from a day to some months. There are 'flashback techniques' as in *Final Solutions* where the old woman goes down the memory lane to recollect her life in her teens. But the play is located in the present. Another technique is that the same character's past and present are presented in two selves—young and old as seen in the character of Daksha and Hardika. The change in attitude to current problems is brought out by the change in attitude of the old woman, who held a different view of it in her young age. Hence, Dattani has introduced a dialogue between two selves (young and old) of the same person under two different names.

It is true that Dattani has made innovations both in themes and

techniques. The question is that what impression his plays leave on the audience, if meaning is made in the plays by interaction and understanding in relation to the culture in which they are located. Dattani has little to fear. Like many of the modern plays, in Dattani's works, the similarity between the language of his plays and that of ordinary people in our society is explicit. Each character has his/her distinctive voice. When asked, 'Do you allow your characters or at least the central character to change in course of the play?' Dattani answered, 'Yes, very often they have chosen their destiny and I must allow them at times to do what they want to do. But I tend to put them on a train where I am in control of their final destination.' Thus, Dattani's plays, then, have purely performance-oriented scripts that elicit from the audience an emotional as well as a strongly intellectual response. He has created a vibrant, new theatrical form which is a marked development on the hitherto stagnant Indian drama in English.

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## **Task Based Language Teaching: A Paradigm Shift**

**- P. Saleema & Jesia Persis Preethi**

### **Introduction**

With the advent of the communicative language teaching approach in the early 1980s and much emphasis on learners' communicative abilities over the last two decades, the term task-based language teaching (TBLT) came into prevalent use in the field of second language acquisition in terms of developing process-oriented syllabi and designing communicative tasks to promote learners' actual language use. Within the varying interpretations of TBLT related to classroom practice, recent studies exhibit three recurrent features: TBLT is compatible with a learner-centered educational philosophy<sup>1</sup> it consists of particular components such as goal, procedure, specific outcome<sup>2</sup> it advocates content-oriented meaningful activities rather than linguistic forms<sup>3</sup>.

The task-based view of language teaching, based on the constructivist theory of learning and communicative language teaching methodology, has evolved in response to some limitations of the traditional PPP approach, represented by the procedure of presentation, practice, and performance<sup>1</sup>. Thus, it has the substantial implication that language learning is a developmental process promoting communication and social interaction rather than a product acquired by practicing language items, and that learners learn the target language more effectively when they are naturally exposed to meaningful task-based activities.

A detailed practical framework is designed for the communicative classroom in which learners perform task-based activities through cycles of pre-task preparation, task performance, and post-task feedback. This is done through language focus.<sup>4</sup>

TBLT provides learners with natural exposure (input), chances to use language (without fear of getting things wrong) to express what they want to mean (output), to focus on improving their own language as they proceed from Task to Report stage, and to analyse and practise forms.<sup>5</sup>

### **Methodology**

In TBLT, the lesson is based around the completion of central task and the language studied is determined by what happens as the

students complete it. The lesson follows certain stages.

***Pre-task***

The teacher introduces the topic and gives the students clear instructions on what they will have to do at the task stage. He may help the students to recall some language that may be useful for the task.

***Task***

The students complete a task in pairs or groups using the language resources that are available. The teacher monitors and offers encouragement. Students prepare a short oral or written report and present it in the class.

***Post task***

The teacher highlights the language that the students used during the report phase for analysis. Finally, the teacher selects areas to practice based on two aspects. They are the needs of the students and weak areas that emerged from the task reports. The students then do practice activities to increase their confidence and make a note of effective language in the course of presentation.

**Task with learning outcome:** Communicate with clarity.

Often we come across situations where one has to give directions to the commuters. But it is often observed that it becomes difficult to reach destinations due to lack of clarity in communication.

***Pre-task***

The following expressions and prepositions were given which would help them to complete the task.

Expressions	Response
Could you guide me to the library?	Go to the next light and turn right. Go two blocks, it's on the left.
How do I find city hall?	Just go straight, it's on this street, on the right, about a mile and a half.
Which way do I go to reach the post office?	Drive to Avenue Road and turn right. The post office is in the far corner across the park.
Excuse me, I'm lost, how do I	Go to the second light and turn

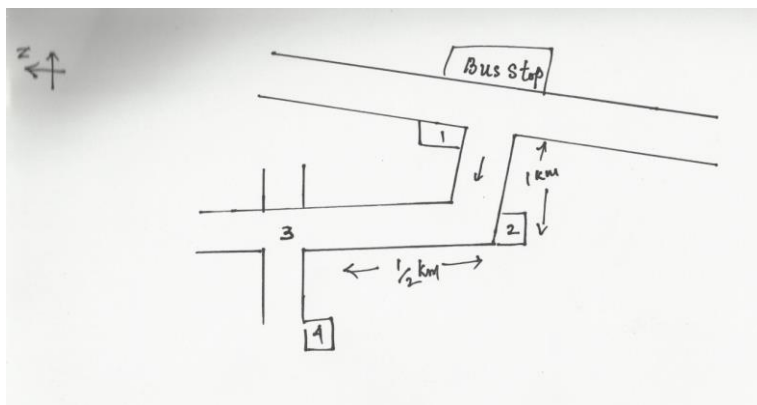
get to the museum?	left. Drive straight till you reach Tower Clock. The museum is exactly opposite to it.
Could you direct me to Race Course Road?	Take NH 5, drive about 8 km, you'll reach Nizam Crossroads, take a right, you will run into it.
Which is the best route to Vallabhai Patel Stadium?	Take this road and drive to the next traffic signal. Then head west, you can't miss it.

### Prepositions of location most commonly used when giving directions:

go straight	go to	turn right	turn left
cross	on your right	on your left	beside
next to	behind	across from	in front of
opposite to	adjacent to	on the corner	

### Task

The following route map was given along with the riddles. The students had to find the landmarks by interpreting the riddles. Further the students had to write a detailed description on how to reach the Museum. Then they had to present it in the form of a Role play (one asking for the directions, others trying to help in that regard).



### Riddles:

1. Order, Eat, Relish the meal but don't forget to pay the bill

2. Where the bruised wounds are dressed and broken bones are tied.
3. If I say stop all should stop.
4. If you were someone great, your possessions are preserved here.

### **Post Task**

The description was evaluated by the teacher and the corrections were made. The students also contributed by improvising the Role play.

#### ***Answers for riddles***

1. Hotel/ Restaurant
2. Hospital
3. Traffic Signal
4. Museum

### **Sample worksheet by Student**

Cross the road, take the road right beside the hotel, go straight, you will come across a hospital. Take turn & go till you reach traffic signal, take right and go ahead the museum is in the corner.

### **Corrections by the Teacher**

The students were instructed to avoid obscure words and use apt vocabulary instead. For instance ‘adjacent to’ instead of ‘right beside’. They were instructed to use articles and prepositions at the right places.

### **Sample Worksheet by Teacher**

Across the bus stand there is a restaurant. Take the road adjacent to it, walk about one km, you will reach a hospital. Take a right from the hospital. About half a km away, there is a traffic signal. From the signal, head west till you reach the museum at the dead end.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

As N.S. Prabhu aptly quotes, ‘Learners’ involvement and interest were, in fact, the features most noticed by observers in project classrooms in comparison with normal classrooms’.<sup>6</sup>

- The student learns the usage of prepositions with the help of the task on Giving Directions.
- The reading comprehension is enhanced when the students interpret the riddles.
- Vocabulary is developed in the process of finding the apt synonyms.
- The writing skills are developed when they use the right prepositions and expressions.
- Attention to detail and enthusiasm is developed.
- They learn to communicate with clarity not only in written form but also in spoken form.

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## **Myths in the Select Plays of T. P. Kailasam**

**- B. Sreekanth Reddy & P. Padma**

The South–Western state of Karnataka possesses a rich and ancient heritage of performatory forms in the Kannada language, a few dating perhaps to the twelfth century. Yakshaganga is the folk tradition most commonly associated with Karnataka by outsiders. The history of modern Kannada theatre begins around the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The British administration had by then penetrated fairly into present–day Kannada, the material infrastructure for Kannada printing and publishing had been established, and modern educational institutions had begun functioning across the region. All these, in turn, influenced the development of Kannada literature, the period 1880–1920 often being termed the ‘Kannada Renaissance.’ Kannada speaking areas low scattered in the erstwhile provinces of Bombay, Hyderabad, Mysore and Madras. Kannada was open to influences from other Indian languages as well. At that time, there was a strong popular desire for the unification of all Kannada speaking region under one Kannada identity.

Company Nataka, a collective term encompassing a few hundred companies which sprouted all over Karnataka between 1900 and 1950, was basically a Kannada version of the Parsi commercial theatre. They traveled the length and breadth of the state. Their distinct theatrical idiom with painted curtains, appealing songs, melodramatic acting and mesmerizing special effects reigned supreme over the popular imagination of Karnataka till the advent of films. The Kadasiddeswara Sangita Nataka Mandali – 1901 and the Mahalakshmi Prasaadika Nataka Mandali – 1903 mark the rise of company Nataka in north Karnataka. They introduced several innovations: importing the technique of transferring scenery, using dynamos to generate electricity and introducing women to enact female roles. In south Karnataka, A.V. Varadachar established the Ratnawali Theatrical Company – 1904. He refined the mode of singing and brought conflict into characterization, replacing the existing stereotyped renderings. Eventually these innovations were picked up by other companies, and through them evolved the magic formula of Company Theatre.

One troupe which exploited this formula to its fullest was the

legendary Gubbi Channabasaveswara Nataka Sangha. It began in 1884 as a rural amateur group, but a glorious chapter opened in its history when actor – director Gubbi Veeranna took over its reins in 1917. It became famous and toured extensively even in parts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Other companies, after 1915, could never hope to surpass or even match Gubbi troupe. Instead they tried to focus on, and specialize in, specific aspects of performance.

The Companies started to close down during the 1930s and 1940s. Only a few managed to survive the crisis, but could never regain the popular appeal of previous decades.

However, amateur theatre in Karnataka never became an organized and unified movement because it was divided into the rural groups that initiated the Company Nataka within their limited capacities. After 1915, however, the amateur theatre underwent a transformation. T.P. Kailasam contributed much to amateur theatre in Bangalore. K. Sivarama Karanth made several experiments in Dakshin Kannad and later. Sriranga involved himself deeply in amateur movement in North Karnataka. Though they differed widely in concepts, they launched a common attack on the Company Nataka genre specially its artificiality and anachronism. These factors effected a transition from epic to social plays, from painted curtains to suggested scenery, from rhetoric to everyday speech, and from melodrama to broad realism.

Four major writers concentrated exclusively on drama and made substantial contributions. They were Samsa (Sami Venkatadri Iyer) and T.P. Kailasam from the south, and Sriranga and G.B. Joshi from the north. Samsa's plays are mostly about the kings of medieval Mysore he used history to counter colonial rule. Kailasam followed a different path, emphasizing the actual present and depicting the rising middle class of the old Mysore region, as well as interrogating their 'progressiveness' with an extraordinary strength for wit and farce. P. Lankesh, Girish Karnad and Chandrasekhar Kambar, together, they consolidated and crystallized all the modern issues in well-structured plays that were met and picked up by Kannada theatre but also became renowned outside Karnataka.

Kannada theatre moved toward a new professionalism. In 1980, the Ninasam Theatre Institute under K.V.Subbana initiated a one year theatre course and, later in the decade, two professional companies (Ninasam Tirugater and Rangayanes, in Mysore) started operations. Directors introduced in these activities include B. Jayashree, C.G. Krishnaswamy, C.R. Jambe, Jayathitha Joshi, S. Raghunandan, C. Basavalingaiah, Iqbal Ahmed and B. Suresh. There were shifts in Kannada drama as well. The established generations of Karnad, Kambar and Lankesh wrote new plays, often departing from earlier methods. Talented younger playwrights like H.S.Shiva Prakash also appeared.

Tyagaraja Paramasiva Kailasam (1885-1946), popularly known as T.P. Kailasam was both a great playwright and a talented actor. His plays are lively representation of themes taken mostly from ancient Indian literature. T.P. Kailasam has very intelligently taken up his themes and characters from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, two great epics of ancient India. It is by virtue of his mythological themes that his plays written in English figure prominently in Indian drama in English. Thus T.P. Kailasam's English plays — unlike his Kannada plays — are inspired by Puranic themes, but renders them brilliantly in the intellectual idiom of our own day,"<sup>2</sup>

Kailasam's English plays include *The Burden* (1933), *Fulfilment* (1933), *The Purpose* (1944), *The Curse or Karna* (1946), *Keechaka* (1949), and a short monologue (1933). Besides these, he is said to have about thirteen more English plays, unfinished and unpublished to his credit. Kailasam, being a great genius and an outstanding actor, cared least for the publication of his plays and other works. He even never wrote down his dramas. It was always his friends who could persuade him to dictate the dialogues and take them down and prepare the manuscript. Whenever, he was inspired, he would perform the whole scene before his friends. It was up to his followers and friends to systematically arrange the dialogues and situations so as to assume the shape of a complete play. He never relied on the printed page and, therefore, went on changing the dialogue from one performance to the other. Thanks to his sincere well-wishers who took down his plays and tried to present them faithfully. Thus, his plays have

reached us through his friends but with little loss of quality and significance.

All the five plays of Kailasam are based on various myths from the two epics of India— the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. But out of these five plays four have their themes and characters from the Mahabharata, with the only exception of *The Burden* which deals with the story of Bharata of the Ramayana. When asked about his inclination more towards the Mahabharata. Kailasam is said to have replied.

“You see, the characters in the Mahabharata are all like us, living rooted to this world. They have their adhyatmic ambitions, but in the way the great sage Vyasa has depicted them, they are all human. But in the Ramayana, sage Valmiki has transgressed humanity. All the characters are on the threshold of divinity. The material dross has never gained their feet.”

Although all his themes and characters are mythological yet their treatment and delineation are strictly according to his vision, mission and imagination. Actually, in them, we find Kailasam's "quest for greatness." He makes his characters brave the challenges of destiny, which itself is obscure and mysterious. His Ekalavya, Karna, Krishna, Keechaka do not seem to be exactly imitating their counterparts in the Mahabharata; on the contrary, they are interpreted in the light of human values. Both Ekalavya and Karna suffer from the complex of being low-caste youths; and in their super-human effort to transcend the lowness of birth by their moral uprightness they suffer defeat and death. Ekalavya, who, by his own dedication and perseverance achieves his goal of becoming an outstanding archer, is not tolerated by Arjuna, and at his insistence, his right thumb is demanded by Guru Drona as his "Gurudakshina". The cruelest treatment is given to him and even to his mother by Krishna on the ground of fulfilling his desire. Keechaka, quite different from the Mahabharata Keechaka, is depicted as a lover of Draupadi, who is killed by Bheema, her husband and rival of Keechaka. The irony of fate that works through the lives of these character is dramatically employed in order to fulfill the requirements of tragic drama. This exhibits that Kailasam had made use of myths in his plays according to his choice and requirement of the story.

## ***1. The Burden***

*The Burden* (1933) alongwith Fulfilment was first published in Little Lays and Plays in 1933. The manuscript of Little Lays and Plays was very much liked by Kailasam's close friend, Mr. Deshpande Subba Rao of Nandyal (A.P.), who got the book printed at his own cost and presented all the copies to Kailasam. The Burden handles the theme that Bhasa dramatized in his Sanskrit work Pratimanatakam (The Statueplay) but Kailasam's playlet "has a power and beauty of its own." In the Valmiki Ramayana Bharata and Shatrughna's return from their grandfather's place after the death of Dasaratha has been plainly narrated, but both Bhasa and Kailasam have elevated this incident to tragic heights in their Pratimanatakam and The Burden respectively.

While returning from their grandfather's place to Ayodhya, Bharata and Shatrughna notice certain changes in the behaviour and appearance of the people. By seeing the dim lit royal path they sent some catastrophe in the capital. They first meet two aged chamberlains—at-court, who when enquired, stand tongue-tied. At last with great difficulty they get at the terrible truth that their father Dasaratha is dead and their brother Crown Prince Rama has been banished for fourteen years. They are totally upset. Bharata is so enraged that he becomes wrathful "against his evil mother" and takes even the Royal Priest Vasistha to task for not having saved his father. Finally, sage Vasistha consoles him and directs him to do his duty, which is actually a 'burden' that fate has placed on the shoulders of Bharata.

Kailasam has very significantly used the Ramayana myth of Bharata who denounces his real mother Kaikeyi for manipulating kingship and kingdom. The ideal character of Bharata must have been projected by the dramatist with a view to teaching a lesson to those English Lords and petty Indian rulers who were struggling hard for their supremacy and independent identifies during the years of Indian struggle for independence. In spite of the limited scope for delineation of character in this playlet, Bharata is exalted by Kailasam, but idealization here, unlike that in Keechaka, is well within bounds. There is a fine portrayal of Bharata's love for all, respect for elders and his superhuman attitude towards worldly affairs in the playlet. The other

characters also find their suitable position and recognition. Commenting upon the technique of Kailasam as revealed in *The Burden* S. Krishana Bhatta says:

But Kailasam fails before Bhasa's wonderful imagination of the statue-symbol. Further, though the playwright is influenced by Western one-act plays, the development of the plot is not whole in itself here, and thus the playlet looks like a scene in a play or an unfinished play. Also, the piece is too short to have a clear climax. The playwright's mania for alliteration is less pronounced here than in other plays. Though some unusual usages like 'Poor ancient' have crept in, the prose-medium employed seems to fit in with the dignity of the characters in the playlet.

## **2. Fulfilment**

*Fulfilment* (1933), chronologically an earlier play, is the natural sequel to *The Purpose* (1944). The story of Ekalavya begins in the two Acts of *The Purpose* and ends in the one Act of *Fulfilment*. '*Fulfilment*', a sequel to '*Purpose*', was created on the spur of the moment when Kailasam declaimed his then half-written play '*Purpose*' to Dr. (Sir) C.R. Reddy (Founder of the Andhra University and later Pro-Chancellor of the Mysore University) who naively asked Kailasam after the recital, "Well" what becomes of Ekalavya then? Kailasam's answer was, '*Fulfilment*', the play full fledged, of three Acts. In the last Act Ekalavya meets his end by Krishna's hands.

*Fulfilment* is considered as the crown of Kailasam's dramatic art, beautifully presents the terrible act of Krishna's murdering Ekalavya and his mother too only in order to fulfil the purpose which is crystal clear to his divine self. The chief event fulfilment is suggested in the following verse of the Mahabharata:

Jaraasandhaha Chaydi - raajo mahaatma  
Mahaabaahuhu Ekalavya nishaadaha  
Ekyekasaha twaddhitaartham hataaha Mayaiva.

(In your own interest I have killed the great Jarasandha, Shisupala — the king of Chedi, the great tribesman Ekalavya one by one).

*Ekalavya*, a myth, symbolizing devotion to one's teacher and dedication to one's work, has been acclaimed and accepted as the most loyal pupil in the history of the world. When rejected by Guru Drona for being his student on the ground of his belonging to the low caste of the Nisadhas, Ekalavya learns archery by the blessings of the clay image of Guru Drona. He becomes an outstanding archer who stuns even Drona and Arjuna by his unique feats. At the instance of Arjuna, Guru Drona demands Ekalavya's right thumb as his "gurudakshina". He does this instantly. Even after all this he is not spared to act according to his own will. He is going to join the Kauravas on the eve of the Kurukshetra war. Krishna knows well the consequences of his shaking hands with Duryodhana. He tries to dissuade him from doing so. But Ekalavya, firm at his decision, says:

Nothing will stop me...why with Partha's bow trained against my beloved Gurujee, my place is in the very van of the fray. Partha, the snake that has set out to sting the very one that taught it to sting does not know that Gurujee's other pupil is alive. But he soon will! with my shafts will I put out the eyes that irreverently aim arrows at Gurujee! I will slither the arms that raise a bow against Gurujee! (in a final burst of frenzied fury) Stop me! Nothing will stop me!

These words of Ekalavya are expressive of his loyalty and sincerity to his "Gurujee" with the blessings of whose clay image he has learnt archery on the one hand, and his anger and desire for vengeance upon Arjuna, on the other. When failed to convince him, Krishna engages him in a debate about first and last things, about man's duty, about good and evil, about courage and cowardice. At last, while Ekalavya goes on narrating the story of the Bird's Tree, Krishna stabs him at the back, and then reveals to him his divine nature. He kills Ekalavya to protect Arjuna. And he will kill many others too for the sake of Arjuna. When Ekalavya asks him why he has killed him stealthily, Krishna justifies his act of killing with the words, "It is the purpose of the killing, and not the manner of the killing that decides the fairness of the killing." He knows well that for the benefit of mankind Arjuna must be protected at all costs. He is the destiny of both Arjuna

and Ekalavya, but in order to protect the former he kills the latter. This intention of Krishna is shrouded in divine mystery. Mortals live and die because of Him, but He is above kindness and hatred. He puts an end to the life of Ekalavya not to take revenge but to fulfil his destiny. Ekalavya, realizing it well, feels himself fortunate to have been killed by Lord Krishna Himself. However, while dying he requests Krishna to save his mother from the pain and pangs of her son's death. He fulfils this purpose also by murdering the mother too. Before killing her he says to Himself:

His poor old mother! Mother?  
(his face suddenly takes on a grotesquely humorous  
expression; but bursts into unearthly guffaw of  
laughter sounding less of human than of a hyena)  
HA! HA!! HA!!! MOTHER! BROTHER!! SISTER!!! ...  
HA! HA!! HA!!! BALBHADRA! SUBHADRA!!  
SUYODHANA!! PARTHA!! HA! HA!! 4

These words of Krishna do not seem to be simple enough to be spoken by an ordinary human being. To kill the son and then the mother is a divine action possible only to one who is beyond all pleasures and pains, love and hatred, time and space, and such a one cannot be any other than God Himself. Krishna fulfils the purpose of protecting Arjuna, sending Ekalavya to heaven and saving his mother from even a moment's misery of losing her son. The purpose is fulfilled and Krishna's act of killing is justified. This godly act of Lord Krishna has been, probably, mistakenly explained as "selfish" by S. Krishna Bhatta when he says, "Krishna's character seems to be truly selfish."

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## **The Grim Exploration of History and Exploitation in Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies***

**- C. Naresh**

Indian English novelists are always fascinated by History. These writers want to present the life of common people which is the neglected subject in History. Engagement with history in fiction involves interpretation of the history of the lives and relationships, like national, institutional, familial, gender and personal. The recent Indian English Novelists especially from 1980s have been experimenting widely to present History and Politics in the post-modern and post-colonial perspective. Postcolonial literature uses a wide range of terms, like writing back, re-writing and re-reading, which describes the interpretation of well-known literature under the perspective of the formerly colonized. A.S. Dasan notices the difference between History and Fiction, "Life is so long, vast and variegated that all its implications and impacts cannot be contained in its entity by history- fiction interface alone... the truth revealed or connoted by a writer may be viewed as truth stranger than fiction. It is well said that in history, nothing is true except names, and in literature, everything is true except names". [*Questioning For Truth: History- Fiction Interface In the Recent Indian English Fiction*, P.8].

Amitav Ghosh's novels are remarkable for their re-presentation of history which is omnipresent in all his novels. He is also a graduate from History. Being a Diaspora writer, with an anthropological outlook and historical in depth, he brings out the forgotten history of common people and their suffering. Ghosh's novels echo the individual's predicament in a given historical circumstance. When Ghosh is asked by John C. Hawley on how he chooses the character's predicaments and how he inserts them into the larger historical context, Ghosh replies "My fundamental interest is in people- in individuals and their specific predicaments. If history is of interest to me it is because it provides instances of unusual and extraordinary predicaments... The historical (or non-fictional) aspect of the situation is interesting only in so far as it creates a unique predicament for a character". [*Amitav Ghosh: An Introduction*, P.6]

Amitav Ghosh is a humanist, who through his novels has raised his powerful voice against all kinds of tyranny and oppression. He disapproves of domination of man by man at all levels like political, military and economic. In most of his novels especially in *The Glass Palace* and *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh has exposed how imperialism has done immense harm to the conquered nations. These Europeans drained and exploited the natural resources which are transparently portrayed by Ghosh in *The Glass Palace* (2000) and *Sea Of Poppies* (2008). In these two novels Ghosh has blended all the post-colonial themes. In both the novels he talks about how the European Culture has been systematically destroying the native culture. Brinda Bose praises Ghosh in the treatment of history and says “He (Ghosh) is also that one ‘who sees history as the trajectory of events that causes dislocations, disjunctions, movements and migrations, eventually replacing solid markers with shadow lines, destabilizing our notions of the past in the reverberations of the present’ [ *Amitav Ghosh: Critical Perspectives*, P.16].

Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies* (2008) is the first in a projected trilogy. The novel has been short-listed for the Man Booker Prize. It is stunningly vibrant and intensely human work that establishes his reputation as a master story teller. Like *The Glass Palace*, this novel also presents the life of colonial period. The story of the novel excavates the hither to unrevealed aspects of colonial rule in India. *Sea of Poppies* dramatizes two great economic themes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, like the cultivation of opium as a cash crop in Bengal and Bihar for the Chinese market, and the transport of Indian indentured workers to cut sugarcane for the British on the islands like Mauritius, Fiji and Trinidad. Britishers notoriously turned china into a country of opium addicts. Chinese attempted to block the importation of opium, this attempt resulted in the Opium Wars, the most important historical event of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The novel *Sea of Poppies* is divided into three parts – **Land**, **River** and **Sea**. In the first part it describes, how the people are dislocated in the colonial era and the circumstances forced them to leave their native place, why there is migration and the latter two parts portrays the problems in culture and migration. In this novel Ghosh concentrates on rustic life. Ghosh, as a historian and anthropologist,

knows that agriculture is the backbone for the Indian economy. He tries to show how the Europeans try to change the mind set of local people to prefer commercial crops instead of rice fields. To encasing money with poppy seeds, they try to create a huge demand for poppies and even force them to change their crops. Amitav Ghosh presents how the small farmers and agricultural labourers in colonial India are forced by the circumstances to become coolies and deported in Mauritius and other places.

Deeti, a young woman lives in a village on the outskirts of the town of Ghazipur. Her husband is Hukam Singh. They are blessed with six year old daughter Kabutri. Deeti is a victim of arranged marriage. She does not know that her husband is an opium addict. Hukam Singh is a victim of the British. He served as a sepoy before joining Sudder Opium Factory. Hukam Singh was a Sepoy in the army. He was a balamteer in Burma and was wounded fighting for the company Bahadur. After that he has turned to opium for the pain. During the nuptials of Hukam Singh and Deeti his addiction for the opium is revealed “that this is my first wife. She’s kept me alive since I was wounded. If it weren’t for her I would not be here today. I would have died of pain, long ago” [P.34]. This addiction has spoiled his relationship with his family.

With the arrival of Britishers, even the agriculture has undergone a change. India which is a soil for cultivating rice, wheat, masoordal and vegetables are replaced by poppies. The British businessmen want to earn easy money from cash crops and to meet their greed, the Indian farmers are compelled to produce crops according to the will of Britishers. Before poppy plantation was introduced, the fields were heavy with wheat in winter, and after the spring harvest, the straw could be used to repair the hut’s roof. “But now, with the sahibs forcing everyone to grow poppy, no one had thatch to spare – it had to be bought at the market from people who lived in faraway villages, and the expense was such that people put off their repairs as long as they possibly could”. [P.29].

Ghosh is a good researcher. His account of the poppy seeds is based on empirical evidence but not on imagination. He gives the clear picture of poppy fields in the village. Earlier poppies were grown in

small clusters between the fields that bore the main winter crops such as wheat. The farmers used to raise poppy seeds as luxury items. They even used to keep a little for their families and they would use it during illness or at harvests and weddings and the rest would be sold. “No one was inclined to plant more because of all the work it took to grow poppies- fifteen ploughings of the land and every remaining cold to be broken by hand, with a dantoli: fences and bunds to be built; purchases of manure and constant watering; and after all that the frenzy of the harvest, each bulb having to be individually nicked, drained and scraped... but what sane person would want to multiply these labours when there were better, more useful crops to grow, like wheat, dal, vegetables?” [P.29].

Here Ghosh has not only mentioned the hardship that is demanded by this crop from the farmers, but also the struggles to cultivate it. The readers are sure that here Ghosh is on the farmers’ side. The culture of the cultivating wheat and vegetables has become extinct with the arrival of Britishers. As they are greedy for wealth, the English Sahibs would allow a little else to be planted. Their agents would go from home to home, forcing cash advances on the farmers, making them sign asami contracts. It was impossible to say no to them.

The problem is clearly revealed in the novel” If you refused they would leave their silver hidden in your house, or throw it through a window. It was no use telling the white magistrate that you hadn’t accepted the money and your thumb print was forged: he earned commissions on the opium and would never let you off. And at the end of it your earnings would come to no more than three-and-a-half sicca rupees, just about enough to pay off your advance” [PP.29-30]. This gives a vivid picture on colonial rule. The local people are exploited. Nobody is there to question them. The farmers have become easy prey to the businessmen. The farmers have been lured into dependence by the economy of cash crop and their own subtle addiction to the taste, the feel and the aroma of those seductive seeds.

It is rightly pointed out by S. Latha and K.V. Ramana in an article “poppy was an item produced not to be consumed but to be sold. It slowly induced a colonial consciousness, transforming the farmer into a worker and subsequently into a slave. Distribution helped not the

natives but the colonial rulers to perpetuate the rule of the market. Ultimately poppy led to the natives alienation and escape from life. ‘Drug abuse’ left deep anguish in the lives of masses and the nation at large. Ghosh presents this history through the lives and emotions of his characters”. [*Re-Viewing Colonial Agenda in Amitav Ghosh’s The Sea of Poppies*, P.149].

This is one reason for why the small farmers become coolies. The Britishers have created unemployment opportunities by creating artificial famine in India. In the later part of the novel this kind of problem is highlighted. When Deeti has lost her husband, who served in the opium factory and whose land has been forcibly used for opium plantation, Deeti is isolated. She prepares to die in her husband’s pyre only to save herself from the lust of her husband’s younger brother, Chandan Singh. But she is rescued by kalua – a chamar, Blackie and an ox-driver. Kalua marries her secretly and are on eloping. They become vagrants and destitute. At last they come to Chhapra. Here they encounter with the locals for food. They observe that

“The town was thronged with hundreds of other impoverished transients, many of whom were willing to sweat themselves, half to death for a few handfuls of rice. Many of these people had been driven from their villages by the flood of flowers that had washed over the country side: lands that had once provided sustenance were now swamped by the rising tide of poppies; food was so hard to come by that people were glad to lick the leaves in which offerings were made at temples or sip the starchy water from a pot in which rice had been boiled” [P.202].

The poppy seeds have become a big blow on the livelihood of people in India. There is starvation everywhere. The poor become poorer. It has affected the lifestyle of small farmers. The poor boys find work in factories even at the cost of their lives. In the factory there is inhuman torture of the white supervisors. The Sudder Opium factory consists of several hundred Indian workers but it is looked after by the superintendent, a senior officer of the Indian company. Only the

Britishers occupy the positions like overseers, accountants, store keepers, chemists etc. These circumstances have forced the natives to become indentured labourers.

*Sea of Poppies* also gives a real picture on the opium trade. As the time passes China has become the brain child of the British and American merchants. In the dinner party offered by the landlord Neel Ratan to Mr. Doughtly and Mr. Burnham, readers can identify the real intention of opium war. As it is revealed by Mr. Burnham “The war, when it comes, will not be for opium. It will be for a principle: for freedom – for the freedom of trade and for the freedom of the Chinese people. Free trade is a right conferred on man by God, and its principles apply as much to opium as to any other article of trade” [P.115]. At this juncture Neel Ratan asks him politely if he is not troubled to invoke God in the service of opium, he simply puts it “Jesus Christ is free trade and free trade is Jesus Christ.... If it is God’s will that opium be used as an instrument, to open China to his teachings, then so it be” [P.116].

The colonial rulers have exploited not only the subaltern class but also the well-off Indians, the landlords in particular. The landlords have a strong faith in the company’s policy and a high regard for the Queen’s rule. Due to their ignorance and lack of foresight, the landlords are cheated and got ruined. This happens exactly to the landlord of Rakshali, Raja Neel Rattan Halder. Neel Rattan is financially exploited by Mr. Burnham and being accused of forgery. Like the king Thebaw in *The Glass Palace*, in this novel Neel is sent to jail across the black water, as a part of capital punishment. The judge passes upon him the sentence of the law of forgery and explains “forgery was a hanging offence – a measure which played no small part in ensuring Britain’s present prosperity and in conferring upon her the stewardship of the world’s commerce. And if this crime proved difficult to deter in a country such as England, then it is only to be expected that it will be very much more so in a land such as this, which has only recently been opened to the benefits of civilization” [P.235]. Amitav Ghosh has brought this verdict from the book *The Days Of John Company; Selections From Calcutta Gazette 1824-1832*.

The Irony here is that the Law of the Britishers accepts exploitation but not forgery. Neel is awestruck because this kind of

system and punishments are not there earlier. The Britishers Law has used this case as a tool to create terror among the common people in India. Whatever the culture they build up here, people have to follow it. There is no alternative for the people. Neel who has been accustomed to a rich life, suffer a lot when he is sent to Alipore jail. He feels inconvenient to the jail life. It is the largest prison in India. When he goes there he is treated as a prisoner and during the time of changing clothes by the jailers. He says “Stop! You can’t treat me like this, don’t know who I am? ....then some caught hold of the end of his dhoti and gave it a sharp tug. The garment spun him around as it unraveled, and somewhere nearby a voice said:.... Now here’s a real draupadi...clinging to her sari... now another hand took hold of his kutra and tore it apart so as to lay bare his underclothing... Sir!... I must protest against this treatment. Your men have no right to hit me or tear away my clothes” [P.287]. Neel’s mouth is forcibly opened in order to count his teeth. He is made to unceremoniously bend so that the guards can examine his hind parts to ensure he carries no communicable venereal disease. These plans are a part of humiliating Neel Halder.

Amitav Ghosh as a past colonial writer explicitly gives the information to the readers on the existential crisis of people during the colonial period. When these kinds of circumstances are prevailing in the country, people are in despair. They can’t tolerate this exploitation. People have become indentured labourers. All this is for a morsel of food. Ghosh with his historical knowledge and his anthropological outlook deeply dwelled into the history of migration and understood that British Raj’s exploitation of natural and human resources and recurrent droughts have compelled the natives to become indentured labourers in western countries. To transport these people, the only cheap source was ship. In this novel *Ibis* is the ship which takes them to west. Thus Ghosh has stamped his mastery in showing the historical themes with anthropological outlook.

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## **Interpersonal Relationships in Toni Morrison's *Sula***

**- M. Ravichand**

The Bottom is a hilly part of the town of Medallion where the African American community lives. Despite being situated up in the hills, it is called the Bottom and it started to be called this way as a “nigger joke . . . The kind white folks tell . . .” (Morrison 4). A white farmer once promised freedom and a piece of land to his slave; nevertheless, the farmer was not willing to give fertile land to the slave, therefore, he tricked the slave into thinking that the richest and most fertile land lies in the hills. The slave believed him and took the land from him, he even let himself believe that the reason for calling the place the Bottom is that when God looks down from heaven, the Bottom is the first place he sees (Morrison 5). The name which Morrison chose for this part of the town indicates that the African American inhabitants of the Bottom were dealing with racial oppression and moreover, they still are dealing with racial oppression in 1919, where the novel begins.

The novel also deals with the Bottom community's absence of male characters and describes the dynamics of male/female relationships which are presented in the novel. Male protagonist are mostly absent in the Bottom community because they are trying to gain economic success and to win their manhood back in the patriarchal society of the United States. It is important to note that “African American men have historically been blocked from enacting both the traditional African and traditional American mainstream gender roles of provider and protector” (Lawrence-Webb, 9 Littlefield, and Okundaye 628). African American men were emasculated during slavery and with the emasculation; they lost their power to protect their women. When an African American woman was raped by her owner, for example, African American men did not have the power to intervene. As hooks points out in her book *Ain't I a Woman*: “Most black male slaves stood quietly by as white master's sexually assaulted and brutalized black women and were not compelled to act as protectors. Their first instincts were toward self-preservation” (35). With little or no protection from African American men, African American women needed to be independent of men which was “an independence imposed rather than desired” (Christian, *Black Feminist*

*Criticism* 7). Most male characters in the novel are looking for a submissive woman who would help them feel better about their own masculinity. The only male character who is not interested in proving anything to the mainstream society and who does not accept the defined notions of masculinity and femininity is Ajax, who leads a more contented and satisfactory life than the rest of the men in the Bottom. Even though there is no successful and fulfilling marriage portrayed in the novel and most of the men who live in the Bottom consequently leave their families or lovers, all women.

The main female characters in the novel lack support and affection from their mothers which lowers their self-esteem and therefore, the two main female characters look for the support in their friendship. Nel is determined to rebel against her mother and to find her own identity; Nel is also determined to discover life outside her mother's control which she consequently does in her friendship with Sula. When Sula does not find the sense of belonging in her relationships with her family members, she looks for it somewhere else and consequently, she finds her sense of belonging and her center in her friendship with Nel. The friendship which Sula and Nel share in their childhood is highly beneficial for both girls. Sula and Nel meet at the time in their life when they both start to realize that their position in the society is disadvantaged "because each had discovered years before that they were neither white nor male, and that all freedom and triumph was forbidden to them, they had set about creating something else to be" (Morrison 52). As Gillespie and Kubitschek claim: "in their childhood friendship, Nel's and Sula's antithetical strengths and weaknesses assure them mutual dependency and thus equality of participation" (41). In their friendship bond, there is no leader and no follower, the two girls are completely equal and complement one another. Friendship bond has different dynamics than sexual or parental relationships and according to Abel: "Because it is a freely chosen expression of self, friendship is a relationship in Sula, implicitly contrasted to both parental and sexual bonds." Women need the presence of other women to deal with the troubles of their lives; they also need each other's protection when the male protection is missing.

Some of the undeserved punishments Sula and Nel are facing are, for example, the attacks from a group of Irish boys who are

harassing African American school children in Medallion. These attacks make the girls aware of their uneasy position in the society. According to Collins, African American mothers are the ones who should help their daughters overcome the “experience of being singled out” (127). But Sula and Nel need to learn how to protect themselves on their own. Sula and Nel are scared of the Irish boys and try to avoid them on their way from school until one day when Sula and Nel decide to take the shorter route home although they are aware of the fact that they might meet the harassing boys, which they eventually do. Sula takes the lead in this scene and protects herself and her friend Nel, who is scared and does not know how to react. Sula pulls out her grandmother’s knife and slashes off the tip of her finger to scare the boys away, which she does (Morrison 53).

Sula and Nel choose different life paths -- Nel chooses to dedicate her life to a husband and children, which is the acceptable role for an African American woman in the patriarchal society, whereas Sula chooses to be independent of men and becomes an outcast in her community. The basic difference between Sula’s and Nel’s strengths and weaknesses and between their natures may be observed in the girls’ reactions after they accidentally kill Chicken Little, a small boy from their neighborhood. Sula plays with the boy and swings him, but his hands slip from hers and Chicken falls into water; he sinks and does not come up. While Sula cries, Nel remains calm and is the first one to speak in the scene (Morrison 59-63). Sula does not know how to behave in stressful situations but for Nel, it is natural to stay calm and to deal with the situation. Their different views of life separate the two women from one another. Nevertheless, neither Sula nor Nel are contented with their lives and what they are missing is their friendship bond which would help them fight the patriarchal oppression if it did not fall apart.

Even though there is no successful and fulfilling marriage portrayed in the novel and most of the men who live in the Bottom consequently leave their families or lovers, all women, except for Sula, share the opinion that it is better for a woman to be married than to be single and that “no woman got no business to be floating around without no man” (Morrison 92). As Mayberry points out: “Jude Greene [is] the black male resentful yet envious of white male power” (526). What Jude is looking for in the marriage is “someone to care about his hurt,

to care very deeply” (Morrison 82). He wants to be a man and a man needs a wife; in his marriage to Nel, Jude is willing to create “one Jude” and he chooses Nel because she is kind and is willing to obey (83).

Nel and Jude breaks their marriage when he engages in a sexual relationship with Nel’s friend Sula. Mayberry claims that one of the main reasons why Jude chooses to engage in a sexual act with Sula is that: “since he [Jude] cannot usurp white male power, he will conquer the masculine black female [. . .] his incomplete masculinity is attracted to the masculine in Sula” (525). Sula’s views of marriage and her attitude towards men are not welcomed in the community. Even Nel turns her back on Sula just like the rest of the Bottom community members after Sula engages in a sexual relationship with her husband Jude. Nel finally finds the truth about herself and she cries: “I thought I was missing Jude [. . .] O Lord, Sula. We was girls together” (Morrison 174). The mistake the female characters in *Sula* make is that they submit to the social conditioning of marriage and motherhood and they do not cultivate women’s bonds. If the women in *Sula* did not cling on what the society expects from them, they would lead more fulfilling lives.

African American children, and especially daughters, need their mothers’ affection and protection. Another images were developed, which portrayed African American mothers as controlling and “bad,” such as “the Black matriarch” or “the welfare mother,” who does not work, is a single parent and who “passes her bad values to her offspring” (Collins 77). These controlling images of African American mothers were “designed to oppress” both African American women and men (Collins 118). African American women were in a difficult position because they had to cope with both racism and sexism in the patriarchal society of the United States. This is confirmed by bell hooks who argue that: “Sexism and racism intensified and magnified the sufferings and oppressions of black women” (22). Due to the fact that “Black women have been denied male protection,” the mother/daughter relationship becomes fundamental for African American women because mothers need to “teach their daughters skills that will take them anywhere” (Collins 126). According to Patricia Hill Collins, African American mothers try to provide protection for their daughters and try to teach their daughters to love themselves for who they truly are in order to survive in the patriarchal society: “African-American mothers

try to protect their daughters from the dangers that lie ahead by offering them a sense of their own unique self-worth” (Collins 127). Nonetheless, this sense of protection and sense of unique self-worth are missing in mother/daughter relationships which are depicted in *Sula*.

A few acts of Nel’s rebellion towards her mother are visible in the novel. When Helene and Nel go to visit Helene’s mother and her ill grandmother to New Orleans, Helene accidentally enters the white section of a train and a white conductor banishes her from there in an impolite way. Helene feels humiliated, apologizes for her oversight and smiles at the conductor “like a street pup” (Morrison 21). African American soldiers who sit by watch Helene with hatred in their faces and they are disgusted to see an African American woman smiling at the white man who has just insulted her. Nevertheless, the revelation that there exist people who do not worship her mother and are not under her control pleases Nel: “She [Nel] felt both pleased and ashamed to sense that these men, unlike her father, who worshiped his graceful, beautiful wife, were bubbling with a hatred for her mother” (Morrison 22). Nel is happy to discover her mother’s weakness and it is this discovery which leads Nel to a promise she makes to herself. It is a promise that she would not become the person her mother wants her to be, she promises that she would find her own identity. Nel looks into a mirror and she whispers: “I’m me. I’m not their daughter. I’m not Nel. I’m me. Me” (Morrison 28). After Boy Boy’s departure, Eva goes to great lengths to provide for her family. She mutilates herself by sticking her leg under a train to collect money from insurance companies so that she can grant a place to live for her children. Even though her sacrifice is enormous, Eva knows that she is left with no other possibility because there are no other opportunities of obtaining money; therefore, she literally sacrifices a part of her own body for her children to survive.

“Pattern of missed communication” is also visible in Hannah’s relationship with her own mother Eva (Hirsch 419). Hannah questions her mother’s love because she knows that her mother Eva is the one who killed Plum—the most beloved child of Evas. Eva puts herself in a position of “God” after her son Plum returns from the World War I as a drug addict. Plum finds it difficult to lead normal life after the war and takes heroin to escape his memories. As Eva cannot watch him killing himself, she decides to end his life and burns him so that “he

could die like a man not all scrunched up inside my womb, but like a man” (Morrison 72). Eva justifies her action by stating that she felt as if Plum tried to climb back to her womb and that he acts like a baby, not like a grown man. When Plum was a child, Eva struggled to keep him alive as he had problems with his bowel movement and Eva remembers how much energy it cost her to keep him alive and when she sees him not appreciating his own life, the life she gave him, she decides to end it. What Hannah does not understand is that Eva had no time to play with her children when they were small because Eva went through a hard time just to make ends meet and to secure the fundamental needs for her children.

The interpersonal relationships among the characters suggest that African Americans still face many difficulties when trying to assimilate into the American mainstream society. Women’s fears of being alone and unloved force them to accept sexist oppression and to submit to the menial position. Male/female relationships portrayed in the novel are based on cultural conditioning and obligation more than a free choice. Motherhood also represents the relationship which is based on cultural conditioning and obligation. When male characters leave their families, African American women are left without support or protection from African American men and therefore, African American women in the novel must take care of their families on their own and are put in the position of a family provider. Consequently, the relationships between mothers and their children become complicated because mothers fail to communicate about their struggles with their children and children miss their mothers’ affection. Women’s friendship is the only relationship in the novel which does not involve the reduction of personalities and the only relationship which supports a healthy growth of characters. The fact that the female characters in the novel are left alone and that they experience the absence of male characters intensifies the importance of women’s bonding. Women’s friendship helps the two female characters see that they are not alone in facing the life’s obstacles in their adolescent years and their friendship enables them to cope with social expectations. If women cultivate bonds, they would be able to fight against the oppression.

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## **Meridian's self sacrifice: Walker's *Meridian***

**- Samuel Mark & M. A. K. Sukumar**

The novel, *Meridian* is written by Alice Walker, which was published in 1976. It is about the female protagonist of the novel, with the same name Meridian, who gradually awakens from her subordinate states as a black female, daughter, wife, and mother to her own self and tries to become the maternal provider of the larger black community. In *Meridian*, Walker expresses “...inner struggle...” of especially a black woman, Meridian Hill.

In order to go ahead with a mission, she has to undergo certain terrible experiences i.e. rape, struggle, and violence. The fight of protagonist in the novel starts when “she leaves her husband and gives up her child, distances herself from her devout Christian mother and devotes her life to activism” (Lauret, 2000: 60)<sup>1</sup> She has to struggle with different types of obstacles because of her “...insistence on the sacredness of life” (Evans, 1984: 466)<sup>2</sup>. The necessity of this struggle is given in *Meridian* as “...there are times in a person’s life when to risk everything is the only affirmation of life” (Walker, 1986:133). Thus, Meridian ignores lots of things for her people and without hesitations she devotes herself to Revolution. Meridian’s only struggle is not for the women’s rights, it is also for destroying “...racial oppression” (Birch, 1994: 211)<sup>3</sup>. In *Meridian* there is “...a process of struggle and suffering for black and white together and for men and women together” (Lauret, 2000: 63)<sup>4</sup>. Both black and white people, who are students at Meridian’s college, do not give up their hopes saying “We shall overcome...We shall overcome, someday...Deep in my heart, I do believe...We shall overcome, someday...” (Walker, 1986: 48)

The novel is structured with discrete fragments, begins and ends with its characters struggling to find a way to live. Many of the fragments of *Meridian* relate events from the days of protests, marches, and constant jailing. The opening and the concluding scenes situate the heroine is clearly present, that is the middle 1970s. It directly concerns the conflicts between personal needs and public commitments of young civil right activists.

Meridian, the protagonist of the novel, struggles through the problems of her own psyche and injustice framed by patriarchy and racism until she gains inner strength and liberate herself from all kinds of oppressions. Walker transcends boundaries of the gender to embrace more universal concerns about individual autonomy, self-reliance and self-realization. The book chronicles the series of initiatory experiences of Meridian, who undergoes in an effort to find her identity, or her own moral center, and develop a completeness of being. Here is a formidable struggle, for she lives in a society which domesticates conformity that denunciates individual expression, especially for women; but she flourishes notwithstanding and evolves into a prototype for psychic wholeness and individual autonomy, and from a woman raped by racial and oppression to a revolutionary figure effecting action and strategy to bring freedom to herself and other poor disenfranchised blacks in the south.

Meridian has a strong will to fight against male oppressors and radical injustice. She educates herself and seeks her own voice and identity. In this work, Walker illustrates a story of a black woman's life, a story of a young woman who struggles during the civil rights movement. Meridian is a black woman from a southern town who's spiritual and intellectual strength and self-confidence gradually increase when she confronts many traumatic experiences. After getting married at a very young age, she has a child and later gets divorced. She sends her child away and ends up everything to work in the voters' registration campaign, encouraging African Americans to register. For this, she sacrifices her beautiful life as a mother which is very sacred in African American black women. The outstanding point about Meridian, Walker tries to portray is that she interacts with people as individuals, rather than stereotypes. Barbara Christian notes that the novel has many interesting themes. Some of its major themes concern the ideology of black motherhood in America and a celebration of the true meanings of motherhood. Walker illustrates how mother hood is "an angle of seeing life" of valuing all life, of resisting all that might destroy it by tracing the lives of mothers (276).

The novel runs particularly with the motif of death and rebirth throughout and recalls the force in nature which transforms decay into

growth, loss into gain. Meridian is in a state of decay at the beginning with suffering from fainting spells and loss of hair. Even her face is “wasted and rough, unhealthy brown, and pimple across her forehead and on her chin. Her eyes were glassy and yellow and did not seem to focus at once. Her breath like her clothes was sour. At the end she regains and reflourishes with hair and strengthened.

Meridian has been passionately in love with Truman, who later leaves her for Lynne, whom he later abandons along with their daughter Camara. By the time he wants Meridian, she no longer wants him because her life of total commitment to struggle in the black small towns of the south is meaningless to him, an increasingly commercial artist. Lynne cannot go back to where she came from and she does not belong in the black community either. With great skill and care to make Meridian believable at every stage of her development, Walker also shows the readers the cost. For every exemplary act of bravery for the black community (Standing up to a tank so black children can see a peepshow), she pays an immediate price in her body. Asked by a group of temporary revolutionaries if she can kill for the revolution, she infuriates her friends because she cannot say an easy yes and spends a decade worrying about the question.

In ignorance Meridian got pregnant and had to leave high school and when she is offered a college scholarship for her work in civil rights, she gives her baby away to relatives and goes. She feels that giving up her child is a sin and shame, and after aborting Truman’s baby, she is sterilized. She is haunted by having failed to win her mother’s love, by the lack of mothering and nurture the baby. At the same time she strongly substantiates her harsh choice for her accomplishment. Her life would have been wasted and she would have taken out her emptiness and frustration on her baby, whom she could love. One of Meridian’s acts on behalf of the black community in a small town in Alabama is to force the end of the flooding that menaces the children. The city has closed the swimming pools sooner than integrate them. In the hot weather, black children wade in the ditches behind their houses, where the city without warning flushes the reservoir of excess water.

It was Meridian who led them to the Mayor’s office, bearing in

her arms the bloated figure of a five-year-old boy who had stuck in the drain for two days before he was raked out with a grappling hook----. To the people who followed Meridian, it was as if she carried a large bouquet of long-stemmed roses. The body might have smelled just that sweet, from the serene, set expression on her face. They had followed her in to a town meeting over which the white-haired, bespectacled Mayor presided, and she had place the child, whose body was beginning to decompose, beside his gavel.

Walker consciously rejects death. Meridian's political commitment is not to end in martyrdom there have been too many martyrs to her cause. Still one needs some other equivalent of death or marriage to round off a tale, and Walker has not found one here. Meridian has brought off a successful change from victim to fully responsible protagonist: that she no longer need punish herself physically, have fits go blind because she acts for her people and herself, and that she believes she could kill if she must to prevent more martyrdom. She has ceased to be one sort of committed person and become another.

In *Meridian*, Walker writes about "...the possibility of interracial love and communication, the vital and lethal strands in American and black experience, with violence and non-violence and self-hatred" (Gates, Jr. - Appiah, 1993: 9)<sup>5</sup>. Most significant themes of Meridian includes "...the estrangement and violence that mark the relationships between Miss Walker's black men and women" (17). Moreover, the most difficult paradox that Walker has examined to date is the relationship between violence and revolutionary years of movement has witnessed the sharp strictness and violent sides of both government and society.

Even though being a Civil Right female worker depicts that Meridian will experience the hard conditions of the revolution, Walker implies that "...if Black women turn away from the women's movement, they turn away from women moving all over the world, not just in America"(467). In fact, being the writer of Meridian, Walker rejects "...the violent revolution..." (Birch, 1994:209)<sup>6</sup> Likewise, the protagonist of the novel Meridian has "joined the movement against racism" (213) for stopping the violent attitudes towards people. Her

devotion takes lots of things but she doesn't give up her decision. It is clear in *Meridian* that "...rigid and foolish force, on the one hand, and sanctimonious greed, on the other, stand as the only operative values in the society" (Cooke, 1984: 162)<sup>7</sup>. In addition to this, the writer of *Meridian* Walker, "...examines the hatred and violence which result from the fear of difference" (Birch, 1994: 214)<sup>8</sup>. The exact reason of the violence during movement is race.

In *Meridian*, the heroine expresses a deep sensitivity for her own mother who, through suffering and sacrifice, fulfilled her dreams of becoming a school teacher. Such an anchor in her ancestral past gives Meridian a sense of strength and continuity and knowledge of herself as a creative human being. And this helps to fortify and free her from a need for dependence on another person in her quest for identity. As for Meridian, in spite of the completely antithetical family and community pressures, she constantly opposes and rebels against the attitudes and actions expected of her. And by upholding her sanctity above all, she lights out for a different territory. Though married and a mother, she is not content. She is conscious of a vague yearning for more expanded horizons than are available at her intellectually limited husband. Towards the end of the novel, one finds Truman recognizing what he had been blind to before the honest nature of Meridian's love. It exposes his lack of honesty. Meridian, however, challenges the assumption that a woman should be a 'special sun' in a man's life. Ultimately, she abandons conventional motherhood and finds an alternative way of serving her people, while at the same time developing a sense of self that she can live with. When Meridian embraces a more secular religion and attends the funeral of a black slain boy, she affirms to the grieving father her willingness to kill only to protest lives. She would kill, before she allowed any one to murder his son again.

Dixon comments on this important episode in the novel: Yet this point is neither the beginning nor the end of Meridian's commitment; rather, it is one step in her understanding that violent defensive actions may become necessary. Meridian achieves this enlightenment long after the revolutionaries have failed to do anything concrete.<sup>9</sup>

In an epiphany of sorts, Meridian discovers that her identity is

inextricably tied to her black people. She realizes that she is a more particle of a much larger, more complex composite. And that this existence extended beyond, herself to those around her because, in fact, the years in American had created them one life (p.204). Upon perceiving her essential oneness with black humanity, Meridian reassesses her commitment to the racial struggle once again. This time she feels duty bound to make a commitment. And while throughout the novel she could not contemplate killing for the struggle, she now sees the necessity, for it. Finally she feels she can kill if need be. And this realization gives her confidence her worth, of her power, of her place, in the sun.

Meridian finally discovers, in the atmosphere of an institution supportive of human morality, that she would kill for the revolution. She also understands that she must respect her life and not give it up before any obstacles to love it, and not to give up any particle of it without a fight to the death, preferably not her own.<sup>10</sup> While defying the tradition of separate but equal race relations, Meridian, in her active social role, concurrently challenges, traditional and synthetic images of women. She is in sharp contradistinction to the images presented of the mummy women (which are Walker suggests, images of all women).

This image of women as possivist, as “a mindless body, a sex creature, something to hang false, hair and nails on” is actively challenged by Meridian in her role as a human rights crusader. It is not incidental that her physical features in this chapter most resembles as males. Most of her hair has fallen out and she wears an old railroad cap and dungarees which have masculine suggestions. But the fact that she is physically un-attractive. She is decidedly out of her place as a woman in her demonstration of unwavering leadership qualities, these generally associated with the male. Although there are armed policemen stationed in a “red-white and blue” army tank to prevent Meridian from fulfilling her mission, she bravely Marches on, facing the tank aimed at her chest. “The silence as Meridian kicked opens the door”, exploded in a mass exhalation of breaths, and the men who were in the tank crawled sheepishly out against to stare. Thus a symbolic inversion of roles occurs in this scene and Meridian can be said to triumph over tradition and authority. Her achievement in this series of

attacks on tradition is a pointed commentary on America's role-dependency. She exemplifies Toni Cade's assertion that;

You find yourself in destroying illusions, smashing myth....being responsible to some truth, to the struggle. That entails cracking through the veneer of sick society's definition of 'masculine' and feminine.

It explores the tension between stasis (traditions) and change (Meridian), sets the stage for the flashback of events which form the story of Meridian's development. It is suggested here that Meridian has emerged from the trance like state to a saint. She explains to Truman that she has volunteered to suffer until her people are delivered from oppression. The continued progress of her search for identify requires that she go backward in order to move forward, and backward is the south. It is significant that much of the novel is set in coastal Georgia where the survival of Africans particularly of the oral religious and musical traditions are said to be most salient.

It is in the South, then that Meridian rediscovers the power of the black past accepts it and draws strength from its traditions, most notably the symbiotic musical and religious traditions. Upon perceiving her essential oneness with black humanity, Meridian reassesses her commitment to the racial struggle once again. This time she feels duty bound to make a commitment that extends beyond registering black voters and integrating rest room facilities.

Thus the self has bloomed; Meridian has found her identify, an identity fashioned not from the western tradition, but rather from the artifacts of her own heritage. Truman gradually realizes the source of Meridian's vitality and the ultimate value of her life. At the end of the novel Meridian is leaving the town of Chickokema for still other crusades. She leaves behind her cap and sleeping bag, the articles that have identified her throughout novel. After Meridian leaves, Truman climbs in to her sleeping bag and then dons her cap almost in an effort to become Meridian, to experience, through osmosis, her vitality. But like Meridian, Truman and Anne-Marion must individually sift through the shards of their cultural past to heal and recreate themselves.

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## Theme of Exploitation in Mulk Raj Anand's *Coolie*

- G. Aruna

As a political novelist, Mulk Raj Anand is recognized as the greatest of Indian writing in English. In his writings, the reader can identify the social, economical and political problems. His novel '*Coolie*' focuses on the exploitation of laborers in the form of servants. In his second novel, he presents a critique on the contemporary period. He makes the audience attentive to understand the inhuman treatment against the poor. In his second novel, '*Coolie*', he represents his characters and their actions realistically. The characters of his dream are fictionalized in the form of a novel. He works for the social welfare through his writings. His motive is to bring equality in every one of us and to strive for the development of the society. He fights for against the exploitation of underprivileged, social injustice and class. He has been rightly recognized as the "voice of suffering humanity, champion of the waifs, the disinherited, the lowly, the lost", a writer with compassion for the 'pariahs and the bottom dogs' as well as the 'Dickens of India.' (Amarnath 170)

Mulk Raj Anand gives a glimpse of Indian society which includes the life in slums, in town life and also on a hilly place. Like Bhaka in '*Untouchable*', Munoo in '*Coolie*', hero of the novel, is treated as an untouchable. The coolie in this novel is "underpaid, overworked, cheated by foreman and storekeeper, always in debt and fearful of the sack, is not necessary to anyone-there are too many waiting to take his place." (R.K.Dhawan 71) His writings are based on humanitarian approaches to reach the common people. His writings reflect the sufferings of the untouchables. This reflects the cruelty of the class system which coerces and suppresses the poor and the downtrodden.

In *Coolie*, Munoo is an orphan. He used to live in the house of his uncle and aunt. In spite of his aunt's cruel attitude towards him, he enjoys playing on the hill side. Moreover he shares everything with his friend Bishamber with whom he says "My aunt wants me to begin earning money.....And she says she wants a son of her own." (2) and he is rejected by his relatives and oppressed by his uncle and aunt, Gujri. Munoo realizes that his happy life comes to an end when his uncle

warns him “I am grown up must fend for myself” (2) and for their livelihood. They think of Munoo as financial burden and decided to set him as a domestic servant in Nathuram’s house. Being economically poor, he works as a servant in sub accountant’s house. Binoi Uttam Kaur exploits Munoo by means of her class superiority. Munoo works as a domestic servant. There he undergoes ill-treatment, coercion and unable to bear the ill-treatment of them, he runs away. He has successfully escaped leaving his job and from the clutches of his aunt and uncle. He experiences exploitation as an ill-treatment and torture in his job and even from his friends while playing. He bears the situation and is forced to think that there are “two kinds of people in the world; the rich and the poor”. (Premila 12)

In *Untouchable*, Anand portrays Bhaka as an outcaste victim who faces the humiliation and suppressed by the customs and traditions. In *Coolie*, Munoo faces the assault physically and mentally as a servant at every place, reflects the behavior of human beings among themselves. Even though, he is an outcaste, he is permitted to touch the utensils. But he is treated as an untouchable due to poverty. He sacrifices himself to his employers. He experiences a number of exploitations which kill him not only physically but also mentally. These exploiting forces make him spiritually die. The doyen of Indian writings in English, Srinivasa Iyengar rightly says, “If untouchable is microcosm, coolie is macrocosm.”(Iyengar, K.R.S, Indian Writings in English, 265) Munoo can be remembered as a tragic hero. As Riemenscheider points out,

Munoo is not the common type of hero we expect to find in a novel. In his opposition to society he is passive while the society is active. Munoo does not build his own life which on the contrary, is built for him. (Riemenscheider 32)

Child is recognized as the future of the nation. The Constitution of India has also provided right to education for children and strictly prohibited the child labor. But the society uses them as a slave. The rights are not implemented properly by the Government if there is violation. Every human being has fundamental rights. In *Coolie*, Munoo is denied the fundamental rights and freedom. He wanders alone to find

work. He boards a train, in which he meets Prabha who was doing business with his young partner, Ganpat. As he doesn't have any heir of his own, Ganpat remembers him saying, "You should be happy now.....Here is a son for you, readymade and complete. And you can forget all about the herbs that you were going to fetch for your wife-or yourself..." (63) He felt happy that he got love and affection from Prabha's wife as a mother. He expects love rather than the want of food. He treats both of them as their God gifted parent. He is also accustomed to work for the factory from morning to the night. Later on, he is exploited by Prabha that "a kinship with him, the affinity his soul felt for his unborn son. Only he tried to make himself believe that it might be possible to regard their completely strange boy as a son." (64) Even though he got love from Seth's wife, he is given charge of delivering essences. But Munoo realize the nature of the human being and decides to leave the place. Then he moves to work in the market. The policemen chase him as he has no license to work in the market. He sleeps on the pavement of a closed shop. . Premila Paul comments as "His aspirations, passionate longings and potentialities go waste before they could find fulfillment." (53)

...the story of Munoo is quintessentially the story of every exploited individual in India and the pattern of his life is intended to show the pitilessness that lies imbedded in the lives of millions of people...(Khan 30)

Munoo represents the sufferings of class system on behalf of other children. He becomes suppressed in every mode of life. Every social factor pushes him to worse situation. Later he is fascinated by seeing the circus free of cost. Then he is persuaded by the elephant-driver to go Bombay with the circus team. In Bombay, he realizes, "The bigger a city is, and the more cruel it is to the sons of Adam. You have to pay even for the breath that you breathe". (13) the elephant-driver shows him the way, so that Munoo may go unnoticed. Luckily, he finds Hari-Har, a worker in the textile factory. He discovers "a curious flutter of excitement in his heart, like thrill of ear and happiness which had filled him when he first laid eyes on Sham Nagar-the fear of the unknown in his bowels and the stirring of hope for a wonderful life in the new world he was entering." (81) With the help of Hari-Har, he

joins the factory. In one situation, Hari's wife Lakshmi exploits and lulls him to sleep with the incantation. In the factory, they are exploited by the trader from whom they have to buy provisions. He treats the factory workers as animals. Ratan, a co-worker, protects Munoo from exploitation by losing his job. The strike is held for re-installing Ratan into his job. But the management diverts the matter. They give notice for reducing their working hours.

Money is the key factor in every life. Every worker do their duty under the constant fear of their masters till his end. In Coolie, Ratan is a wrestler who saves Munoo from exploitation. He is a kind hearted person who dares to raise his hand against the foreman and moneylenders who exploit the coolies. His bravery has sown the seeds of protest in co-workers. Thomas, a British exploiter, terminates the services of Ratan and his co-workers go for a strike. Thomas exploits the workers not only as a government agent but also with his private ownership of money lending business. The chief concern of his business is profit. They were not treated as workers but as a creature own by them. The workers are treated as outcastes and "to give the coolies the slightest chance of bettering themselves. They were supposed to be sub-human. They worked from dawn to dusk, old and young, male and female, for their masters and they were treated like dogs." (Anand 172)

Poverty and Hunger are the problems that deprive a human from a stable life. One must fight for the life to avoid the poverty. To come out of his poverty, he works at different places. He is not happy with the factory work. But he has to come across many obstacles in the way of his progress. And the society thrashes him to remain as a servant. He thinks of "a deep rooted feeling of inferiority to the superior people who lived in Bungalows and wore Angrezi clothes,"... (257) The High society exploits him by using his work. Munoo is a hard worker and never runs after money. To escape from miserable life, he moves towards the Malabar Hill, and then he is knocked by a car. Mrs. Mainwaring is an Anglo-Indian lady, who is other major character of the novel. He moves Simla with her. She is married, divorced and remarried woman. She is living with her daughter in Simla. Her husband is posted to Peshawar. Saros Cowasjee in his coolie: An

assessment observes:

Anand gets so involved pillorying the Anglo-Indian woman that he loses sight of his hero. He gives some five pages to sketching her background and her somewhat shady present. (53)

Mulk Raj Anand aims to bring awareness and healthy life among every human being without any distinction of race, class etc. If everyone wish and work for the sake of country to unite people without any distinction, then no child can be a slave under anyone. Munoo works as a domestic servant under her. His journey moves to the same place where he enjoyed his childhood with his friends. He is only a boy for her. She is a woman longing for sex. She exploits Munoo sexually as, “Why didn’t the world understand how women gives herself in love, in hate, in pity, in tenderness, in playfulness and in a hundred different moods? Then she looked at him with a flutter in her eyes.....Beautiful boy, lovely boy. You only want a wife now”. (293-294). She could not develop integrity of character. “If her mind had not been reacting against the deep-rooted belief in the sin of sex, she might have had an integrity of character which would have saved her from the on slaughter of all these men, but, vacillating between a belief she felt to be wrong and a desire which was continually insistent, she became a bitch to all the dogs that prowled round her bungalow” (287).

Munoo enjoys life with her mistress. Whenever she wants to go for shopping, he pulls rickshaw for her. This brings a lot of effort and strain on his lungs. He is examined by Major Merchant. Merchant informs Mrs. Mainwaring about Munoo’s disease as a severe one. He warns and forbids her from having any intercourse with Munoo. She visits him bringing the fruits and flowers. “Death pulls the curtain over Munoo’s life and” (282) putting an end to his struggle for existence and dies of consumption. Munoo’s death indicates human tragedy. It is caused by poverty, cruelty, greed and selfishness leading to exploitation. Munoo, a hero of the novel, represents the sufferings of the downtrodden. It emerges as a powerful tragedy. S.A.Khan says:

“The story of Munoo is the story of unending pain relieved only by some imperfect glimpses of

happiness.”(Khan 32)

Mulk Raj Anand tries his best for the sake of social welfare in rising human values among the human beings. He thinks of the equality treatment between rich and poor, so that they can enjoy their life without any discrimination. Through him, he has focused attention of millions of surviving people, exploited by many rich people who make the poor to work hard and die prematurely. He gives full freedom to his characters. Anand wishes to raise the humanity against the brutal exploitation of the downtrodden.

Anand explores the stresses and strains of the poor people in the Indian society. Exploitations are of social and economic leading to suppress the poor people. Anand says that it is not religion, caste or race but only cash and class that matter. In *Coolie*, Munoo's father dies of feudal exploitation and mother by poverty and hunger. Munoo also faces domestic exploitation by his uncle and aunt. In Nathuram's house, he is treated like a monkey, an instrument of entertainment. They are directly or indirectly responsible for the exploitation of the protagonist. They belong to the class of exploiters. The novel is remarkable for multiplicity of characters and the way the author has represented the characters. The hero of the novel has played many roles like a factory worker, rickshaw-puller and as a coolie. M.K.Naik comments as,

“The novel is an indignant comment on the tragic denial to a simple peasant of the fundamental right to happiness. Munoo and his fellow coolies are exploited by the forces of industrialization, capitalism, communalism and colonialism. With its constantly shifting scenes, its variety of characters from all classes of society and its wealth of eventful incident, “coolie” has an almost epic quality.”(10)

In *Coolie*, most of the characters are owners of capitalist machinery. Anand says that they are paragons of the capitalist exploitation. The Britishers are brutal exploiters exploited the Indian. They always make the Indians suffer so that they can survive by exploiting the natives of India. In India, there are many children who

have been exploited by economically and socially independent owners of the capitalist machinery. In *Coolie*, Munoo is the character who represents all the children subjected to pain and suffering leading to mental and physical harassment. They are suffering without the fault of their own. Because of the capitalist exploitation, Munoo has become a victim of child representing in a symbolic way. He is not aware of the nature of exploitation suffered by him and other coolies. He accepts his identity as a servant saying, “What am I-munoo? I am Munoo, Babu Nathuram’s servant (68) He fears about losing his job. Once Prabha had been a coolie but now he had become an owner of a pickle factory. The exploitation is done to the exploited who are economically poor, by the exploiters who are financially rich.

Almost all the workers of the factory are indebted to their foreman, pathans and grocers. Maximum part of their meager wages goes to pay the interest. Anand expresses his anger towards such capitalistic exploitation. Even though there are laws against such exploitation, exploiters win over the exploited by using their power. There is a law against child labor that children should not work under inhuman and unbearable conditions for long hours. Anand says,

But really he was mentally and physically broken. And as he thought of the conditions, under which he had lived, of the intensity of the struggle and futility of the waves of revolt falling upon the hard rock of privilege and possession, as he thought of Ratan and Hari and Lakshmi and the riots, he felt sad and bitter and defeated, like an old man. (284)

Machine becomes the tool of exploitation of the poor in the hands of the rich. Exploitation kills of to claim, to react and to fight against injustice. Even Ratan tries to help others from exploitation. When it comes to him, he loses his job and wishes that he “would like to die” (217) losing his brevity because of exploitation. Poverty and hunger are the root cause for exploitation and always the exploitation is of the working class by the ruling class. Even the people who are starving are compelled to desert their native places to make their livelihood in towns and cities. Munoo fights for the survival in every phase of his life. He continues to accept various occupations at different

places with the constant fear of poverty and hunger. P.K.Rajan observes,

If the individual's quest for freedom in a social system of ruthless exploitation...The society of coolie is one in chief form of exploitation is capitalist through the feudal exploitation still remains, Munoo, in his quest for freedom, is squeezed dry by the machinery of capitalist exploitation until he meets his tragic end. (15)

In *Coolie*, Munoo has experienced domestic exploitation by his uncle and aunt. Biwiji, being a traditional housewife of Nathuram, exposed domestic exploitation to Munoo. He also faces Industrial Exploitation while working in the pickle factory. He also exposed to colonial and capitalistic exploitation in cotton mill and religious exploitation during the time of strike. At the end, he is exploited by Mrs. Mainwaring in both physically and sexually. In the ending, Premila Paul comments as '*Coolie*' is not a pessimistic novel. The hope of humanity lies in people like prabha, Ratan, and Mohan" (15)

Our India is a mixture of cultures and traditions. The way of living is far better than any part of the universe. But the class and caste system, superstitious feelings are imbedded in the minds of Indians. It can be removed by bringing proper social awareness and education. Literature reflects the dirty and filthy image of the society of India. The exploitation which victimizes the poor can be removed only by Individual consciousness.

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**Existentialism: A Keynote in Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of*  
*Billy Biswas***

**- K. Ravi Sankar**

Arun Joshi is an outstanding Indian English novelist who has impressed us immensely with his thoughtful utterances, masterly treatment of existential themes, and skillful weaving of fictional techniques. He sets his novels against the background of the changing scenario of the post-independent India. He minutely observes the conflict between the traditional values and the modern materialistic approach to life. He notices the chaos and hollowness in the mind of the contemporary younger generation. With his deep knowledge of Indian philosophy, he suggests in his novels an entirely Indian solution to the spiritual crisis of the youth.

Arun Joshi is a great artist of psychological insight that enables him to see into the life of things. In his fictional world he tries his level best to delineate the predicament of the modern man who is confronted by the self and the questions of his existence, which is painfully aware of his precarious in the fundamental sense that he cannot control what he is able to foresee. He is torn asunder by a dual code of behavior, and he lives lazily by opportunism, treachery, cowardice, hypocrisy and wit. These absurd situations give rise to existentialist emotions which Joshi has dealt with in the themes of his novels. In all his novels he unravels the facets of identity crisis in modern man's life. His protagonists are essentially foreigner wherever they go. They happen to be walking metaphors of alienation.

Arun Joshi's novels deal with various themes such as alienation and involvement, east-west encounter and compromise, existentialism and materialism, and quest and complacency. Through his protagonists Joshi makes his readers peep into the confused inner self of the contemporary westernized and materialistic man who is spiritually bankrupt. Because of his having doubts about God's existence he teased by the constant queries about the purpose of his own existence. He has a spiritual quest for the knowledge of his inner self in the labyrinth of life. In the wake of his quest he become alienated from his society, this world, and moreover, even from his own self. Joshi protagonists are alienated fellows who engage in soul searching and finally come to

know the meaning and purpose of their lives and also have a sense of their true identities. This process of transfiguration, i.e., withdrawal from and return to life leads them to purification and perfection.

Arun Joshi's second novel, *THE STRANGE CASE OF BILLY BISWAS*<sup>1</sup> seems to be a sequel to his first novel, *THE FOREIGNER* which is about a rootless hero who seeks detachment from the world but, at last, comes to realize the actual meaning of the theory of detachment as depicted in the *GITA*. It concerns itself with the crisis of the self, the problems of identity, and the quest for fulfillment. In one of his interviews Joshi himself admitted that he was led to writing to explore "that mysterious underworld, which is the human soul."<sup>2</sup> Billy Biswas, the protagonist, measures a long way from New Delhi to Maikala hills in search of inner peace, his spiritual roots. Arun Joshi himself says that

The novel is about a mystical urge, a compulsion which makes Billy go away...in number of Indian legends and religious texts people go away to forests to heal themselves spiritually. Possibly that's what he is suggesting, though not consciously.<sup>3</sup>

The novel presents a metaphysical quest of Billy and deals with a deeper survey of human soul.

Billy's quest is deeper though he is born and brought up in a fairly wealthy family. He comes from the "upper crust of Indian society" (9). He is much interested in the exploration of his inner being. Romi rightly remarks:

If life's meaning lies not in the glossy surfaces of our pretensions but in those dark mossy labyrinths of the soul that languish forever, hidden from the dazzling light of the sun, then I do not know of any man who sought it more doggedly and, having received a signal abandoned himself so recklessly to its cell. (8)

He is not in harmony with his family members. Although he lives with them, he is all alone, isolated and alienated, a stranger in the real sense of the term. He writes to Tuula Lindgren:

It seems, my dear Tuula, that who are my parents? My wife? My child? At times I look at them sitting at the dinner table, and for a passing moment, I cannot decide who they are or what accident of Creation has brought us together. (97)

Billy's awareness of the deeper layers of his personality makes him an existentialist being, estranged and alienated from the superficial reality of life. His is the predicament of an alienated personality who never feels at home in the modern bourgeois society. His is an attempt to find out viable alternatives for the most futile cry of man in a smart society. Romi, the narrator conveys the same at the opening of the novel. He says:

As I grow old, I realize that the most futile cry of man is his impossible wish to be understood. The attempt to understand is probably even more futile. If in spite of this I propose to relate Billy's story, it is not so much because I claim to have understood him as it is on account of a deep and unrelieved sense of wonder that in the middle of the twentieth century, in the heart of Delhi's smart society, there should have lived a man of such extraordinary obsessions. (7)

He describes Billy as a man of extraordinary obsessions and that extraordinary sensitivity to the work that used to be the essence of Billy. He is an unusual person of brilliant intellect, profound, sensibility and extraordinary obsessions. In all respects he is rare, extraordinary and distinguished. He is one of those rare men who have poise without pose. One is bound to notice the strong, rather British accent of his speech, that soft cultivated voice, and the words a cadence, a compulsive quantity that engaged you in spite of yourself.

Billy has a dislike for an organized life. Though born and brought up in an aristocratic family, he is filled with virulent hatred for the systematized civilized life which aggravates his problem of identity instead of resolving it. He acquires a sudden interest in his own identity. An evidence of his dislike for the so- called civilized world can be traced in his active preparation for his Ph.D. in Anthropology, while his

father does not know about it and is thinking that he is doing engineering in America. He likes to learn and find out about the aboriginals of the world. Roomi rightly sums up his impression of Billy: “it was around his interest in the primitive man that his entire life had been organized” (14).

Billy’s predicament becomes a strange case as he turns out to be a split personality – split between primitive and civilized. His strange case becomes a “universal myth of the primitive in the heart of man ever alienating him from the superficial and polished banalities of modern civilization.”<sup>4</sup> He finds modern civilization fast degenerating, as well as norm less and meaningless. He himself describes:

What got me was the superficiality, the sense of values. I don’t think all city societies are as shallow as ours. I am, of course, talking mainly of the so-called upper classes. I didn’t really get to know the others. I don’t think I have ever met a more pompous, a more mixed-up lot of people. Artistically they were dry as dust. ... Nobody remembered the old songs, or the meaning of the festivals. All that was left was loud-mouthed women and men in three-piece suits dreaming their little adulteries. (178-179)

He finds himself misfit in a world like this and is in search of a place where he may not feel self-estranged, socially isolated and culturally uprooted. His deep love for primitivism is an inborn propensity. That is why he chooses in New York to live in Harlem, a place where the Negroes live, although he could very well afford to stay in good hotels in some other area like Manhattan. But his quest for self-realization summons him to live in Harlem which is “the most human place he could find” (9) where he may feel a sense of belonging in the real sense of a turn.

From his early childhood, Billy’s case has been strange. At the age of fourteen, he goes to Bhubaneswar: “The first thing that hit me about Bhubaneswar was the landscape” (123). He finds something much more insubstantial about the place. One afternoon, he visits Konark. The sculptures at Konark, it seems to him, are capable of giving

him a solution to his questions about the problem of his identity. He is led to understand: “What appealed to me were the shades of the same spirit that I spoke of although I knew then. I know now, that the time when first learned to build temples. If anyone had a clue to it, it was only the *adivasis* who carried about their knowledge in silence, locked behind their dark inscrutable faces (124). One night, he happens to go to the tribal people with his uncle’s chauffeur. With deep interest he watches the tribal dancing, drinking, singing and making love. Extremely sensitive as he is, he feels a strange sensation: “Something similar happened to me then” (124-25). He records the impressions thus:

First a great shock of erotic energy passed through me, although, mind you, there was nothing particularly erotic about the whole business except once when a boy and a girl, their arm round each other, loitered past me giggling and tumbled into the bush beyond. The shock of erotic energy was followed by the same feeling of unreality or, as I said, a reality shaper than any I had ever known. It was a bit like having taken a dose of a hallucinatory drug, something I realized many years later when I was in Mexico. I remember saying to myself, even though I was only fourteen. (125).

Since then, Billy feels restless as som Bhasker dose in *The Last Labyrinth* after his experience in a cave. Whenever he listens to folk music or drum-beating, he feels altogether transported to the world of the primitive which is different from that of the so-called civilized society. He does not feel at ease in American society. He chooses to live in Harlem, which is one of the worse slums of New York City.

Billy comes out very depressed and really shaken up. He describes his condition that he was so shaken up that the first thing he wanted to do was to get back home. He comes back to India and is appointed Professor in Anthropology at the Delhi University. His mother introduces him to Meena, a pretty young daughter of a retired civil servant. Verily speaking, he is much upset by these hallucinations that he had grown terribly afraid of himself, some part of him. He

though terrible things might happen unless he did something drastic. What with being an Indian and having been brought up in a close-knit family, the only thing he could think of was to get married. It was like taking out insurance on his normalcy. So, he marries Meena Chatterji to avert hallucinations, and it is, as he thinks, like taking out an insurance on his normalcy. He wishes to behave like a normal man. He wants to develop a sense of harmony with the surrounding, a sense of belonging. But this he does not get even after his marriage with Meena Chatterji. Meena fails to engage his soul, to satisfy his inner urge and give peace and satisfaction that Billy badly needs. On the other hand, what he comes to receive from Meena and her kith and kin is disillusionment and depression. He feels and gets annoyed at the core of his heart. Once in a picnic party arranged by Meena, he almost goes mad when he hears one of the boys passing remarks that all banjaras were thieves and their women no better than whores.

He feels terribly sick of the so-called upper-class shallow city societies in Delhi. He tells Romi: “I don’t think I have ever met a more pompous, a more mixed-up lot of people artistically, they were dry as dust. Intellectually, they could no better than mechanically mouth ideas that the West abandoned a generation ago” (179). In one of his letters, he writes to Tuula that when he returns from an expedition, it is days before he can shake off the sounds and smells of the forest. The curious feeling trails him everywhere that he is a visitor from the wilderness to the marks of the Big City and not the other way round. He develops an intense hatred for the so-called civilized people: “I see a roomful of finely dressed men and women seated on downy sofas and while I am looking at them under my very nose, they run into a kennel of dogs yawning or snuggling against each other or holding whisky glasses in their furred paws. The imagery of dogs with large teeth and furred paws shows Billy’s utter dislike for the elite class and its character. To him, modern civilization seems to be telling upon the health and hygiene of the contemporary man. It is monster-like, devouring all the human qualities of head and heart. Billy is seen reflecting: “I sometimes wonder whether civilization is anything more than the making and spending of money. What else does the civilization man do? And if there are those who are not busy earning and spending-the so-called thinkers and philosophers and men like that – they are merely hired to

find solution, throw light, as they say, on complications caused by this making and spending of money. He even expresses a deep sense of sorrow at the people's sheer money-mindedness and thereby degradation of their soul.

All this results into Billy's turning an introvert. He forsakes his responsibilities towards his family, his wife and his son. He cares only for his responsibilities towards his soul: "I had greater responsibilities towards my soul" (186). He is "a pilgrim of the spiritual world."<sup>5</sup> He is self-centered. His tortured soul terribly needs application of some balm by someone who can share his suffering. With a view to getting the right kind of solace that his injured soul needs, he meets Rima Kaul, who has loved him passionately since the day she met him. His trips to Bombay take him closer to her. She, he is sure, has much of the 'rare degree of empathy' and 'sufficient idea of human suffering' which Meena lacks. Billy himself remarks: "I came to like it even more than I liked the sex part. I felt happy not when I took her but when she said, 'Oh, how misunderstood you are, my poor boy, I know how you feel. Those who harass you should be put to death straightway. It was this that I was really looking for'"(188). But her Billy is mistaken. His passions lead him astray and his romance with Rima Kaul is degraded into seduction. One afternoon he takes her to Juhu, hires a room in a third-rate hotel and like any common rogue he seduces her. But very soon he is given to understand that his relationship with Rima is nothing but his degradation. He turns a hypocrite, a thoroughly corrupt being. Unfortunately, he fails to find a way out of it. He does not have the guts to break away from this filth. He points out:

The worst of it was that in spite of this knowledge of my degeneration, I continued to behave as before, I continued to whine and lie and sham. I found that I could not stop. I met her three or four times after that. Each time I would determine to be honest – with her, with myself – and each time I would start to play the parts as soon as I got the chance. You have no idea how ridiculous and fraudulent it become. I offered to divorce Meena and marry her even though Rima herself never even hinted at such a thing. I agreed to



start living with her as soon as possible. And all the time I knew that I intended no such thing. (188)

Thus, Billy reaches the climax of hypocrisy in his way of working. He delves deep into corruption, and affirms: “It gradually dawned on me that a tremendous corrupting force was working on me. It was as though my soul were taking revenge on me for having denied for so long that Other Thing that it had been clamoring for” (189). He now rests assured that no women of this ‘phoney society’ can satisfy his soul. Frequent hallucinations and visions of women still haunt him. He once writes to Tuula: “A strange women keeps crossing my dreams. I have seen her on the streets of Delhi, nursing a child in the shade of a tree or hauling stone for a rich man’s house. I have seen her buying bangles at a fair. I have seen her shadow at a tribal dance, and I have seen her, pensive and inviolable, her clothes clinging to her wet body, beside a tank in Benaras. And once I saw her, her face strangely luminous in the twilight, loading a freight train with sulphur on a siding in one of our eastern ports. Yes, this women keeps crossing my dreams causing in me a fearful disturbance, the full meaning of which I have yet to understand” (225-226).

This time, it is not a hunger for sensual satisfaction. “It is a quest for self-realization, for a union with the missing part of his soul.”<sup>6</sup> Sitting outside his tent on a particular fateful night, he hears two clear choices that the price of making such choices is terrible and that the price of not making them is even more terrible. Almost always an enigmatic impression of Billy’s life, as Romi, his friend, rightly remarks, is noticeable.

Billy is so much fed up with the so-called civilized world of greed, avarice, hollowness and hypocrisy and feels so much drawn towards the primitive in life that he leaves his wife, his only child and his old parents. Once he gets an opportunity to take his students on an anthropological expedition to the Satpura Hills in Madhya Pradesh and gets so much fascinated by the intense beauty of the hills and their inhabitants, particularly women with graceful figures and bright eyes. With the Bhils and their leader Dhunia, he eats drinks and waits for the rising of the moon and he could for the first time see clearly the change entering him. While he sat in the purple shadows, he had the first

terrible premonition that he might not go back. An enormous search is launched by the policy to find Billy out. When they fail to find him out, it is presumed that he has been killed by a tiger prowling in the area.

Billy's fascination for the primitive life, really speaking, is a search for his identity. "It was more or less the same with me except that I could not figure out what excited or troubled me unless it was a sudden interest in my own identity. Who was I? Where had I come from? Where was I going? (122).

With a skilful weight of the details, Joshi manages to explore the protagonist's psychological instincts. Billy's enigmatic behavior can be understood in terms of certain psychological and anthropological facts at work with reference to Jung's theory of the collective unconscious.

Thus, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* very beautifully presents the theme of man's restlessness in modern materialistic life and his futile attempt to escape it. It is "concerned with the crisis of contemporary civilization in the upper-class Indian society in particular and the modern world of industry and commerce in general."<sup>7</sup> For the theme of the novel Joshi goes to Arnold's *Thyrsis*, "It irk'd him to be her, he could not rest" (6). Billy feels an irresistible pull towards the primitive world and finally he joins the tribe beyond the forest on the Maikala Hills. But his quest is not over. He intends to reach the height of divinity:

Billy is a new type of character in the whole range of Indo-English fiction. He is not a stereotype of a traditional Indian hero posing wisdom through philosophical speculations but a character effecting metaphysical manifestations. He is a rebel. He makes no cowardly compromises like Sindi nor has pity for himself. Unlike Sindi he has a strong will and determination ... He was a man of conviction capable of turning his vision into reality.<sup>8</sup>

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## ***Candida*: George Bernard Shaw's Best Creation of All Times**

**- Md. Afrozuddin**

It is hard to speak too highly of *Candida* (1897). No equally subtle and incisive study of domestic relations exists in the English drama. Drama about a love triangle between the vigorous, upright Morell, a Christian Socialist pastor; the fragile, eighteen-year old Marchbanks, a dreamer and poet given to flashes insight; and Candida, Morell's calm, efficient, and wise wife, who handles her husband with love and understanding. Although staunchly bourgeois in her attitudes, she is touched by the adulation of Marchbanks, who is determined to deliver her from her prosaic existence. Morell, unnerved by the poet's accusations of lack of understanding, is further disturbed when Marchbanks reveals that Candida may in fact love him and insists that Candida resolve the triangle by choosing one of them. Candida asks what each has to offer her: Morell offers his strength, honesty, ability, and dignity; Marchbanks his weakness, desolation, and heart's need. Candida then announces her choice to be the weaker of the two, whom Morell does not immediately recognize as himself. Candida explains their mutual love and the need that Morell has for her, and Marchbanks leaves, rising above mere romance and philistine domesticity of the heroic world of the creative imagination.

"The central note of the play is that with the true woman, weakness which appeals to the maternal instinct is more powerful than strength which offers protection." Candida is quite unpoetic, as, indeed, with rare exceptions, women are prone to be. They have small delight in poetry, but are the stuff of which poems and dreams are made. The husband glorying in his strength but convicted of his weakness, the poet pitiful in his physical impotence but strong in his perception of truth, the hopelessly demoralised manufacturer, the conventional and hence emotional typist make up a group which the drama of any language may be challenged to rival." Marchbanks, as if discerning unhappiness in Candida's marital relationship, argues with Morell by expressing his displeasure over it." He says:

Happy: Your marriage, you think that: you believe that:

Marchbanks is the epitome of a love-intoxicated romantic

young man consumed by his passion and hungry for the grand gesture. Our amusement comes from how completely he fulfills the stereotype of immature starry-eyed obsession. Marchbanks wants Morell, to come to a settlement regarding his undisclosed love for Candida. He says:

I must speak to you. There is something that must be settled between us. (Act I, P.540)

Marchbanks, the absurdly romantic poet who is in love with Candida, is an odd figure. He understands everything, Candida says, and yet he has the social grace of a badly-trained puppy. It's amusing, and it is the tiniest bit too much – which is just right. His behaviour is a kind of first draft of a poet's love affair – he'll get the raw impulse out now, and clean up the style and regularise the metre later. Marchbanks comes out with the truth that he has fallen in love with Candida:

I love your wife. (Act I, P.540)

Petrified by Marchbanks's love for Candida, Morell tells him that it has become a common feature for everyone to love Candida. Morell says:

...Everybody loves her: they cant help it. I like it. (Act I, P.541)

Like Shaw, the Rev. James Morell is a democratic socialist dedicated to promoting an egalitarian society. There was nothing to suggest a crisis in the marriage between Pastor Morell and Candida until Marchbanks, a fervid and callow poet, met the clergyman's wife. Morell says:

...You little snivelling cowardly whelp. Go, before you frighten yourself into a fit. (Act I, P.544)

Until the appearance of a certain young poet, whom both husband and wife have taken under wing, begins the romantic triangle that reveals, sometimes painfully, a great deal about what men think they know about the women in their lives, or about themselves, for that matter. Morell has not taken care of any house-hold work. Marchbanks, who is present there, incoherently expresses the horror

that has haunted his heart, bursts out poetically before Candida:

No, not a scrubbing brush, but boat: a tiny shallop to sail away in, far from the world, where the marble floors are washed by the rain and dried by the sun....a Chariot: to carry us up into the sky, where the lamps are stars, and don't need to be filled with paraffin oil every day. (Act I, P.558)

Morell, husband to the “beguiling and enchanting” Candida, is a happy man. He is, after all, a handsome, sought after public speaker and successful minister. The fact that his readers are mainly women must certainly indicate that he has a certain understanding of their needs.

It is perfectly plausible that the Church secretary, the “lady typewriter” Miss Proserpine Garnett, is in love with Morell, and that most of his female parishioners share “Prossy’s complaint.” Morell is, at bottom, every bit the romantic the poet is, but Morell’s passion takes the form of Christian Socialism. The pastor’s shining righteousness would also be a bit too much, were he not restrained by the humbling example of the Social Gospel, and the pomposity – pricking candour of his down – to – earth wife. Candida says:

...Why does Prossy condescend to wash up the things, and to peel potatoes and abase herself in all manner of ways for six shillings a week less than she used to get in a city office? She’s in love with you, James: that’s the reason. (Act I, P.563)

There is a precious little public discussion of the emotional and psychological dynamics in male-female romantic relationships. Why specific people become couples, and how self-effacing strength supports hidden weakness is a topic rarely explored in the play. Candida spontaneously expresses her fondness for Marchbanks who appears to her, sincere in showering love and affection on her. She says:

...I have grown fonder and fonder of him all the time I was away...though he has not the least suspicion of it

himself, he is ready to fall madly in love with me? (Act I, P.564)

Without getting Oedipal, the play suggests a part of a female's attraction for a male involves her ability to maternally nurture him. If Shaw dealt only with that, Candida would be noteworthy, but he does further into territory few males eagerly examine. Candida is the shining exception, and Shaw's admiration for women often led him to place them on pedestals, and that is certainly the case with Candida, known more for Shaw's political oratory than his religious rhetoric. Candida provokes Morell, by telling that Marchbanks is right in understanding her:

He is always right. He understands you; he understands me; he understands Prossy; and you, you understands nothing. (Act II, P.565)

As painful as it may be, Morell must learn that his wife is not to be taken for granted – and hope that it isn't too late. Marchbanks, much like Shakespeare's Orlando, must learn that genuine love is nourished by a good deal more than infatuation and poetry. And what of Candida? Will she decide to play Rosalind to the vulnerable Marchbanks? Ultimately, each must learn something important about mature love, duty, and, more importantly, passion. Marchbanks being induced by over powering love for Candida, musically sings:

Candida, Candida, Candida, Candida, Candida. I must say that now, because you have put me on my honour and truth; and I never think or feel Mrs. Morell: it is always Candida. (Act III, P.575)

Marchbanks is experiencing love for the first time, and he's being very imaginative about it. It stimulated him to write a lot of poems and it has awakened him because he's been much neglected in his life. Responding to Morell's utterance in calling Marchbanks a beggar, seeking her favour, Marchbanks poetically says:

She offered me all I chose to ask for; her shawl, her wings, the wreath of stars on her head, the lilies in her hand, the crescent moon beneath her feet- (Act III,

P.579)

As for the relationship between Candida and Morell, and the turmoil Marchbanks brings into it. One can see all of it as an honest representation of reality. It says a lot about marriage and the permanence of marriage and the question of marriage. It has to be worked on and is more precious than many people think. It has a lot to do with give and take and how much one wants to compromise and how important once independence is. Shaw went so far as to claim that a husband can be the partner who is the oppressed and infantilised plaything, in response to Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Even hinting at this is a threat to the male ego, of course, and *Candida* has survived more than hundred years of fragile machismo by making us laugh while the title character morphs into mommy. Shaw placed Candida at the centre of a non-sexual triangle. A spaniel puppy to Morell's Great Dane, Marchbanks follows the older woman around, fawning over her and declaring his love. The young man assumes the attitude of the lovesick poet, and declares that Morell doesn't deserve his wife's attention and affection, says:

...I am the happiest of men. I desire nothing now but her happiness...let us both give her up. Why should she have to choose between a wretched little nervous disease like me, and pig-headed parson like you? Let us go on a pilgrimage, you to the east and I to the west, in search of a worthy lover for her: some beautiful archangel with purple wings- (Act III, P.580)

Morell is vigorous and alert to the outside world, but with few clues about the chemistry within his own marriage. Marchbanks sharply reacting to his pathetic appeal, commands Morell to ask her to choose between them says:

Oh, you fool, you fool, you triple fool: I am the man, Morell: I am the man. You don't understand what a woman is send for her, Morell: send for her and let her choose between - (Act III, P.580)

Generations ahead of its time, the play leaps beyond an examination of male/female relationships and deepens our



understanding of human need. The jocular bit of scolding does not mean that Morell has done anything like throttle Marchbanks. Shaw's own impression simply indicates that Morell "grasps him powerfully by the lapel of his coat." That is all. In fact, Morell doesn't really have an opportunity to do much more than that since, in the text, Marchbanks is so quickly begging not to be struck that Morell can do little but release him in disgust. There were times when Shaw himself pretended not to approve of this sort of woman, and maintained that his portrait of the perfect darling of a wife who is her husband's "greatest treasure on earth...my wife, my mother, my sisters: the sum of all loving care to me" actually revealed the heroine of his play to be a Medusa who when looked full in the face turns a man to stone. Candida throws herself for auction and asks them to offer their bidding. She says:

And pray, my lords and masters, what have you to offer  
for my choice? I am up for auction, it seems. What do  
you bid, James? (Act III, P.590)

"Candida stands between two men declaring their undying love and tell them both that they are acting like little boys." Shaw sets the heroine a real challenge in his description of Candida as "a Woman who has found that she can always manage people by engaging their affection, and who does so frankly and instinctively...but Candida's serene brow, courageous eyes...signify largeness of mind and dignity of character to ennoble her cunning in the affections." Morell with much proud humility says:

I have nothing to offer you by my strength for your  
defence, my honesty for your surety, my ability and  
industry for your livelihood, my authority and position  
for your dignity. That is all it becomes a man to offer  
to a woman. (Act III, P.591)

Like Shaw, the Rev. James Morell is a democratic Socialist dedicated to promoting an egalitarian society. Like many people with large public lives, he tends to take for granted or not even realise the emotional and practical support making a family run smoothly he gets from his wife. Candida asks Marchbanks to offer: My weakness. My desolation. My heart's need. (Act III, P.591)

Both men want her and claim to need her Shaw sets up the moment when Candida must choose between them, and her choice when she makes it is a very Shavian One. Candida says:

I give myself to the weaker of the two. (Act III, P.591)

Candida is the visual, narrative, and imaginative centre of the play. She is beguiling and enchanting in figure and movement. We cannot help but link the boldness of the play's thought with our own growing understanding of feminism and true humanity. May be Morell has never really known his wife at all. May be her needs are much more complex than he has ever realised. May be they both have to reconsider who they are after years of marriage? Candida is confronted with a choice. The ending is the confrontation of the three where the self composed Candida cuts through the male scrapping with icy clarity. The two men force Candida to choose between them. She keenly sifts through the play's arguments about material strength and weakness until finally the husband realises that she is the stronger of the two. She is Queen of the house.

"Candida is a direct response to *A Doll's House*, claiming that, in the real typical doll's house it is the man who is the doll, and, indeed, like Ibsen's Nora, it is Morell who is steadily disillusioned during the course of the three acts." What annoys us most about this *Candida* was that it made us wonder if we believed any of it. Would a woman such as Shaw's Candida marry a Morell in the first place? Would she see Eugene Marchbanks as anything other than a rather effeminate boy displaying more signs of outrageousness than genius?

When such questions start, the play is lost; a decent reading of the play is not enough to put it over, and in its best moments. The renowned Shavian wit is on full display in *Candida*, and it is great fun. Males get the burnt of the well-aimed barbs. However, at the end, since everything goes out of Marchbanks's hands, to express his innate love for Candida, Marchbanks tells Morell that he has filled her heart with his happiness. He says: I no longer desire happiness: Life is nobler than that. Parson James: I give you my happiness with both hands: I love you because you have filled the heart of the woman I loved. Good bye. (Act III, P.594)

Marchbanks and Morell differ in their ways of thinking about love. Eugene's is romantically poetic as Morell's idea of love is as romantically conventional. Candida does her best to teach Morell to become outwardly perceptive. "Candida is constantly aware of how obtuse her husband really is, and that it is her role to point out to him that marriage depends on love and not on a handful of high-minded principles." Marchbanks enigmatically rushes out by expressing that, he has a better secret in his heart. It's hard to imagine why someone who said that marriage "is an alliance entered into by a man who can't sleep with the window shut, and a woman who can't sleep with the window open" would be so fascinated with writing about the domestic union, but fascinated with it Shaw was, and the crackling energy of much of his dramatic work comes from the tension between husband and wife. The ending is never in doubt: As a true Shavian heroine, Candida will stay where she is needed, nurturing the earthbound body and mind of the stalwart but unimaginative preacher who is her husband, while freeing the soul of her poet-admirer to create beautiful and passionate art.

The "secret" of *Candida* is Shaw's closing admission that, though the poet has no business "with the small beer of domestic comfort and cuddling and petting at the apron-string of some dear nice woman," Eugene probably eventually discovered that "he had to keep his feet on the ground as much as Morell, and that some enterprising woman married him and made him dress himself properly and take regular meals." "An additional interpretation of the "secret in the poet's heart," one not acknowledged by Shaw in any of his numerous letters on the subject, is the secret alluded to by Thomas Carlyle in *The Hero as Poet in Heroes and Hero-Worship*." Carlyle says that the poet and prophet are fundamentally alike and in some ages synonymous because both are "Hero-souls" sent by nature to penetrate "into the sacred mystery of the Universe."

Marchbanks's secret, especially in a play subtitled "A *Mystery*," owes something to the above passage from Carlyle. This interpretation of the secret would explain why Morell and Candida do not know it and why the poet goes out into the mysterious night, "the true realm of the poet." "If the poet's secret is "that divine mystery,

which lies everywhere in all Beings,” another explanation of what Shaw means by Pre-Raphaelitism “at its best” suggests itself - an explanation based on Shaw’s analysis of medieval art in “On Going to Church.” The “best” of Pre-Raphaelitism may be the genuinely religious impulse which dictates the creation of all great art, and the development “into something higher” the evolutionary development of art in order to express the constantly evolving religion of creative evolution.” *Candida* is one of Shaw’s most personal, least discursive works and offers one other ancillary dividend. *Candida* is the sort of misguided affair that makes us fear that readers are incapable of handling Shaw - and that they might as well not even try.

As a woman living in a time where females were not encouraged to form, much less voice, their opinions, *Candida* must learn how to speak her mind; Morell must learn how his marriage operates; Marchbanks must learn what the unromantic side of domestic life consists of (peeling onions and cleaning boots) before rushing into it; and so forth. “*Candida* is based on a very old dramatic device: a misunderstanding.” In the course of the play, husband and wife come for the first time to genuinely understand each other and their actual relationship. The more everyone learns how family and work relationships function, the closer they are to preventing seriously disruptive misunderstandings in the community; the more Morell and Marchbanks learn from *Candida* what it takes to maintain balance and happiness in the household, the closer they come to resolving the love triangle. *Candida* is a woman of strong instincts. The maternal instinct is particularly strong. Her way are those of a woman who has found that she can always manage people by engaging their affection, and who does so frankly and instinctively without the smallest scruple.

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