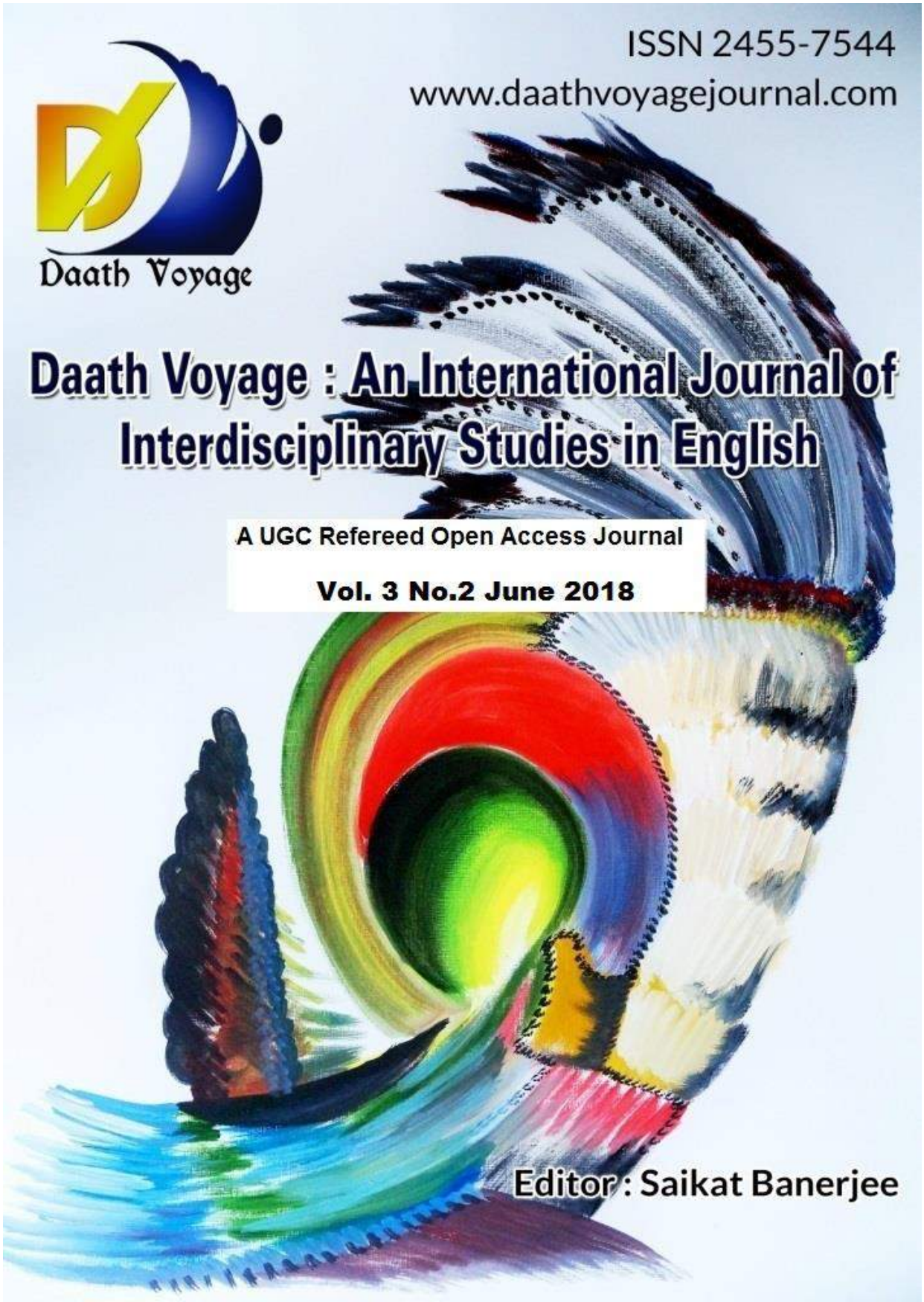

Editor: Dr. Saikat Banerjee
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
St. Theresa International College, Thailand.

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Liminality and Communitas: Harry Potter and *rites de passage* in Young Adult Literature

Dr. Karan Singh,
Associate Professor
Govt. College for Women,
Mahendergarh (Haryana)

Abstract: The onset of the age of Information technology has opened unchartered areas of experiences which along with its scattering and questioning of relevance of older forms of genres has made a revaluation of literary aesthetics imperative. The success of Harry Potter series in attracting a wide readership has thrown open an interesting debate concerning the use of generic nomenclature of children's literature for it. In terms of readership, protagonists and the mythical/philosophical background, Pottermania transcends narrow confines of children's literature and makes frequent forays into adult young world. Dismissal of it as a new fad for childish adults, limited only to those people who live a sedentary and superficial life of fantasy, as suggested by critics like A.S. Byatt, seems inadequate in its scope and critical acumen.

It appears imperative that critics need to focus on Young Adult (YA) literature as a distinct genre to explain the periodic rise and popularity of books like Harry potter series representing lives of young people who exist at the boundary of childhood and adulthood. The liminality of their existence makes them capable of crossing over to child psychology while retaining an adult perspective over things about them. This twilight region is as much capable of putting its faith in magic and rituals as it does in scientific gadgets; celebrates the value and inevitability of romance, while anticipating the complexities of human love. Young Adult literature thus exists at the borderland of children and adult classics and borrows narrative strategies, thematic concerns and treatment from both of them. My paper would trace the salient features of Young Adult literature and would examine how the characters, incidents, narrative technique and structure of the Harry Potter series uphold a vision of the world whose value lies in its liminality— straddling magic and

rationality, childhood and adulthood, magic castles and contemporary London. Further, the situation of Young Adult literature in a world of Information technology becomes an interesting site for understanding how hybrid formation and mutation are postmodern aspects of any new art form, affecting its growth and sustenance in the contemporary world.

Keywords: Liminal, Young-Adult literature, rites de passage.

Literature like a Protean being has an ability to assume multifarious forms and manifestations and the literatures in the wired world of today are examples of how this vital form of human communication can reshape itself according to the socio-political, economical and technological advances. While the outer forms of manifestations of literature has mutated and realigned itself to the governing conditions, the inner form has remain faithful to imitation of whatever is intrinsic to human nature. While on one hand new experiments in literary craft betoken human versatility to find new mediums of their expression, there is always something which goes to the primitive impulses and desires in human community. My paper seeks to trace some fundamental patterns behind the popularity of Harry Potter series and the appeal of Young Adult literature by aligning them with some anthropological insights into rites-de-passage as observed by William Turner and Arnold de Gennep. For it I presume that liminality and the consequent desire for communities is a fundamental human situation which can be fruitfully applied to the desire in human psyche for discontinuity with structural existence. The tug of unknown and mysterious thus can be seen as a primitive impulse in human mind for ambiguity and status reversal.

The wonder of A.S. Byatt, a well known British critic expresses a dilemma which is prone to become a cliché whenever a work like Harry Potter appears. The critic exclaims:

> What is the secret of the explosive and worldwide success of the Harry Potter books? Why do they satisfy children and—a much harder question—why do so many adults read them? I think part of the answer to the first question is that they are written from inside a child's eye view, with a sure instinct for childish psychology. But then how do you answer the second question? Surely, one precludes the other. (Byatt 1)

The bewilderment is natural, there are facts which confuse even the hard boiled purist critics who tend to dismiss the enchanting world of Harry potter as written for "people whose imaginative live are confined to TV Cartoons, and the exaggerated (more exciting, not threatening) mirror-worlds of soaps, reality TV and celebrity gossip" (Byatt 1). The popularity of Harry Potter series which cuts across geographical and age barriers brought to fore the necessity of taking a critical look at Young Adult literature as a potential source of understanding the power of literature and how it can appeal to human mind. Though having its own audience and used as a vehicle for instructing young minds, the YA literature didn't quite get the spotlight it deserved. Whenever some outrageously famous series like harry Potter is noticed, it arouses some interest but is as speedily forgotten as it occurs. Most of the literary critics tend to dismiss these successes as a result of fickle minded readers' obsession with whatever is sensational and catchy. Dismissing it as a passing fad wouldn't explain it power, however transient it may be and one suspects that there is something beneath the surface which periodically appeals to the imagination of readers and which has not been properly explored despite a plethora of critical theories in contemporary times.

Literary world is sustained over hierarchies between different genres and these hierarchies are sustained through our strict adherence to what is literary and what is perhaps less literary. Thus any literary work which celebrates and falls within the exacting boundaries of these defining parameters is only qualified the attention of critics who then evaluate it on the basis of pre-existing formulations. The children's literature has customarily dismissed as not worthy of serious critical attention so far and has been often seen as underdeveloped form of literature. Situated in the crevices of children and adult literature, Young adult literature has been a neglected genre which needs serious critical attention. The neglect of YA experience by the adult world lies in its viewing this important phase of human development as childish or immature which is superseded by the later development. Elaine Quinn rightly notes in this connection:

> Once readers move beyond age appropriate fairy tales, they are expected to give up their child-like fears and fascinations with the strange, eerie, and unknown while disciplining themselves to 'rationally recognizing the dangers of these disrupting forces that intrude on their humanity. The inclination is to dismiss stories of the supernatural, surreal, or fancy as

> either immature daydreams of immortality, poorly contrived romances of horror, fluff of the imagination or, even worse, as solipsistic, self-referential texts. Unfortunately, in the haste to dismiss "unrealistic" genres of books, we miss important understandings of adolescent thinking and identity construction while remaining blind to the flawed, linear nature of the developmental theories surrounding them.'(Quinn 51).

The idea of linear progression of human psyche akin to linear progression of human history relies on enlightenment idea of rational faculty as the sole guide of human development. It neglects the multiagency and heterogeneity of human existence. Cindy Lou Daniels advocates that this reappraisal of Young Adult literature needs a development of alternate critical strategies for it which should align itself "to acknowledge the differences in the literary craft itself" (Daniels 79).

The peculiar situation of YA literature straddling two poles, viz. a world of child and an adult world gives it some of its characteristics. In words of Robert Bittner, "literature for young adults is a literature of fluidity, conforming to the experiences of young people in specific contexts and shifting with changes in socio-political ideologies. For young adults, this literature is an escape as well as a comforting reflection of life" (Bittner 32). The liminality of this existence makes it a part of those experiences which have been neglected for so long and which make itself feel in its most power impact on human psyche. An evaluation of these impulses would explain to a certain extent the appeal of literature for human mind and how and how it is related to an exploration of unknown and unchartered.

The appeal of Harry Potter for a modern reader lies in its unique position as representing appeal of liminality and communitas to human psyche. William Turner's interpretation of ritual process has its foundation in Van Gennep's discussion of liminal phase in *rites de passage*. Drawing heavily on his field work in Ndembu tribe of northwestern Zambia, Turner constructs some distinctive features of 'liminality' and 'communitas.' The notable hallmarks of 'liminality' as explicated by Turner are its ambiguity, unstructurality and transmutation. In the words of Turner:

> The attributes of liminality or liminal personae (threshold people) are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classification that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are

> neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. (Turner, The Ritual 95)

Young adult literature is in itself a rites de passage and is about "life, its histories and potentialities, transformations and choices; it is about conflicts between the claim of the individual and the claims of culture (Freud); it is about life's fantastic flux of being. It is about new beginnings and other directions" (Proukou 62). The parallel between the phase of adolescence and rites de passage described above is quite obvious. On the level of human growth, it shows the same characteristics which are shown by an initiand in the rites of passage. Katherine Proukou rightly asserts:

> The separation from childhood is a complex trial, begun in adolescence and symbolic of all transformations of consciousness, particularly from one state of understanding to a higher or clearer one: A reason why adolescence is worthy, according to Joseph Campbell, of the elaborate rites of primordial societies, who celebrated it. These rites forced the child [...] to give up its childhood and become an adult—to die, you might say, to its infantile personality and psyche and come back as a responsible adult. This is a fundamental psychological transformation that everyone has to undergo. (Proukou 63)

YA literature is a luminal literature due to its positionality between distinct genres of literature viz. children and adult literature as the experiences depicted in YA literature belong to the threshold between children and adult. In words of Vandana Sexena, "adolescence itself can be seen as the liminal space of magical realism. An adolescent can be seen as an "other," an outsider to the categories of child and adult, embodying the gap between the two states of being in the chronology of growth." (Saxena 43). The important properties which Turner ascribes to liminality are ambiguity, a disregard for classifications and a *trishanku* like state—"those who pass from one zone to other waver 'between two worlds' in a 'symbolic and spatial area of transition'" (Bruster 39). The world of Harry Potter is situated between two worlds, he is born in a Magical world but after his brush with Lord Voldemort, he has to live in a muggle world. Harry's frequent journeys from magical world to the muggle world give him a unique position from which he can see and evaluate both the worlds. Despite his unique position as The Boy Who Lived, Harry has to return from

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Hogwarts to his uncle's home at Privet Drive during his summer holidays to maintain the charm of protection alive. The transition from one ritual state to another i.e. his being an adult at the age of seventeen is full of much significance in the novel as whenever he attains maturity the charm protecting him from death at the hands of Lord Voldemort will vanish making him vulnerable.

Liminalities are further attributed by, what Turner calls as "blend they offer of lowliness and sacredness" (Turner, The Ritual 96). It implies the vision that "the high could not be high unless the low existed, and he who is high must experience what it is like to be low" (Turner, The Ritual 97). Harry's disregard for socially inferior is perhaps his chief characteristic which separates him from the highly hierarchised world of Wizards. In the world of Wizards, house elves like Creacher and Dobby are treated as slaves and worthless beings by people such as Malfoys who do not consider them as beings with any feelings or sentiments. Even Harry's godfather Sirius Black did not treat Creacher which leads to his treachery against him and eventually to his death. Lord Voldemort considers it beneath his notice to give attention to magfical powers of house-elfs. The goblins are seen as worthless beings and are treated in a contemptuous way. Harry's attitude towards all the socially inferiors is markedly different from other wizards. His sympathy for Dobby earns him a friend who saves him from Malfoy manor. Harry's sorrow at the death of Dobby is genuine and he decides to bury him by digging a grave with his own hands, instead of using magic making even goblin Griphook exclaim:

> 'You buried the elf,' he said, sounding unexpectedly rancorous. 'I watched you, from the window of the bedroom next door.'
>
> 'Yes, ' said Harry.
>
> Griphook looked at him out of the corners of his slanting black eyes.
>
> 'You are an unusual wizard, Harry Potter.' […]
>
> 'If there was a wizard of whom I would believe that they did not seek personal gain,' said Griphook finally,' it would be you, Harry Potter. Goblins and elves are not used to the protection, or the respect, that you have shown this night. Not from wand carriers.'" (Rowling, Deathly Hallows, 393-94).

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One aspect of liminality is its role reversal which is purported to invert hierarchy in social structures and thus through its "withdrawal from normal modes of social action, it can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs" (Turner, The Ritual 167). This role reversal usually takes place with the initiand being vilified by the commoners before his ritual elevation to the higher status. On a symbolic level this inversion of roles, might be responsible for emphasizing a warning to the chief-elect about the lure of power and value of humility with which he is supposed to bear the staff: "Rituals of status reversal, according to this principal, mask the weak in strength and demand of the strong that htye be passive and patiently endure the symbolic and even real aggression shown against them by structural inferiors" (Turner, The Ritual 175-76). Despite his being born with a popularity Harry has to live on the fringes of insult and neglect. It is what makes him immune to the trappings of ego and power. Dumbledore's comment on power are quite relevant as they depict power as infectious from which only a person who has no desire for it but on whom it is thrust: "I had proven, as a very young man, that power was my weakness and my temptation. It is a curious thing, Harry, but perhaps those who are best suited to power are those who have never sought it. Those, who, like you, have leadership thrust upon them, and take up the mantle because they must, and find to their own surprise that they wear it well" (Rowling, Deathly Hallows, 575).

Michael Cart and Christine Jenkins, in *The Heart Has Its Reasons*, define YA literature as the "quintessential literature of the outsider who is too often rendered invisible by society" (Bittner 32).The power of the weak over the politically, economically or physically powerful lay in another sociological process which Turner observes in tribal society where the conquered tribes acclaimed mystical power over the politically superior tribes. The defeated ones became the part of tribal societies by claiming spiritual and moral powers which terrified the powerful ones and thus created a kind of anti-structure within the tribe, which controlled and displaced the political manifestations of power by the powerful one. This process of realignment of powers is not overtly conscious one and operates on the level of symbols and rituals. Further, this power is not used individually but for the welfare of the society as a whole—for rains, for fertility etc. and its function is to have a kind of egalitarian societal system. Turner calls this identification of political weaker with moral,

mystical and ethical sentiment of the society as "the powers of the weak" (Turner, The Ritual 109). Harry Potter is not an accomplished wizard like Voldemort, he is at his best a moderately gifted wizard. Yet he possesses a power which a wizard like Lord Voldemort is unaware of. It is the mystical power of love which is exemplified by his mother's sacrifice for him. Harry showcases the strength of the mystical strength of friendship, love and loyalty which enables him to defeat more powerful and skilled death-eaters again and again throughout the novels.

Liminality is also attributed by the juxtaposition of "'open' as against 'closed morality', the latter being essentially the normative system of bounded, structured, particularistic group" (Turner, The Ritual 110). In words of Turner: "Prophets and artists tend to be liminal and marginal people, 'edge men', who strive with a passionate sincerity to rid themselves of the clichés associated with status incumbency and role playing and to enter into vital relations with other men in fact or imagination" (Turner, The Ritual 128). Patrick Jones while describing a salient feature of Young Adult literature points to the non-conformity as its chief feature: "Indeed, this is a literature full of misfits, iconoclasts, freaks, geeks, and more than a few nonconformists. The non-conformist teen, like Jerry in *The Chocolate War,* is on the outside due to a deliberate choice. The choice is normally to remain true to an inner code, rather than submit to the rules, regulations, or pressures of a larger group, whether it be, classmates, or society. [...]They're iconoclasts, rebels, and deviants. Deviants not sexually, but because they deviate from the formal and normal" (Jones 13). Harry is a subversive power in the novels, "a determined rule-breaker" (Rowling, Deathly Hallows, 545). He frequently breaks the rules of Hogwarts through his forays in the castle. He is rightly described as "breaking a hundred school rules into pieces along the way" (Rowling, Chamber of Secrets, 241) during his encounter with the snake in Chamber of Secrets, as is asserted by Professor McGonagall. This inversion of rules is common to a group of people who are portrayed as the moral center of the novel. Harry's father James Potter, Sirius Black and Lupin too had no regards for rules. There is a strong affinity between characters who flout rules and their presentation as antithesis to other group of characters such as professor Snape and Malfoys who are law abiding and are represented as evil. James and Lily Potter die because they put more faith in their friends than in secrecy. Harry too judges people not on the basis if their credentials but on their openness of heart.

While differentiating community from 'communitas' in the former's hierarchal and rigid stature and the latter's flexible and changeable forms, Turner asserts: "The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchal system of politic-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of 'more' or 'less'. The second which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of ritual elders" (Turner, The Ritual 96). The distinction between communities and 'communitas' is that of between a rigid structure which becomes immune to change and a flexible one which allows for different permutations and combinations. 'Communitas' sustaining on the transitional state of liminality, question the assumed notions of hierarchical structural superiority within rigidified social conventions which are challenged, subverted and brought to the scrutiny of public.

The connection between the polluting aspects of liminal periods and societies' abhorrence for whatever is hybrid is fundamental in understanding why certain genres of art, groups of people and periods remain neglected or seen as having dangerous potentials. The answer, according to Turner, lies in the fact that "from the perspectival viewpoint of those concerned with the maintenance of 'structure', all sustained manifestations of 'communitas' must appear as dangerous and anarchical, and have to be hedged around with prescriptions, prohibitions and conditions" (Turner, Process 109). Elaine Quinn analyses YA heroes as potentially dangerous for society as they refuse to be assimilated into the pattered nature of societal expectation: "Pathologized as deviant, ascribed with endless maladies that capitalize on societal anxieties and intolerances, and diagnosed as irrational, dependent, and non-conforming, young adults are viewed as dangerous and unpredictable aberrations that must be cured of their reckless natures. In a word, they are transgressors, who blatantly resist their assignment to "normal" cultural boxes" (Quinn 50). The axis around which the Harry Potter novels revolve is antagonism between pure-bloods who consider themselves as the rightful heir of magical powers and mudbloods who are from muggle families possessing magical ability. Along with mudbloods are aligned half-bloods, one of whose parents has been a muggle. The mudbloods become a victim of oppression under the regime of Lord Voldemort who appoints

himself as the champion of the pure-bloods. Even the mention of mud-blood arouses strong emotions who are considered as thieves of magical power. This hatred of non-magical people stems from the fact of their being hybrid ones, neither here nor there, existing between muggle and magical world.

The lack of stringent configuration in communitas prompts derivation of 'spontaneous' and 'immediate' as its governing marks. Harry lives on the brink of moment and is not systematic. He doesn't love lessons much and is in love with Quidditch which hovers on immediacy of experience. His response to others is spontaneous, natural and instinctive.

In instant or spontaneous Communitas there is always an impending sense of catastrophe and disaster. There is no doubt that Harry lives on the brink of catastrophe. Each novel brings this sense of doom quite clearly and as we move towards the final part, this atmosphere of disaster gets only thicker. Harry is a scarred boy in the beginning and ultimately he comes to realize that 'one cannot live till the other dies.' The novels begin with a tragedy which colour the subsequent life of the hero.

The underlying linkage between property and structure of the society, where property and individual possessions are the visible forms of commitments and principles on which any society is based, adduces conception of folk theatres as communitas. Exploring this association between property and community, Turner observes: "Property and structure are undisseverably interrelated, and the constitutions of persisting social units incorporate both dimensions as well as the core values that legitimatize the existence and forms of both" (Turner, The Ritual 146). Any attempt to break away from the fabric of the society through communitas would ultimately pass through renunciation or escaping from the possessions. The impulse to move away from property, to quote Turner again, represents inhabiting "the fringes and interstices of the social structure of his time, and to keep them in permanently liminal stage" (Turner, The Ritual 145). Harry has to live with Dursleys in utter poverty. He sleeps in a cupboard and has to borrow clothes of his cousin Dudley. Eve when he acquires the wealth of his parents, he is more ashamed to have it. His friendship with Weasleys, who are depicted as quite poor and living in a shabby house, gives him happiness which is not marred by their poor condition. He loves Burrow, the house of Weasleys, despite its poverty:

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> It looked as though it had once been a large stone pigsty, but extra rooms had been added here and there until it was several storeys high and so crooked it looked as though it was held up by magic. […] Round the front door lay a jumble of wellington boots and a very rusty cauldron. Several fat brown chickens were pecking their way around the yard.
> 'It's not much,' said Ron.
> 'It's brilliant,' said Harry happily, thinking of Privet Drive. (Rowling, Chamber of Secrets, 29).

If communitas seem to lack structure in the modern sense it doesn't mean that they are simply chaotic or bare. The interrelatedness of various components found in communitas is in itself a kind of form within which diverse components exist in dialectical relationship. This dialectic exists at the very heart of communitas which is essentially the unreductiveness of human person to a single faculty. Turner locates into communitas a revelation of the wholeness of our being in communication with the wholeness of others: "Communitas has an existential quality; it involves the whole man in his relation to other whole men. Structure, on the other hand, has cognitive quality" (Turner, The Ritual, 127). Harry Potter too believes in wholeness of communication. He does not value human beings only on the basis of their cognitive qualities, rather he finds emotional spectrum of human beings as of more consequence than his/her intellectual mapping. That is why in the beginning he rejects Draco and chooses Ron instead. He is brave not calculating which is amply revealed in his various escapades. His friendship with Luna and Hagrid despite their eccentricities attests the fact that for him it is the invaluable, eccentric, impenetrable human personality is more important than materialistic, selfish human beings.

Katrherine Proukou discusses the inherent strength of YA literature in its bringing forth an alternate reality, a reality which does not follow rigid conventionalities of adult world but which appeals to the power of imagination and demolishes the entrenched structuralities of human society as well as human mind, thus becoming a rites-de-passage in itself:

> Perhaps the extraordinary success of the Harry Potter series and the recent growing interest and popularity of YA literature in general demonstrate the value of this disposition. For YA

literature presents the world of imagination as real not hallucinatory, feelings as reliable not deceitful, nature as essential not expendable, danger as challenging not demoralizing, enemies as teachers as well as adversaries, and life as a surprising process neither exactly fair nor completely capricious. Young Adult Literature, as a rite of its own, has its own prophetic role. (Proukou 68)

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A Critical Study of an Intellectual Celebrity: A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

Dr. Panchali Mukherjee
Associate Professor and
Coordinator of the Department of Humanities
Christ Academy Institute for Advanced Studies
Christ Nagar, Bangalore
E-mail Id: panchali.mukherjee@gmail.com

Abstract: The research paper "A Critical Study of an Intellectual Celebrity: A. P. J. Abdul Kalam" studies the ideology of technological nationalism in the context of A. P. J. Abdul Kalam (1931-2015) and Arun Tiwari's text *Wings of Fire: An Autobiography* (1999). It studies the way in which technology affects the Indian society and culture in order to promote connectedness and a stronger national identity. The paper attempts to establish the idea that the success of a nation can only be determined by the way a nation, that is, India in this context tries to innovate and diffuse technology across its people. It tries to elucidate the idea that technological nationalists such as A. P. J. Abdul Kalam believe that the presence of national R & D efforts, the effectiveness of these efforts are key drivers to the overall growth, sustainability and prosperity of a nation. The paper illustrates the correlation between economic growth and nationalism.

There is indeed a profound relationship between technology and Indian nationalism in this case which is manifested through a painting that A.P.J. Abdul Kalam comes across in the reception lobby at Wallops Flight Facility at Wallops Island, a NASA facility in East Coast, Virginia. This place was the base for NASA's sounding rocket programme. The painting depicts a battle scene with rocket flying in the background and the soldiers on the side launching the rockets were not white but dark-skinned with the racial features of people found in South Asia. On closer examination he finds that the painting depicts Tipu Sultan's army fighting the British. Kalam feels happy to see an Indian glorified in NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) as a hero of warfare rocketry although it was a fact that had been long forgotten in India (*Wings of Fire: An Autobiography* 37-38). This exhibits the glorification of the Indian historical past in terms of

technological progress and boosts Indian nationalism by showing India to be having an indigenous technological programme even in the eighteenth century thereby negating the theory that India's technological programme is imported. In the process it creates a strong national identity and also talks of a progressive Indian past.

In the mid-twentieth century, intellectuals in a nation were very nationalistic about science and technology and the trend still continues in some of the nations. India is a nation that is very nationalistic about science and technology. In the "Introduction" to *Wings of Fire: An Autobiography* (1999), A. P. J. Abdul Kalam states:

> This book is being released at a time when India's technological endeavours, to assert its sovereignty and strengthen its security, are questioned by many in the world. Historically, people have always fought among themselves on one issue or another. Prehistorically, battles were fought over food and shelter. With the passage of time, wars were waged over religious and ideological beliefs; and now the dominant struggle of sophisticated warfare is for economic and technological supremacy. Consequently, economic and technological supremacy is equated with political power and world control. (*Wings of Fire* xiii)

A.P. J. Abdul Kalam on the occasion of releasing the book, *Wings of Fire: An Autobiography* states that the national identity of a nation, that is, India in this case is formulated in the recent times on the basis of economic and technological supremacy. A nation that has attained economic and technological supremacy is said to be strong and powerful which boosts the nationalistic (the policy or doctrine of asserting the interests of one's own nation) image of the very same nation. In India, the story of *Agni*, *Prithvi*, *Akash*, *Trishul* and *Nag* missiles have raised the nation to the level of a missile power of international reckoning (*Wings of Fire: An Autobiography* ii). Thus, the example highlights significance of the relationship between technology and nationalism in the context of a nation's national identity.

> Techno-nationalism assumes that the key unit of analysis for the study of technology is the nation: nations are the units that innovate, that have R&D budgets and cultures of innovation, that diffuse and use technology. The success of nations, it is believed by techno-

> nationalists (who rarely if ever label themselves as such), is dependent on how well they do this. ("Contradictions of Techno-Nationalism and Techno-Globalism")

Wings of Fire: An Autobiography is a saga of India's search for scientific and technological self-sufficiency. Prof. Vikram Sarabhai was A. P. J. Abdul Kalam's mentor and both were techno-nationalists who have contributed immensely and valuably to the Indian Science Programme. Once Prof. Sarabhai came to Thumba on one of his routine visits he was shown the operation of the nose cone jettisoning mechanism. Prof. Sarabhai was asked to formally activate the system. To their horror, when he pressed the button, there wasn't any reaction. They asked him to wait for a few minutes while they re-forged some connections. When he pressed the button for a second time, the pyros was fired and the nose cone was jettisoned. Prof. Sarabhai congratulated the team, called Dr. A. P. J. Kalam and talked to him of rocket launching facilities such as launch pads, block houses, radar, telemetry etcetera. He spoke of the failure in activating the system in order to probe the reason behind it and then solve it. The apparent reason that came to the fore was that they lacked a single roof to carry out the system integration of all the rockets and the rocket systems thereby making Prof. Sarabhai decide to set up a Rocket Engineering Section which further led to the setting up of a Rocket Engineering Laboratory. This instance shows the vision and the commitments of techno-nationalists such as Prof. Sarabhai and Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam in making a country progress on the basis of technology. They have been credited with genuine leadership qualities and inspired budding scientists and engineers both through ideas and examples thereby training many scientists and engineers who later took charge of important scientific projects (*Wings of Fire* 61-63). The relentless efforts of the scientists and engineers catapulted India to a level of a technologically progressive nation leaving behind a legacy of a progressive scientific programme.

> Ernest Gellner refers to nationalism as a way of adapting to a modern, industrial and globalizing world. ("Contradictions of Techno-Nationalism and Techno-Globalism")

India displays technological nationalism by developing rockets which made India capable of producing indigenous sounding rockets. It is seen as the revival of 18th century vision of Tipu Sultan thereby linking it to nationalism. The Thumba Equatorial Launch Station was developed in active collaboration with France, USA and USSR. It was envisioned as the centre of India's integral

national space programme. The actual journey however began with *Rohini* Sounding Rocket Programme (RSR). This programme was responsible for the development and fabrication of sounding rockets and their associated on-board systems for scientific investigations in India. Under the RSR programme, a family of rocket sounding programmes were developed. These rockets had wide ranging capabilities and several hundred such rockets have been launched for various scientific and technological studies. It is an effort to develop the country to make it adapt to a modern, industrial and globalizing world (*Wings of Fire* 41-43).

The success of a nation is determined by the way a nation tries to innovate and diffuse technology across its people. In the "Epilogue" of *Wings of Fire*, Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam states:

> A nation needs both economic prosperity and strong security for growth and development. Our *Self Reliance Mission in Defence System 1995-2005* will provide the Armed Forces with a state-of-the-art competitive weapons system. The *Technology Vision* – 2020 plan will put into place certain schemes and plans for the economic growth and prosperity of the nation. These two plans have evolved out of the nation's dreams. I earnestly hope and pray that the development resulting from these two plans – *Self Reliance Mission* and *Technology Vision – 2020* – will eventually make our country strong and prosperous, a "developed" nation.

The above example shows the vision of a developing nation as stated by Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. A nation can grow, be self-sufficient and prosperous if it develops technologically which can only happen when there is realization of one's dream and its fruits are distributed across the people.

The technology affects the Indian society and culture in order to promote connectedness and a stronger national identity.

> Techno-nationalism also takes other forms leading to the creation of national identities fit for a technological age. ("Contradictions of Techno-Nationalism and Techno-Globalism")
>
> A few nations who have grown very strong technologically, over the past few centuries, have wrested control, for their own purposes. These major powers have become

> the self-proclaimed leaders of the new world order. What does a country of one billion people, like India, do in such a situation? We have no other option but to be technologically strong. But, can India be a leader in the field of technology? My answer is an emphatic 'Yes'. (*Wings of Fire* xiii-xiv)
>
> This story is an account, I hope, not just of personal triumphs and tribulations but of the successes and setbacks of the science establishment in modern India, struggling to establish itself in the technological forefront. It is the story of national aspiration and of co-operative endeavour. And, as I see it, the saga of India's search for scientific self-sufficiency and technological competence is a parable for our times.
>
> (*Wings of Fire* xv)

The above examples exhibits that for a nation to forge a strong national identity in the present world it should be technologically strong. Thus, a developing nation such as India will be able to create a strong identity for itself through its struggle on the technological forefront. A nation that is technologically well-developed is a strong nation.

> This innovation-centric techno-nationalist understanding is central to national histories of technologies. ("Contradictions of Techno-Nationalism and Techno-Globalism")

The idea that technological nationalists such as Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam believe that the presence of national R & D efforts and the effectiveness of these efforts are key drivers to the overall growth, sustainability and prosperity of a nation forms the cornerstone of a nation's growth and prosperity.

In *Wings of Fire*, the concept of techno-nationalism is explained in the context of the Indian milieu. A country has to be technologically powerful to establish its own national identity and to attain growth. It is a necessary prerequisite to establish the growth trajectory of a developing nation like India.

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Women Empowerment and Gender Positioning: Critically looking at an Indian Speech by Smriti Irani and an American speech by Hillary Clinton

Sayantan Mukherjee
Ph.D. Student in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics
Department of English, Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona 85281
United States
Contact: **smukhe27@asu.edu**,
sayantan.muukherjee@gmail.com

Abstract: This study employs a broader critical discourse analytic framework (CDA) to understand the similarities and differences between two public speeches by Smriti Irani and Hillary Clinton on the general issue of women empowerment. These two speeches are situated at different points in recent history. While the speech by Smriti Irani took place in 2014, Hillary Clinton's speech took place in 2010. Despite their difference in timeline, both speeches serve as a potential dataset for analyzing the issue of women empowerment as more than a topic of gender equality. Due to the fact that these two speeches are available on YouTube, their availability bolsters their currency on the crucial issue of women empowerment that transcends the boundaries of two different countries.

Keywords: CDA, power, agent of change, identity, nation, culture, empowerment, India, United States.

Introduction

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze two public speeches by two political figures addressing the women empowerment issue as a whole. One of the speeches is by Smriti Irani, Minister of Information and Broadcasting (since 2016, and former Minister of HRD, in office 2014-2016) of Government of India, on the occasion of International Women's Conference 2014. The other speech is by an extremely famous public figure and politician Hilary Clinton (67th United States Secretary of State, in office 2009-2013) at TED Women 2010. These two speeches serve as potential researchable data due to their apparent levels of similarities and differences. How two hugely different public figures in two different continents address similar issues in different

manners is worth something to investigate further. This study aims to investigate how the analysis of these two speeches will inform the field of CDA in terms of issues like women empowerment in different geographic and sociocultural contexts, public figures (women) defining or redefining their roles as agents of change, and how typical lexical usage facilitates their oratory.

Theoretical Background

CDA is a dynamic field and is enriched by the works of many scholars and proponents of the field.

> Critical Discourse Analysis explores the connections between the use of language and the social and political contexts in which it occurs. It explores issue such as gender, ethnicity, cultural difference, ideology and identity and how these are both constructed and reflected in texts. (Paltridge 186)

In general CDA as a school or paradigm is characterized by a number of principles: for example, all approaches are problem-oriented, and thus necessarily interdisciplinary and eclectic. Moreover, CDA is typified as a research paradigm which is interested in "demystifying ideologies and power through the systematic and retroductable investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual)" (Wodak and Meyer 2009). CDA has never been and has never attempted to provide one single theory or a single methodological approach. By the virtue of being CDA it is rather a convergent point of different kinds of methodologies. In the field of CDA the studies derive from different theoretical backgrounds and are oriented towards different data and methodologies. The definitions of the terms like 'discourse', 'critical', 'ideology', and 'power' are so multi-faced that CDA always demands to specify which research orientation these terms are relating to when given in a context. To give an exhaustive survey of all the research that has been done under this name of the field is beyond the scope of this paper of mine. Thus, a very short nut-shell survey of the literature focusing on the three major scholars of CDA, Fairclough, Wodak, and van Dijk, is provided below.

Norman Fairclough is one of the most renowned scholars in CDA. He takes a grand theoretical position in his approach to CDA. His approach is also called the Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA). Fairclough focuses on social conflict in Marxian tradition and emphasizes on

detecting its linguistic manifestations in discourses. In so doing, he focuses on particular elements of dominance, difference, and resistance. According his approach, every social practice has a semiotic element. For example productive activity, the means of production, social relations, social identities, cultural values, consciousness, and semiosis are dialectically related elements of social practice. He understands CDA as the analysis of dialectical relationships between semiosis (including language) and other elements of social practices. Ruth Wodak is another major name in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis. Her approach is said to be one of the most linguistically oriented approaches in CDA. Her approach to CDA is called the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). In this approach, she explicitly tries to establish a theoretical premise of discourse by establishing a connection between fields of action (Girth 1996), genres, discourses, and text. Although DHA is aligned to Critical Theory, general social theory plays a minor role compared with the discourse model and the emphasis on historical analysis.

Teun van Dijk marks a new critical paradigm as a corrective to more traditional approaches to discourse analysis. This approach to CDA is called Socio-cognitive Approach. This approach is on the side of socio-psychological side of the CDA field. This framework serves as "systematizing phenomena of social reality" (Wodak and Meyer 25). The approach is in the tradition of social representational theory (Moscovici and Duveen). In this framework, the focal triad is interpreted between discourse, cognition, and society. Discourse is seen as a communicative event, including conversational interaction, written text, as well as associated gestures, face-work, typographical layout, images, and any other semiotic or multimedia dimension of signification. Van Dijk, through this framework, understands linguistics in a broad 'structural-functional' sense. In so doing, he argues that CDA should be based on a theory of context. He insists that researchers in CDA should examine the ways structures and strategies of text and talk are conditioned by and also condition social, political, cultural processes, and structures; and should address issues of power, domination, inequality, resistance and many others.

Methodology and Data Collection

As it has been articulated in the literature that no one model is sufficient for CDA, it would be wise to incorporate more than one approach to obtain the criticality of any research. In this research, CDA will serve as the broader methodological paradigm. In a general sense, CDA will be used to investigate the data drawing upon different approaches within the diverse analytical tools of CDA. This qualitative study of the data will be carried out by broadly incorporating models suggested by Fairclough, Wodak, and Van Dijk. The data will be investigated for relevant lexical items, phrases, repetition of words and these will facilitate the unpacking of the ideologies, value-systems, social-cultural backgrounds that have been "out of sight" (Hyland 4) rather than overtly stated in the text. How the speeches have been performed, what the underlying use of discourse is, and how all these relate to different views or thought processes are the concerns of this study. The investigation aims at finding out both similarities differences in ideologies, power structures, and social dynamics of these speeches by the two very different public figures at hand.

The data that will be analyzed are general (mostly sentence by sentence English, see the appendix section) transcriptions of two small segments (for Irani, it is 0:31-5:52 seconds and for Clinton, it is 0:31- 6:28 seconds) from the two public speeches occurred on two different occasions and in two very different geographic contexts. The reason behind choosing the segments and not the whole speeches is that these small segments are the most identifiable relevant portions as far as their focus on women empowerment is concerned. Both the speeches are available on YouTube. I will use the excerpts from those transcriptions wherever necessary. Entire relevant segments have been transcribed and attached in the appendix section of the paper. In this research the public speech by Smriti Irani is on the occasion of International Women's Conference in India, in 2014; and the speech by Hilary Clinton is at the conference called TED Women in 2010, in Washington DC, USA. Since both of these speeches have occurred at different points of time in the contemporary history and the speakers are presenting their talks in their own ways, I will use my own discretion to represent the segments that are potentially comparable.

As far as some background information is concerned, Smriti Irani is the Minister of Information and Broadcasting in India, and formerly, she was a model and actress in Hindi film

industry. Although she has been a follower of BJP's political ideology, in 2014, it was recently that she had become the HRD minister after the historical victory of BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) over INC (Indian National Congress). Hilary Clinton, on the other hand, is a veteran politician and an activist regarding women empowerment issues in the United States. During the speech analyzed in this paper, she was serving as the 67th Secretary of States in the USA. She has always been a very good orator, and there are many more videos available on YouTube where she talks about the issues related to women empowerment.

Analysis and Discussion

I will broadly talk about the similarities and the differences in terms of their format of speeches, their choice of certain lexical items, their use of intertextuality, their portrayal of women empowerment issues, their representation(s) of individual national identity, their representation of "self " and their identity as woman, their use of rhetorical elements, their depiction of themselves as agents of change, their manifestation/acknowledgement of their political career, and their worldview of power.

Both of them use the general format of addressing the audience and thanking the organizers in the beginning. After that, they draw upon women empowerment issues by using quotes, stories, and narratives from their experiences. They talk about the issue being a global one. They talk about the benefits of empowering women for the bigger benefit of humanity, safety, and the prospect of the nation and world. These are things that give these two speeches an even ground, apart from the fact that both of them are talking on occasions of women empowerment. However, Irani and Clinton mark a difference at the very beginning of the speeches. Irani is not using any notes on paper for the speech and is addressing the audience drawing upon (possibly) immediately preceding speakers' talks and also her reflection on those. However, Clinton seems to be using some written notes to perform this oratory on stage. I am not sure in the case of Clinton whether or not she is preceded by any other speakers on that conference, but Irani is definitely preceded by some and she uses elements from those speaker's speeches to make the talk a response or continued "conversation" at times.

Although the topic or the broader issue both of these speakers are addressing are similar,

there is hardly any match in terms of the content words that they use. The only five major words that are found closely comparable are "women", "world", "country", "nation", and "cause." An interesting side of the story is that Irani uses the word "nation/national" much frequently to convey the sense of the country, whereas it the label is "country" for Clinton. The key words or phrases that Irani uses are, to mention some of those, "constructively heard", "speak/speaking up", "nation(s)", "pursuit", "culture", "humanity", "India", "cause", "conflict", "politics/political", "ideology", "race", "unnatural", "ownership", "resources", "globally", "infant death" and so on. On the contrary, some of the content keywords (or even phrases) by Clinton are "decision was made", "change", "agents", "women and girls", "cause", "controversy", "friends", "government", "policy", "equality", "prosperity", "fairness", "country", "agenda", "rights", "men", "opportunity", "world", "American", "dramatically", "children", "threat", and "subjugation."

These words can denote a myriad of configurations about the positions of the speakers. In Irani's speech, there are no such strong agentive words as it the case in Clinton's repertoire here. Words that are loaded with socio-political meanings are there in Clinton's speech; for example "government", "policy", "agenda", "rights", "subjugation" etc. These words alone say that Clinton is confident about her political identity. She never mentions the term "politics" in her speech, but these other terms convey her strong political identity in a very conspicuous manner. Moreover, "men" and "friend" are the two words that are not at all present in Irani's speech. This can also imply certain things about her discomfort on visualizing gender equality with the presence of "men", or even, embracing camaraderie with a heterogenous group consisting of both "men" and "women" "friends." Clinton can recognize many faces in the crowd and addresses them as friends. This discursive gesture suggests that Clinton is a veteran activist in this arena of befriending anyone and everyone whenever needed. However, when Irani addresses anyone during the speech, she uses 'Ms.' or 'the lady'. It can either mean that she is not yet at a stage where she has made many friends in this arena, or it can also denote that, being an Indian, she maintains the decorum of addressing anyone in a more formal manner, hence creating a slight distance between her and the others. The word "men" can be a problem when one is talking about "women empowerment." Even Clinton uses it only once just to sound neutral, and Irani never even tries that. Clinton, most of the time,

says "women and girls" when she is addressing the women issues; However, the chosen label is only "women" for Irani. It suggests that Clinton is overtly segregating girls from women and also dissolving the boundaries whenever the issue relates to any of them.

The element of intertextuality is very frequent when Irani speaks. She alludes to Ramayana, she responds to other speakers who have preceded her, she talks about a study done in 1996. This makes the speech more interactive for Irani since she was new in the domain of politics at that time and could not find the dexterity in talking about her own opinion or agenda as Clinton could. There is no such case of overt intertextuality by Clinton. In Irani's depiction of women empowerment, the issue is mild and more general in manner. She tries to associate this issue for the benefit of nation and human beings. She says women do not have problem in speaking; however, they have a problem in "being constructively heard." Here she clearly states that women issues need to be heard and then need to be acted upon. In the case of Clinton, she clearly states that women issues are not just "moral" or "humanitarian" issues; they are broader and more crucial than that. She emphasizes if women issues are neglected, any nation will face obvious threat and danger. Clinton makes it clear that her government includes policies for women equality and empowerment as a cornerstone of government's foreign policies. Clearly, Irani does not have that authority to either implement or even directly talk about those things in her speech. Thus, she remains mild and more general on those topics.

Both of the speakers project their national identities extremely strongly whenever needed. However, they operate in different manners. Irani talks about Ramayana, Lord Rama (Indian epic and its main protagonist), talks about infusing 'feminine' virtues in achieving a national identity, and talks about a lady from Sri Lanka to show a cultural similarity. So, Irani's way of defining national identity is all about only ideological beliefs and cultural depictions. On the contrary, Clinton resorts to making prevalent that she is from the United States and that she strongly and overtly represents that country on many occasions. She also mentions the name of former (current at the time of this speech) president Obama. In terms of national identity, she renders a different level of indexicality—she unabashedly correlates it with the flourishing of girls and women. She says where girls and women flourish, the value system of a nation is defined. She mentions the

government and American foreign policy several times--that makes her national identity conspicuous in the text.

Both Irani's and Clinton's representations of "self" are different. Irani foregrounds her woman identity on many occasions. She talks about the incident when another lady from a different political party embraces her only because she is a woman. She also mentions that she and the lady from Afghanistan are same despite their geographic and linguistic differences; one of the major reasons for that is they are both women. Towards the end of the segment, she emphasizes her role as a woman and offers her opinion based on that ground. In the case of Clinton, her depiction of "self" is little different from Irani. She foregrounds herself as a "woman" clearly as opposed to a "girl." She foregrounds her woman activist identity whenever she has the chance. She embraces her woman identity more by relating her struggles and her sources of inspiration to the numerous ones who are doing the same. Her very acknowledgement of attending TED Women is the foregrounding of her strong woman "self." She even touches upon the cause of bringing about the change in the scenario because of one potential reason that she has a personal commitment to this as she is a powerful woman.

Both of them are brilliant orators. And oratory is marked by the use of rhetorical elements. Irani draws upon logos (logic), ethos (credibility), and Kairos (spatial temporal context). She uses different resources to strengthen her arguments. She talks about studies and numbers in that, she talks about her woman identity aligning with many others in the crowd, and she also uses the perfect context for bringing in every intertextual element in the discourse. It is clear that she has listened to many of the previous speakers, and her responding to those when she had the dais is a perfect element of Kairos. Also, her not having any written notes adds to her credibility as a good orator. She employs the popular rhetorical technique of using three short speech units to compare and show different aspects related to any issue.

Excerpt 1 (taken from Irani's segment)

44. I know that conflict arises when there is widespread

45. poverty; conflict arises when there is illiteracy; conflict

46. arises when there is a race to take ownership of resources.
47. But we also know that when women are put at the helm of
48. affairs, conflict has this unnatural way of decreasing.

This way of describing also reemphasizes her epistemic stance. On the other hand, Clinton also uses all the three rhetorical elements that have been mentioned in the case of Irani. However, adding to that, she uses emotional appeal (pathos) when she talks about women that carved the projects with their own hands and also when she talks about struggle issues of women. The primary similarity of Clinton to Irani lies in the section where Clinton uses the three comparative phrases to show the gravity of the issue and also to bolster her epistemic stance.

Excerpt 2 (taken from Clinton's Segment)

49. Because women's equality is not just a moral issue, it's
50. not just a humanitarian issue, it is not just a fairness
51. issue; it is a security issue, it is a prosperity issue,
52. and it is a peace issue.

This is one of the areas where Clinton outweighs Irani. In her speech, Irani never tries to foreground herself as an agent of change. She keeps on talking about how she takes pride in her women identity like many others, but never ever depicts herself as an agent that can bring about change in the scenario. Clinton portrays herself as an active agent in this struggle. She identifies herself with all the women who have brought about change in some manner or the other. She explicitly foregrounds herself as one of the "agents of change." She also highlights her duty as an agent of change by talking about the rights and roles that she, along with her government, has brought into American government policies.

Excerpt 3 (taken from Clinton's segment)

20. …as
21. Secretary of State with the great honor of representing the
23. United States, I have made clear that the rights and the
24. roles of women and girls will be a central tenet of
25. American foreign policy.

As it has been become evident by now from the preceding discuaion, Clinton never overtly states the term "political" or "politics" in her entire speech; however, Irani does that twice: First time when she talks about another lady from a different political ideological school, and the second time when she talks about the lady from Afghanistan. She is new in the field of politics, and like many other speeches, she does not want to lose an opportunity to mention her (professional) political side of the career to redefine her identity as a politician. Clinton does not have to do that because she is already a veteran politician and serves at one of the highest levels in the U.S. government. Thus, in spite of overtly mentioning a political identity, Irani is not that impactful as Clinton in this regard. Another explanation might also be inferred that this is not the right place and situation to become overtly political. The situation demands a solidarity in women's empowerment movement, which Clinton does perfectly and confidently. However, Irani, being a seemingly novice candidate in the field (at least, up until the time of this speech), still counts upon her political identity as a convincing standpoint for situations like this.

The overt mention of power is there in Irani when she talks about the resources being claimed by only one group ("race"). There is no other mention of power in the speech by Irani; whereas Clinton conveys the notion of power through the issues of safety, security, threat, and economic growth. She also alludes to the notion of power by depicting the lady in Kirgizstan who is the President there. It shows the power, according to Clinton, is when one achieves a position in the hierarchy and has the ability to implement rules or run a government. She also foregrounds her ability to implement rules or bring about changes of any sort on women empowerment issues when she depicts herself as the Secretary of State. This is not at all the case with Irani. Although she

serves at an honorable postion in Indian government body, she lacks the ability to redefine and project that power in her speech.

Conclusions and Future Implications

The critical analysis of the data unpacks some crucial issues in the relevant context. Both Irani and Clinton try to portray themselves as women who have authority to speak and have the power to influence. That is why they are both invited speakers. However, along with some major differences there are some similarities in their speeches--both of them are talking about change, and both of them are trying to connect themselves with the audience that comprises other activists, political figures, and followers. Thus, the impact upon these audiences defines and is defined by the speakers' personalities as public figures. However, being a veteran politician and activist, Clinton can count upon her credibility and talk about her authority in public space like this TED talk. On the contrary, as a newcomer in the field of politics, Irani cannot do that. Since she has not gathered that much authority yet, she cannot claim herself to be an agent of change. Moreover, the political ideology she adheres to never explicitly spoke about the agency of women till then (and even now that is far from being one of the main mottos of BJP). Back in 2014, whenever BJP talked about women empowerment, it centered around the notion like giving basic utilities to marginalized women. Embracing the viewpoint on uplifting the hierarchical status of women in India as compared to men, to a certain extent, was yet to find its place in public speeches by BJP leaders.

Although boasting about success in the domain of gender equality has found its currency in recent times, India, in in a broad sense, is still an extremely patriarchal society till date. Even if there are rules in the government policies (which are considerably low in amount as compared to those which favor patriarchy) the implementation is anything but well-achieved so far. Thus, coming from the kind of political castle that is in no conflict with the broad patriarchal spectrum of Indian society, Irani becoming an agent of change would be unwarranted and would cause a blow to her bourgeoning political career. Yet, she has to talk about women empowerment. That explains why she finds her points hitting the national and cultural identity of India by drawing upon epics and praises of the motherland as heaven. To strengthen her standpoint as a leader who is aware of the factual grounds, she talks about the study that mentions a gradual decrease in infant death over

the past several years. Her soulfully praising the motherhood of women or infusing feminine virtues into our country's/ motherland's identity is ideologically pertinent to the sociocultural belief that a woman is best when she is a mother.

In both of the speeches, there is a tension between depicting themselves as individuals as well as representatives of different countries, ideologies, and socio-political systems at the same time. In the case of Clinton, all these are well-projected, and the she is able to ostensibly strike a balance between the individual Clinton and the representative Clinton of several other membership units. Whereas, in the case of Irani, individual Irani is near nonexistent in her speech. She always identifies herself as a woman, and that too, in broad general terms. She cannot exercise her power to act on her own. She is always a representative of a particular country, ideology, and socio-political system. Thus, Irani being a good orator through her marvelous use of rhetorical elements does not help her in becoming an agent of change, neither does the agency of change help her define as a strong individual in her speech.

The future implication of this sort of a study is to be developed into a more robust investigation by corroborating further analyses employing different theoretical standpoints that would sustain methodological eclecticism. Moreover, incorporating other theories of political discourse analysis can help unpack more crucial aspects on the issue of gender equality and women empowerment on a global scale. The study started as a mere investigation for finding similarities and differences in two public speeches by two extremely different public figures. However, at the end of the study, it eventually unfolds into layers of tension, ideologies, membership units, projected identities, and labels for the construction of female gender driven by socio-cultural undertones. The tension between the individual and the membership ideologies is a key factor in any kind of oration by political leaders. It emphasizes the notion of affordance by any social actor on what to embrace, how to embrace, and when to embrace. Although this is a very small-scale comparative study at a much simple theoretical level, it can inform the field of critical discourse analysis, language in action, and political science in India as well as in the United States. While India as a largely socialist country heading towards capitalism needs stronger individuals to be at the political helms, the United States, a capitalist country suffering from economic recession and

worldwide competition, also needs to redefine its political ideologies towards achieving a more homogeneous sustainable national and cultural belief system.

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Appendix

Excerpt 1/ Smriti Irani [0:31-5:52 seconds]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2b6Q_8iGF0k (current at the time of data collection)

1. Well women don't have a problem in speaking, they have a
2. problem in being heard.
3. (0mitted)[Thanks the organization for this conference]
4. So that they can come here and speak up and also be very

constructively heard. I had two very senior, and experienced ladies give the worldview with regards to global connect and conflict. While I was listening to one of the pioneers in the women's movement in Europe, I heard her talk about nations in pursuit of protecting the national identities, I heard Ms. Anderson quote Mahatma Gandhi. And when I was reflecting on this pursuit of protecting national identity, my thoughts went to the Lady from Sri Lanka, who is sitting here.

We all in our country, that is India, absorb and follow a lot of values from so called epics like Ramayana.

Omitted [story from Ramayana]

Omitted [Quotes from Ramayana]

Lord Rama turned around and said that "my mother land, my mother is so beautiful that she is greater than all the heavens that human beings seek to achieve."

It is because India as a culture has infused the feminine virtue in pursuit of a strong nation that we serve as individuals not only at national cause but also at the cause of humanity.

Omitted

Omitted

Omitted

Ms. Anderson spoke about conflict, which is one of the worrying factors when people converge on a global platform and talk about nation building, national interest, and interest of humanity.

Well to downsize a bit Ms. Anderson, I have been forever (in) conflict with the lady called Rita Bahuguna Joshi, who belongs to a political ideology not similar to mine.

But when I walked in she embraced me warmly, and with a wink and a smile she said, "I embrace you not because you are BJP, I embrace you because you are a woman."

I then went and when I was about to sit I was warmly greeted by Dr. Gaganfur from Afghanistan, A lady who serves at the Minister of Women Affairs.

We don't know each other's language, but we all knew just one thing, that we are culturally connected and especially so because we are both women in the field of politics.

I know that conflict arises when there is widespread poverty; conflict arises when there is illiteracy; conflict arises when there is a race to take ownership of resources.

47. But we also know that when women are put at the helm of
48. affairs, conflict has this unnatural way of decreasing.
49. In 1996 a study was put out by Mr. Subbarao and El Raney,
50. which said, and 72 countries were part of this study, that
51. if nations in 1975 had invested in women's higher
52. education, then in 1985 those nations would have seen a
53. decline in infant deaths by 68%; if those same 72 countries
54. had put in all their resources to increase per capita
55. income of every citizen in those 72 countries the impact on
56. infant deaths would have been 0.
57. Today when I stand here as a woman I offer the opinion that
58. if you truly want to globally connect on issues of
59. humanity; if you truly want to reduce conflict then one of
60. the first steps that we as a nation, we as a world need to
61. make is to empower women.

Excerpt 2 / Hilary Clinton [0:31- 6:28 seconds]

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbPtm1_2AnI (current at the time of data collection)

1. If TED Women is in D C, I have got be there and be part of
2. this.
3. I look out at this audience and I see lots of friends and
4. so many people who have done already such an incredible
5. amount to move forward an agenda for women and girls not
6. just here in our country but around the world.
7. Now I know there is a little bit of controversy over
8. whether there should be a TED Women conference, or not.
9. Because if there were a Ted Women conference what about a
10. TED Men conference.
11. But I think the right decision was made. Because there is
12. still so much that we have to talk about women and men
13. together, about what we need to do to widen the circle of
14. opportunity for women and girls to give those of us who are
15. lucky enough and blessed enough to have so many
16. opportunities in our own life to connect with, network
17. with, contribute to that cause.
18. Because we are already seeing the power of women and girls
19. as agents of change. It's something that I believe in with
20. all of my heart. And as I travel around the country now as
21. Secretary of State with the great honor of representing the
22. United States, I have made clear that the rights and the
23. roles of women and girls will be a central tenet of
24. American foreign policy.

Because where girls and women flourish our values are also reflected.
Before I go too much further in talking about what we are doing in government and what I would like to challenge you to join us in doing, I want to acknowledge…
omitted [talks about the demise of a women activist]
omitted [talks about the demise of a women activist]
I just came from Kirgizstan where there is a woman president who is not only the first female in a State or Government in post-soviet union central Asia, but she is presiding over the first parliamentary democracy in the entire region. The courage it takes for her is something I draw courage from.
Or when I go to visit projects that women have curved out literally with their own hands in places like South Africa, I see in action that sense of resilience and commitment that keep any of us, including me Going.
I know so well that there are women as we speak in our country and elsewhere, who will never hear of this conference and certainly could not have imagined attending, but who are living the kinds of life experiences and involvements that bring us here.
So the United States has made empowering women and girls a cornerstone of our foreign policy.
Because women's equality is not just a moral issue, it's not just a humanitarian issue, it is not just a fairness issue; it is a security issue, it is a prosperity issue, and it is a peace issue.
And therefore when I talk about why we need to integrate women's issues into discussions at the highest levels everywhere in the world, I am not doing it just because I have a personal commitment or not just President Obama cares about it, I am doing it because it's in the vital interest of the United-States of America. Let women work and they drive the economic growth in all sectors; send the girl to school even just for one year and her income dramatically increases for life and her children are more likely to survive and her family more likely to be healthier for years to come.
Give women equal rights and entire nations are more stable and secure. Deny women equal rights and the instability of nations are almost certain. The subjugation of women is

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67. therefore is a threat to the common security of our World
68. and to the national security of our country.

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Magic Realist Experiments in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

Dr. Rahul Chaturvedi
Assistant Professor,
Department of English
Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India
Email: ksiddhartth@gmail.com

Abstract: Salman Rushdie brought about a change and new vigour in the writing modes of Indian English novels. He experimented not only in contemporary postmodern forms and story-telling strategies like magic realism, metafiction and historiographic metafiction, but also remarkably used indigenous story-telling techniques such as oral narratives, incursion of fantastic into a supposedly realist narrative, episodic structure, digressive mode and so on. This paper is an endeavour to examine his magic realist experiments in *Midnight's Children*, which borrows from both European and Indian traditions of the category of the magical. The purpose is to examine how a supposedly historical narrative is fundamentally revelling in the magical with a view to foreground the real and historical.

Keywords: Magic realism, intercultural discourse, post-colonialism, post-modernism.

Magic realism, a coinage from German art critic Franz Roh, refers to the magical representation of reality into art. Unlike realism which purports to give an illusion that it represents the world outside "as it is" or surrealism which intends to unravel deeper inner recess of human mind—psychological and subconscious reality—magic realism blends fantastic with the real. More appropriately, it blurs the boundary between what is magic and what is real through sudden incursion of fantastic elements into an otherwise realistic plot. Defining the term, David Lodge writes that magic realism figures in when "marvellous and impossible events occur in what otherwise purports to be a realistic narrative" (114). The genre today is associated with Latin-American novelists like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and some other continental writers like Gunter Grass, Milan Kundera, Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie. In the novels of these kinds, a bizarre confluence of the fantastic with real is achieved wherein ostensibly realistic characters and settings

suddenly start functioning in magical ways. Thus, magic realism can be roughly described as a narrative that simultaneously juxtaposes two contradictory modes of representation, realistic and fantastic.

Magic realism is a successful postmodern strategy of questioning the mimetic realism, that is, it critiques the possibility of any authentic representation by blurring the boundaries between the real and magical and simultaneously evolving a resistant aesthetics against the theory of verisimilitude between life and literature. Magic realism can be distinguished from other fantasy-genres like science fiction in the sense that it never attempts to move away from the real, and if it evokes magical, the purpose is to intensify the effect of the real. In other words, magic realism can be defined as a subversive realism that questions and challenges, if not altogether refutes, the claims of the faithful representation of the reality as a whole into art. It calls into question the mimetic power of words to adequately represent the world, of language as the mirror of the world, and simultaneously destabilises the nature of Truth and Reality. In brief, magic realism is a successful postmodern tactic of questioning the concept of mimetic representation. It figures as a form that merges the fantastic and real world and blurs the boundaries between them, as a means of presenting history through story. It establishes itself as a subversive realism which lays bare the contradictions involved in the logic of realism.

Furthermore, another feature of this magic realist genre is that it emerges from the confluence of two opposite thought traditions—modern empiricism that gave birth to realistic fiction and pre-modern supernaturalism (in the positive sense of metaphysicality) which works behind mythical and several such other magical tales as a shaping force. More prominently in postcolonial societies like India, it functions as an intercultural discourse building a bridge between colonial realism and pre-colonial fantastic narratives. Postcolonial authors have readily adopted this current global narrative to express two conflicting cultural codes—one of the west that mostly held reality to be empirically verifiable and immanent and the other of the east which revels in magical, supernatural or, say, transcendental. In India, magical or fantastic has always been the part of story: the stories of gods and goddesses with which our mythology is replete have innumerable such magical incidents and actions which can be now easily associated with magical or fantastic but still

majority of Indians are never shocked by their 'unreality' and consider them as real as any ordinary empirical phenomenon. Thus magic realism, in the context of postcolonial Indian English novelists, is both an indigenous story-telling strategy and culturally hybrid genre.

Midnight's Children is a historical narrative if we conform to the broader definition of a historical novel offered in *The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf* by Avrom Fleishman who writes that "what makes a historical novel historical is the active presence of a concept of history as a shaping force" (15). Mostly reveling in the ideas of history and historicity, *Midnight's Children* also oddly records almost all the major events of modern Indian history—the Amritsar massacre (1919), the 'Quit India' Movement (1942), the Partition of India (1947), the language riots and the division of states (1956), the Indo-Chinese war (1962), the death of Nehru (1964), the Indo-Pak wars (1965 and 1971), and the Emergency (1975-77). But what distinguishes it from the 'proper' history is the *manner* in which it reports these events. The narrator/historiographer of this novel, Saleem Sinai is the bastard son of a departing English colonizer, Methwold and Vanita, a lower class Hindu woman but is brought up by a Muslim couple, Ahmad and Amina Sinai owing to an instinctual child-swapping act of the hospital nurse. The story is narrated retrospectively in the first person by Saleem himself who recounts the events of his life and his family saga, against the backdrop of Indian history, to Padma, his beloved and a worker in the pickle factory to which he has come after he has been emptied of history during the Emergency. At the heart of this autobiographical historification lies unique blending of the magical with the historical which tells the tale of *Midnight's Children*, of those who were born at the precise hour of India's independence and had supernatural powers by virtue of their fortuitous birth, and more prominently the story of Saleem, with magical telepathic abilities and Shiva, with phenomenal physical strengths.

In mixing the recognisably realistic with the fantastic, *Midnight's Children* is a magic realist text. To rewrite the complicated and traumatic history of recent Indian politics, Rushdie uses this narrative mode. The argument can be aptly supported by the observations of Richard Cronin who opines in this regard that "the Indian English novel cannot be written by a simple realist, but only by a writer willing to flirt with fantasy, a writer ready to dally with Bombay talkie"(186). Though

there is certainly an exaggeration in Cronin's observation yet it can never be totally refuted that the experiments in fantasy provide Rushdie with unlimited powers to penetrate the reality of Indian history inside out. Throughout the novel, Rushdie has interpolated fabulous and fantastical in the same narrative which otherwise claims to be realistic and historical, as the characters caught up in contemporary political and social turmoil also possess the magical powers owing to their fortuitous birth at midnight. All the 1,001 midnight's children have magical powers, which differed considerably according to the proximity of the moment of their birth from midnight but only 581 of them survive as a consequence of the death of 420 children by their tenth birthday. The two born exactly at the moment when clock joined hands together are endowed with most powerful magical gifts, Saleem (blessed with the powers of telepathy and an uncanny sense of smell) and Shiva (born with a pair of powerful knees and an extraordinary ability for fighting wars), the boy with whom Saleem was swapped at birth. The fantastic elements in the story borrow from magic realist techniques to reflect the political realities of the 20th century. Saleem is the most remarkable in his miraculous powers with his telepathic ability to bring people together and connect them inside his mind. In the novel, by the time Saleem reaches the age of nine, he experiences a strange magical phenomenon due to which he begins to hear voices rattling in his head, and after the washing-chest accident he becomes 'a sort of radio'. Hiding in an old clock tower, he enters the thoughts of strangers all across India, from movie stars and politicians to cab drivers and tourists. He also builds a Midnight's Children Conference inside his head which works as a kind of parliament to discuss the current conflicting ideologies of the then contemporary India which symbolically reflects the challenges the country witnessed with regards to its cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. Saleem's mind might be functioning like a catalyst, a telepathic conduit and is undoubtedly magical but what is being intended to be said is certainly real—there is hardly any doubt in conflating the split of Midnight's Children Conference on the grounds of linguistic and cultural differences with real division of Indian states on linguistic reasons. Furthermore, when Saleem loses his telepathic abilities, he regains very soon another sort of magical ability, an acute sense of smell. As I have already mentioned that the most of the events which Saleem is narrating happen in his absence, the role of these magical abilities becomes more crucial in linking the wholly different personal and

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historical happenings. Any analysis of history-fiction interface will clearly reveal the magic realist nature of Saleem's narrative which states how Saleem retrospectively connects the political history of twentieth-century India with his personal family history through his dreams, hallucinations, and fantasies. There are several episodes in which the narrative takes sudden excursions into fantastic without making any distinction from the real. For example, when, on December 15, 1971, Tiger Niazi, the Pakistani army officer in charge of the war against Bangladesh, surrenders to his Indian counterpart and old friend, Sam Manekshaw, Saleem comes across Parvati, the witch who helps Saleem escape from Pakistan by magically transporting him in her basket:

> Saleem, shrouded in wickerwork darkness, was reminded of years-ago midnights, of childhood wrestling bouts with purpose and meaning; overwhelmed by nostalgia, I still did not understand what that something was. Then Parvati whispered some other words, and inside the basket of invisibility, I, Saleem Sinai, complete with my loose anonymous garment, vanished instantly into thin air.
>
> 'Vanished? How vanished, what vanished?' Padma's head jerks up... I, shrugging, merely reiterate; Vanished, just like that. Disappeared. Dematerialized. Like a djinn: poof, like so.
>
> 'So,' Padma presses me, 'she really-truly was a witch?'
>
> Really-truly. I was in the basket, but also not in the basket; Picture Singh lifted it one-handed and tossed it into the back of the Army truck... one hundred and two persons returned, although one of them was both there and not there. Yes, magic spells can occasionally succeed. (380-81)

The passage certainly demonstrates undistinguishable mélange of fantastic and real. It simultaneously evokes historically verifiable details as well as the event that is impossible to verify. We have nothing else but to believe his disappearance cloaked in invisibility.

There are innumerable such instances of blending marvellous with the real in the narrative. Throughout the novel, the conversion of metaphors into events is another device of magic realism in the novel, for example, the 'cracks' in Saleem's body correspond to the 'crack' in the body politic of the nation and so on. Rushdie constantly exploits the metaphorical axis of substitution which convincingly substitutes one (tenor) with another (vehicle) without any verifiable connection only

on the grounds of attributive association. Metaphors used by Saleem to link personal with political aptly describe probable in terms of improbable, and most of the times, substitute events with themselves. Such convergences are the appropriate mode of the magic realist form adopted by Rushdie. It, first, pushes physical phenomenon to verge on the metaphorical plane and then questions their veracity leaving the readers baffled about the ontological nature of these magical events.

Theorising the nature of magic realism, Linda Hutcheon points out that the post-modern is related to magic realism as "post-colonial literatures (which) are also negotiating ... the same tyrannical weight of colonial history in conjunction with the past" ("Circling the Downspout" 151). She associates the genre with the Third-World writings stating that "the formal technique of 'magic realism' (with its characteristic mixing of the fantastic and the realist) has been singled out by many critics as one of the points of the conjunction of post-modernism and post-colonialism" (152). By introducing the term magic realism in reference to *Midnight's Children* and analysing it in the light of aforementioned hypothesis of Hutcheon, it can be appropriately argued that this novel definitely marks a moment of conjunction between postmodernism and colonialism. Thematically, it is meant to negotiate the tyrannical weight of colonial history as we know that Saleem is the bastard son of a departing colonizer which, in turn, forces Saleem to obsessively view his life in terms of his nation whose birth itself, is considered a colonial legacy. Therefore, Saleem finds himself handcuffed to history and desires to liberate himself.

Whatever be the nature of magic realism in *Midnight's Children*, postcolonial or postmodern, it is inextricably grounded in the tradition of Indian mythological story-telling. It is a fact now that magic realism is one of those few novelistic forms which were born outside the western soil, which is in Latin America. But the point I intend to make here is that the form has always existed in India though without any theoretical terminologies. If we look at the nature of the stories in our epics and *Puranas*, we'll have no pains to claim that the form was never unknown to Indian story-tellers. The stories, in the epics and *Puranas*, always purported to be real, didactic but simultaneously evoked the fantastic. *Ramayan* which has been referred to in the novel also, intends to present a realistic narrative of Ram's life so as to establish him as an ideal in the society but there

are several marvellous incursions into otherwise realistic narrative such as Ahilya's re-metamorphosis into a woman from the stone, the Lord Hanuman's power to fly and his power to carry a big mountain in one hand and so on. But such fantastic actions are not at all doubted by us and we 'willingly suspend our disbelief' taking them to be real as any other real event or action of the narrative. Our mythology contains countless such tales of gods and humans who are endowed with magical abilities. Rushdie owes a lot to our/his native oral and mythological story-telling ways. The names of some of the characters in the novel correspond to our mythological goddesses. For example, Padma, a synonym of goddess Lakshmi, is the companion of Lord Vishnu, the preserver of the cosmos, and, in the novel, Padma is to be married to Saleem who is also a preserver of histories. Shiva and Parvati are also invoked in the novel. Attribution of magical powers to the characters with the names from mythology cannot be considered impossible as the mere chanting of their names presents a visual of their magical abilities before the eyes of Indians. Furthermore, the magical sniffing abilities of Saleem can be equated with Lord Visnu's Varahavatar (incarnation as a pig, an animal endowed with an acute sense of smell) which is not only real but sacred also. In other words, what I want to propose is that magical abilities of the characters of the novel are not at all shocking for the Indian readers who have a rich tradition of explaining the real in terms of marvellous and vice versa. In this regard, Rushdie himself says: "Many people, especially in the west, who read *Midnight's Children*, talked about it as a fantasy novel. By and large, nobody in India talks about it as a fantasy novel; they talk about it as novel of history and politics" (quoted in *Inventing India* 187).

In conclusion, *Midnight's Children* uses magic realism as a method of re-telling 'reality' with the aid of the magical. It is culturally postcolonial but narratologically postmodern in nature. Since *Midnight's Children*, the form has established itself as a major narrative mode of Indian English Fiction in whose lines fall the novel likes *The Circle of Reason*, *Looking through Glass*, *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* and dozens of several well-known novels which together form the canon of Postmodernist Indian English fiction.

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Kinnaur: A Site of Global Confluence

PoojaNegi
Assistant Professor
Department of English
University of Delhi
Email: lalit05negi@gmail.com

Abstract: Kinnaur, a significant region in Western Himalayas boasts of a vibrant and diverse culture.This paper tries to bring to the forefront the region by focusing on the socio-political and cultural aspects that sets this region apart. This paper by tracing the evolution of the space down history engages largely with the contexts of globalisation and its impact on the identity of Kinnaur. The larger aim of the research is to foreground the unique oral and folk tradition that is intrinsic to the region.

Keywords: Kinnaur, Indo-Tibetan Trade Relations, Syncretism, Folklore and Oral Tradition.

Introduction

Kinnaur -- the land of deities -- situated in Himachal Pradesh, in Western Himalayas, is a land which is characterised by a unique culture and sensibility. It has certain geographical specificities -- a landlocked region with the river Sutlej flowing through it --which has gone into determining the culture, customs and traditions indigenous to Kinnaur. This is among a few regions in India where polyandry is still practised and which also boasts of a matriarchal social system. Moreover, this region has shared a space where there is a simultaneous existence of two religions- Hinduism and Buddhism, which is described by the terms such as"syncretism"or"religious Dualism" (Raha,1978). Moreover, historical narratives and archaeological evidences point to the role of Kinnaur in the mythical history of India as it is believed that the Pandavas along with Draupadi spent a year of their exile in Kinnaur. By taking into account the many implications of these aspects this paper proposes to explore the modes and mores of this region and analyse their relationship, and among other aspects, tothe tribal literature endemic to this region.

The role of religion, history, and geography in creating the oral tradition of this region is the

main crux of the ongoing research by focusing on the tribal literature which consists largely of folklores, folk tales and folk songs which is a part of the everyday existence of Kinnauri people and if/ how it has been influenced by the changes that have come to the region and how it has reached the present stage of its evolution. This engagement also takes into account the geopolitics of Kinnaur and how it's location is at a strategic point in the Indian subcontinent opening up movements within and outside the scope of the nation state thereby alluding to the possibility of a global transaction, which is the immediate concern of the paper.

As part of the study, the narratives regarding the historical background and those alluding to the geographical areas are taken up for study with special focus on the prominent matriarchal system inherent to the region. Even while considering these factors another aspect of the position of the tribal women within the society and their influence on the creation and propagation of the Kinnauri literature is also a major point of interest.

This paper engages largely with the contexts of globalisation and its impact on the identity of Kinnaur. Towards that end, this paper will be engaging with sites of interactions such as the language, the Indo - Tibet relations through Kinnaur, the unique trade routes and rules, the tourism sector that is a high contributor to the cosmopolitan nature of Kinnaur, political intervention from Gorkhas, the unique natural resources present there and its equally scintillating religious legacy. The paper engages with how all these have in a way contributed to the making of Kinnaur as a site of global and local confluences.

Kinnauri Language: A Motley

Kinnauri is heterogeneous in nature, and has a set of many dialects and depends to a great extend on its variations in accent and the vocabulary list. Due to the lack of script and because of a unique indigenous grammar it was not possible to preserve Kinnauri in written form. There are some Tankri inscriptions on temples and wooden works which provides information regarding vocabulary list that gives a general picture of linguistic situation in Kinnaur. This research was undertaken as part of a series of research travel to Kinnaur and other parts of Himachal and there were many interesting findings regarding language and Script.

Tankri script in Kinnaur has been used by Kinnauri people for purposes of business /trade

and recording, official-agreements. On linguistic grounds, Kinnaur is divided into two blocks: Upper- Kinnaur and Lower- Kinnaur, and even within the variants in these blocks there are several differences in its accent and vocabulary, so standard Kinnauri is the medium that connects Upper-Kinnaur with Lower- Kinnaur. Apart from that, a form of Indo-Aryan language is spoken in Kinnaur. An interesting aspect regarding the cross border influences in the realm of linguistics can be found in Rahul Sanskritiyan's book KinnerDesh Mein. He has given the name "Homskad" to this and interestingly why it is called "hom" is not mentioned but in kinnauriHom means our/s and Khad means language/ dialect. One can also find the influence of Sanskrit, and Bhoti in Kinnauri language. The geographical boundaries of Kinnaur which is adjacent to Tibet and Shimla helps to understand that Kinnauri is an amalgamation of Indo - Aryan and Tibet - Burma. The use of Tibetan language in upper Kinnaur area is more visible because of the borders and further dissemination of cultural and religious influences which is strongly felt in upper Kinnaur.

Although common masses do not understand this language much, but among monks (lamas) and nuns (jomos) the learning of this language is mandatory as it is linked to their practices in their religious life. Interestingly, although infrastructure development is taking place in Kinnaur with modern education and globalisation, culturally it has negative implications on the language front as it becomes the major contributor to the language extinctions because Kinnauri is being replaced by linking words of Hindi and English. Except for the older generation very less people speak pure Kinnauri language, even in folk songs, music and dance there is mixture of pop music and songs, this way purity is tainted, leading its way to extinction. This can be understood as the other side of the confluence of cultures and practices.

Indo- Tibet Trade and its Historical Relevance

Early relation between Kinnaur and Tibet is not clear, it leaves us with a lot of questions regarding transnational relations. Linda LaMacchia points out in her work Songs and Lives of the Jomos "Did Tibet colonize Kinnaur/Bushahr and did all, just the upper part, or none of Kinnaur belong to western Tibet?" (9) If yes, then to what extent can we see the influence of Tibet over Kinnaur? The historical background of the Bushahr-state takes back to the time when many battles have been fought among hill chiefs of Shimla, but Kinnaur (was once a part of Bushahr -state)

remain in complete isolation from rest of the India. Rulers of Bushahr state were also in complete peace and harmony like the virtuous king Chatter Singh, and his successor Kheri Singh who has earned the title of the "Chattrapati" (Bajpai,1991) from Aurangzeb. Kheri Singh was a skilled warrior and known more for his relation with Tibet's King. It is believed that when Tibet-Ladakh-Mughal War (1681-1683) took place and Tibet was supported by Kheri Singh. All of upper Kinnaur which Tibet occupied during the war was bestowed to Kheri Singh and this friendship had resulted in a commercial treaty that also benefited Kinnauras. There were certain privileges enjoyed by Kinnaura- traders such as: exemption from paying tax, free movement across borders. Hence Bushahr state (Rampur) was a hub of Indo- Tibet trade.

Exchanges of goods such as wool, pashmina wool, woollen clothes, crockery, carpet, kala-jira, salt,- sheep, yak, horses with other plain areas of India and in exchange — sugar, iron-tools, brass utensils and indigo were supplied to Tibet. So, this trade brought economic prosperity and development to Kinnaur. Unfortunately, trade remained standstill after the occupation of Tibet by China, but still illegal trade practice is being observed in these boundaries. In order to revive this trade the Internationally recognised Lavi -Fair is held every year in the month of November in Rampur, the town has been hosting this International Lavi fair for more than three hundred years, Now district Kinnaur (after separation from Rampur) also celebrates same fair which starts a few days before Rampur's Lavi- fair. Thus, Rampur was the gate towards Kinnaur, Tibet and Afghanistan. Therefore, the Lavi- fair is renowned for its excellence in bringing to the forefront the ancient Indian culture. At present cash crops such as apples, peanuts, dry-fruits, handloom are exported from Kinnaur to countries outside.

Efforts are also made by government to foreground the art and craft of Kinnauri culture with the aim to preserve the unique culture and to attract tourists across globe.

Trade Practices

M.K Raha and Mahato, in their work The Kinnaurese of The Himalayas highlights various trade practices and identified two practices such as Moshe and Dopchak. Moshe is a system of trade based on the relationship developed between individual traders on either side of the border. In this regard they say, "Each individual trader from Kinnaur had one or a few traders at Tibet and other

places with whom only the Kinnaur trader should trade. So his counterpart/ counterparts in Tibet were called Moshe, the traders from Indian side could not trade with any trader other than his Moshe. He was free to trade with others when his Tibetan Moshe was not present. According to this system the contract was made and signed by Kinnaurese trader and his Moshe in Tibet. The Moshe used to keep this contract duly signed under a sealed covered" (114).

Dopchak/Ngonshe is the other system that they identified, which refers to a system of mutual cooperation and agreement among traders of the various countries. "This system, trader of both the sides used to make an agreement that trade commodities would be sold to the traders under contact, through middle man called Ngonshe. Traders outside this contract could not get things; only the excess goods and goods not under contract could be sold to the other traders. Also through the Ngonshe provided traders under contract refuse to buy those and Ngonshe in exchange of his service used to charge commission from the parties. If any party break the rule of Dopchack that party would have to pay fine worth the weight of half of the pebble of gold" (115).

Gurkha Occupation and 19th Century Invasion

The great tussle between Gurkhas and hill chiefs were either as a result of border disputes and expansions of belligerent parties. "The Gurkhas of Nepal conquered the Shimla Hills state and the state of Bushahr except Kinnaur. The raja of Bushahr and his mother, refuge in Kinnaur, and the kinnaures held the Gurkhas off by burning the first bridge into Kinnaur (Wangtoo)" (Linda, 2008).

Although, Gurkhas could not harm the king and his mother, king's treasuries and historical records were wiped out by them. Since Kinnaur was a part of Bushahr state, so this destruction may partly have affected Kinnaura's historical documents. Later on under the leadership of Colonel Ochterlony with the alliance of some local chiefs, Gurkhas were completely defeated and Amar Singh Thapa was expelled. However, Gurkhas (Nepalis) are still coming to Kinnaur, Rampur, and Shimla to find jobs and settling down across Himachal Pradesh. Therefore, migration has been taking place over a long period of time and as a result of it socio- cultural assimilations among Kinnauras -Nepalis and other regions of Himachal by contact and communication.

Religious Legacy

The existing religions Buddhism and Hinduism have contributed significantly amount to the

creation of Kinnauri identity and literature. This gains prominence in relation to the stories that circulated as part of the presence of numerous deities endemic to this region. Besides these, the possession of human beings by deities is a crucial part of the rituals and cultural ceremonies and the act of storytelling takes on a new level here. Moreover, studies have been done on the Jomo (nuns) of this region highlighting their stories and songs. Clearly, religion plays a crucial role in the narratives.

In many areas of Himachal Pradesh, religion decides the culture and Kinnaur, one among them, is considered as a religiously mixed area with the amalgamation of religion and culture. The upper part of Kinnaur is more influenced by Tibetan culture and Buddhism than lower part of Kinnaur, this is because of Indo -Tibet trade that played a crucial role where as the lower part was geographically close to Rampur Bushahr. Despite different religions Kinnaura pay respect to each others religious views which is quite evident from the deities's temples adjacent to buddhist temples and involvement of both religious practices in their life.

Narrative Accounts in Festivals

Many festivals are celebrated in Kinnaur and each festival has its own story. For instance Ukkayang (festival of flowers), Sazo (new-year), Ormigh (festival of Pandavas), Bishu (welcoming of new years), and Loser, upper Kinnaur festival (new-year). These festivals are celebrated with traditional songs which are passed down to generations with the aim of preserving the native culture. Since Kinnaur does not have any script so its history is shown through oral narratives, fair, festivals, folk songs and folk tales. Therefore, socio-culture amalgamations and its historical relation between Kinnaur -Tibet is preserved in the narrative form of festivals.

Exploration of Natural Resources

The Hydroelectric power Projects in Kinnaur district (H.P) is meeting the demand for electric power in India and is able to provide rural India with electricity and has other benefits such as generating employment and boosting the Indian economy. However, it has increasingly come to impact environment in a negative way. The large part of shaky Himalayan regions have been exploited for various socio-economic purposes.

Kinnuars' livelihood is closely linked to the eco-system and the development of projects are

affecting their livelihood. Severe consequences such as: climate change, lack of agriculture and horticulture productivity, deforestation, drying up of agriculture land, landsliding, and the drying up of river Satluj have been felt because of these projects. This leads to a threat of water crisis, which might end up in a possible third world war. Air pollution and lack of moisture in soil leads to less production of apples. Many villages in Kinnaur district (Pangi-Kashang-Projects, Moorang- Tiding, Chagaon, Urni-Wangto) have been affected by the projects. So, loss of biodiversity can not be supplemented with hydro-power projects.

Although some concern and unrest have been shown by the local inhabitants of Kinnaur, government needs to take serious action so that power projects must be eco-friendly and sustainable in nature.

Conclusion

This research apart from highlighting the unique and diverse culture of Kinnauri people, also presents how the inhabitants of such region shows close proximity towards their own culture and geography. Their conscious effort to save the culture is reflecting through folklores and oral narratives. However, major steps needs to taken by the next generation to preserve their unique culture, which is passed down the generations and continued the legacy. Unfortunately, under the influence of modernisation and globalisation they are disconnecting from their socio- cultural and historical identity.

Moreover, there is the need to understand the contribution of the unique specificities of the region to its literature also envisages the need to promote and preserve the age old cultural tradition of Kinnaur. Other major steps to be taken on environmental front. Also need to be more focused on the realm of the environment-in preserving the remaining ecosystems and revamping it as it forms an integral part of the religion, culture and local tradition has an impact on the narratives which are part of the tribal literature.

Thus, this paper deals with the context of globalisation and engages with the sites of interaction such as language, trade routes/ rules, tourism and religion which plays a vital role in the formation of the identity of Kinnaur at global and local level.

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The Portrayal of Women in Rohinton Mistry's Works: A Study

Dr.S.Neelakandan
Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
K.Ramakrishnan College of Engineering,
Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu
email: sntry1981@gmail.com
&
G.Sankar
Assistant Professor,
Department of English,
PSG College of Technology,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
e-mail: gsr.english@psgtech.ac.in

Abstract: This paper aims at exploring the women immigrants while settling down in a foreign country in a new milieu—their problems, anxieties, miserable plights in the light of present socio political scenario especially in the works of Rohinton Mistry. Over the past several years Rohinton Mistry has established himself as one of Canada's most critically acclaimed writers.He has gained a magnanimous popularity in the world of literature. His works such as, *Tales from FirozhaBaag* (1987), *Such a Long Journey* (1991), *A Fine Balance* (1995) and *Family Matters* (2002) have received virtually unanimous praise. Mistry's characters, represent the Parsi Community, whose identity has been historically problematized. It is a progressive community with a glorious past and a dismal future. Mistry attempts at giving details about the lifestyles and culture of the Parsis wherever he gets an opportunity in his fiction.

Key words- Culture, Identity, Immigrant women, Dilemma.

Introduction

Rohinton Mistry was born in Bombay (now Mumbai), India, on July 3, 1952. A member of the Parsi religious community in India, he completed an undergraduate degree in mathematics and economics at the University of Bombay. In 1975 he moved to Canada, where he lived in Toronto and worked for a bank. Mistry eventually returned to university, finishing a degree in English and philosophy in 1984 at the University of Toronto. It was while he was a university student in Canada

that he began to write and publish fiction. His first two published short stories won the Hart House Literary Prize (1983 and 1984), and another story won the *Canadian Fiction Magazine* contributor's prize in 1985. Those three stories, with eight others, became his first book, *Tales from Firoszha Baag* (1987).

This collection of linked short stories concerns the inhabitants of an apartment compound in Bombay. One of the stories, "Squatter," consists of tall tales told by the compound's local storyteller; one tale concerns Savukshaw, a heroic cricket player and tiger hunter, and the other concerns Sarosh, a Parsi who immigrates to Canada but returns to India when he cannot learn how to use a Western toilet. In another story, "Swimming Lessons," a young man connects the residents of his Canadian apartment to the family and residents in the Bombay apartment he has left behind.

The sufferings of women

Though Rohinton Mistry has received widespread commendation for his fiction, he has also been criticized for his 'portrayal of women'. Critics find that RohintonMistry's female characters are one-dimensional and limited. They are seen to be house bound, rarely leaving their apartments, complexes while their male counterparts venture far and wide, not only in and around Bombay but also places such as Delhi. By attending the social contexts of his female characters' lives from a feminist perspective, this analysis examines the ways Mistry interprets the situations of women – their experiences, histories and responsibilities as wives, widows, mothers and single women – within the cultural rubric of Parsi India.

Parsis are the most Westernized religious group in India, and Parsi women have not been as widely subjected to the particular oppressive traditions and perceptions that Hindu and Muslim women have. Parsis, for instance, encourage women to pursue higher education and independence, and often to go abroad to pursue their interests (Trembour, 115).

Mistry explores the issues of education, independence, and ambition, while also addressing the continuing difficulties that even a relatively independent woman faces in a patriarchal society. In *A Fine Balance*, Dina, who was denied an education as a girl, is forced, out of economic hardship, to establish a tailoring business in her own home. And while her business does flourish for at least part of the book, she continues to battle many oppressive traditions and constraints.

despite her fervent pursuit of freedom from her brother's financial support. Jasbir Jain observes that for Indian women "the concept of independence, freedom and self are all relegated to a world outside"(3) of the home. And while many of Mistry's women do experience a sense of selfhood and identity outside o f their homes—Vera and Dolly, and Mehroo in Tales from FirozshaBaag, and Dina in *A Fine Balance*—several of them such as Daulat, Mamaiji, Najamai, and Dilnavaz, cultivate their independence within their apartments and apartment compounds.

The Exploration of women Identity crisis

In *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, for instance, a series of short stories where the women are usually dealing with one situation, whether it be a day in the life of mothers such as Silloo Boyce and Mrs.Bulsara, Mehroos and Mrs.Mody's experiences as wives, or even Tehmina's ways of trying to cope until her cataracts ripen. It is in his novels, however, that Mistry's progress in probing the experience of his female characters becomes apparent because he has more room to develop a detailed account of their daily lives. His portrayals of Dilnavaz and Miss Kutpitia, are much more thorough than those of his characters in the FirozshaBaag compound, and the extended treatment of Dina is more expansive. And although each of his women has their roles determined, to some extent, by social conventions, they nevertheless are not stereotypes, but rather distinct individuals who frequently transcend their circumstances, refusing to be circumscribed by these social roles. Women such as Daulat, Dilnavaz, and Dina, find ways of coping with their various situations by taking matters into their own hands, stepping out of their expected roles, and exploring new possibilities.

Women characters who are in Mistry's fiction, defined by their relationships to men in which they develop their own identities while fulfilling their obligations as Parsi wives, mothers, and sisters. Mrs. Mody in *Tales fromFirozshaBaag*, gains the recognition from her neighbours in the apartment compound as Dr. Mody's ill-tempered wife. After he dies, Mrs. Mody's life is spent coming to terms with the stormy and often mean relationship she had with him. Likewise, in *Such A Long Journey*, Alamai is only liberated from the way she is portrayed by her husband, Dinshawji, as his 'domestic vulture,' at his funeral. Even the independent Dina, in *A Fine Balance*, is in jeopardy of being forced to move back to her childhood home with her brother and his family after

the sudden death of her husband. Without him, she is on her own, and this is considered an unacceptable situation for a young woman to be in. She is therefore expected to reaffiliate herself with a man by remarrying or depending on her brother for shelter and financial assistance.

Isolation and Assimilation

Silloo Boyce and Mrs.Bulsara in *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, are only ever seen as mothers. Mistry portrays their unfailing commitment to their sons, as well as the strong, and often culturally prescribed relationships they have with them. And while Dilnavaz is given attention as a woman whose experiences are frequently independent of Gustad in *Such A Long Journey*, much o f her time is spent performing her duties as a mother. Even her "dalliance in the dark arts" (Ekelund 11) with Miss Kutpitia has been criticized by NiluferBharucha as being something Dilnavaz does only "for the wellbeing of her family" (182). Kashmira and Khorshedbai in *Tales FromFirozshaBaag*, and Miss Kutpitia in *Such A Long Journey*, are women who have each been placed in unusual and disturbing situations. With them, Mistry creates three characters who are imprisoned by various circumstances: Kashmira by her husband and Khorshedbai; Khorshedbai herself by her insanity and her past; and Miss Kutpitia by thirty-five years of grief-induced isolation. With the exception of Khorshedbai, who is taken away by ambulance at the end of "The Paying Guests," they are eventually liberated from their situations. Likewise, in *Tales from Firozsha Baag*, Mistry offers Tehmina and Behroze, two women who are objectified for their appearance and behaviour but, by the end of the stories, are released from the dies into which they have been cast.

A Fine Balance illustrates the deeper insight of political, nativity and struggle of suffering people. It always focuses on the deep structure of the individual's existences of human life. *A Fine Balance* is taken up for analyzing the human sufferings in which RohintonMistry ultimately gives a space of endless sufferings of the individuals. DinaDalal fights for her independence and individuality but she has faced continuous failures and threats by society. Finally she has lost her flat and forced to her brother's home as a servant. RohintonMistry highlights crucial events in the country's chronicle by depicting the background of each protagonist. Dina, chooses to be displaced her home, because she wants to assert her individuality and sense of self. She has grown up in Bombay, but her sense of independence after her husband's accidental death keeps her away from

her family. She resolves to restructure her life without being economically dependent on a man. For her, life is a series of emotional upheavals and relocations of emotional bonds. Emergency made both Dina and Maneck fail in their attempt. In the name of poverty alleviation and civic beautification, beggars are carried away and made to be slaves in labour camps.

Dynamics of culture and cultural cross fertilization

In *Family Matters*, RohintonMistry has portrayed different types of women such as nurturer,bully, spiteful, timid and independent. Coomy, Roxana, Jeroo, Yasmin, Lucy, Phoola, Villi, the Card Master, Mrs. Kapur and Daisy are some of the women characters in this novel who are different from each other. Coomy, the step-daughter of Nariman, Yasmin, the second wife of Nariman and Mrs.Kapur, the owner of Bombay Sporting Goods Emporium are portrayed as rude and bully characters in this novel. Nariman marriesYasmin, who is a widow with two children, Jal and Coomy. So it is from the earlier time until the end Coomy behaves rude to her step-father. She always put forth too many rules and regulations to be followed. Being an old man, affected by Parkinson disease expects some sort of affection and love from his children but Nariman gets complete unbelongingness from Coomy. When Jal requests Coomy to be lovable to Nariman, Coomy frankly admits "I was already eleven years old when he became our step father. It was not like a baby growing up with her real father". (64) Coomy feels that Nariman is responsible for her mother's death. So she is not able to stop her hate even at his olden days. *Family Matters* weaves the lives and memories of a Parsi family.

Conclusion

The novelist has succeeded in maintaining a fine balance between death and bigotry, family nurture and control. Mistry has explained different women characters in a single novel as caring, loving, rude, shy and independent. As Jaydipsinh reiterates, "through an intensely meaningful portrayal of women characters in this novel RohintonMistry has globalized the theme of contemporary complexity inferring that in the modern society beset by dynamics of culture, confused by cultural by cultural cross fertilization, marred by religious fanaticism and converging on inner fracture, the system gets protected from the ultimate fragmentation by one women or the

other. Though women soar high, with academic qualifications, and economic independence; they have space within themselves. To preserve the equilibrium of life, relationships should be revived and only a healthy and harmonious man-woman relationship will flourish.

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Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: Class and Society, Marriage and Women

Dr. Rekha Tiwari
Lecturer and Head,
Department of English
Guru Nanak Girls P.G. College, Udaipur
E mail – tiwarirekha32@gmail.com

Abstract: Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice is a novel 1813, it is often taken to be a Victorian novel because it is very realistic is often taken to be a Victorian novel because it is very realistic in its depiction of the early nineteenth century English society. At the time, England was still a land of aristocracy, even though the Industrial Revolution caused major changes in the class structure. As Victorian novels often do, it portrays and comments on the social conventions of the period. It is generally known that the society of the nineteenth century England was nothing like today: class differences were more visible. There were three major classes upper, middle and lower – that were further divided. the upper class "can be divided into three sections: the aristocracy, the gentry, and the hierarchy or class of independent gentlemen who did not have to work. Polite manners were much more appreciated and, most importantly, the social status of women was determined according to the status of their family or their husband. Therefore, they had to marry the most appropriate man that was sometimes even imposed on them by their family. Though they could choose whom they would marry, there was very little possibility that they would marry a man they loved, unless he is also wealthy and willing to marry her. This paper focuses on Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice to illustrate that because of their subordinated position marriage was the only way through which women could validate their social status. Therefore, it was usually not an institution created for love but rather one based on social class. Austen successfully portrays the society of the then England and contemporary anxieties connected with marriage.

Key Words: Women, Marriage, Nineteenth Century, Class, Society.

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Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is a novel published in 1813, Pride and Prejudice is taken to be in the class structure as Victorian novels do but it does not display typical Romantic characteristics. As Victorian novels often do, it portrays and comments on the social conventions of the period. It is well-known that the culture of the nineteenth century England was very different from today. Class differences were more visible, there were three major classes that were further divided. In the upper class, polite manners were much more appreciated and most importantly, the social status of women was determined according to the status of their family or their husband. Consequently, they had to marry the most suitable man that was sometimes even forced on them by their family. Though they could choose whom they would marry, there was very little possibility that they would marry a man they loved, unless he who is also wealthy and willing to marry her.

This paper emphasis on Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to depict the condition of women that because of their secondary position in society and marriage was the only way through which women could validate their social status. Therefore, it was usually not an institution created for love but rather one based on social class. Jane Austen effectively represents the society of the then England and existing anxieties connected with marriage.

Pride and Prejudice is very realistic in its representation of the nineteenth century English society. At that time, England was a land of aristocracy, the society was divided in three major classes upper, middle and lower. In the words of Prewitt Brown the upper class "can be divided into three sections: the aristocracy, the gentry, and the squirarchy or class of independent gentlemen who did not have to work. The majority of Austen's characters are members of the upper class. At the opening of the novel she tells us that Fitzwilliam Darcy, one of the main characters, has an income of £10,000 a year. In spite of his enormous yearly income and his origins, he is technically not a member of aristocracy due to the absence of the title that a real aristocrat was supposed to have (Prewitt Brown 74).

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"To qualify as an aristocrat, one had to be of titled rank, to own an estate exceeding 10,000 acres, to have enough money in revenues to live opulently, and to own a house in London to go to during the social season. Obviously there were exceptions—some ancient titles had declining fortunes—but in order to participate fully in the social life of the aristocracy, one had to have these things. (Prewitt Brown 74) The Bennet's, as well as most of the people who live in Meryton and its surroundings, are members of the gentry. Their income does not come near £10,000 a year but rather around £2,000 to £5,000. Mr. Bingley, on the other hand, can be regarded as a gentleman. The following passage explains why: "In Jane Austen's novels, a gentleman can be a younger son of the gentry who has not inherited an estate and who has taken holy orders (...), or he can be the son of a man who has made a fortune in business and has been brought up as a gentleman to do nothing (Mr. Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice*)" (Prewitt Brown 76). When he comes to the city, Bingley is promptly seen as a suitable would-be husband of one of the Bennet sisters because of his prosperity. The characters in the novel are strictly defined by their social status which cannot drastically change unless a character loses a great sum of money or somehow comes into its possession. This makes it more understandable that to the society of the nineteenth century England money really made the world (or class) go around. Prewitt Brown agrees with Stone and suggests that:

> In the early nineteenth century, the nexus of social change was to be found more in the gentry and middle class than either the working class or aristocracy. Austen shows over and over again that the apparent stability of class position is an illusion created by the slowness of change through marriage and the peculiar stability of class character, resulting from the chameleon like adaptability of new families. (78)

Throughout history money has always meant the same thing: power. In the nineteenth century it usually opened a way to the upper class; however, "this did not mean that everyone who was rich was a member of the upper class. But without money, people sink awfully fast. Austen's novel reflects this through Mr. Bennet's frequent warnings to his wife and two frivolous younger daughters – Lydia and Kitty that they should reduce their expenditures, for they "were in the habit

of spending more than they ought" (Austen 10). Even smaller amounts of money meant some kind of stability at the time – they meant preserving one's social status. In that regard, Mr. Bennet had enough money to not to be forced to work, but if his family spent more than they could yearly afford, this money would soon be gone and their social rank would be lowered. This kind of scenario troubled them so much that they hardly dared to speak of it in open terms; however, Mr. Bennet was aware of the fact that "Mrs. Bennet had no turn for economy, and his love of independence had alone prevented their exceeding their income" (Austen 177).

Pride and Prejudice is called a novel of manners because it represents the society of that time. The characters are concerned with pride, education, and courtesy all that of what we call manner. The fact that the novelist places her characters in the realistic situations helps one learn more about the actual image of the society of that time and her characters acts according to their social class. As the title indicates the main flaws of the upper class society are, pride and prejudice, but also vanity. The rich are too proud of their own wealth and legacy which causes them to be unproductive and dismissive of those who are less well off. They never value a person's qualities, but think of him or her only as a member of his or her family and class. In other words, the prejudice of the rich against those who are not as rich often cause distress to both sides as emotions and individual virtues are overlooked. Mary's remarks on the disparity between vanity and pride explain the lack of obsessive self- absorption: "Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others think of us" (Austen 13). Darcy also comments on this topic by saying: "Yes, vanity is a weakness indeed. But pride—where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will be always under good regulation" (Austen 36). Clearly, these two characteristics are two completely opposite things.

While arrogance can have negative as well as positive results, varying upon the person's character, vanity can only have negative outcomes. After reading the novel, it can be said that half of the society is hollow, starting from Mr. Bingley's sisters, Mrs. Bennet and her daughters. In the

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course of the novel Darcy states: "I have an excessive regard for Miss Jane Bennet, she is really a very sweet girl, and I wish with all my heart she were well settled. But with such a father and mother, and such low connections, I am afraid there is no chance of it" (Austen 23). Austen's analysis of such attitude is seen in the redeeming ending of the novel as Darcy realises that no woman could make him happier or be a better and more interesting partner than Elizabeth, despite her poor connections.

Wealth indeed was very important as it separated people into classes and therefore played major role at the time, especially for women who were seen as secondary and were considered according to the families they were born and married into. It often produced pride and arrogance, which caused prejudices. Today women today almost as equal as men but women in the nineteenth century did not have the same place in the society. To understand their condition better, it is necessary to point out that women, once married, did not have any properties. Everything they possessed became their husband's proprietorship. If one takes a closer look at the condition of women, it is obvious that they were inferior to men. They were considered to be a wife and a mother, especially the women belong to upper class. Since they were not allowed to work, their only responsibility was to give birth to their children and to take care of their husband. However, women of the nineteenth century were to some point in a better condition than those before them. They had some freedom; they were educated. It was no longer the exception for women of the middle and upper classes to choose their own husbands.

If one takes *Pride and Prejudice* as a representative of the culture of that time, it is clear that those women who acted in accordance with their sense were more appreciated in the society. For example, because of her common sense Elizabeth did not let herself be fooled by some characters and she acted the way she thought was best. With such qualities as the sharpness of her mind and responsiveness, she is much valued by others. So, people like her company: "It was plain to them all that Colonel Fitzwilliam came because he had pleasure in their society, a persuasion

which of course recommended him still more; and Elizabeth was reminded by her own satisfaction in being with him, as well as by his evident admiration of her" (Austen 107).

If one tries to analyse the role of women in the novel, it can be seen that it is compatible with the ones previously described. Her female characters in the novel are playing the role of a mother and a wife. Although they did not have their own properties once they got married, they were mistresses of the household and, besides being a mother and a wife; it was their most important role.

Their representation in the novel is based on everyday leisure and social happenings that took place in their community. The important events were balls, and Austen describes two significant ones: the first in the town near Meryton, and the second in Netherfield, on Mr. Bingley's property. Balls were very significant in making social contacts because they were huge get-togethers and many people attended them. At the first ball were made the most significant connections that would affect the course of the novel: Jane met Bingley and Darcy met Elizabeth. The second ball was more a requirement that took place in order to approve the feelings developed on their first meeting. In addition to being an opportunity for making connections, balls also provided an opportunity to meet a future husband.

The prospect of the Netherfield ball was extremely agreeable to every female of the family. Mrs. Bennet chose to consider it as given in compliment to her eldest daughter, and was particularly flattered by receiving the invitation from Mr. Bingley himself, instead of a ceremonious card. Jane pictured to herself a happy evening in the society of her two friends, and the attentions of her brother; and Elizabeth thought with pleasure of dancing a great deal with Mr. Wickham. (...) And even Mary could assure her family that she had no disinclination for it. (Austen 54)". Another important aspect represents women in the novel is their meetings with family and friends. Elizabeth and Miss Lucas, owing to the fact that they are close friends and live nearby, often visit each other.

Kitty and Lydia visits their uncle and aunt not to meet them but with the purposes to meet the soldiers of the nearby regiment:

> The two youngest of the family, Catherine and Lydia, were particularly frequent in these attentions; their minds were more vacant than their sisters', and when nothing better offered, a walk to Meryton was necessary to amuse their morning hours and furnish conversation for the evening; and however bare of news the country in general might be, they always contrived to learn some from their aunt. At present, indeed, they were well supplied both with news and happiness by the recent arrival of a militia regiment in the neighbourhood; it was to remain the whole winter, and Meryton was the headquarters. (Austen18)

Elizabeth and Jane, however, were different from Lydia and Kitty. They liked spending time with Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, their uncle and aunt, as well as travelling, which was a great advantage for women of upper classes considering the fact that travelling is the best way to learn something and to grow as a person, but also to meet people. Finding a husband was the greatest task of women of the upper and middle class in the nineteenth century according to Victorian fiction (Armstrong, 113). At that time, they could, to a certain extent, choose whom they would marry, which was a major progress compared to the fifteenth century for example. The important thing was for their future husband to be either of the same or of a higher rank than them: “On her choice of a love object, a man she could both marry and desire, depended not only her identity as a white, respectable English woman, but also the integrity of the family unit, on which in turn rested the well-being and longevity of the nation” (113). Woman had no personal possessions and could acquire them only in rare cases; while they were unmarried everything was their father’s propriety which was to be inherited only by male heirs after his death, and as soon as they got married, the dowry they bring into marriage became their husband’s. Therefore, the only way to become socially accomplished was to marry a rich man. Likewise, a rich man cannot be deemed socially accomplished if he remains a bachelor. Austen clearly depicts these concerns in her novel by introducing them with the famous first sentence: “It is a truth universally acknowledged,

that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (2). Marriage is thus established as the central concern of the upper classes.

Women were supposed to choose a man who could financially support them and not the one they wanted or loved. This was a common truth and it can safely be said that girls were taught to think that way from early on. Mrs. Bennet wants her daughters to marry someone with a great fortune. After she hears that a young man who has inherited a large sum of money has come into their neighbourhood, she insists on Mr. Bennet's visiting him and immediately sees him as a potential husband for one of her daughters. Similarly, after Elizabeth turns down Mr. Collins' proposal, her mother sees it as the most inappropriate thing since Mr. Collins was to inherit their land after their father passes away. She laments it as if Elizabeth caused their financial downfall the second she refused him:

> Aye, there she comes, (...) looking as unconcerned as may be, and caring no more for us than if we were at York, provided she can have her own way. But I tell you, Miss Lizzy—if you take it into your head to go on refusing every offer of marriage in this way, you will never get a husband at all—and I am sure I do not know who is to maintain you when your father is dead. (...). (Austen 69)

Marriage is in her view a way of survival as well as a way of keeping her status. She even accuses Elizabeth in front of Mr. Collins of "not knowing her own interest" (Austen 67) because she finds Mr. Collins to be tolerable enough to make a husband for her daughter. However, Elizabeth does not agree with her – she is not at all interested in him as a man or in his inheritance. Miss Lucas, on the other hand, willingly accepts his proposal the moment he asks her to marry him. Austen explains that her acceptance happened "solely from the pure and disinterested desire of an establishment, [and Miss Lucas] cared not how soon that establishment were gained" (74). The narrator further states that "[marriage] was the only provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want. This preservative she had now obtained; and at the age of twenty-seven, without having

ever been handsome, she felt all the good luck of it" (74-75). Miss Lucas admits these reasons to Elizabeth later, who does not hide her surprise. Charlotte explains she only wants "a comfortable home" (Austen 76) and pictures Mr. Collins a good opportunity for her "considering [his] character, connection, and situation in life" (Austen 76). Having in mind that she is led by the thought of protective her social status it is difficult to say whether she is to be judged or not because she is not the only one who does it.

Miss Bingley similarly conforms to these social conventions. She attempts with all her feminine powers to attract Darcy in order to have him thinking of her as a potential wife. Since she belongs to the upper class, she is not even thinking of marrying someone poorer than her. According to her, Darcy is a most agreeable man, a perfect match. He is handsome, well-educated, has nice manners, and above all he is very rich. Nevertheless, not everyone has the same opinion of him. Mrs. Bennet, for example, "quite detest[s] [him]" (Austen 9) after she sees his behaviour on the first ball: "But I can assure you (...) that Lizzy does not lose much by not suiting *his* fancy; for he is a most disagreeable, horrid man, not at all worth pleasing. So high and so conceited that there was no enduring him! He walked here, and he walked there, fancying himself so very great! Not handsome enough to dance with!" (Austen 9). However, she quickly changes her attitude towards him as soon as she finds out what he did for Lydia and that Elizabeth accepted his proposal:

> Good gracious! Lord bless me! only think! dear me! Mr. Darcy! (...) how rich and how great you will be! What pin-money, what jewels, what carriages you will have! Jane's is nothing to it—nothing at all. I am so pleased—so happy. Such a charming man! —so handsome! so tall! —Oh, my dear Lizzy! pray apologise for my having disliked him so much before. I hope he will overlook it. Dear, dear Lizzy. A house in town! Everything that is charming! Three daughters married! Ten thousand a year! Oh, Lord! What will become of me? I shall go distracted. (Austen 220)

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His money and the fact that he is willing to marry one of her daughters absolves him from any social misdemeanour he may have committed earlier. Soon after that Mrs. Bennet wants to find out about Mr. Darcy's favourite dish in order to be able to please him. She is very calculating and focused on money, as one can see from the example above. Though Elizabeth is not led solely by the idea of marrying a wealthy person regardless of his manners, she does exclaim after she sees Darcy's estate "that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!" (Austen 141). Even she, who is considered to be quite rational and sensible, admits that it would be nice to live on an estate like Pemberley. Armstrong in this view states that *Pride and Prejudice* is one of those novels that say: "Marry a man with whom you were emotionally compatible if you could, but marry a man of material means you must, (...) or else face the degradation of impoverishment or, worse, the need to work for a living" (Armstrong 97). Indeed, the biggest fear of women of the upper class was not marrying a rich person because that would cause their social and economic degradation, which was far worse than being married to a penniless man however much a woman might love him. This is only a reason more to believe that marriage was a means of social as well as financial security.

Men were also vulnerable to this notion as represented by Wickham. He tried more than once to marry a rich girl and the first one we find out about is Darcy's sister. Later on he wants to marry Miss King, to whom "he paid (...) not the smallest attention till her grandfather's death made her mistress of this fortune" (Austen 91), and at the end, when he escapes with Lydia, he is willing to marry her only after Darcy discharges his debts and pays him a certain amount of money. But Wickham is not the only one who wants to marry for money; Colonel Fitzwilliam on one occasion openly discusses with Elizabeth his reasons for marrying a wealthy woman. As Prewitt Brown sums it up, "brought up to lead an aristocratic life and honestly unwilling to give it up, he needs a monies marriage to maintain the expensive leisure to which he is accustomed. He cannot afford the luxury of falling in love with a poor woman" (69). This explains why people at the time want to marry for money; they are used to living in the lap of luxury and are not willing to discharge it. In addition, Armstrong points out "it is fair to say that any man whom women find agreeable in other respects

will in all likelihood cost them dearly in economic terms, and there can be little emotional gratification in that" (Armstrong 107). Armstrong's conclusion about the Victorian fiction in general could be applied to this novel, too: "Victorian fiction revised an earlier narrative that insisted a woman's quest for financial security and social respectability began and ended with her ability to attract an agreeable man and extract a promise of marriage from him" (Armstrong 113). This confirms that the purpose of marriage in the society of the nineteenth century had to do first and foremost with the woman's social affirmation.

In the nineteenth century male-dominated England women generally did not have as many rights as they do today; they had no rights of their own and since they did not want to surrender their social status and the way of living they were used to, the only way to keep it was to marry a man of the same or a higher social status. Jane Austen tried to depict the society of that time as realistically as she could in this novel, and considering the fact that she is a woman, one may say that she understood women's condition better than any other male novelist. So, through this novel she clearly states that marriage was first and foremost an association through which women were able to find social acknowledgement respect. This was their socially formed vision of happiness was to give birth to children and to be able to learn to love him.

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Epiphany and the Politics of the Gaze:

A Comparative Study of Coleridge's and Joyce's Artistic Visions

Ananya Chatterjee
Lecturer of English
JIS University, Agarpara.
&

Nisarga Bhattacharjee
Guest Lecturer
Seth Anandaram Jaipuria College (Day)
and Achrya Prafullya Chandra College, Kolkata

Abstract: This paper aims to study Geraldine in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem *Christabel* in the light of the concept of 'epiphany' as we find in the works of James Joyce. In the process, the paper intends to apply some feminist understanding on the characters of the poem and the novel. The focus of the paper lies on the character of Geraldine from Coleridge's *Christabel* while looking at the unnamed muse in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as a foil. While presenting Coleridge's vision as a 'supernatural epiphany', this paper also acknowledges the differences in the visions of the two writers. The other focus of the paper lies on the psychoanalytical feminist approach of Laura Mulvey, which has been presented in association with some new considerations. This paper will also aim to provide a semblance of reconciliation between Joyce's aesthetic 'epiphany' and Coleridge's apparently 'demonic' vision.

Keywords: Epiphany, gaze, voyeurism, demonic, supernatural.

S. T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth published the first edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, marking the rise of the British Romantic Movement. Wordsworth's intended to portray the usual and everyday in the unusual and innovative light of imagination. Coleridge opted for something that would replace a sense of familiarity with an air of the supernatural, seeking

therefore to earn a readers's 'poetic faith' (Coleridge 2008, 86). The poems of Coleridge and Wordsworth in this way brought together

> …the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of imagination (86).

The vision of Geraldine is often mentioned as an example of the Coleridgean element of the supernatural. If we take a look at Geraldine from a different perspective, keeping in mind the theory of imagination as propounded by Coleridge himself in his *Biographia Literaria*, we are bound do discover intriguing facets of this interesting and widely discussed, yet mysterious, figure.

So, who or what exactly is Geraldine? Is she the devil incarnate, a symbol of Satan? Is she an agent of the supernatural? Or, is she the epiphanic vision for Christabel? Does the appearance of Geraldine meet the definition of an epiphany, or should we look elsewhere in the poem for one? Is she the embodiment containing the 'real' objects of her prayer? Perhaps the deep desires of her inner psyche in flesh? We can only speculate. Throughout the poem, she remains mysterious. Her mystery is never unveiled despite a vague revelation of her social identity in part two of the poem. It is she who makes the poem an enigma, and it is this enigma that makes the poem still so appealing to the readers.

One quite obvious observation is that both in case of Coleridge and Joyce, the object of vision is essentially feminine. Both Geraldine and the unnamed Muse are exotic and wrapped up in a veil of mystery. In case of Joyce, he makes us see the Muse through the eyes of Stephen, thus bringing in the concept of the male gaze, keeping in mind the statements of Laura Mulvey in her essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (Mulvey, 1), and 'the Other', as stated by Simone de Beauvoir (Beauvoir, 26). In case of Coleridge, can we apply this same thematic model? If we are to take into consideration what the poet had to say in his *Biographia Literaria*, we will come to find a strange harmony in the order of things in *Christabel*. Whereas Christabel remains the 'lovely lady' (Coleridge 1996, 102), symbolic of finite mortal beauty, the suave, yet sinister Geraldine, on the other hand is 'beautiful exceedingly' (103), balancing out the finite by the mysterious, eternal or infinite, and therefore creates a sense of a strange harmonious binary.

> According to Anya Taylor, in SEL (Studies in English Literature),
>
> Coleridge's opening section does to listeners what Geraldine does to Christabel: leaves them anxious and ungrounded. Critic after critic has tossed interpretations into the poem's Dark fluxion, all unfixable by thought. (Taylor, 707)

The poem thus attracts a multitude of interpretations that appear with varying claim to validity. Some see the heroine Christabel initiated into love; some see her as a more or less innocent Eve falling into the snares of a demon from preternatural realms or from Satan; some see the poem as having no meaning besides the complex contradictions of language and voice; as a Blakean examination of divided states of body and soul; as a dream or many dreams with condensed or displaced images; and even as a meditation on Jean-Jacques Rousseau. William Hazlitt called the poem 'the most obscene poem in the English language' (Koenig-Woodyard); Tom Moore thought its gaps showed incompetence (Moore). How do we cope with this tumult of uncertainty?

Geraldine's sudden appearance out of nowhere, almost as an answer to Christabel's prayers, might be interpreted as a fragmentation of self: the separation of the active, devious mind from the passive, pliant body. It is almost the reversal of the process of birth – an unnatural, surrogate mother coming to life in front of her child. Geraldine disrobes, exposing her bosom to Christabel and the placenta disconnects, leaving Christabel confounded, but Geraldine confident and capable of taking matters into her own hand from now on. The recurrent mention of the absence of Christabel's birth mother, who had died at childbirth, hangs as an eerie but significant shadowy veil upon the entire scene.

The resultant gap in the father-daughter relationship becomes a yawning chasm when Christabel's father fails to rescue her from the clutches of Geraldine. The poem is a fragment. We do not know for sure what Coleridge had planned for the ending. But, whatever is available to us, shows that Christabel never succeeded in procuring the agency to confide in her father, who looks more and more like a pawn in Geraldine's game. A fragment is supposed to have loose, jagged ends, and *Christabel* is no different in this respect.

Christabel is not exactly a savior, not some Christ-like figure although some critics have come to that opinion (Basar). She is rather a victim, and the nature of her crisis is one that is quite

irresolvable. The woman cannot save herself. This fact should not be directly regarded as a misogynistic move on the part of Coleridge because when we read between the lines, we find that even though her betrothed knight is referred to right in the beginning, he fails to make an appearance to protect her betrothed. On the contrary, she prays for his protection. But, the poem does not indicate that any male has the power to alleviate the situation and undo the indelible curse. The poem might have a medieval setting, but it is not a romance in the usual sense, because of which the poem comes to exhibit a modern approach on the part of the poet. Similarly, the imagery is deeply rooted in the Christian tradition but the ballad is not ideally Christian in nature. The epiphany that occurs in the poem, resultantly is not religious but demonic in nature, as we shall go on to establish.

In the beginning of the poem, Christabel wakes from a dream in the middle of the night about her long lost love, a knight, who is 'far away' (Coleridge 1996, 102). She then ventures from her father's castle into the garden where she encounters Geraldine. This section of the poem is loaded with both contemporary and biblical feminist symbolism. First, Christabel is represented as a bit of a damsel, her long lost love – or rather his absence – has caused her emotional distress. This suggests a historical representation of a woman's relationship with a man, that of her dependence on him. She then leaves her father's castle alone, which symbolizes a more contemporary view of a woman's independence from her father and household: she is breaking out of the private sphere, but only by the seclusion of the night. Christabel chooses to venture into the garden, perhaps a reference to the Garden of Eden, where she meets Geraldine. At first, Geraldine is depicted as a mirror character in Christabel. However, the scene when Christabel and Geraldine sleep together is borderline erotic and the reader begins to sense a sort of corruption of Christabel, akin to the fall of man instigated by Eve and Satan in the biblical story. This familiar notion of Adam and Eve is furthered later on in the poem when Christabel sees Geraldine with serpent-like qualities.

Whether or not Coleridge intended for this poem to illustrate a statement about feminism by adapting the story of Adam and Eve is unclear since he admits the poem is still not finished at its time of publication. However, if he was in fact attempting to make a statement about feminism,

what exactly was he trying to say? By suggesting that Geraldine has snake like qualities – akin to Satan's portrayal in the biblical story – and also corrupts Christabel, he is furthering some contemporary anti-feminist theories that women were capable of corrupting mankind and should be feared. On the contrary, the homoerotic scene he illustrates right after Christabel wakes from her dream about her long lost knight, suggests that maybe females do not need a man to complete them, that they may find comfort within their own sex.

It seems that Coleridge struggled with contemporary feminist ideas. Again, scholars acknowledge that Coleridge studied Wollstonecraft, and portrays feminist ideas in this poem, but he also portrays more conservative and traditional ideas of a woman's role in family, love, and society (Newlyn, 215). This *struggle* with contemporary social change could certainly lead to a fragmented effect on his unfinished, and therefore inconclusive, poem and portrayal of the female role.

Now, the question that we are here to discuss is, are there shadows of Coleridge's vision in the epiphany experienced by Stephen in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*? Joyce takes notice Coleridge's comment on Giordano Bruno in the essay "The Bruno Philosophy" –

Every power in nature or in spirit must evolve an opposite as the sole condition and means of its *manifestation*; and every opposition is, therefore, a tendency of reunion. (Joyce 2000, 94) (emphasis ours)

When we shall delve into its Joycean definition, we shall find that that 'manifestation' is what an epiphany essentially is. What is significant here is the understanding that an opposition is necessary in order to flesh out the manifestation – the opposition of Christabel and Geraldine, or Stephen and the unnamed bird breasted woman in *A Portrait…* (Joyce 2000, 166), of the male and the female, nature and culture.

So, what exactly is an epiphany? The term derives from the Greek word *epiphanein*, meaning 'to manifest' and in pre-Christian times it was used to record appearances of gods and goddesses. It is a sudden flash of perception and insight. The term has religious connotations and the feast of epiphany, celebrating the revelation of the divinity of Christ was celebrated on the 6th of January. Joyce was interested in these sudden, dramatic and startling moments, which seemed to have heightened significance. In *Stephen Hero*, Stephen Dedalus ecomes the mouth-piece for the

Joycean idea of epiphany – 'by an epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech, or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself' (Joyce 1963, 211).

It is well known that in his lifetime Joyce produced some 71 epiphanies (Natali, 7). Stephen says that the 'apprehension of beauty involves recognition of integrity, wholeness, symmetry and radiance' (Joyce 2000, 206). Epiphany is a momentary occurrence, a moment when:

> Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany. (Joyce 1963, 211).

Keeping in mind Joyce's views on the epiphany, we can easily see how the first vision of Geraldine is not epiphanic in nature although it meets some of the conditions. As Christabel 'prayeth' for her lover beside the giant oak-tree, she sees Geraldine. Her appearance is sudden, dramatic and startling. The mystery of Geraldine reveals itself through her speech and gestures as she softly whispers to Christabel, the story of her disappearance. But the mystery revealed here is a deception – it, very likely, is not true and is only meant to entice Christabel's attention and affection.

But, it is Christabel who is being deceived while the experience in these lines is not same for the readers. The ominous undertones in the poem and the eerie atmosphere around Geraldine at once tell the readers that something is not what it seems. Here, we must take into consideration a fundamental factor regarding the position of the reader with relation to the two genres we are dealing with – a novel and a ballad. Joyce adopted the genre of the novel for writing *A Portrait…* in such a way that it shall carry the reader along with its own development. In this kungstelroman, as Stephen grows, we grow with him. His new realizations in life are to a certain extent our own. At the same time, there is a meticulous undertone of irony and ambiguity throughout the novel and these undertones allows the readers to maintain a critical distance from Stephen from time to time. As a result, when the epiphany arrives for the protagonist at the end of Chapter 4, the reader too might feel it in his/her own skin. But, achieving the climactic epiphany is not the end of it all. The novel continues into a further chapter. The reader is thus able to probe the implications,

consequences and gravity of the epiphany. This allows the novel to allow multiple perspectives and depth of understanding, which makes it a truly Modernist work.

In case of a ballad like *Christabel*, on the other hand, the reader is not expected to identify with the protagonist to that extend. A ballad is generally a story told by the teller to the listener, and to that effect we have a narrator who is much less impersonal in nature than is Joyce's. This narrator's skill lies in making us feel for Christabel but not feel like Christabel. Thus, the epiphanic experience in the poem is not meant to arrive to the reader and to Christabel in the same degree and same manner. Going by the definition of epiphany, we can understand that it is the point where Geraldine's true nature is revealed that the epiphany actually occurs. The point referred to is at the end of the part 1 of the poem:

> Like one that shuddered, she unbound
> The cincture from beneath her breast:
> Her silken robe, and inner vest,
> Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
> Behold! Her bosom and half her side –
> A sight to dream of, not to tell!
> O shield her! Shield sweet Christabel! (Coleridge 1996, 109)

What Christabel gets to see at this point is an epiphany for her, for at this moment the true nature of Geraldine is revealed to her, and the force of that epiphany abruptly changes her entire demeanor. But what is that something that does it to her? We do not know. As if to emphasize the fundamental ignorance that the reader encounters at this point, Geraldine next goes on to curse her –

> In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
> Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
> Thou knowest to-night, wilt know to-morrow,
> This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;' (Coleridge 1996, 109)

There is a fundamental darkness at the heart of the poem which makes it most mysterious. The narrative voice tells us about everything about what happened, but for that which happened at the exact moment of the manifestation – its single-most illuminating moment is also its point of aporia.

If we analyze Geraldine psychoanalytically, it is clear that she is Christabel's unconscious mind, brought alive in front of her in a moment of epiphanic revelation. Divining that is possible. We also know what is the implication of the realization – it is a revelation of the essential demonic nature of Geraldine – and it does not concern us the way it does Christabel, because the reader is quite aware of it already at this point in the poem. But, what intrigues the reader and is left impossible to divine is the essential content of that revelation. This fundamental aporia carries the poem beyond the confines of simple Romanticism and into the territory of ambiguity that makes it relevant to contemporary readers.

Geraldine comes from the 'other side' (103) of the oak tree. Indeed Christabel might be viewing half of her own self, after Geraldine undresses. The vision of Geraldine is significant, but its effect on Christabel is uncertain. We are not sure what happens on that fateful night, but it changes Christabel forever. This puts the audience in a state of fascination for what has been described peripherally but essentially left unseen. Mulvey notes that in case of Hitchcock's movies the audience is made to identify with the privileged gaze of the male protagonist that often objectifies the Other – the female protagonist who is presented as an object of sexual fascination. The audience thus indulges in a 'voyeuristic-scopophilic gaze' (Mulvey, 843) without the any consideration of its moral consequences. Identifying with the protagonist means that the audience, who is expected to be male, can leave behind his own self and this guilt-free state of indulgence leads to the view's pleasure.

The fact that the core object of fascination in case of *Christabel* – Geraldine in her epiphanic manifestation – is left as a fundamental mystery means that the reader, who in this case is looking from the eyes of Christabel (without suffering the consequences that Christabel did), is left hanging in a state of suspended pleasure. This instead leads to a heavy state of ambiguity, and the opposite of what Hitchcock brings about – an internal probing. The reader can only fill in the gap left in the poem by looking inside and finding their reference points in their own unconscious. This is what makes *Christabel* so compelling and haunting in nature. This is what made, for instance, Godwin run out of the room screaming the time Byron read the poem to him (Byron, 319). One is not cursed in the way Christabel is. Instead one might encounter the worst part of their unconscious in this

moment of satanic epiphany. Rather than the objectification of the Other, the poem excites our tendency to objectify the Other and at the moment we would indulge in that tendency it gives a demonic twist to the situation so that we end up being the victim before the Other.

Now, if we come to Joyce, we see that, because of the deferent nature of the art-form, the effect of the epiphany is not the same. Nonetheless, see with respect to Mulvey's thesis, there is an essential similarity in outcome. The Other in this case is the so-called bird breasted woman –

> A girl stood before him in midstream, alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird…. Her bosom was as a bird's, soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some dark-plumaged dove. (Joyce 1996, 165)

The reader that Joyce's novel prefers is male, same as it is in case of Hitchcock. But, having walk along with Stephen, the audience's gaze has been by now refined to the point where it is aware of the complex relation of sexuality and aesthetics. The content of the impending epiphany (of which, in this case, the writer ensures that we are fully aware of) is principally aesthetic in nature. Stephen has gone through a series of tribulations, at the end of which he has emerged with a more mature understanding of sexuality. Unlike what would seem from the selective bit of quotation above, the epiphany does not insure from an objectification of the Other, but a realization that the sexual to is a component of the aesthetic that the writer is after. The mode of the passage is more devotional at this point, freed of the moral repercussions that a gaze motivated on sexual gratification leads to and evades.

Thus, in this case as well, the reader's tendency to objectify the female Other is caught hold of. While Coleridge casts the reader into oblivion by that trap, Joyce gives it a better turn, making it not voyeuristic but artistic in nature. (How far is an artistic still a voyeuristic? – question for another paper.) Joyce does so by placing the artistic epiphany or aesthetic epiphany in an interesting relation with religion – embracing the possibility of release that religion provides but attaining that enlightenment through artistic rather than religious epiphany. It has to be observed that the Joycean notion of epiphany is a secular derived as much from Aquinas' theory of the principle of Haecitas

as it is on conventional Christian concepts. But, this epiphanic vision allows Stephen "to live, to err, to recreate life out of life" (166) – and this helps him break the shackles of priestly life.

Similarly, the vision of Geraldine is an answer to Christabel's prayers and helps her move beyond the shackles of conventions and explores life beyond. The consequence is traumatic. Ut it does open up a new life for Christabel, just as the epiphany opens up a new way for Stephen Dedalus. The outcomes vary in that it is essentially mincing in case of Christabel and enliving for Stephen. But, we must remember, that *Christabel* is a fragment and we cannot be sure of the final effects. Similarly, as already noted, Joyce ensures that the reader approaches Stephen's realizations critically, regarding than regarding them as a final solution. Invariable of the outcomes, then, what both the texts demonstrate is that the subject and object – which in this case is an Other that resists objectification – are interdependent. They exist in antithesis to one another: that is, finite and infinite – Christabel's finite loveliness as opposed to the exceeding beauty of the enigmatic Geraldine. It is not by killing or conquering the Other that fulfillment can be attained. Rather, it is by regarding the Other with the lens of demonic mystery or artistic religiosity (another antithesis that operate in a perpetual contestation) that one can attain the moment of epiphany. Our comparison and contrasts between the works of Coleridge and Joyce respectively therefore, can best be explained by quoting Coleridge himself – '[i]n the reconciling and the recurrence of this contradiction consists the process and mystery of production and life' (Abrams, 119).

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The Myth of India: Oriental Image and Racism in Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust*

Abdus Sattar
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Galsi Mahavidyalaya
Galsi, WestBengal.

Abstract: In the writings of occidental people, it is observed that European hegemony and racial ideologies get impetus as they orient their writings to perpetuate the colonial discourse by presenting the stereotypical oriental images and creating binary opposition. Preconceived Eurocentric temperament and conventional archetypal mindset fabricate the colonial discourse, and the old western myth of India as a land of spiritualism, exoticism, mystery, rogues, cheaters, irrational people, primitivism and hot climate. On account of their racial mindset, the occidental characters fail to accustom to the Indian culture, so ultimately their desires are deceived and disillusioned. The main focus of this paper is to document the blunt and implied colonial discourse and European hegemony embedded in Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's "Heat and Dust" and how the colonial discourse impedes the occidental people to merge with Indian people and immerse in their cultures.

Key Words: European hegemony, stereotype, racism, colonial discourse, spiritualism, exoticism, cheaters, primitivism, desire, deceived.

The trend of postcolonial writings is to exhibit the colonial and postcolonial discourse prevailing in the oriental as well as in the occidental countries. Europeans' imperial oriented mindset and racial attitude are explicitly discernible in the pre- and post-independence writings. The Oriental writers orient their writings to decolonize the colonial politics by establishing the postcolonial ideologies or by decentralizing the colonial hegemony prevailing in the oriental

countries especially in India. Writers like Raja Rao, Salman Rushdie disenchanted with the colonial hegemony establish their own Indian aesthetics and Indian discourse by the process of appropriation of language, and of image of India. But the western writers tend to present the stereotypical image of India i.e. 'spiritual' and 'full of cheaters' that comes from the age of European renaissance down to the present age. The old western myth of India as a land of spiritualism, exoticism, mystery, deception, rogues, cheaters, primitivism etc stemmed from the preconceived Eurocentric temperament and conventional archetypal mindset. In the introduction of 'Orientalism', Edward Said conspicuously describes the temperament of occidental people by defining Orientalism "as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 3). The tradition of writing about India remains in flux by the hands of Anglo-Indian and other European writers, but after the independence of India, the image of India and Indians is subjected to change for the colossal impact of war and decolonization; yet the western mindset and stereotypical presentation of India steadily brew. In the postcolonial era, the western writers tend to throw light in their writings on the aspects of cross-cultural encounter, interaction of Indo and Anglian people, stereotypical image of India and Indians, Europeans' long for spiritual enlightenment, and their ultimate deception. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala being inextricable part of the Indo-European culture transmutes cross-cultural experiences in her fictions especially in 'Heat and Dust'.

In 'Heat and Dust', Jhabvala delineates the encounter of two cultures and stereotypical western myth of India i.e. India is a 'spiritual' land and Indians are basically 'cheaters'. Other conventional images like suttee like primitive culture, primitive equipments and technology, superstitions, exoticism, unhygienic food, uncivilized and irrational people, dusty weather etc are also minutely reflected in this novel. By the denigrated image of India, Jhabvala impliedly elicits the Eurocentric maxims of Rudyard Kipling – "East is East and West is West", and "White's Man Burden". Here the novelist tries to encompass the whole gamut of Indian life, but her negative portrayal of India i.e. exoticism, mystery, heat and dust, spirituality, communal riots, uncultured and uncivilized people, primitive medical equipments, unhygienic Indian food, fanatic Muslims,

primitive culture etc and more impetus to them explicitly express her Eurocentric and racial attitude.

Two simultaneous plots in "Heat and Dust" manifest different time zones – Raj era in 1920 and Indian era in 1970. In 1970, the narrator came to India to reconstruct the story of her step grandmother, Olivia; wife of British ICS officer, Douglas Rivers. In Raj era, Douglas had learnt the Hindustani language in order to understand the country and its people better so that he could afford to impose the imperial ideologies on the Indian people with great ease. He admitted "It's the only language in which you can deliver deadly insults with the most flower courtesy" (38). His purpose of adopting the Indian language and culture was to govern the country more efficiently and to settle 'a great variety of problems' with flattery tongue. He did not allow the local rich people to enter his office but to sit on the verandah when they came for offerings of 'baskets of fruits and trays of sweetmeats and pistachio nuts'. Douglas took the cross-cultural encounter as a strong mean to widen and strengthen the colonial regime, not to know the alien people and their culture by the process of negotiation and by a mutual exchange of various goods. The land, the Britishers shared was different from Indian's and it was known as 'Civil Lines' in which Indians were not allowed to live with 'burra sahib'. "The creatures to be seen inside are the Rivers, the Minnies, the Crawfords, the Saunders and the like, who speak differently, eat differently, think differently and in fact do everything differently. An Indian needs some sort of passport to enter into this de-indianized part of India. All the doors and windows are shut to keep out heat and dust, and metaphorically, India itself" (H-Shihan, 46). Douglas formed an imperial and superior concept of his race, so he denigrated Indians by calling them "a pack of rogues" (38). His superior and colonial attitude was reflected by his temperament and by his western discourse of civilizing "the wretched inhabitants of his wretched state" (148). The typical mindset of Douglas was also reflected by his construction of negative image of Indian Nawab. To saturate the thirst of Olivia who asked about the Nawab he said; "He is a menace to himself to himself, to us, and to the wretched inhabitants of his wretched state. The worst type of ruler – the worst type of Indian – you can have" (148).

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The colonial hegemony forced the oriental people to accept the inferior identity by means of embracing the negative image of India. Like the Nawab, Inder Lal accepted that his living condition, house, food and his manner of livelihood were considered to be primitive in comparison with the western standards. He also considered himself inadequate by accepting 'his unscientific mind and ignorance of the modern world'.

On the other hand, the novelist described Major Minnies as 'fair and judicious'. Douglas also convinced Olivia that "he is a fine man. He has some fine qualities – and if only these were combined with a little self-restraint, self-disciplined" (148)

Douglas was also described as 'fair and noble' man having scientific and logical mind. To keep the European race in flux, Olivia wished to procreate many children like Douglas having the ideal and fine qualities of occidental people like handsome, noble, rational and supercilious.

"The image of Indians as 'children', so popular in Anglo-Indian fiction, continues in Ruth Jhabvala. Since children are by nature petulant, volatile and imprudent, it is essential to be strict with them and this is supposed to be in their long term interest" (Bhan, 193-94).

Here Douglas considered Indians as cunning and devious creatures like the children, and as 'a pack of rogues'. The Indians used to adopt the very filthy and mischievous devices to pester the Anglo-Indian officials like the wicked children. When a delegation of Indian merchants came to pay respects as a tribute to Douglas, he considered their requests as mere usual cunnings and tricks.

Mr. and Mrs. Saunders' attitude to India, its people and culture was also denigrated one. Mr. Saunders extremely excoriated the Indian culture, and considered suttee custom as savagery like 'everything else in the country, plain savagery and barbarism'. He also cited the violence that broke out in the name of religion. Mrs. Saunders felt exasperated at the presence of Indians and formed a negative image [takes a contemptuous view] of Indian servants. She formed an opinion [is persuaded that] that Indian servants were debased by nature, sexually perverse, and had no normal

way of life, human emotions and attitudes. They were wicked by blood, and did not know how to respect their masters.

> She said that these servants really were devils and that they could drive anyone crazy; that it was not stupidity on their part – on the contrary, they were clever enough when it suited their purposes – but it was all done deliberately to torment their masters. (28)

But her criticism of India was not confined only to the servants; rather she encompassed the whole India "everything was like that, everywhere the same – the whole town, the lanes and bazaars" (28). On account of her bitter experience in India, she constantly urged Mr. Saunders to leave this land of 'heat and dust' for England, a cool and clean land. Like Mrs. Saunders, Miss Tietz's observation of India was imbued with utterly denigrated images such as 'Hindu-Muslim riot, and a smallpox epidemic, and several famines', and she found nothing worth in India but only all the inimical things that one could find on this earth. It was so rotten country that without the help of Jesus Christ, it was impossible for the Europeans to live in.

Major Minnies' attitude to India was ambivalent– he neither completely excoriated all aspects of India nor entirely eulogized. He believed that one could love India in many ways and there were "many things to love her for – the scenery, the history, the poetry, the music, and indeed the physical beauty of the men and women" (170). At the same time, he also elicited his view that the Indians were debased in nature and had 'weak spot' in the finest people and even in the finest feelings, so it would be unreasonable to them to merge with the Indian culture and Indian people as it could bring debilitation and destruction. But at last his swaying attitude towards India established his third space position. He admitted:

> It is all very well to love and admire India – intellectually, aesthetically, he did not mention sexually but he must have been aware of that factor too – but always with a virile, measured, European feeling. One should never, he warned, allow oneself to become soften (like Indian) by an excess of feeling; because the moment that happens – the moment one exceeds one's measure – one is in danger of being dragged over to the other side (171).

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Only one character, Olivia who succeeded in negotiating with the alien culture and people was considered by Dr. Saunders as 'something rotten' in her character like the uncivilized Indian. The narrator also described her "a pretty young woman, rather vain, pleasure-seeking, a little petulant" (160). With her vast arena of thinking and mind, Olivia succeeded in negotiating with the Indian culture and people with optimistic outlook. She admitted "That I don't know India. It's true I don't, but what's that got to do with it? People can still be friends, can't they, even if it is India" (103). She defended Indian suttee custom by echoing it was the part of their religion, and was also something ancient one, so it would be a great blunder for them to meddle with that. For her oriental orientation of mindset, she was described as rotten or having frailty in character.

The narrator's treatment of India, at fast, was utterly negative one, so she deliberately avoided all Indian things especially food. She said "I hate their food, I wouldn't touch it for anything" (3). Her depiction of Inder Lal's house only solidified [endorses] the western myth of India. The ambient of his house could not have the salubrious effect on the people as it was messy, poky, and children were untidy. She observed that Indian streets were only full of beggars, and were 'dense, run-down, and dirty'. But later with the changes of socio-political scenario and cultural fabric of India, the temperament of the narrator was subjected to change. She viewed "they are no longer the same because I myself am no longer the same. India always changes people, and I have been no exception" (2). Later, similar to Olivia, she decided to accept the Indian culture and people, so admitted "more and more I want to find out; but I suppose the only way I can is to do the same she did – that is, stay on" (160). She adopted Indian lifestyle so she ate Indian foods and dressed Indian clothes though she looked strange to them. She was not perturbed when people call her a 'hijra'. On account of her love for India and Indian people, she made friendship with Inder Lal, her first host; and Maji, a spiritual woman. She tried to converse with Ritu in Hindi though she was not interested in conversation with her. She also eulogized the scenario of people sleeping in group under the open sky in India contrary to the material world of England in which people suffered from mental trauma for their spending of isolation life in their houses. She accepted that

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she had developed the 'sense of communion' while sleeping at the rooftop in India, the experience that she never felt in England.

"The response of the Europeans to the Indian phenomena even in post-independence phase continues to be negative. This applies both to short-term travellers and to Europeans who, engaged in various avocations, have lived in India for long. Perhaps the most odious is the reaction of a young man and a young girl the narrator meets shortly after her arrival in Delhi" (Bhan, 203). Other western characters like Chid and two young people came to India in search of a spiritual enlightenment under the roof of Hindu religion. The girl and her boyfriend, being enchanted by the impressive lectures of the swami came to India for a pilgrimage, but fell under victim of cheaters and various diseases. They had been cheated and robbed in the most sacred places like Amritsar and Kashmir so the girl 'had developed dysentery'. They became so exasperated by these denigrated aspects that they were forced to return back England conceiving the old and conventional western image of India. Chid being led by the sparkling inner impulse of spiritual stir lived like an Indian yogi, but later being perceived the illusive nature of spiritual quest and pilgrimage, dismantled his yogi dress and Indian culture by adopting western discourse, dress and manner.

The novelist perpetuated the western discourse not only by the words of occidental characters that had by blood cynical temperament towards India but also by the words of some Indian characters especially Dr. Gopal. When the narrator met Dr. Gopal for the diagnosis of Chid's ailment she was first asked about her race, and she was informed to consult doctors in her own land in which she could have better doctors and better facility in hospitals. It was unreasonable to them to live in such climate that did not even suit Indians. In this climate, not only occidental people but even most Indians suffered from many fatal diseases. At last, he concluded his statement by uttering God never wanted that 'human beings should live in such a place'. The narrator observed the inhuman and primitive form of treatment that Ritu received for her ailments. Later she was suggested to have a pilgrimage that could restore peace and solace to the most deserted and depressed heart and mentally ill persons. By this the novelist tried to focus on the primitive medical

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treatment of Indians for ailments contrary to the highly equipped western medical system. Karim, Nawab's nephew and his wife Kitty left their native land for England as to them there was nothing worth to live in India. Here people were rotten and all things were primitive, so one could not afford to lead a reasonable life in India.

The desire of Europeans was utterly deceived as there was a great disparity between appearance and reality. Chid being impressed by the words of Swami led a life like yogi by putting aside his Christian characteristics and clothes, and by wearing a dress of orange robe. He was convinced that by leading this kind of ascetic life one could get the spiritual enlightenment and mental peace. So to get his dream fulfilled, he ventured in the religious path by wielding begging bowl. But in reality, he observed that practical India was different from his dream and instructed India, so he had to constantly send telegraphic for money. In his journey to Amarnath, he was thrown stones and other missiles. He had to also bargain for cheap room to lead a reasonable life as it was impossible for him to live under the open blue sky and green trees instructed by the guru. At his time of illness towards the journey of Amarnath, nobody came to rescue him except the White colour people. On account of these incidents, he was totally disillusioned, and at last, he became pucca sahib by throwing away his orange robe dress. Insimilar way, the girl and her boyfriend were deceived and disillusioned in their quest for spiritual enlightenment as they also came under the victim of cheaters and robbers.

If we take a closer look at the journey undertaken by Olivia and the narrator, we may say that the former's desire to bridge the gap between East and West is only partly fulfilled, as her child, bearing the blood of two cultures, is eventually aborted.

On the other hand, the firm decision of the narrator to have a baby, and her ultimate shifting to the town of X paved the path for cross-cultural encounter, and sapped the racial tension. The narrator admitted that "Chid and I have now both merged into the landscape: we are part of the town, part of people's lives here, and have been completely accepted (78).

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The very title 'Heat and Dust' explicitly suggests the racial temperament of the writer, and forecasts the negative image of India that the novel is going to present. In apparent sense, 'heat' and 'dust' imply the external climatic condition of India in which Europeans are not accustomed to. Europeans severely excoriated the dusty hot climate of India in which they underwent many physical as well as mental problems. The hot and dust climate constantly kept the western people in exasperated and quarrelsome mood. On account of that Douglas repeatedly convinced Olivia to have a sojourn trip in the salubrious climate especially in Shimla. Most of the time, they used to keep their doors and windows close so that the hot and dust air could not enter in their rooms. "The Westerners' response to India is symbolised by 'heat' and 'dust', the two things which Europeans, used to a cool and clean climate, invariably dislike and abhor. The 'heat' and 'dust' of India are, as it were, the symbols of discomfort, dirt and disease which the Westerners must encounter and overcome" (Chadha, 106). But in metaphorical sense, it represented the murky aspects of Indian culture and society in which one had to succumb to the terrible experience. India was depicted as a land of communal riot, severe disease, hunger, poverty, destitute, primitivism, exoticism, mystery etc having nothing to praise. These oriental images of occidental people explicitly elicited their colonial and racial mentality. Olivia feared to have a child owing to her frightened by all the little babies who lied buried in the graveyard catching the diseases of smallpox, cholera, or enteric fever.

The novelist excoriated the Government of India by illustrating that India demanded licenses for everything, and later refuted to issue the licenses. If anyone went to the Secretary of India for the need of help, he only knew the word 'no'. Minor images of Indian society like use of mosquito net, crowded bus, dusty people and hot climate were so minutely pictured that they titillated western people and infuriated the oriental one. The novelist documented only one side of Indian life – in Raj era she pictured only upper class society full of parties and luxurious lifestyle, and in Indian era she pictured lower middle class society full of beggars, eunuchs, primitive customs and poor irrational people. Intentionally or unintentionally she failed to capture the whole gamut of India life, and to have insight into the inner hearts of Indian people. These images were clear incarnation of the racial temperament of the writer.

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The problem of untouchable, suttee system, and communal riots was so acute almost every character that came into contact in these matters excoriated these customs. Dr. Saunders considered the suttee custom 'plain savagery and barbarism' like everything else in the country. Regarding the communal riot the Nawab said it was 'like weather in its season' which broke out naturally at one time, and after particular duration it automatically vanished. In India, the condition of lower class people was so pathetic that nobody touched their bodies if they suffered from any fatal disease or succumbed to any pathetic situation. Among the gang of dacoits, Tikku Ram asked the hangman on the gallows whether he was belonged to the "Chamar". At the time of his death, he was more concerned with the caste of hangman rather than his valuable life. The incident of beggar woman who suffered from a particular disease, and not a single Indian came to rescue her except the narrator also exemplified the problem of untouchable in India. Other incidents like performing yogi by sadhus, tied the piece of string, believing in hooting of owl as ominous before the journey suggested the exotic and superstitious mentality of Indians.

The Nawab was also very much aware of the superior and directorial mentality of the occidental people and their racial discrimination. The occidental people used to mould the identity of the oriental people, and manipulated their direction. The establishment of western discourse utterly shattered the socio-political life and cultural fabric of India. It was the occidental people who decided what Indians should do and what they should not do. There was no individual identity of the Indians. Being exasperated with western discourse and colonial hegemony, the Nawab resisted the imperial regime by raising his voice.

> They make themselves into judges over others, saying this is good, this is bad, as if they are all-knowing. Who is Major Minnies that he should say to me don't do this, and don't do that, who has given him the right to say this to me? (135)

The Nawab was deceived in his desire to know the foreign culture by negotiating with the occidental people. But their fanatic racial attitude and Eurocentric temperament inhibited his intention of merging with the Europeans and their culture. He was very much conscious of the

superior mentality of the occidental people, so his opinion about the occidental people clearly threw light on the imperial temperament of the Whites and their preconceived oriental old myth. He asked a question to Olivia whether she despised Orientals or not. Later he clarified himself by convincing Olivia; "You are right. I think. Because we are very stupid people with feelings that we let others trample on and hurt to their hearts content. English people are so lucky – they have no feelings at all" (145).

Thus, it is observed the old western myth of India as a country of spiritualism, exoticism, mystery, religious gurus, diseases, awful climate, rogues, dacoits, cheaters, famines, beggars, primitivism etc was continued to brew in the Eurocentric writings of the Anglo-Indian writers. The myth of India got impetus through the images of binary opposition – Indians as rogues, cheaters, untidy, irrational, childlike, different, uncivilized and primitive; and Europeans as fair, clean, honest, virtuous, mature, normal, rational, civilized and modern. These negative images of oriental people established the colonial discourse and European hegemony, and ascertained the racial temperament of the Europeans that stemmed from their Eurocentric archetypal mindset. The lopsided depiction of India was the manifestation of novelist's racial orientation of temperament. On account of their colonial mindset, the occidental characters failed to accustom to the Indian culture, so ultimately their desires to know the Indian culture and to attain the spiritual enlightenment were deceived and disillusioned.

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V.S. Naipaul's Hindu India and Concern with History in *India: A Wounded Civilization*

Jasmine Anand
Assistant Professor of English
MCM DAV College for Women,
Chandigarh., India

Abstract: The paper will peruse 'Hindu India' and concerns with history through new-historicism in V.S. Naipaul's *India: A Wounded Civilization*. He sees the oneness in India as a façade because of the collapse of dominance of Hindu culture in India. He mocks at various Gandhian ideals practiced in India, which according to him blur the vision of Indians as Gandhi built "only a nation of followers, with no leadership". Naipaul deals with India's social and cultural history as an extension of psycho-biographical experience of Indians. He associates Emergency with Indira Gandhi's name, but mainly attributes it to lack of "central will" in Hindus. History gets recreated largely through the individuals whose roles he reconstructs from interviews, fiction, non-fiction, newspaper clippings, and magazines for argumentation apart from his commentaries on the literature, society, and politics of India. In the light of his personal history and diasporic experience the paper will investigate his description of history vis-a-vis professional history.

Keywords: V.S. Naipaul, Hindu India, History, Culture, Society.

V.S. Naipaul in *India: A Wounded Civilization* sees India's "going on" or "it's equilibrium" as a facade because of the collapse of dominance of Hindu culture in India. He observes India as a text to be studied and researched because of his expatriate experience and finds the 'Hindu India' as wounded, inflicted, and bruised due to invasions. Weiss comments on the 'wounds' as a metaphor which refers to a "psychic, not a physical wound: because of its particular religious and philosophic attitudes and its lack of a historical sense, India is unequipped to compete in the twentieth century" (124). Naipaul attempts to explore the reason not only of the Emergency but also of the general conditions of the country by working on India's intellectual and cultural history, because he knows;

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"In the history books, in the accounts of wars and conquests and plunder, the intellectual depletion passes unnoticed" (IWC 8).

Naipaul, in this way, recuperates that history which; in general, does not become part of our history books and remains hidden. No doubt, he is not a professional historian recording the past, but he offers his own take on various issues which are part of our history. His is- what Nietzsche calls- *super-historical consciousness* in his essay "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life"- a sense that allows for a greater cultural view [emphasis added].

Naipaul jibes at a kind of collective amnesia widely prevalent in Indians' perceptibility regarding their history. He is amused to find that Vijaynagar "as a kingdom, is so little remembered" (IWC 5) by the general Indian public.

> Some of the ruins of Vijaynagar have been declared national monuments by the Archaeological Department; but to the pilgrims … Vijaynagar is not its terrible history … To the pilgrims Vijaynagar is its surviving temple (IWC 5).

Even those who claim to be part of the educated section of the country are equally disappointing. Naipaul is amazed to discover that "there are university students in Bangalore, two hundred miles away, who haven't even heard of it" (IWC 5).

Naipaul is constrained to find that Indians have little *historic sense* [emphasis added]. He writes: "no country was so easily raided and plundered, and learned so little from its disasters" (IWC ix). For Indians, "India, Hindu India, is eternal: conquests and defilements are but instants in time" (IWC 4) and it "does seem just to go on" (IWC 3).

But Naipaul is appalled to find the same kind of ignorance- which is visible in the historic sense of Indians- about their present knowledge of Indian polity. He observes that "for the prince with his ancestral pieties, the girl with her foreign marriage, the peasant of Bihar or Bundi with his knowledge of karma, *India was going on: the Hindu equilibrium still held* [emphasis added] (IWC 27). All of them are far removed from the Emergency.

Naipaul also sees the Emergency in India as the beginning of the loss of an old equilibrium.

> With independence and growth, chaos and a loss of faith, India was awakening to its distress and the cruelties that had always lain below its apparent stability, its capacity simply for

> going on. Not everyone now was content simply to have his being. *The old equilibrium had gone, and at the moment all was chaos* [emphasis added] (IWC 38).

Though "… independent India, with its five-year plans, its industrialization, its practice of democracy, has invested in change" (IWC 8), yet this change could not be effective because India could not break off completely with its past. It does not mean that Naipaul endorses a complete break away from its past. He rather insists on the need for possessing the past but "only by inquiry and scholarship," by "intellectual discipline" (IWC 161) instead of a historical version mystified and born out of glorification.

Nietzsche talks of historical over-awareness, placing heavy burden on self- consciousness of individuals, denuding life of originality and creativity. On the contrary, Naipaul talks of the reverse for the colonized people. Historical amnesia, only a dim awareness of the past impedes the development of a healthy self-consciousness. It leads them to a halfway point somewhere between a repression of who they are on the one hand, and an unconfident imitation on the other. According to Pratap Bhanu Mehta, "Lack of historical self-awareness impedes self-examination, a lack of a sense of history disables agency" (qtd. in Panwar 45).

Naipaul strongly believes that "Men need history; it helps them to have an idea of who they are" (EOA 318), but history has to be seen; and not to be blindly accepted and eulogized to abstraction. The past, if allowed to grow untrimmed, would choke the present. In this context, a quote from Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India* gives a more balanced view:

> India must break with much of her past and not allow it to dominate the present. Our lives are encumbered with the dead wood of the past; all that is dead and has served its purpose has to go. But that does not mean a break with, or a forgetting of, the vital and life-giving in that past (522).

It is not the past that one has to break with, but "the excrescences and abortions that have twisted and petrified the spirit" (Nehru 522).

V.S. Naipaul's emphasis on history and its amnesia is criticised by Rob Nixon as being a western prerogative and the past as an irrational category that belongs to the third world, one which poses an impediment to such cultures (121).

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The Hindu India indeed is Naipaul's own search into himself and his genealogy which since childhood was experienced in its microcosmic form through symbols, icons, and anecdotes by his grandfather and father. Studying the metaphorical utopian Hindu India (*Ram Rajya*), he finds weaknesses and flaws in its own ideology. Its vulnerability led to the Emergency of June 1975. In this regard bearing the failure of democracy along with the realization of Hindu India, 1980s can be seen as the era of accelerated ascendance of the Hindu Right.

V.S. Naipaul in his agenda to enlighten his 'area of darkness' builds upon the Hindu ideas he was familiar with. As he wrote about the ideas/attitudes/history/literature related to the Hindu cult he was damningly labelled as "A cheer-leader for the BJP" (qtd. in Dhondy) by Salman Rushdie. William Dalrymple, in an article in *The Guardian*, asserted that V.S. Naipaul had no comprehension of history himself and was a self-confessed "supporter of the entire Sangh Parivar Programme" (Dhondy). It seems that V.S. Naipaul has used the phoenix technique in his assessment of India: as for the Hindu India to rise and realize, first it has to burn itself to its own Hindu malady (its obsessions and not the ideas). He openly denounces the wrongs done by people under the name of Hindutva. But this movement according to him is "a reaction to humiliation, suffering, and historical imperialism. It doesn't want to dominate the world. It is an awakening that can stimulate the population …" (Dhondy). The *Wounded Civilization* also concludes on the awakening of the Hindu population projected through the ideas and working of the Shiv Sainiks.

V.S. Naipaul has a position of both an insider and an outsider. He is an Indian Brahmin disassociated from the land of his ancestors. Secondly, he is a West Indian by birth. Finally, he is an expatriate in London because of his self-chosen exile. His approach to Indian life and culture can be understood only in terms of his triple identity and a complex personality. With his own share of ambivalence and unstable identity V.S. Naipaul wrote about India when it was passing through its own stage of instability trying to ascertain its identity as a political nation during Emergency. He analyses Indian life and culture with the Hindu norms of *karma*, *dharma*, and *moksha* and

counterbalances it with the Western norms of individuality and freedom. V.S. Naipaul's Hindu self can be documented through the background of his Hindu childhood.

I came of a family that abounded with Pundits. But I had been born an unbeliever. I took no pleasure in religious ceremonies. They were too long and the food came only at the end. I did not understand the language, it was as if our elders expected that our understanding would be instinctive and no one explained the prayers or the ritual, one ceremony was like another. The images did not interest me. I never sought to learn their significance … So it happened that though growing up in an orthodox family, I remained totally ignorant of Hinduism. What then survived of Hinduism in me? Perhaps I had received a certain supporting philosophy. I cannot say, my uncle often put it to me that my denial was an admissible type of Hinduism. Examining myself I found only that sense of the difference of people which I have tried to explain a vague sense of caste and the horror of the unclean (AOD 32-33).

The search into the times gone by starts for Naipaul from himself. He says,

> And though in India I am a stranger, *the starting point of this inquiry*- more than might appear in these pages- *has been myself*. Because in myself, like the split-second images of infancy which some of us carry, there survive, from the family rituals that lasted into my childhood, phantasmal memories of old India which for me outline a whole vanished world [emphasis added] (IWC xi).

A.K Mehrotra states that "Naipaul's over reliance on what might be called the "Hindu cultural and philosophical system" to explain the brutalities of Indian society is not simply an anthropological inadequacy - it is in fact the keystone of the play of self, ancestral memory, and cultural desire that marks all his writings" (240).

Further, Sudha Rai's quote from V.S. Naipaul's Foreword to Seepersad Naipaul's collection of short stories, *The Adventures of Gurudeva and other Stories* can help in measuring the depth of his Hindu self, his urge to write about himself or "peripheral people" with "suppressed histories", and his love and hate relationship with India:

I do not know how, in such a setting in these circumstances of dependence and uncertainity, and with no example, the wish to be a writer came to my father. But I feel now, reading the

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> stories after a long time and seeing so closely (what was once hidden from me) the Brahmin standpoint from which they are written, that it might have been the caste sense, the Hindu reverence for learning and the world awakened by the beginnings of an English education and a Hindu religious training …. He was concerned from the starting with Hinduism and the practice of Hinduism … as late as 1951, he was writing to me ecstatically about Aurobindo's commentaries on the Gita .... *They are written from within a community: a Hindu community*, essentially, which, because *the writer* assesses as a whole, he *can at times make romantic, and at other times satirise .... I stress it because this looking from being my father's become mine; my father's early stories created my background for me* [emphasis added] (11).

Furthering the issue of Hindu India- the homogenous Hindu *rashtra* (nation) is congruous with upper-caste Hindu beliefs and practices, which are central to the Hindu Right's agenda. As the author's of 'Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags' note: "At the heart of Hindutva lies the myth of a continuous thousand-year-old struggle of Hindus against Muslims as the structuring principle of Indian history" (Basu et al. 2). The figure of the Indian Muslim can be categorised as "the "intimate enemy" or the "stranger" in our midst, who is not quite a friend or an external enemy" (Kumar, Priya xvi). In the Indian landscape, Muslims, along with Christians, have often been viewed as non autochthonous not because they are born elsewhere but because they follow faiths that originated elsewhere, which Vir Savarkar propounded in his theory of Who is a Hindu?. The "strangeness" of the Muslims was further exacerbated by Partition in 1947 and creation of Pakistan as a separate nation for the subcontinent's Muslims. Mushirul Hasan, a Partition historian, does not see Partition as the consequence of Jinnah's two-nation theory (an outcome of irreconcilable differences between Hindus and Muslims) but, as the consequence of consciousness of community, conceived by a small group, "as an ideological counterweight to secular nationalism" (i).

This Hindu strain forms a part of V.S. Naipaul's reaction towards Muslims in *An Area of Darkness*. Though the character of Aziz, Naipaul's personal servant in Srinagar has been created with utmost warmth, yet, at his farewell, even though he sees tears running down Aziz's cheeks, he says: "Even at that moment I would not be sure that he had ever been mine". Contrarily, on his way

back from Awantipur to Srinagar, with his past baggage of "vague sense of caste and a horror of the unclean" he unscrupulously takes food from the hands of a Brahmin dirty servant because "His *servant* was of the *right caste*; nothing served by the fingers of his *right hand* could be unclean" [emphasis added] (AOD 139-140). Here, right can also be studied as a metaphor and a binary opposite.

The time during which V.S. Naipaul wrote *India: A Wounded Civilization* was a crucial period in the recent Indian history. It was the time when India was going through the Emergency. And today, after more than four decades, the Emergency is remembered popularly as a political crisis in the history of Indian democracy by all and sundry. Bipan Chandra, a noted historian, recollects it in the following way:

> In 1975, India experienced its *greatest political crisis* [emphasis added] since independence when internal emergency was declared on 26 June. How did the Emergency come about? Was there no other choice, as Indira Gandhi maintained, or was it the ultimate expression of her authoritarian tendencies, as the opposition alleged? Or did both sides indulge in obfuscation. The issue, in fact, is quite complex (246).

But, Naipaul does not see it simply as a political crisis. He maintains:

> An inquiry about India- even an *inquiry about the Emergency*- has quickly *to go beyond the political*. It *has to be an inquiry about Indian attitudes*; it has to be an inquiry about the *civilization itself*, as it is [emphasis added] (IWC xi).

India: A Wounded Civilization thus becomes an assessment of Hindu India with its ideas that are lost and impediments because of free-wheeling obsessions. V.S. Naipaul sees the working of "intellectual crisis" at great length for the 'golden' India's [non-shining] phase. He criticizes:

> It is fundamental to the understanding of India's intellectual secondratedness, which is generally taken for granted but may be the most startling and depressing fact about the world's second most populous country which now has little to offer the world except its Gandhism concept of holy poverty and the recurring crooked comedy of the holy men, and which, while asserting the antiquity of its civilization (and usually simply asserting

without knowledge or scholarship) is now dependent in every practical way on other imperfectly understood civilizations (IWC 104).

V.S. Naipaul was born 15 years before the Independence of India. He grew up with two ideas of India, one a kind of country from which his ancestors had come and the second which was the India of the Independence movement, the India of the great name. He wrote in *India: A Million Mutinies Now*:

> I grew up with two ideas of India. The first idea not one I wanted to go into too closely was about the kind of country from which my ancestors had come .... There was a second India. It balanced the first. This second India was the India of the great names. It was also the India of the great civilization and the great classical past. It was the India by which in all the difficulties of our circumstances we felt supported. It was an aspect of our identity, the community identity we had developed, which in multi-racial Trinidad had become sure like a social identity .... This was the identity I took to India on my first visit in 1962. And when I got there I found it had no meaning in India. The idea of an Indian community- in effect, a continual idea of our Indian identity made sense only when the community was very small, a minority and isolated (7).

V.S. Naipaul since his birth has been an expatriate not only because of his genealogy but because of practice! Naturally the desire to know about origin, roots and home emerges from this fact. He mentions "I think ... between my birth and the age of seven, we lived in about seven or eight different houses" (qtd. in Mahabir). His Hindu impact lays large on his father Seeprasad's joining Arya Samaj Movement at Trinidad. Further, Mohamed Bakari mentions Naipaul, "As a Brahmin he feels duty bound to be in the forefront, as a historic and religious duty, to defend Indian culture and Hinduism" (248).

Naipaul uses Hinduism and Gandhism as the "referent frames" to discuss about Emergency and the present "intellectual depletion" (Mustafa 134). He examines the current Indian crisis with a peep into past by giving illustrations from novels. Akin to Emergency, in the novels of R.K. Narayan, Naipaul notices his fictional world torn "between the wish to preserve and be psychologically secure, and the need to undo" (IWC 16) the old equilibrium. But simultaneously,

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Naipaul also views R. K. Narayan's novels as a "classic exposition of the Hindu equilibrium" (IWC 17), which is still being maintained. He finds R.K Narayan's unexamined sense of continuity as being a typically Hindu "simplification of reality" (IWC 11). He has earlier read Narayan's novels as social comedies, but now he sees them as more akin to Hindu religious fables. Naipaul observes that both Srinivas and Jagan have misunderstood Gandhi's views. They both venture into the world of doing, followed by a "withdrawal"- regressing to almost a karmic acceptance of life.

Naipaul sees in the character of Srinivas, the protagonist of *Mr. Sampath,* a misinterpretation of the ideas of *karma* and non-violence. According to Naipaul, Srinivas understands the Hindu idea of *nishkamkarma* as the equivalent of "non doing". The Hindu idea advocates that a person must perform his karma without thinking about benefits. It does not mean that one should withdraw from all action. But Srinivas, who takes up the cause of true journalism enthusiastically in the beginning, soon retreats to the idea of indifference and develops an almost saint-like ascetic attitude towards life. While he thundered against municipal or social shortcomings an inner conflict went on interrogating: "Life and the world and all this is passing. Why bother about anything? The perfect and the imperfect are all the same. Why really bother" (IWC 12).

Even in an incident of tiff with his wife, his attitude is *congratulatory*! [emphasis added] He believes "Non-violence in all matters, little or big, personal or national" (IWC 13) because Srinivas thinks that it facilitates "an unagitated, undisturbed calm, both in a personality and in society" (IWC 13). The Gandhian idea of non-violence degenerates into *sad quietism* [emphasis added] in Srinivas. For Srinivas, Gandhian non-violence becomes a means of securing an "undisturbed calm" (IWC 13). In the fate of Srinivas, Naipaul sees the fate of the vast Indian populace, who has likewise interpreted its religious philosophy superficially, and comments:

> Out of a superficial reading of the past, then, out of the sentimental conviction that India is eternal and forever revives, there comes not a fear of further defeat and destruction, but an indifference to it. India will somehow look after itself; the individual is freed of all responsibility (IWC 15).

Another instance of the struggle between tradition and modernity is Jagan, a character in *The Vendor of Sweets* who is sustained in life by Gandhian principles which cannot equip him to

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fight chaos in his life. Jagan's world gets crumbled, the old equilibrium gets shattered; when his son brings home a foreign girl and lives with her without marriage and is jailed for carrying liquor in his car. Jagan abandons his home and retreats to the jungle. Naipaul sees in Jagan a decadent idea of Hindu morality.

Naipaul tries to reveal the debility of Gandhian philosophy through the character of Jagan in *The Vendor of Sweets*. He is a Gandhian who has worked for the independence of India, but he does not pay his sales tax. He cheats the very government for whose sake he had bravely taken police beatings during the British rule. Narayan mocks, "If Gandhi had said somewhere, "Pay your sales tax uncomplainingly," he would have followed his advice, but Gandhi had made no reference to sales tax anywhere to Jagan's knowledge" (IWC 28-29). Jagan has no idea of what Independence or self-governance means because as Naipaul comments- "Jagan's was a *holy war* [emphasis added]; he had a vision of his country cleansed and purified rather than a political vision of his country remade" (IWC 33). His world is limited to his idea of Gandhi because "the stress was on the fight for the truth rather than the fight against the British" (IWC 33). Naipaul holds "a multitude of Jagans," new to the idea of the state, responsible for undoing the independence.

> Now the Jagans had begun to be rejected, and India was discovering that it had ceased to be Gandhian (IWC 36).

Naipaul sees these texts as representing India. For instance he considers the novel *The Vendor of Sweets* "a confused book and its confusion holds much of the Indian confusion today" (IWC 42). He examines the characters as existing in the narrow sphere of conformity, "content to be ruled in all things by others" a sphere where "ritual regulates the will". Rob Nixon asserts that with this Naipaul seems to give an orientalist reading of India as "his commonest argument is that nothing significant happens in "simple societies"- there is therefore nothing to tell" (IWC 122). The barbaric and reductionist view further adds to the third world status of India being a primitive society.

Naipaul assessed that the Hindu society with its ideals that Gandhi had "appeared to ennoble" during the struggle for Independence had started to "disintegrate with the rebirth and growth that had come with the Independence" (IWC 45). Post Independence there were no ideals

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but people were left with trauma, poverty, aggression, borrowed institutions, and colonial hangover. Congress as a party professed secularism but was a continuity of colonial rule, more of transfer of power from one monolith to the other. Despite its hegemony over the masses for long it could not provide strong cultural and ethical base which could provide enough strength to masses to pave new phase in their country's life. The realisation that India had ceased to be Gandhian also came with the chaos of the Emergency (IWC 46). The image of a Gandhian India had actually distorted the image of real India. Gandhi was the pioneer of a movement than the maker of a nation. The violence and cruelty which had been part of India and were obscured by non-violence were now coming up on the surface. It even led to the confusion of Indians themselves who even though practising violence would prefer to be typecast as believers of non-violence and the followers of Gandhi. Now the "older deeper, Indian violence" was brought out in the open in the press but this was not only a reference to state violence but the oppressive violence that had "become a part of the Hindu social order" (IWC 46). "The antique violence remained: rural untouchability as serfdom, maintained by terror and sometimes by deliberate starvation. None of this was new: but suddenly in India it was news" (IWC 47). In this disenchantment Naipaul sees Emergency as the moment of India's "awakening to its distress and the cruelties that had always lain below its apparent stability" (IWC 48). After Partition and the onslaught of Emergency "India needed a new code, but it had none" (IWC 46). He rejects both Hinduism and Gandhianism as being unsuitable for the present. Hinduism according to Naipaul had only "exposed us to a thousand years of defeat and stagnation .... Its philosophy of withdrawal has diminished men intellectually, and not equipped them to respond to challenge; it has stifled growth. So that again and again in India history has repeated itself: vulnerability, defeat, withdrawal" (IWC 53). According to Weiss, Naipaul views "Indian religion and philosophy as advocating surrender- to one's fate, to dehumanising living conditions, to the socio-economic mechanism of mills and chawls', a pattern that has been followed through the ages, leading to the "intellectual depletion of India" (127).

The emergence of Shiv Sena seems to be the only saving grace of this period. During the Emergency the right wing was able to gain considerable ground since many organisations had been banned and a lot of their leaders were put in jail. Moreover JP's alliance with the right also

legitimised its existence to a large extent. He views the Sena as a "reworking of the Hindu system" and a "positive" movement despite it being called "fascist" which is in stark variance to its present image of being a highly sectarian outfit (IWC 62).

India's "defect of vision" extends beyond Gandhi, poverty and torture as it failed to understand the political situation of India as well, which saw the rise of numerous regional and communal parties like the Shiv Sena, the Dravidian movement in the South, the Anand Marg and, most importantly, the Jan Sangh, fighting for the cow issue as well as nuclear power, which according to Naipaul emerged then as "the best organised opposition party; with its emphasis on Hindu power" (IWC 114). This defect of vision according to Rob Nixon emerge as a "fundamental flaw in the national character" (83) and also becomes a source of national integration.

Though Naipaul has done quite a lot of India bashing still his ambiguous statement seems to project a ray of hope out of disenchantment. As he remarks, "It is one of the paradoxes of India under the Emergency that make judgement about the Emergency so difficult: the dangers are obvious, but the results can appear positive" (IWC 131).

The methodology of narration adopted by Naipaul is empirical: observation, analysis and conclusion. The narrative passages contain his commentaries on the literature, society and politics of India. The narrative passages alternate between factual and analytical, and reflect on the current situation under discussion. The technique of non-fiction used by Naipaul is that of a travel and journalistic writing side by side giving us some insights into his autobiography.

The use of literature forms the other strand of the narrative. The part one of IWC embarks the argument with two novels by R.K Narayan: *Mr. Sampath* and *The Vendor of Sweets*. These two novels explain the 'Old Equilibrium' and the 'Shattering World.' U.R. Anantamurti's *Samaskara* is used to analyze the role of *karma* in shaping the Indian sensibility by Naipaul. Henceforth, there is also use of personal histories of individuals. The book discusses the life, autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* and ideology of Mahatma Gandhi. The use of newspaper excerpts and the documentation are from Deccan Herald of Bangalore, Indian Express, Economic Times, Blitz a popular left-wing weekly of Bombay, Statesman, Times of India, Bombay Handbook published by American Women's Association. The other literature looked into is a letter from Sudhir Kakar,

Nirad Chaudhuri's *To Live or Not To Live*, Prakash Tandon's autobiography *Punjabi Century* (1963), Judith M. Brown's *Gandhi's Rise to Power* (1972), Lanza del Vasto biography of Bhave, *Gandhi to Vinoba: the New Pilgrimage* (1956). This is how he gets material to write his non-fiction, and uses these as illustrations to justify his point.

Naipaul places the past under watchful assessment. The past only becomes a point of investigation and reference. The present needs to be involved with and tackled through its means. There is definitely a toning down of the bitterness that Naipaul has for India of the recent. Later on in his writings he even describes the darkness referred to as that of his mind rather than the nation. He feels that slowly the Indians are coming out of the ignorance and realizing the damage that has been done to the country by following trodden paths blindly. Passion is giving way to intellect and creativity based on liberalism is stepping in. Naipaul adds that India now appears to parody the old idea of itself.

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An Ecocritical Study of Manik Bandyopadhyay's *The Boatman of the Padma*

Jayeeta Nag
Ph.D Research Scholar,
Aliah University, West bengal

Abstract: Manik Bandyopadhyay's canonical text *The Boatman of the Padma* lays bare an inextricable bonding shared between nature and the fishermen of Ketupur, living along the banks of Padma River. This paper ecocritically analyses how the river governs and dictates the lives of marginalised people of rural Bengal. My paper also endeavours to portray the camaraderie and interconnectedness shared between womenfolk of Ketupur and nature.

Key-words: Nature, ecocritical, marginalised.

Ecocriticism is relatively a new addition to the theoretical canon. It has made its emergence with the publication of the canonical text *Silent Spring* (1962) by Rachel Carson. Ecocriticism tries to make an interconnectedness between literature and environment. Ecocriticism deals with environmental ethics, pollution, global warming, animals, man-made disaster and the harmonious communion as well as the disharmonious relation shared between human beings and non-human nature. Ecocriticism is an emerging field which tries to encapsulate certain nuances from other disciplines like environmental ethics, animal rights, geography, history etc. So it has emerged as an 'interdisciplinary field'. In today's twenty-first century the burgeoning interest in technology renders the mother earth and its precious resources plundered and exploited by human beings. Technological innovations and anthropocentric attitudes of human beings dismantle the pristine relationship shared between man and nature. The present text *The Boatman of the Padma* chosen for analysis proposes to make an illuminating discourse about how ecology inadvertently and directly dictates and regulates human lives and their culture. But we must delve deep into interpreting the multifarious definitions of ecocriticism before interpreting the text *The Boatman of the Padma* in relation to ecocritical theory. William Rueckert is the first person who used the term

"Ecocriticism" in 1978 in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". He defines ecocriticism as "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature" (xx). According to Cherryl Glotfelty

> Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its readings of the texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies (xviii).

She also concedes

> In philosophy, various subfields like environmental ethics, deep ecology, ecofeminism, and social ecology have emerged in an effort to understand and critique the root cause of environmental degradation and to formulate an alternative view of existence that will provide an ethical and conceptual foundation for right relations with the earth (xxi).

William Howarth has given a detailed presentation about the etymological root of "ecocriticism":

> *Eco* and *critic* both derive from Greek, *oikos* and *kritis*, and in tandem they mean 'house judge,' . . . So the *oikos* is nature, a place Edward Hoagland calls 'our widest home,' and the *kritos* is an arbiter of taste who wants the house kept in good order… (69).

Greg Gaard also refers to the all-encompassing nature of this theory stating that

> As ecocritics seek to offer a truly transformative discourse, enabling us to analyse and criticize the world in which we live, attention is increasingly given to the broad range of cultural processes and products in which, and through which, the complex negotiations of nature and culture takes place (4).

Ecocriticism of present era strives to foreground the disastrous effect of human activities that endanger the lives of other species and rupture the camaraderie shared between human-beings with non-human nature.

J. Donald Hughes in his book *An Environmental History of the World* evaluates the role of environmental history in reinforcing the effect of human activities on non-human nature and vice-versa. He delineates

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> As a method, environmental history is the use of ecological analysis as a means of understanding human history. It studies the mutual effects that other species, natural forces, and cycles have on humans and the actions of humans that affect the web of connections with non-human organisms and entities. Environmental historians recognize the ways in which the living and non-living systems of the Earth have influenced the course of human affairs. They also evaluate the impacts of changes caused by human agency in the natural environment. These processes occur at the same time and are mutually conditional (4).

Manik Bandyopadhyay's *Padmanadir Majh*i or The *Boatman of the Padma* underpins how the ecological phenomena (here the principal character is played by the Padma River) dominates the lives of people residing along the banks of the river. The very title of the novel connotes that fishermen are bound to ride to the river. *The Boatman of the Padma* is an intriguing tale of the lives of fishermen of Ketupur (a village in Bangladesh) who undergo a multitude of hardships to sustain their livelihood. They spend a precarious existence combatting with the adversaries from the outer world. The river posits a significant role in their lives. She serves a dual purpose: life-sustaining force and the inscrutable force of destruction. The arbitrary nature of the river Padma keeps the villagers of Ketupur under perpetual fright. The seasonal turbulences in weather particularly storms like northwester etc. wreak havoc on the lives of the people of Ketupur, Portrayed against the silhouette of Kuber's solitary life-struggle for survival the author successfully presents the saga of survival of fishermen and common dwellers residing along the banks of Padma. Their simple lifestyle which is thoroughly devoid of the intrusion of intricacies of urban life holds up the picture of a pastoral lifestyle spent at perfect equipoise with natural surroundings. Here the Padma is not a mere natural phenomenon. The author with his majestic writing style bestows anthropomorphic features on the river, and these endearments render the river the status of a human character.

The beginning of the novel introduces the readers to the scene of fishermen involved in the arduous task of fishing 'ilish' (a sweet-water fish) from the breast of Padma. Their relentless task of fishing illish would earn them a livelihood. The process of fishing is described as follows:

> The ilish season was on in the Padma; fishing was proceeding in full swing with no respite throughout the day and night. In the evening one could see from the jetty hundreds of dots

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> of light moving about on the river like ever-glowing fireflies. Those were the lights in the fishing boats; all through the night they would flit about in this way looming like arcane signs in the faint mysterious darkness of the river (3).

The environmental concern is discerned by the novelist in his way of mentioning the erosion of land by the water of Padma. The omniscient narrator of the novel states that the river Padma tries to engulf the land of Ketupur day by day. The fishermen of the village not only have to combat natural calamities like nor'wester in the midst of river; they have to remain ever vigilant about every changes that take place in Padma. Their very residence situated along the banks of river is threatened by swelling Padma in monsoon. It is best understood in reference to the context where a low-lying alluvial land called Channar Char is swept away by Padma. This accident jeopardises the inhabitants of Chanar Char (a neighbouring village of Ketupur). This gruelling accident delineates how human lives are destined by the vagaries of nature. The passage reads

> There had been extensive rains that year. Some five miles of Ketupur, a low-lying alluvial land of the Padma called Channar Char had gone half under water; out of panic, many had fled the land. One never knew whether the tract of land that the capricious Padma had created long ago would suddenly be devoured by her again! (56)

The engulfment of land by Padma River uprooting the dwellers from their own land gives the researcher to analyse this novel from ecocritical perspective. Here the benign nature is replaced by its antagonistic form. Even sudden devouring of alluvial land called Channar Char by Padma does not spare the inhabitants of that village to evacuate the land on time and migrate to a safe abode. The stream of water inundate the "small sandbanks in the middle of the Padma" (57) and its massive flow of water "sweep away houses, people, and cattle in those habitations like so much straw" (57) The visit of Ganesh and Kuber in Channar Char to gather information about the whereabouts of Kuber's wife's relatives unravel the perilous existence into which people are thrust to endure. The description not only unfolds to the readers about the deplorable and wretched condition of human beings but it also gives a painstaking account about the sufferings of livestock who are devoid of any shelter. When Kuber reaches Chardanga (a village in Channar Char) to meet the family of his father-in –law he notices that not "an inch of dry land anywhere around" (58) is

left to be inundated. But the most compassionate picture that crops up is the benevolence on part of the villager to try to save their livestock. As the translation reads

> Mala's old father Baikuntha was feeding the pain-stricken cows; her elder brother, Adhar was catching fish with an angling rod, sitting on the roof, while some naked boys and girls sat dangling their legs from the bridge that had been contrived by fastening two bamboo poles side by side;...(58)

The calamities of nature wreak havoc on their crops leaving least to survive on. Even Kuber feels suspicious to take responsibility of the family of his father-in-laws. Because his own village Ketapur also becomes a victim to nature's whims. Kuber recounts "The aush paddy having been destroyed, there were indications of an impending famine visiting the land; food grains were already dearer in the country under water" (61).

This vagaries and changing attitude of nature also remind us of a novel by Adwaita Mallabarman's *Titas Ekti Nadir Naam* where people migrate to other lands due to the drying up of large mighty river Titas at an alarming rate. In Mallabarman's novel, we notice how a natural calamity like the rise of alluvial soil land or "silt bed" on Titas endangers the business of catching fishes for Malo fishermen.

In both these river-centric novels we discern how river dictates and governs the lives of people residing in the riparian locality. *The Boatman of the Padma* describes how feminine sensibilities share a camaraderie with a natural force. During the storm, the womenfolk of the village try to appease the wrath of nature by observing certain rituals. During the violent storm, the female members of the village try to take refuge to the Almighty God seeking a solution for this natural calamity. The chanting of prayers to mitigate the wrath of nature is observed in certain houses.

> When the storm rose, the women in the house after house laid out wooden planks on their courtyards for the tempest god to sit upon and calm down. In every house, women offered desperate prayers to the deity. Was this the wrath of god? What caused this visitation? (69)

The novelist also takes recourse to the natural metaphor to relate to the emotional turmoil in Kuber's heart. When Kuber comes to the hospital seeking medical help for treatment of the broken

leg of her girl child, Gopi he feels utterly destitute. The novelist tries to project a harmony between the torments of Kuber's mind with the waves of the river lashing against the shore. The following excerpt will substantiate my argument.

> …leaving his only daughter at this faraway hospital he was standing stupidly on the riverbank not knowing where to go or what to do. The ship steamed off hooting its siren; the waves it stirred up in the water lashed against the shore. There was a similar turbulence in Kuber's heart for his daughter (83).

The other pertinent factor of the novel is the earnest urge of Hossain Mian, a shrewd rich villager, to colonize a wild land. The land is here named as Moynadwip. Hossain Mian conceives it of as a utopian land or dreamland. His fervent wish is to set up a colony in Moynadwip and make it a habitat for human beings. The character of Hossain Mian is quite ambiguous in nature. Sometimes the readers feel that he tries to make a society at Moynadwip irrespective of religions and devoid of communal hatred. He wants to set up a colony at the far off island of Moynadwip where people will lead a peaceful life. May be he wants to set up a society devoid of hierarchical societal structure. But a close reading of the novel would unfold his devious plans. He is also presented as a money-lender. But behind the veneer of munificence the dark desires of his heart lurk in. He chooses downtrodden and crestfallen people from the village of Ketupur who are struggling with chilling penury. They are thrust into spending their lives in wilderness of Moynadwip and inhabit the place with their offsprings. The people have to endure a precarious life combatting with the creatures like venomous snakes in this wild island. Nature in wilderness of Moynadwip is presented as a threat. To materialise his dream of setting up a colony at Moynadwip he uses the poverty-stricken people as sitting ducks. Rasu, the one who succeeds to escape from Moynadwip, gives a horrid and harrowing account of his stay there. The novel presents Hossain Mian as a capitalist. His greed for exerting sovereignty over nature is portrayed here. Hossain Mian is a representative of modern human beings who try to colonize and inhabit every empty land. He uses laborious and able-bodied men from Ketupur to serve his purpose. But the poor villagers have no other choice but to be governed by Hossain' idiosyncrasies. So they arduously try to cope with the wilderness and stay at Moynadwip living the lives of 'noble savage'. The intersection between human and nature as

presented by humans' encroachment into the abysmal territory of Moynadwip also resembles the peaceful existence shared by aboriginal in the lap of nature. The utmost effort shown by the settlers of Moynadwip to grow vegetables, rabi crop actually resonate the simple primitive lifestyle which heralded the dawn of civilization.

> The paddy crop had been harvested; some mustard, gram, and pea seeds had been sown; greens and vegetables like radish, spinach, and cabbages had not survived the previous year; this year efforts had been made on an experimental basis by applying a new variety of fertiliser in a few bighas of land; nothing could be predicted about the result (118).

But the clearing of wild forest for setting up human habitat produces an uncanny terror in the mind of Kuber. A brief description is given about cutting trees and making habitat there. May be the description lays bare how the virgin forest is robbed of her chastity. The lines are

> The clearing in the midst of dense forest all around looked so dreadful that it seemed that as if the woodland which had been virgin since the day of creation of this island had had a handful of flesh torn away from her breast!(118)

Here we find a resemblance between the oppressed existence of nature and the marginalized existence of womenfolk of Ketupur. Both are victims of patriarchal oppression. The concluding part of the novel which showcases Kuber's meek surrender to the wills of Hossain Mian by uprooting himself from Ketupur and rerooting himself with Kapila at Moynadwip apparently lays bare the surrender of marginalized class in front of an influential capitalist class. By manoeuvring a nasty trick and entrapping Kuber by the false allegation of theft Hossain Mian manages to add a new member to the dwindling population of Moynadwip. Here the emigration of Kuber from Ketupur to Moynadwip doesn't serve as an escape to the pastoral world, but it does enmesh him within the abysmal darkness of wilderness. Hossain Mian's fervent wish to colonize a wild land by using the helpless people of Ketupur as noble savages lay bare the imperialist mentality harboured by him. This also renders the novel to be viewed as an eco-marxist one where the greed of asserting power over land constitutes the primary objective of capitalist human race.

In this way, the researcher has tried to explore diverse ecological connotations found in Manik Bandyopadhyay's *The Boatman of the Padma*. I hope this ecocritical interpretation, giving a

thrust to the study of a marginalised community of fishermen, would add a different dimension to the study of this canonical text.

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Ruskin Bond's *The Cherry Tree*: An Ecocritical Study

Dr. Sandip Kumar Mishra
Assistant Teacher
Balisai Patna Board High School
Email: amardisha123@gmail.com

Abstract: The Environmental concern in literature is a much-talked matter of the day with the arrival of a young theory called Ecocriticism. The green movement promotes environmental concern among the readers. Deep Ecology, one of the sub-fields of ecocriticism, highlights the significance of every organism in an environment. The article explores a child's understanding of the ecological significance of the commonest objects of nature in an environment. Ruskin Bond is a famous Indian writer in English known for his nature writings. Being a worshipper of nature, Bond's short fiction *The Cherry Tree* faithfully depicts environmental awareness grows in a child during his close contact with nature. The paper is an attempt to study this beautiful story under the surveillance of green lens.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, child, planted, cherry tree, eco-consciousness.

1. Introduction

Representation of nature in literature is not a recent phenomenon. Since time immemorial great classics of literature have treatment of nature. From *Beowulf* to *The Wasteland* nature plays an important role in literature. But the writer's attitude to nature is not always the same. Sometimes nature appears as a background and sometimes as a character. The metaphysical poets look upon nature as a concept through which mankind conceives of its difference from the non-human world. The romantics took shelter in the open lap of nature being dissatisfied with the surrounding world. Nature plays a fateful role in Victorian writers like Hardy as we find in his novels. The modern

writers had a pragmatic attitude to nature. But nature writing took a paradigm shift towards the end of the twentieth century when the environmental issues got a place in literature in view of the global environmental crisis. The ecocritics are taking a leading role and ecoconsciousness is now winning over egoconsciousness in literature. The need of the hour is to build up ecocentric attitude which might save our earth from environmental disorder. The present article highlights on the ecocentric attitude of child which is developed with his interaction with nature. Ruskin Bond a champion writer of children's literature enlightens us in his simple story *The Cherry Tree* with environmental concern, hence the study.

2. Aim of Ecocriticism Movement

Ecocriticism is considered to be one of the youngest revisionist movements of recent times. It has been running less than three decades yet gaining its rapid growth and popularity. The word 'ecocriticism' was first used by William Rueckert in his critical essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (1978). However the root of the emergent movement traces back to the past even in the days of Vedas and Upanishads as guessed by a fundamental ecocritic. William Howarth etymologically deconstructs the term as derived from the Greek word *oikas* (meaning household in English) *and kritis* (meaning judge in English). *Oikos* is our largest habitat or earth and *kritos* is the arbiter of taste who wants the house kept in good order. In view of the present environmental scenario the ecocritics wants the earth to be kept in good order for mankind in general. The movement gets its momentum with publication of two seminal works one by Lawrence Buell named *Environmental Imagination* and the other by Cheryll Glotfelty named *The Ecocriticism Reader* in 1996. The most comprehensive definition of ecocriticism is made by Glotfelty who in her book defines it as "the study of the relationship between the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (xviii). According to Scott Slovic there is no single dominant worldview defining ecocritical practice as it is being defined and redefined everyday by actual practice of thousands of literary scholars round the globe to find out a solution to the contemporary environmental crisis through literary studies. Ecocriticism thus proliferates into

several sub-fields life apocalypse, ecosophy, deep ecology, ecocide, ecofeminism, anthropocene etc. Yet despite the apparent contradiction among the ecocritics, all converges to a single point that our global environmental crisis is not natural but because of human atrocities against nature. Greg Garrard talks about the need for ecocritics to develop this kind awareness among the readers. Ecology is a branch of science that develops 'ecology' literacy among the readers while ecocriticism develops 'ecological' literacy among the readers.

3. Ruskin Bond as a Nature Writer

Born in India in 1934, Ruskin Bond is a writer of British descent. He lives in India and is regarded as one of the prolific writers of Indian writing English. Bond spent his early life in Shimla and later started living in Dehradoon and Mussoorie. So he has a practical experience of leading a life in close proximity with natural surroundings of Himalayan foothills. This finds best expression in his writings. Nature permeates his entire writing with a major role influencing his characters. As a freelance writer, he started writing short stories and poems for newspapers and magazines. Bond had written *The Room on the Roof* and its sequel *Vagrants in the Valley* published by Penguin India in 1993. Besides he has written over 500 short stories, essays and novels including The Blue Umbrella, Funny Side Up, A Flight of Pigeons and some 50 other books for children. Because of his contribution to Children's Literature, The Indian Council for Child Education has recognised his role in the growth of children's literature in India. His famous fictional character Rusty an Anglo Indian orphan of sixteen is based on the autobiography of life. The great Indian writer was conferred Sahitya Akademi Award in 1992 for *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra.* He was also awarded Padma Shri in1999 and Padma Bibhushan in2014. For his valuable contribution to Indian Writing in English, he got Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017. Value education of man begins from childhood. Bond's works inculcate human nature interconnection through children's literature that develops ecological values among the children during the formative period of their life.

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4. *The Cherry Tree* as an Ecocritical Text

The Cherry Tree is an eye opener for the children who after reading it get imbued with ecological awareness. The short fiction begins like this. Rakesh a very small school boy of six years old was returning home from Mussoorie bazaar. He bought a bunch of cherries and relished it on the way. The sweet juicy fruits were eaten up one by one and it reduced to only three cherries when he reached his grandpa's house where he stayed with him. His grandfather was a retired forest ranger and so he had great knowledge for the Himalayan landscape and its vegetation. The Himalayan foothills where they lived had not many trees as the dry cold wind and the stony soil stunted the growth of most plants. But Rakesh observed that the forest of oak and deodar developed in the more sheltered slopes. So far Rakesh had thrown away all the seeds until he put the last one on his palm and studied it. As per his grandpa's suggestion, he wanted to make the best use of it. Inspired, he took a spade, dug the soil and planted it in the shady corner of a mustard field and forgot all about it.

Meanwhile, Rakesh eco-consciousness grew with his observation of the natural surroundings. He liked to listen to stories told by his grandfather who in turn requested Rakesh to read out newspaper because of his feeble eyesight. But Rakesh had little interest in socio-centric issues. The child was gradually getting a bio-centric attitude. At the advent of winter, he observed how the deodar trees looked bare because of the dry cold wind and snowfall. He used to enjoy the charcoal fire in the evening to have some warmth during the biting cold of winter. He saw how the migratory birds arrived at their land from far off Siberia and how they returned to their land during the spring with a 'v' shaped formation streaming northwards and heard the call of the birds through the mountain air.

One morning when Rakesh went into the garden and stooped to pick up a small twig, he found to his surprise that it was well rooted. He stared at it for some time and was delighted to confirm with his grandpa that it was the same seed that he had planted and that now sprouted into a cherry plant. Rakesh nourished it with water regularly and spotted it with pebbles. He witnessed the

gradual growth of the plant in a slow but steady way. With the arrival of rainy season, when the ferns sprang from the trunks of the trees, strange looking lilies came up in the long grass and the cherry tree grew up rapidly.

But the growth of the plant was not without hindrance. Once a goat entered the garden and ate all its leaves when it was two feet height. Only the main stem and the two thin branches remained. Rakesh thought the plant must die now but grandfather assured him that the cherry tree being stoic in nature would survive again. Towards the end of the rainy season new leaves appeared on the branches. Again a woman cut the tree into two while cutting grass for domestic animals. Grandfather even scolded her for doing the damage which was irreparable. "But the cherry tree had no intention of dying. By the time summer came round again, it had sent out several new shoots with tender green leaves." (Bath & Dasgupta 33) As Rakesh grew eight years old, the cherry tree grew taller too. It was now up to his chest. Rakesh still nourished the plant with great care. But danger did not leave the cherry tree and Rakesh was an eyewitness of its struggle for existence. The cherry tree's first visitor was a hairy caterpillar who started making a meal of the leaves of the cherry tree. Rakesh removed it quickly and asked it to come back only when it would turn into a butterfly. Because he knew that by then it would be able to suck honey from the flowers and help in infusion. By the time it began winter again there appeared pink blossom at the end of the branch of cherry tree. The following year the tree grew matured and more blossoms in the twigs appeared. The honey bee thronged to feed on the nectar in the blossoms. The tiny birds gathered at the flowers and tore away the petals. Yet there were more blossoms than the number of birds during the spring. When the summer came the small cherries covered the branches of the tree. These invited the bigger birds like bulbuls and scarlet minivets and they started feasting gleefully on the cherries. Grandfather enjoyed the lovely sight of the cherry tree sitting on a cane chair under it. The cool shade of the tree also amused him. Rakesh too enjoyed a thrill especially when the pretty leaves of the cherry tree danced in breeze. He had a special feeling for it as he himself had planted it. He was happy as he had not wasted the seed which had transformed into a beautiful tree. He felt the joy of creation as he touched the smooth bark of the tree and ran his hand along the trunk and put his

finger to the tip of a leaf. He said to himself, "Is this what it feels to be God?" (Bath & Dasgupta 35). That cherry seed was really a lucky one for him as it was put to use.

5. Conclusion

The Study shows how a little child gets awareness of environment while dealing with the simple things of nature. The schoolboy Rakesh understands how a single seed sprouts up into a plant and then into a tree invoking a symbiotic relationship between the human and the nonhuman world. The Cherry tree is the centre which attracts birds, insects, man, child etc. Only a little care can transform the trifle seed into a tree and then into many seeds through flowers and fruits. The child had a practical experience of trees, birds, insects, flowers, and seasons etc. which build up his ecological vision. His first aim was to relish the cheery to gratify his sense of taste but soon it transformed into nature care for long term benefit of mankind. The text is not merely a glorification of nature but an exploration of the inherent worth of nature. In today's circumstances, people indulge in environmental exploitation. They have little time to witness the inherent value of natural objects. A child like Rakesh had such kind of ecological understanding which everyone should have for better earth care.

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Sharia Law: An Abominably Institutionalized Women Rights Breach in Jean Sasson's *Princess: A True Story of Life Behind the Veil in Saudi Arabia*

Shikha Thakur
PhD Research Scholar
Department of Humanities and Languages
Central University of Himachal Pradesh
Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh

> The biggest danger for any organism is to not identify that it's being threatened. I want to hope that people realize that the source of danger and risk in the Middle East is not the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but the deep radical Islamic vision of forming a global caliphate
>
> -Naftali Bennett (n. Page.)

Abstract: The paper endeavours to remonstrate the scandalously appalling Sharia Law; the religious law of land, through Jean Sasson's *Princess* (1992). It accentuates on Saudi Arabia's centralized Sharia Law that dehumanizes and devours women; for Saudi Arabia regards uncodified Sharia Law in its entirety as the law of the land with no interference. Subsequently, the present paper meticulously displays the obliterated lifestyle of royal women in cage, who despite being affluently opulent, live at the mercy of royal men. Thus, Sharia Law being the unchallenged constitution, presumed to be run by Allah and Islam therefore, plays mayhem with the lives of women predominantly, equating them to a silenced object of men's pleasure and expunging them from exercising basic human rights. The paper, thus, urges the readers to disenchant oneself from fanatic religious dogmas, that corroborate retarded lopsided approach to advancement and dehumanizes women.

Keywords: Sharia Law, Islam, women, persecution, remonstrate, fundamentalism, extremism.

Introduction to Sharia Law

The Arabic word Sharia refers to 'path', which when collated with law corresponds to the law of path revealed by God, Allah. Sharia Law, marked with predefined set of protocols derived from the

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religious precepts of Islam; the Quran and the Hadith, therefore, acts as a way of life to be adhered by all Muslims without question and intervention. Quran being the divine book of guidance revealed from Allah to Prophet Muhammad to serve humanity, is the central philosophy of Islam. Apparently, Sharia Law; an "Islamic law based on the Koran" (n. Page) as defined by Merriam Webster Dictionary, occupies the constitutional tenet in Saudi Arabia.

"Islamic law is therefore the expression of Allah's command for Muslim society and, in application, constitutes a system of duties that are incumbent upon a Muslim by virtue of [its] religious belief." (Coulson 1) Religion being one of the predominant structures leading ones way of life, here becomes a powerful tool for the reigning government i.e. absolute monarchy, to exercise its appalling creed. Religion fixed around its fanatic static philosophy tends to play havoc with the lives of people primarily women. Subsequently, Saudi Arabia being Muslim majority country, is turbulently dictated by its monarch who based on the misinterpretation of Quran and Hadith written in seventh century, monopolizes the lives of women by enacting Sharia law. An article entitled "Sharia Law in Saudi Arabia", states "Sharia is the de facto Constitution of Saudi Arabia" (n. Page), that circumscribes women within the four walls, reduces their testimony to half, reduces them to a tilth of land to be cultivated by men, legitimates them as passive humans by controlling their sexuality, scandalizes them as subservient to men by forcing male-guardianship, denies them basic human rights: driving, voting, studying, independent outing, recreation, dancing etc. The devastating Sharia law in Saudi Arabia, strictly incorporated by the system of absolute monarchy creates ruckus in the lives of women, spitefully condoning its incorporation as religious.

Thematic Analysis

Princess, is seamlessly an ardent testimony to women of indomitable spirit, for princess Sultana's brazenness to reveal the scandalous implementation of Sharia Law, from behind the veil, unwillingly invites the fanatic wrath of the Saudi establishment. Nevertheless, Sultana valiantly swims against the tide of Islamic Fanaticism and gingerly brings to the light the appalling nature of Sharia Law. This novel predominantly centralizes the looming spectre of repressive Islamic

fundamentalism, with Sultana's invariable struggle for women's rights. By this time Sultana's concern for the edification of women had started toppling for the threat of world terrorism, and the escalating religious fanaticism. Whereby,the Islamic religious police (also mutaween) corroborated in force and conventions for the enforcement of sharia in Saudi Arabia. In addition to having the power to arrest anyone engaged in homosexual acts, prostitution, fornication, or proselytizing of non-Muslim religions, they can also arrest unrelated males and females caught socializing, enforce Islamic dress-codes, Muslim dietary laws (such as the prohibition from eating pork) and store closures during the prayer time. They prohibit the consumption or sale of alcoholic beverages and seize banned consumer products and media regarded contrary to Islamic morals. The book contains quotes from Koran, which are misinterpreted by religious fundamentalists to perpetuate their deeds of women persecution, in which women have no right to map out their own futures, but instead are married off as young girls to men twice their age and are treated with the utmost brutality. The book is severe indictment on the male chauvinistic Islamic society.

Princess, is the mouthpiece of Sultana's buildingsroman from turbulent childhood to torturous adulthood on grounds of the then functional fanatic regime in power. Sultana born as an unwanted tenth girl child, who despite cocooned in the web of immense opulence, lives in a gilded cage effaced in thick black veil, for her biggest mistake of "owing to the absence of a male organ" (Sasson 23). This results in Sultana's utmost abjection by her misogynist father and despotic brother (Ali), where at tender age she was made to realise her existence as burdensome. She vividly narrates a violent memory as a four years old, " I was slapped across the face by my gentle mother... . I had imitated my father in his prayers. Instead of praying to Makkah, I prayed to my six-year-old brother, Ali. I thought he was god... [for] If my brother were not god, why was he treated like one?" (Sasson 25). This represents the squeamishly appalling Saudi interpretation of laws of the Quran, that criminalizes Muslim women's violation of a man's honour, similar behaviour by Muslim men is however circumvented. This aptly describes "*Princess* [as galvanizing] human rights activity all over the world, striking a chord with women of every age and nationality" (The New York Times), where the very basic human right of speaking is forbidden to women, as in one

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of the incidents Sara recounts, "Ali was allowed to speak, while I was forbidden to respond... .To teach me that men were my masters, my father decreed that Ali would have the exclusive right . . . " (34). Furthemore, Sultana's description of her elderly scholarly dearest sister Sara, who was forced to marry a sixty-two-year old stranger, as his third wife, by injecting Sara with tranquilizers on her wedding day is condoned in the name of predominant Islamic law stating, "that if a girl passes puberty, she is allowed to be married – regardless of whether she is 9,11,15" (Munajiid n.page.). This not only pester Sara physically but also mentally, who post-wedding becomes the victim of "sickening sexual brutality until she felt her only escape was death" (Sasson 69), thus making a severe attempt to commit suicide by putting her mouth in microwave, which she fortunately survives. Sara's husband is a sexual sadist who tortures Sara, leaving her desperate to leave the marriage any way she could. Alas! Women in Islam have no authority to pronounce divorce, indeed it is the husband who enjoys the supremacy of doing so on any pretext. Setu Gupta, a student of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University, Lucknow, formidably describes the lopsided Islamic concept of divorce where:

> A husband may divorce his wife by repudiating the marriage without giving any reason. Pronouncement of such words which signify his intention to disown the wife is sufficient . . . .The absolute power of a Muslim husband of divorcing his wife unilaterally, without assigning any reason, literally at his whim, even in a jest or in a state of intoxication, and without recourse to the court, and even in the absence of the wife, is recognized. All that is necessary is that the husband should pronounce talaaq; how he does it, when he does it, or in what he does it is not very essential (n. Page)

After divorce, Sara, despondently stays with her biological family, where she is unwelcomed by her patriarchal father, who believed that "Sara had obviously provoked her husband into criminal behaviour. It is never the fault of the man in the Middle East" (Sasson 73), where every action conducted by man against woman is condoned in the name of Sharia law which rather than condemning is further termed " 'notable' act of upholding the commands of the Prophet" (Sasson 74).

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Further, Sultana plans a trip to Italy and Egypt to reverberate Sara of her traumatic failure of marriage. Ali managed to convince Nura (another sister) that his friend Hadi and he would come along, because "in Saudi Arabia, a man must write a letter granting permission for the females in his family to travel" (Sasson 66) or would accompany them . Enraged by Ali's intervention in the trip, Sultana makes several efforts to excise him out of the trip: she flushes his headdress down the toilet, causing him to break his toe in an attempt to impede her; Sultana took Ali's hidden collection of pornography to the local mosque in order to get him in trouble with the mutawas(Islamic religious police), but to no avail. Despite several robust attempts Ali and Hadi cling on to the trip, for Islamic law vehements on male guardianship. Well substantiated by one of the blogs by Deeba Abedi, an Indian-American writer who staggeringly states that through Islamic Sharia Law "Their [Women's] basic, fundamental rights are denied, such as the right to drive a car, the right to make decisions, the right to stand on a street alone and the right to travel alone. The country's male guardianship system requires a woman to gain permission from a male guardian — who could be her father, husband or even a teenage son — for any number of life decisions and freedoms, from basic to critical" (n. Page). The trip is further marked by despondency because Ali and Hadi are seen foreclosing Sultana's and Sara's move, they admonish them on their idea of visiting a pub and unveiling themselves. However, Ali and Hadi expose their double standards by furtively visiting night bars at wee hours and then corroding the club dancers to mere piece of debauched creatures. They copulate with various women during the trip, on the contrary, profess women to maintain their chastity, and to be virtuous by obeying to their masters 'men'. The two on being caught red-handed by Sultana and Sara raping a small child, "acted as though nothing had happened" (Sasson 93) and on being warned, exculpate the same by stating that, she was a sex slave and "young girls were more fun and, besides, Father always did the same sort of thing when he came to Cairo" (Sasson 93). Quran is spiteful of adultery and clearly mentions, "Do not commit adultery, for it is an indecent thing and an evil course" (Khan 17:32), nonetheless reinforces sex slavery, thus Sharia Law glorifies "The only unmarried sex explicitly allowed in Islam is between a Muslim man and his slaves." ("Islam: Adultery and Stoning" n. Page). Sara was acutely dismayed noticing:

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Hadi and Ali spent their time buying women, for the streets of Italy were filled , by day or by night, with beautiful young women available to those who could pay. I saw Ali as I always had, a selfish young man, concerned only with his pleasures. But Hadi, I knew, was far more evil, for he bought the women yet condemned them for their role in the act. He desired them, yet hated them and the system that left them free to do as they would. His hypocrisy was to me the essence of the evil nature of men. (Sasson 94)

"Saudi Arabia has probably the highest number of child marriages in the Middle East and yet there has been almost no internal outrage or objection directed at the practice." (Ali al-Ahmed n. Page). Which is further referential when on their arrival back home, Sara's mother dies of searing cancer, nevertheless, their father marries his young fifteen-year old royal cousin, Randa (Sultana's childhood friend). Sultana is determined to dislike her new stepmother but discovers she is a scared young woman just like her. Sultana includes Randa in a woman's group she had organized with two friends, Nada and Wafa. Who on account of their rebellious nature towards Islamic religious fundamentalism, violate the fanatically leashed patriarchal norms, and unfortunately prostrate to fanatics' orders. " . . . Nadia's death or Wafa's premature marriage. Such cruel actions were the worst of all commentaries on the wisdom of the men who consume and destroy the lives and dreams of their women with emotionless indifference" (Sasson 120). This prompts Sultana's father to divorce gullible Randa exonerates. The temporary marriage is exculpated through "a verse in the Koran which says, 'you are permitted to seek out wives with your wealth, indecorous conduct, but not in fornication, but give them a reward for what you have enjoyed of them in keeping with your promise' " While this is waggled in Sharia Law as endorsement of temporary unions, in embracing the freedom to wed young women for the sole pleasure of sex. (Sasson 48-49).

This further foments Sultana's father to urgently marry Sultana, to which Sultana agrees on the condition to meet the chosen stranger pre-wedding. Which according to Islamic law is haram, as "Prophet Muhammad said 'whenever a man is alone with a woman, Satan is the third among them' " (Huda n. Page). Sultana on forcibly meeting Kareem discovers that her father has made a good

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match and Kareem is a good man. Sultana's marriage is happy, surviving with two daughters and one son, until she suffers with breast cancer and could not bear more children. Kareem decides to marry a second wife for the purpose of having more children, and persuades her by stating "Sultana, I am a man that can afford many children. I desire ten, twenty, as many as God sees fit to give me" (Sasson 246). The Quran absolves polygamy so as to atone the women victims of war, dowry, poverty etc. " If you fear that you cannot deal fairly with orphan girls then you marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if you fear that you might not be able to treat them with equal fairness, then only one" (Khan 4:3), Sharia Law twines it in a way that it renders dictating autonomy to patriarchal men to exercise polygamy as per their whims and fancy. Furthermore, Sultana fails to accept this, and furtively runs away to London with her three children, eventually on tracing Sultana, Kareem agrees to sign a paper promising to never marry another woman as long as Sultana lived. On her arrival back in Riyadh, in August 1990, Saddam Hussein invades Kuwait, apparently refugees flood Saudi Arabia. As a result there is a great deal of chaos, and to Sultana's amazement several women took advantage of this chaos and drive through the city streets. Driving is stringently proscribed in Saudi Arabia, for women's biologically emotional trait reduces their testimony to half that of the men. This is aptly laid bare as we encounter the following:

> Women are much more emotional than men and will, as a result of their emotions, distort their testimony. Women do not participate in public life, so they will not be capable of understanding what they observe. Women are dominated completely by men, who by the grace of God are deemed superior; therefore, women will give testimony according to what the last man told them. Women are forgetful, and their testimony cannot be considered reliable. (Sasson 284-285)

Sultana on seeing women driving hopes for a change amid the upcoming generation and feels all the more victorious, for having lived her life on her terms. Religious fundamentalism refers to a belief system that envelopes around affirm conviction on conventional values and behaviour. This belief system prioritizes religion over all other institutions governing human life, by centralizing the holy texts and its teachings. Thus its century old pervasiveness makes it credibly

totalitarian and uncontested, for its inherently tyrannical trait of thrusting its core teachings to the universe with/without force. This furthermore defines religious fundamentalists as 'traditional protestors', who in the name of religion, stand as the tyrants of the society. Apparently, religious fundamentalism aims at dictating its absolute authority over humans in all spheres of life. The novel thus, culminates on a rejoicing note, marking the first step of women towards assertion, confidence, rationality, and emancipation in the religiously fundamentalist Islamic world of Saudi Arabia.

Conclusion

Princess, apparently depicts the appalling situation of women in Saudi Arabia, condoned in the name of Islamic Law, cocooned in unquestionable Quran. The feudal setup of Saudi Arabia incorporates sharia law and legalizes its turbulent practices in the name of Allah. The paper successfully projects the tyrannical Islamic practices encumbered with central law of the land to breach women's basic rights. It enlightens the devilish practices like negation of girl child, forced marriage, triple talaq, forced hijab, male-guardianship, sex slavery, child marriage, temporary sex-union, polygamous marriage, prejudiced inheritance rights and women's half testimony. This paper thus, successfully endeavours to disenchant humanity from religious dogmas and urges the modernised world to shield itself from the appalling impact of fanaticism. It subsequently spotlights the dire need to enthusiastically combat the totalitarian regime of religious fundamentalism, by reminding readers of the spiteful situation of Sultana, Sara, Randa and other ancillary characters. Who despite being royal are corroded to the mercy of men, thereafter breaching their basic civil rights. Plausibly, the paper explores the detrimental impact of religious fundamentalists in the lives of people, which in an attempt to perpetuate its devastating reign plays ferociously petrifying its victims. Hence, there arise an urgency to remonstrate the traditionally hostile structure of religion which dictates the lives of innocents through its illogically uncontested discourse. The scandalous Sharia Law is meticulously projected as appalling to modern sensibilities, marked with despotic control on women's sexuality. Thus, this paper urges its readers to comprehend the very basic nuance of separating fundamentalism in religion from other domains of life, thereby, toppling the extremist Islamic structure in Saudi Arabia.

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Twelfth Night and the Masks of Love

Rupesh Singh
Research Scholar
Department of English &
Modern English Language
University of Allahabad
Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh

Abstract:*Twelfth Night* is a complex play on the various forms that love can acquire. It has marked similarities and dissimilarities with *As You Like* It, the play with which it is often compared. Though it is definitely one of Shakespeare's major love comedies, it also has a sub-plot (that of Malvolio) which has a satirical dimension. In the opening lines of *Twelfth Night* Duke Orsino wants a continuous flow of music to be played as that could be "the food of love" for him. He has gone into a state where he seems to want to escape into an amorous setting where the ugly world of rejection will finally give way to the more pleasant state of acceptance. He can easily switch over to a situation in which nothing short of excess will satisfy. Orsino is not the only one desiring excess; Sir Toby and his drunkard friends and their revelries are equally excessive. On the other hand, there are the overweening and neurotic sentimental states of Orsino and Olivia. As the Duke is overwhelmed by his unreciprocated love for Olivia; while she is engrossed in the grieving for her dead brother and pledge to wear a veil for seven years.

Keywords: masks of love, overabundance of music, varied conceptions of love, and unrequited love.

In the beginning of the play *Twelfth Night*, Duke Orsino is demonstrated as avid lover of music who wants excess of it like Cleopatra. As Cleopatra is an ardent lover of music and she speaks about the music the: "moody food/ of us that trade in love" (2.5. 1-2). Like Cleopatra, Orsino too desires more music in the play. His opening lines are the opening of the play. In this context David Schalkwyk asserts: "Orsino may thus be referring to music as a kind of food in a more than merely figurative sense" (81). The opening lines reveal love as an "essentially interior

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state which nevertheless maintains a peculiar economy of consumption and waste in its relation to the external world" (82). Here, Orsino renders these lines in the opening of the play:

If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken and so die.
That strain again, it had a dying fall.
(1.2. 11-14)

Orsino is the victim of Olivia's love and also the victim of his own emotions. The Duke's starting words delineate both the action of feasting and his own fanatic, choleric and amorous disposition. Schalkwyk writes that, "He desires a surfeit of music precisely in order to overcome his desire" (82). Further he affirms his idea and states that Orsino is suffering from: "erotic bulimia" (82) and longs to procure overabundance of it, "food of love" so that, "sickened", "he will purge himself of love and consequently of the burning void that Petrarch characterised as erotic desire" (82). Orsino's romantic temperament and unrequited love for Olivia can be seen in the following lines: "O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou, / That, notwithstanding thy capacity / Receiveth as the sea, naught enters there," (1.1.8-11).

Schalkwyk points out that Orsino hankers more food of love, he firstly luxuriates in its melancholy plaint, "calling for an interpretation in its natural progression to savour the "dying fall" twice over, but then he turns away in disgust, now sated-but not satisfied" (82). Orsino continues to love; or perhaps, more correctly, he remains influenced or sickened by longing. He returns us to the beginning conditional, "If music be the food of love". Here, Schalkwyk says, "Perhaps music is not the food of love after all" (82-83). Music does not function like normal food, and love's craving does not pursue the ordinary eddy and tide of appetite and gratification. The Duke acknowledges this different logic in his assertion, "spirit of love", and "how markedly different from the material nature of food, appetite and vomiting" (83). Orsino moving away from love's assumed food in revulsion; he now asserts that its surfeit is in fact incompetent of nausea. Schalkwyk indicates, "Its oceanic capacity not only encompasses everything without "cloyment" but it is also able to negate

everything that feeds it" (83). The Duke's perspective of love's vigour to abate denies its dissolute predilection to impinge or demonstrate value onto the meanest objects. Orsino enjoys the creative and notional kinds of love "that were anxiously denigrated by the moralising Psychologists of Shakespeare's time" (83).

Schalkwyk suggests that the idea of love and its affiliation to desire have practised philosophers from Plato onwards. Contemporary and classical authors offer no joined front on the topic, but rather a cluster of confusions, differences and equivocations. Nicholas Coffeteau is one of the few authors who differentiate between love and longing. In Plato's Symposium, Socrates defines love by its inherent association to desire and lack or want: "everyone who desires, desires that which he has not already, and which is future and not present, and which he has not, and is not, and of which he is in want;--these are the sort of things which love and desire seek" (Coffeteau 1621, 41).

Again Schalkwyk points out that in their connotative: "dying fall" and Orsino's immediate transformation with the enjoying, "enough, no more" *Twelfth Night's* beginning lines seem to validate the "Platonic identification of love with desire" (84). The Duke's temperamental wavering "embody desire's cyclical process of longing and satiety, especially in his rhythmical allusion to the dynamics of sexual orgasm in the procession of "surfeit, cloyment, and revolt" that marks the mixture of dissatisfaction and satiety of post-coital depression" (84). As Schalkwyk notices that Orsino is trapped between his ungratified nausea at being jammed with "the food of love threatens the idealizing indulgence of his "high fantastical" desire for the unattainable Olivia" (84).

Marjorie Garber writes that Duke's dejection in love is a kind of unrequited love. It also exhibits his passion for music as well as unattainable love. He proclaims his love for Olivia but he does not have real love for her. Garber hints that, "Orsino's initial passion, although he claims it is for Olivia, is rather for the spectacle of himself in love" (510). Further she states that Duke is flaccid rather than lively, sagging in the excessive. Garber points out, "He does not even go himself to Olivia to tell her of his love, but instead sends a go-between" (511). According to her, Orsino is the apotheosis of refined lassitude and sulkiness, the contrary of Viola's liveliness and activity—

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"just as his constant rhetorical insistence upon expressing his thwarted love is the contrary her resolve not to speak the love she feels, not to reveal herself" (511). But Harold Bloom asserts that He is in love with language, and music, "Orsino, for more in love with language, music, love, and himself" (230). Further, he says, he loves music, language, and himself, "than he is with Olivia, or will be with Viola" (230). Orsino reveals his inner passion to disguised Viola/ Cesario and touches the apogee of "male fatuity" (230). He expresses his untold love before his page Viola/Cesario:

> There is no woman's sides
> Can bide the beating of so strong a passion
> As love doth give my heart; no woman's heart
> So big, to hold so much: they lack retention
> (2.4.94-98)

According to Bloom the high romantic temperament of Orsino confirms him as a lunatic and erotic lover. His pleasant erotic insanity ascertains the tone of the play. Despite his astounding self-engrossment, he authentically turns the viewers. He states, "His high Romanticism is so quixotic, but also because his sentimentalism is too universal to be rejected" (230). Orsino is the brilliance of his place. He the only persona the high-spirited psychosis of the play acclimatises. But Harold C. Goddard writes that Orsino and Olivia both prisoners of their sentiments and feelings. He states that: "The Duke is ne plus ultra of the melancholy characters we have met in Shakespeare. His love is the sentimentalism that idleness is sure to breed in potentially fine natures if it does not turn to something worse" (Bloom, 300). His love is the third category of love as much plunged in it as Toby is in beverage and a point that makes his liking for the sea as metaphor noteworthy. He does not keep it poise. He keeps nothing consistent; his mind oscillates between love and desire. As the jester observes, is "a very appal". He says at one juncture that his love is "as hungry as the sea, and can digest as much". But unluckily he has accepted in his starting assertion that "Whatever enters this sea-like love within a minute to lose its value" (300).

Joseph H. Summers writes in his seminal article entitled: "The Masks of *Twelfth Night*" about Orsino as a sloth lover. He points out that Orsino is a kind of sluggish and lethargic lover. He can

be categorised into the category of moody lovers. In the opening of the play Orsino wishes the music to be play on so that the appetence of love may supply overabundance and excessiveness. The music which is soothing and appealing for Orsino now it becomes pensive and no longer sweet. He writes, "The spirit of love is so 'quick and fresh' that like the sea (hardly a model of freshness)" (Summers 88). Orsino hints the viewers, the soul of love is so unsteady and slippery that transforms at the moment. He is the victim of his madness to which the most admirable protagonists are sometimes its subject. Further, Summers writes, "Its usual causes are boredom, lack of physical love, and excessive imagination" (88) that makes him a type of strange and narcissistic and self-engrossed, and victim is unconscious that he is in love with love rather than with an individual.

Porter Williams, Jr. hints that Orsino's love and desire can be associated to Romeo, because he behaves like that at the very initial stage of the play. As Romeo starts loving an imaginary Rosaline in Romeo and Juliet, and later changes his object from Rosaline to Juliet. First, he is engaged to Olivia and at the end of the play, he finds that he is actually in love with disguised Viola/Cesario. Porter suggests, "Orsino and Olivia who have deceived themselves into believing that they have been overwhelmed with love or with grief" (171). Orsino's gloominess is indicative of the despondency that elongated Romeo's hours while he is separated from his indifferent Rosaline. In *Twelfth Night* every character has certain mistakes and because of that mistake they get into entangled complexities. Viola cannot attain Orsino's love as she is erroneous for Cesario and as long as Orsino errors the object of his love. Porter points out that Orsino, a more sophisticated lover, displays the same type of complexities as Olivia does. Like Olivia he too has a soul capable of being awakened, but like her made the errors of presuming a fake mask. He (Orsino) enjoys his "self-centred melancholy" (177), because he does not have Olivia's love. Further, affirms his assertion, "delighting in the luxurious inactivity of unrequited love" (177). Orsino's good nature is so bewitched by self-indulgence that he almost forgets to know the object of his love except in the dream realm of affluent music. Porter indicates:

> In the very first scene of *Twelfth Night* we are presented with the two great mistakes of Orsino's lovesickness and Olivia's unnatural effort to "keep flesh/ And lasting in her sad remembrance" all the wealth of a "brother's dead love" (1.1.31-32). Orsino unwittingly touches upon Olivia's mistake when he comments upon this "debt of love but to a brother" and anticipates the wealth of love in her nature which she is trying to deny. (179)

Here, Orsino speaks about his unattainable love of Olivia: "How will she love when the rich golden shaft/ Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else/ That lived in her..." (1.1.35-7).

In his seminal article, "The Role of Music in *Twelfth Night*" (1957), John Hollander indicates that the importance of music is so apparently pivotal to the soul of the play, and it makes us to ruminate and speculate about love and desire that is veiled in the play. He states: "The materials are to be music, food and drink, and love" (104). The opening speech of Orsino in the opening of the play is an implication of his own romantic assumption and frenzy of unrequited love. His love for music can be compared to Shakespeare's other play Richard 2, where Richard delivers speech in Pomfret Castle. He compares his prison to the world and to his own body (5.5.41-48). According to Hollander, Duke Orsino and Richard 2 are akin in tone and spirit. He and Richard both of them are an emblem of disordered string. It also suggests that both of them discover their surfeiting appetite in music. *Twelfth Night* is rather different type of play; it begins and ends with music. Orsino thirst at the beginning of the play is supposedly for Olivia. But later it changes and becomes his own act of yearning, and for his own exclamation of feeling.

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An Account of Audacity: Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life*

Anusha Prashar
Research Scholar
Panjab University, Chandigarh

Abstract: Urmila Pawar is one of the leading Dalit writers in Marathi, belonging to the Mahar community, writing ingenuously about her life. Her memoirs are a voyage of self discovery set from the rural areas of Konkan region to the big streets of Mumbai centring on the travails and tribulations of the poor dalit women, the most oppressed and subdued section of our society. It is a blatant and bold narrative of a woman exposing the hidden personal layers of her marital clashes, familial conflicts as well as disputes at her work place due to the stigmatization faced by her. This paper evaluates the predicaments of Dalit women carrying the burden of triple oppression in the form of caste, class and gender.

Keywords: Dalit, memoirs, oppression, women.

The autobiographies written by dalit male writers have completely sidelined the troubles faced by dalit women. Dalit women have witnessed marginalization in the representation of the dalit experience by male authors. They suffered exclusion in the literary, social as well as political field. Their written testimonies articulate their unsaid and unheard experiences as women and as Dalits. The narratives of dalit women reveal their efforts at rejecting the dictatorial traditions and ideologies by revolting against them. The testimonies by dalit women assert their independent space where they have expressed themselves freely without any restriction or fear. Their written accounts serve as the channels for expression and verbalization of their thoughts. The emergence of dalit women writers is a direct reaction to the exclusion experienced by women in the writings of the people of their own community. The narratives written by dalit women share the experiences of the whole community. Their writings advocate the need for listening to the voices of the disenfranchised people. Sharmila Rege in her afterword of *The Weave Of My Life* writes, "Dalit testimonies have not only washed out the 'I', an outcome of bourgeois individualism and displaced

it with the collectivity of the dalit community but by bringing details of lives into the public domain they have also challenged the communitarian control on the self" (Pawar 322).

Urmila Pawar is one of the leading Dalit writers in Marathi, belonging to the Mahar community, writing ingenuously about her life. Her autobiography *Aaydan* is a weave of her struggles, sorrows and anguish over the span of years. It is a narrative which puts forth the experiences of a dalit woman since childhood till today, fondest or bitter all the memories are penned down explicitly. It focuses on the events that unfolded and impacted her life during her physical as well as psychological journey. It is the journey of an individual soaked up in the struggles and hardships of the three generations of dalit women. Her memoirs are a voyage of self discovery set from the rural areas of Konkan region to the big streets of Mumbai centring on the travails and tribulations of the poor dalit women, the most oppressed and subdued section of our society. Not only does her autobiography portray the exploitation and discrimination suffered by her community but also explores the conflicts of her personal life. It is a blatant and bold narrative of a woman exposing the hidden personal layers of her marital clashes, familial conflicts as well as disputes at her work place due to the stigma of casteism attached with her. *The Weave Of My Life* brings issues of exploitation revolving around the existence of dalits, mainly dalit women to the forefront. The tyranny of the social system and how deeply it affected the young minds and souls is reflected upon. As mentioned by Maya Pandit in the introduction of the book, *The Weave of My Life* portrays the conditions of a subhuman existence of an entire community, shamelessly exploited by the upper castes, reduced to a status of beasts of burden, extremely marginalized (xvi). Urmila Pawar also questions the dominance of patriarchal ideologies where a woman's independence is seen as a threat to man's control over her. Maya Pandit observes, "*The Weave of My Life* represents a terrain where the dalit woman stands today, questioning the established ideologies of caste, modernity and patriarchy. It goes on to expose the contradictions, fissures and fractures within the dalit and feminist movements and also within the kind of modernity that we have inherited and, in turn, eventually constructed" (xxvi)..

Her writings showcase the lives of disadvantaged Dalit women crushed under the oppressive structures. She questions the existence of dalit woman, her place in the society, validity of her rights and her identity. Her heart goes out for the poor uneducated women living in filthy places exploited brutally by the upper castes. Through her pen she champions the cause of the unprivileged dalit women, succumbed to conventional silence in this androcentric society. The translator Maya Pandit also mentions in her introductory note, "It is a complex narrative of a *gendered* individual who looks at the world initially from her location within the caste but who also goes on to transcend the caste identity from a feminist perspective"[3] (xvii).

Women being the victims of strong indoctrination of belonging to the weaker sex have quite less participation in the important matters. Caste as well as male supremacy result in their ill treatment collectively. Alladi Uma, on the condition of the women observes, "Most women still abide by social attitudes and beliefs, continuing to be passive, submissive, docile beings, and willing to act as sex and baby machines producing countless children, and as robots running the horse effectively" (Uma 8). Reminiscing her childhood, Pawar mentions how women became the worst sufferers of inequities and maltreatment as they had to trudge day and night, were bashed up by their drunkard husbands and ruthless in-laws, became the victims of aversion of upper castes and society, caught in the web of superstitious beliefs and black magic. While describing her school days she remarks how the upper castes claimed their caste supremacy by exercising power and control on the poor low caste children. They inflicted sheer cruelty on them. Few dalit children who somehow managed to go to school were mishandled and suffered various forms of abuse. Pawar writes, ". . . some Mahar children also went to school but they had to sit outside the courtyard. The teachers taught them and examined their slates, from a distance. They would hit the children with stones if they made any mistakes" (17). Furthermore, poverty exacerbated their problems as being uprooted from their rights they had no existence in the oppressive environment of the ruling high class. Their minds were conditioned to accept their miserable fates without raising any hue and cry. The leftovers of the upper castes satiated the hunger of Mahars. They begged for food in return of the services they rendered to them. They would labour in the fields, weave baskets of various sizes

and shapes for them, beat the dhol and dispose off dead animals. After performing such menial tasks, they would go to them excitedly hoping to get something in return.

The concept of purity and pollution associated with the upper caste and the lower caste is also given place in her memoirs by Pawar. Being the victim of this she was denied entry into the houses of high class people. She has penned down the humiliation people like her face as a consequence of belonging to the dalit community. Low caste people are considered to be filthy and unworthy of physical contact of the upper caste. Pawar recalls the hurtful experiences of her childhood when on the insistence of her mother she would go to the houses of people to sell the hand woven baskets made by her mother. She writes :

> Some of the people she sent me to never allowed me to enter their houses. They made me stand at the threshold; I put the baskets down and they sprinkled water on them to wash away the pollution, and only then would they touch them. They would drop the coins in my hands from above, avoiding contact, as if their hands would have burnt had they touched me. If the house belonged to one of my classmates, the shame of it was killing. (65)

Pawar through her memoirs attacks the double standards of the Upper castes. The Brahmins considered themselves to be the purest and the holiest among all other castes. Not only did they deny the entry of dalits to their places but also kept a physical distance from them because of the fear of getting polluted from their touch. But Urmila Pawar questions that while physically and sexually abusing the dalit girls where do their moral values and beliefs go? In order to satisfy their lust they brutally exploited the low caste women. Pawar narrates an incident of her childhood time where the fair Brahmin, dressed in half pants, with a janeu, the sacred thread, around his bare white torso, and wearing a red vertical kumkum mark on his forehead molested and sexually abused a Komti girl called Ulgawwa inside the temple (66). The holy outer appearance of the priest had a soul stained with the marks of unholy practices. Even today just because these heinous deeds done in the deep darkness don't get surfaced easily, people with power in their hands shamelessly keep on committing them. On the issues of dalit women, Ruth Manorama observes, "the lives of dalit women have been characterized by "Culture of silence", as they have lacked a political, economic and social "space for utterance" for centuries" (259). Pawar also portrays the emotional ordeals that

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a mind and a heart go through when the society breaks off its ties from the people on the basis of caste, creed, race and religion. The muslim family who were the tenants of Pawars on coming to know about their mahar caste stopped talking to them. The cordial bond shared by the landlords and the tenants suddenly transformed into a bitter one. As soon as the muslim family came to know from their relatives about the low caste of Pawars they vacated their house and shifted to somewhere else. The relative of the muslim family uttered in disgust, "Didn't you find any other place? Why did you go and stay at that Mahar's house?'(104). All this impacted the mind of Urmila a lot as she felt humiliated greatly. In her own words:

> Who knows what the fat woman in Rajiwada had told them about me but somehow they stopped talking to me from that day on. They began to behave like strangers. Before this happened I would return eagerly from school to chat with them; now I began to feel guilty as if I had committed some grave offence. At the time of going back to Mumbai at the end of their holidays, they just said 'Bye' and left. How this hurt me! I wept bitterly. (105)

The victimization of Pawar and her family never stopped though the perpetrators kept on changing. From the people of rural area to the denizens of cities, the mindsets of people hardly differed. Majority of the high caste people they came across had minds ingrained in caste ideology. Even after moving from a backward village of Ratnagiri to a metropolitan like Mumbai, the web of the dominant ideology of casteism followed them everywhere. Her husband, Harishchandra resigned from his job because of the disgrace he had to face for belonging to the low caste. The stigma of caste attached with them made it difficult for them to find a rented accommodation in Mumbai. She recounts how her illiterate widow landlady belonging to a non-dalit peasant caste forced them to leave the house. On knowing about the caste of Pawar she could not tolerate her as her tenant. Urmila remembers how her landlady said in a moment, 'Look for another room!' Nothing made sense! But why do I say so? Of course, everything made sense! It was about caste! (205). The next landlady who was an educated one also behaved like the earlier one. What vexes Pawar, is the question, What is the difference between an illiterate and and an educated one if the people falling in both the categories are similar in their thinking? She writes, "My earlier landlady

was a maidservant and this landlady was a municipal councillor. Yet the maid and the honourable councillor were united on one point: caste" (206).

Urmila owes the betterment of her community to the work of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. She mentions about the conversion of dalits into Buddhist religion. Because of the rigid mindsets and obsolete traditions in which Hinduism is rooted, dalits abandoned the hindu religion and embraced Buddhism. They gave up all the older rituals which resulted in the ignominy of dalits. She writes that under the guidance of Dr Ambedker the dumb got a voice and the blind a vision (312).

Urmila's writing slams the parochial customs and obsolete traditions triggering the harassment of women. Dalit women being uneducated and ignorant of their rights lead a life of deprivation. In the Indian society, a woman is considered as an epitome of endurance and perseverance. Thus, the smothering culture forces her to carry the ideological baggage of what it is to be a 'woman' in this patriarchal set up. Pawar stresses the need to subvert this dominant rule imposing various tyrannical norms and customs on women. She feels that women should move from the darkness of suppression to the light of freedom. Dalit women, the marginalized gendered subaltern spend their entire lives in the gratification of the needs of their families. Urmila Pawar feels the dire need of upgrading their status and providing them a life of dignity, safety and liberty. There are many instances of domestic violence and the dehumanized plight of mahar women in the book. Even the women from her family, her sisters, sisters-in-law and mother-in-law also faced abuses and bashing at the hands of their husbands. She cites the ill treatment, her nephew Shantaram gave to his wife. She writes:

> Shantaram did not get along well with her and would beat her often. Once she came and stood in front of my mother- her forehead covered with blood. Shantaram, for some silly reason, had bashed her head with a big stone. She lay unconscious in a pool of blood for a long time. No one demanded an explanation from him nor came forward to help her. People felt that he was her master and had the right to do anything to her. While she lay unconscious, her master, her saviour, was shamelessly making a public announcement, 'I have killed a sheep in our field. Anybody interested in getting the blood?. (154)

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Urmila remarks that most of the women of her community suffered the cruelty of the society. The position of women has always been one of subservience to men. They are the silent sufferers in the name of preservation of the honour of family and and village. They are beaten black and blue without any reason. While recounting the maltreatment faced by the dalit women of her village, Urmila writes, "It was not only husbands or family members who bashed up women. If a woman was suspected to have erred, she was brought before the Panchayat for justice and punishment. She was publicly judged and her other relatives would beat her up as well" (156). The three monsters of caste, class and gender victimise dalit women deeply by inflicting inestimable atrocities on them. The evil of casteism which makes one untouchable as soon as one is born, combined with penury makes the existence of a person really tough. A poor dalit woman who already finds herself a victim of caste discrimination is also weighed down by the presence of gender disparity. She is imprisoned by various customs and conventions which further ensure her suppression. Urmila Pawar recalls an incident when her menstrual cycle started for the first time. As it was a new experience for her so on finding her skirt stained all red she burst into tears. Her mother told her to change her clothes and then to go and sit back at the back door. On hearing such words from her mother Urmila felt bad. She remarks, "This made me cry harder. As it was, people in the class kept me at a distance because of my caste. Now because of this even my own people in the house would keep me away!" (124). The alienation and ostracization faced by women based on their caste and gender make them the worst sufferers of the system.

The issue of gender disparity begins at home and is deeply rooted in the patriarchal system of our society. Before marriage, a girl is dominated by her father and brothers and after marriage the control shifts to her husband. Throughout her life she is commanded by the male figures around her. A woman being known for her passivity and compliance is exploited and violated to the highest degree within the four walls of her house. Unequal treatment is meted out to women resulting in their subordination. Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* observes how "a man is socially an independent and complete individual" in our society as he is considered as the producer whereas a woman has not been guaranteed equal dignity as she is only confined to "reproductive and domestic role" (446).

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Bama Faustina's work *Sangati* also states the sorrows and stories of struggling lives of dalit women who find themselves trapped and crushed in the phallocratic world built around them. In the conversation of Bama with her Paati, one can feel the agonized voices of pain, rising out of prevalent injustice. The discrimination has its roots planted in the early childhood only where the boy is given all the care, freedom and superior treatment where as a girl child is denied everything. She is just meant for carrying out the household duties by confining her to the four walls of the house. Her Paati conveys the troubles of millions of subjugated dalit women when she says:

> We have to labour in the fields as hard as men do, and then on the top of that, struggle to bear and raise our children. As for the men, their work ends when they they've finished in the fields. If you are born into this world, it is best you were born a man. Born as women, what good do we get? We only toil in the fields and in the home until our vaginas shrivel. (Bama 268)

Similarly Urmila's memoirs represent the distressing and appalling conditions of the weaker section of the society. The deep rooted conservatism augments the challenges of women. Urmila Pawar has presented various shades of discrimination and domination that a woman faces in different phases of her life. Since birth till the time a woman reaches the death bed she is shackled by innumerable invisible chains. Throughout her life she is under the control of power of male figures around her like father, brother, husband and father in law. She can neither protest nor retaliate as she knows very well that no one will support her. Once Urmila Pawar asked Bhikiakka, the meaning of words *randki suj* — widow swelling. She had heard the women of her village talking about such words. Her inquisitive mind wanted to know why some women use these words for widows who are somewhat plump. The reply given by Bhikkiakka sums up the extent of tyranny women go through in their lives. Urmila writes:

> When I asked Bhikiakka the meaning of this word, she was taken aback. Instead of answering me, she examined her own arms, and asked me a question, 'Who has got randki suj? Who says so?'

'No, no! I'm asking this because that's what the village women say about the chakarmani women!'

Akka laughed when she heard this. 'You know, for some women. When their husbands die, it is a release from oppression. Then they look a little better, fresh, so people say that they have got the randki suj.'(152)

Urmila Pawar's narrative, in her words is an amalgamation of her own experiences, those of her friends and other women, that of living in the village and casteism (Pawar 226). After shifting to Mumbai, Urmila started writing prolifically. After the training sessions of her job would get over, she would spend her time writing stories. Her stories started finding their place in the ordinary magazines. Publishing of the stories came as an impetus to her writing. It was an encouragement, which kept her going through the hard times. Her passion for writing and the persistence efforts for the completion of her studies earned her a degree of a graduate. She actively started participating in various Sammelans or programmes. Meeting notable and illustrious scholars broadened her horizons of thinking as well as her writing. With this newly gained confidence, Urmila Pawar redefined her objectives and started working for social issues. She along with other women leaders started Dalit Women's Organization which aimed at creating awareness about women's issues. While being a part of various dalit movements she came to the realization that people from the dalit movement, treated women in the discriminatory manner as if they were some inferior species, as they did with the ones at home (235). She writes, "One thing was, however very clear to me. Women's issues did not have any place on the agenda of the dalit movement and the women's movement was indifferent to the issues in the dalit movement. Even today things have not changed!" (260).

The gruelling journey undertaken by Urmila Pawar found its way in the teeth of fierce opposition from the people around her. Her husband who was earlier a source of encouragement and motivation for her gradually started depreciating her efforts. Harischandra's happiness at the attainment of a graduate degree of her wife suddenly changed into bitterness at the achievement of receiving Masters degree. She was publicly felicitated for being the first woman from the Konkan region to have obtained an M.A. All the achievements of Urmila started irking her husband. She

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remarks, "his attitude towards me was full of contradictions. On the one hand, he was proud of my writing, he admitted as much to his friends and relatives. But on the other, he immensely resented my being recognized as a figure in the public domain" (246). Harischandra wanted Urmila to follow the footsteps of the village women who take on a subservient position in the familial matters. The male figures control their lives and keep constraint on their actions. Like majority of men, "he firmly believed that looking after the house was the sole responsibility of the woman. He kept stating his philosophy that a man has the right to behave any way he likes" (241).

Urmila was very well aware of the patriarchal eyes continuously scrutinising her life. She was conscious of her responsibilities as a wife and a mother. Besides completing her household tasks and after catering to the needs of everyone, she would devote time to her writing also. She would utilise all the time she had by continuously keeping herself busy so that no one could point a finger at her. Unfortunately, she couldn't keep everyone happy and all her efforts aimed at striking a balance between her home and her interests failed miserably. All this forced Harischandra to think that, "he was losing control over his wife fast and had to establish his authority with an iron hand so as to keep her within bounds! But he did not know that my horizons had expanded hugely; that I had seen the outside world and that he did not have the power to keep me confined to the narrow space of home anymore" (248). Education liberated her by establishing her identity as an individual. In an Indian society where the woman has always been assigned the role of a submissive, docile and passive being, Urmila Pawar turned out to be a rebel. Women in the patriarchal set up are indoctrinated with the thought of acceptance of their low status. As Alladi Uma observes, "The man, all powerful, wants to demonstrate his superiority over the woman; he controls her life, her actions and her behaviour" (Uma 3). Even Urmila's husband wanted to control her by exercising his authority on her. But she was unstoppable as she was all prepared to carve a niche for herself. Education and her active involvement in the public sphere helped her personality to evolve immensely. In her own words, "I had realized that I had a new vision, a new perspective of looking at women. I had lost my fear. The women's movement had given me great strength to perceive every man and woman as an equal individual" (248).

Urmila burnt the midnight oil to achieve her goals. She stood firmly against all the odds and kept moving forward with her earnest endeavours. She strove hard to fulfil her passion of writing by coping with all the struggles and criticism. Nothing came easy to her. Her hard earned achievements are a result of her fortitude with which she tackled all the problems encountering her way. Her degrees, her writings, her success, everything came at the expense of her family's peace. While recounting the ordeals of her marital life Urmila writes:

> Only I slogged the whole day in the office, at home, and after an arduous journey was dead tired by the time I reached home. And yet at night, though my body was a mass of aches and pains, I pressed my husband's feet. I was ready to do anything he wanted, just to make him happy. I was ready to do anything he wanted, just to make him happy. I was ready to die for a smile, a glance from him. But he accused me, 'Leave alone being an ideal wife, you are not even a good one!' Later on he began saying that I was far from being a good mother as well! I failed to understand what exactly he wanted from me and became miserable. Gradually it became clear to me that everything that gave me an independent identity- my writing, which was getting published, my education, my participation in public programmes- irritated Mr. Pawar no end. Gradually, he began to be full of resentment. (246)

The Weave of My Life not only presents the harsh struggles of Urmila's life but also of the three generations associated with her. The caste discrimination that her family bore in terms of rural segregation in village continued in metropolis also. Her children like her also experienced caste discrimination in a big city like Mumbai. Urmila's children also started feeling bitterness in the amicable bond that they shared with their mother. The steps that her children took in their lives made people doubt her motherhood. When her elder daughter Malavika backed out of her arranged marriage at the last moment, Urmila Pawar was held responsible for that. She writes:

> The marriage ended in the wedding hall. Everybody criticized me. 'What a foolish mother!' They said, 'What sort of a mother is she? How could she fail to notice what her daughter was upto? But it is to be expected, isn't it? She was too busy preening at her meetings, sammelanas and social work to notice what her daughter was doing!' My motherhood was torn to shreds. Mr. Pawar was furious. As it, all his expectations from me had come to

> nought! Now he grew despondent and furiously angry! He began to blow his top whenever he saw me. 'This woman has ruined my family. Because of her, I lost face in the community! She considers herself so intelligent! But she is plain stupid! She is selfish, useless, shameless.' (309)

The personal tragedies that encountered Urmila Pawar's life shook her world upside down. Be it the death of her son Mandar, refusal of her elder daughter, Malavika, to get married on her wedding day, loss of her husband Harishchandra, her brother or her mother. Despite facing all the catastrophes, Urmila's indefatigable spirit made her stand as hard as rock. Her restless soul and mind sought solace in her writing and social work. The candid and commendable narrative strikes a note of sheer positivity and faith. She proves that nothing is impossible if one has conviction in one's beliefs. Glancing over her life she perfectly sums up her journey by saying:

> Life has taught me many things; showed me much; it has also lashed out at me till I bled. I do not know how much longer I am going to live; nor do I know in what form life is going to confront me. Let it come in any form, I am ready to face it stoically. That is what my life has taught me. That is my life, and this is me! (320)

Despite facing all the difficulties, Urmila Pawar's insatiable thirst for gaining knowledge and completing her education resulted in her enlightened self over the years. She attributes herself awareness to the Ambedkarite and Buddhist philosophy. Hence, by celebrating the essence of 'womanhood', *The Weave Of Life* does not evoke our pity but our admiration toward the unflinching spirit of dalit women.

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The bird of fire

S.Mohan Raj
PhD Research Scholar, English
School of Social Sciences and Languages,
VIT, Vellore. Tamilnadu,
rajmohan251@gmail.com

You the bird of fire...!

Sometimes the fire engulf you,
Often you engulf the fire.

You the reminiscence of feministic spirit,
Often voices for your right.

You are in search of twilight...!
But, ah...! You received only fireflies..!

You...The lady with lantern
Search for your light in the patriarchal darkness!

You thou asked a poem
But how thou forgot that
You are a sonnet...!
Offer a mean to many meaningless people(s)...!

You you knew what you are? and
What for you are?

Remember,

A burning stick alone lights up candles.

You glisten with pain..!

Your string may sound with hurdles,

But, as a refrain,

You, again and again, jingles and swear to win...!

You the music of lyre...

Smile

Smile

Smile,

You have to go for mile (s)...!!

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Waiting for You

Harshit Nigam
M. Phil (English),
University of Delhi.
Email: hnigam256@gmail.com.

You pour down so passionately
Electrifying each atom;
That farms and fields get tuned to dance,
The tavern lie stupor.
At times pitter patter,
At other times a heavy down pour.
Whenever you come down
You rekindle the aura.
Frog starts croaking for mate,
Paper boats get set for destinations.
You quench the thirsty earth
Releasing a misty fragrance out of mud.

The mighty ones curse;
You put halt onto their lives.
They may call me Luddite, Effeminate, Hedonist.
No qualms, I have.
Whitman and Gibran gave you a voice.
One more in the lineage I am.
As nothing could be manlier
Than to embellish and eulogize
The creation.

I'm waiting,
When the water pearls on window panes
Herald the rejuvenation.
I'm waiting,
For the seething Jalebis
Reviving the child in every man.
I'm waiting for you
To stimulate my poetry;
Amidst the scorching heat outside,
And the cold humdrum within.

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Absences

Sangeeth SG

Time absconded with boisterous memories,
And left is one brooding incipient present.
Staggering, feet dance in a reptillian intensity
Bleak the moment, dwelling in the recess of psyche,
A repertoire of silence.

Absence, with its stooping jaws, fractured,
in its duel with presence, alone in its jubilations.
An absence born out of itself and dying within its own physique.
Filigreed in its body in gold,
the tales of his impertinous absences.

Time is now but a shallow hourglass, all its sand drained down,
Still, in tranquillity, chains of hours suspended in chaos.
We brood and breed in absence,
A monotonous cacophony of past and lost faces,
The black widow silks its web in fragments of broken time,
And prey off on drunken, brooding absences.

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Where Freedom Abides…

Monisha. X
Assistant Professor,
Department of English
IFET College of Engineering
Villupuram, Tamilnadu
E-mail id: monishaxavier@gmail.com

I am independent,
And that's how the society assumes.
In the depth of the heart, I'm stuck.
All my responsibilities are tangling me.
I'm unable to respire peacefully.
Listening to mother's advice,
Obeying father's words,
Serving my husband,
Sacrificing everything for my children,
And doing nothing for myself.
This kind of attitude, the world calls independent.
But my freedom lies, where I can do everything
What I think and long for.
My freedom lies within me.

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Book review: *Kafka on the Shore*

Damayanti Das
Junior Research Fellow
Department of English,
Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata.

Kafka on the Shore
Author: Haruki Murakami
Original Language: Japanese
Translated into English by Philip Gabriel
Publisher: Vintage
Year of Publication: 2005
Pages: 505
ISBN: 9780099458326

When we come across a book by Haruki Murakami, we know that it is obviously going to be a thought-provoking read making us question the uncritical acceptance of outward reality and usher us into a tantalising fictional world of magic and fantasy. But his books are not any fantasy fiction in which fantasy is used for its own sake in order to temporarily regale the readers. Unlike in fantasy pulp fiction, in Murakami's books, the phantasmagoric world which blurs the tenuous line between the real and the hyperreal , lends itself to varied interpretations regarding the nature and existence of the self vis-a-vis psychic reality. Despite the metaphysical question about man's identitarian struggle being the recurrent theme in his works, these are by no means meant only for a small coterie. On the contrary, there is an abiding appeal of his books to the masses, the reason behind which is the relatability of his works which engage the readers in conversation with the characters. Moreover, the author has a unique gift for juxtaposing the elements of popular culture and philosophical discourse into a coherent whole which dismantles the cultural sacrosanctity of high art. For instance, in *Kafka on the Shore* there are disparate references ranging from Mickey Mouse, the popular liquor brand Jonnie Walker to Austrian composer Franz Schubert and Hegel's dialectic in the speech of a prostitute hired by Colonel Sanders, the founder of America's fast food chain KFC. In my opinion, Murakami's ability to dismantle the firmly entrenched divide between

mass and class and to grip the readers' attention by surprising them at every turn by placing these familiar references in unfamiliar contexts, earned him the status of a bestselling author.

Though this Japanese writer started his literary career much earlier , he came into limelight with the publication of *Norwegian Wood* which brought him instant fame .In spite of his immense popularity with Japanese youth and international acclaim , he is sadly not considered a part of Japan's intelligentsia because of the allegedly excessive western influence on his works. Though since his school days, he has been an avid reader of European literature, it does not mean he is not sensitive enough to Japanese history or culture or literature. For him, the Japanese and western culture are not mutually exclusive. Just as his own novels refuse to be straitjacketed into a specific category, he rules out any binary opposition between these two cultures. When asked about the American understanding of Japanese cultural references in an interview, he made his standpoint clear. He said "When I write a novel I put into play all the information inside me. It might be Japanese information or it might be Western; I don't draw a distinction between the two. I can't imagine how American readers will react to this, but in a novel if the story is appealing it doesn't matter much if you don't catch all the detail. I'm not too familiar with the geography of nineteenth century London, for instance, but I still enjoy reading Dickens." In another interview after the publication of the novel *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, he says, in reference to his not having read many Japanese contemporaries, "I'm a kind of outcast of the Japanese literary world. I have my own readers … But critics, writers, many of them don't like me... I have been writing for 35 years and from the beginning up to now the situation's almost the same. I'm kind of an ugly duckling... always the duckling, never the swan."

On reading this novel through, I feel that the number of references made to the Japanese tradition or how far he is Japanese in his sensibility, should not be our primary concern here. What matters here is the universal appeal of the textual world which strikes a chord with millions of readers. Just like the entrance stone which for Nataka is a guide to the extraterrestrial world, this novel leads the readers out of the mundane world into an alternative textual world unmediated by the constraints of logical time ,space and incidents. There they encounter happenings like fish and leeches falling

from the sky, cats conversing with man, Kafka's father taking the shape of a bottle of whisky, flutes made out of cats' souls, which are outside the pale of rational explanation or objective reality. The focal point in this novel is the search for the integrity of the self. This eerie world takes sensory reality to a metaphysical domain which makes the readers cross the tenuous line between the textual and the real world . The process of reading through which the readers experience the psychic trials and tribulations of the central characters Kafka and Nataka urges them to synthesize the scattered fragmented pieces of their selves.

In the novel, in alternating chapters, two different narratives run parallel to each other. In the odd numbered chapters, a fifteen-year-old boy who has adopted the pseudonym Kafka embarks on an Oedipal quest for his mother who left him when he was four and a half years old. Though there is no direct link established between Kafka Tamura and the philosopher Franz Kafka by the author, our fifteen-year-old Kafka Tamura inhabits a Kafkaesque world of alienation, anxiety, and existential crisis. Since this adolescent boy has been emotionally alienated by his domineering father who looms large as a patriarchal authority, he craves complete assimilation with his lost mother figure. This Oedipal motif calls to our mind Franz Kafka's 'The Judgement' in which he explores the anxiety and guilt in a conflicted father-son relationship which reverses the oedipal myth with the father condemning the son to death. In case of Kafka , in order to intensify his alienation , his father curses him that he would be the murderer of his father and end up having sexual encounter with his mother. In order to evade this Oedipal curse his flees his house and then we see him taken through a series of incidents which are acted out on a surreal plane giving free rein to the readers' imagination. After Kafka loses his physical shelter, he gets emotional shelter in the supposedly surrogate mother figure Miss Saeki, a librarian who takes him under her wing. The interdependence and mutual attraction between them are beyond the dimension of realism and seen in supranatural world of apparitions and simultaneous existence of the different versions of the same persona .Their liaison constitutes a patchwork of dreams in which Miss Saeki, in a reverie, attempts to relive her past by sleeping with Kafka whom she identifies with her dead lover who died young .Kafka is in love with the apparition of her fifteen-year-old self and at the same time is

seen to be enamoured of the same mother figure. His relationship with figures from the past and present lays bare his unconscious enabling him in coming to terms with his own self. This is a liberating experience for him which helps him gradually evolve into"the toughest 15-year –old in the world", as said by the boy named Crow. Since the author has a penchant for the interplay of multilayered allusions and mystery, the identity of the crow is never disclosed. Since Kafka means 'crow' in Czech, it can be assumed that Crow is a manifestation of his other self which sustains and negotiates with his fragile self.

As Kafka undertakes a journey along a meandering psychological path, another old man Nataka ekes out a vegetative existence after he lost his memory and rational faculty in the Rice Bowl Hill incident. After several weeks, he came back to his consciousness only to find himself left with little more than his instinctual drives. Following the disaster, he developed an extraordinary ability of speaking to cats and cat-finding becomes a means for him to earn his livelihood. Could we say that his conversations with cats provide him with a validation of his otherwise vacant existence? Is this so called absurd activity a mode of searching the rational and superior self? The author leaves us pondering over the questions. We see that a turning point in his life comes which proves to be very crucial for Kafka as well .At this point, Kafka's father becomes instrumental in leading both Nataka and Kafka to their psychic growth. In a surrealistic scene, a whisky bottle labelled Jonnie Walker gradually turns into Kafka's father who threatens Nataka that he will kill the cats and warns him that he would make flutes out of their souls. When Nataka murders him for saving the lives of the cats, mysteriously Kafka's clothes get blood-stained. The blood stains suggest that the murder is committed in Kafka's psychological realm in which he fulfils his father's prophecy without suffering the guilt of actual murder. This virtual murder also shocks Nataka out of his passive and blinkered existence and gives him the agency to exert his own will.

The merit of this novel lies in its ability to open up a wide range of possibilities for delving into the motives, symbols, images and characters over and over again. Immediately after the publication of this novel, the readers became so perplexed and overwhelmed that Murakami's Japanese publisher opened an website so that they could ask any question related to the novel.

Though, out of eight thousand questions Murakami responded to only twelve hundred , he concluded that the key to understanding this work is multiple readings with which the readers would come up with myriad perspectives. In this postmodern world which frustrates any attempt at getting a unitary or one dimensional meaning, Murakami's encouraging such fluidity of interpretations or diverse responses would challenge the unifying and metanarratorial scope of a text and endorse multiple, often contradictory, theoretical standpoints.

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