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Representation of Contemporary Society in Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

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Abstract This paper attempts to examine the problematic of representation in Adiga's *The White Tiger* which has been criticized for its alleged misrepresentation of India. Adiga portrays India in a way which challenges the official version made available to the people through Govt. propaganda via print and electronic media. The novelist presents a true and detailed account of contemporary Indian society through various characters, events, anecdotes, representational devices which form the narrative of the novel. He presents India from a perspective which may not be the perspective shared by every reader. He is looking at the "real world" from some angle, with some experience and expectation and the readers are at liberty to endorse or discredit the portrayal of India in the novel. Using irony as a principle of structure, the novelist offers a critique of some of the contemporary problems of Indian society.

Keywords: Uneven development, Mis-governance, Corruption, Violence, Globalization.

Indian English novel has developed as a distinct genre after its gradual progression from various stages—from imitative, realistic, psychological to the experimental stages. The genre as we find it today has been universally acknowledged for its variety, richness and its gradual maturity. In the thirties the "Big Three" of Indian Writing in English started writing fiction in English and they inevitably portrayed the village life and the revolutionary fervor of pre-partition days. They had to grapple with the problem of 'medium', the medium of writing in an alien language which would not render Indian sensibility so easily. The



Gandhian philosophy, consciously or unconsciously entered the creative writing of this phase of Indian English literature. The excellent novels like Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935), R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* (1935) and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) are a testimony to this fact.

In 1950s, Indian novelists' interest moved from the public to private sphere. They began to delineate in their works the individual's quest for the self in all varied complex forms along with his problems. In their eagerness to find new themes related to human psyche and other issues related to 'self', they deliberately kept the larger social/public issues out of focus in their writings.

Novelists like Anita Desai, Arun Joshi and Nayantara Sahgal changed through their works the face of Indian English novel and enriched it further both in quality and quantity. The publication of Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* in 1981 gave international recognition to both Indian English writers and Indian English fiction. Thereafter came more writings especially fiction which was quite rich in terms of quality, content, and craftsmanship. Arundhati Roy won Booker's prize in 1997 for her brilliant Novel *The God of Small Things* and Arvind Adiga bagged the prestigious the 2008 Man Booker prize for his *The White Tiger*.

This paper attempts to examine the problematic of representation in Adiga's *The White Tiger* which has been criticized for its alleged misrepresentation of India. Adiga portrays India in a way which challenges the official version made available to the people through Govt. propaganda via print and electronic media. The novelist presents a true account of contemporary Indian society through various characters, events, anecdotes, representational devices which form the narrative of the novel. He presents India from a perspective which may not be the perspective shared by every reader. He is looking at the "real world" from some angle, with some experience and expectation and the readers are at liberty to endorse or discredit the portrayal of India in the novel. Adiga chooses



Laxmangarh, Gaya, Dhanbad, Delhi and Bangluru as the locale of his novel and keeps on changing the focal point of his narrative from rural India to semi-rural and then to metropolitan cities of Delhi and Bengluru. Written in an epistolary form, the narrative encompasses almost every aspect of Indian life: back-breaking poverty of the poor and the opulence of the rich, pollution, malnutrition, black money and white people, illiteracy, unemployment, road accidents and jail proxy, illegal mining which reminds us of the latest mining scam in Karnataka and infamous Coalgate Scam, caste and culture conflict, superstition, dowry practice, economic disparity and uneven development, Zamindari system, exploitation of marginal farmers and landless labourers, rise of Naxalism, corrupt and unproductive education system, poor health services, tax evading racket, master-servant relationship, flesh trade, crumbling family structure, the working of BPOs and entrepreneurial success and its fallout etc. Some critics object to the negative picture of India portrayed by the novelist who, they argue, misrepresents India and leaves out the progress and the progressive aspects of Indian society in order to sell better the poverty and corruption of our country to the western world. The popular perception and the commonly held view is that Indian poverty and illiteracy are exotic things for the western mind and these sell dearly in the international market. The elite society and politicians are obviously annoyed with Adiga because all the ills and evils of the society are attributed to them and worst of all the murderer “from the darkness remains untraced and uncaught due to a small offering of [my] gratitude to the police”(300). The rich have been portrayed as parasites who feed on the labour and work done by the poor. The novelist’s pro-poor sympathies are very evident as he speaks many revolutionary ideas through Balram, the narrator. The ironic tone clearly suggests Adiga’s ‘commitment’ to the welfare of the poor and downtrodden who creates wealth for the nation by working in inhuman conditions. The farmer, the miner, the petty shopkeepers, laborers,-- all work hard and earn wealth not for themselves but for the elite and dominant class including most of our corrupt ministers, MLAs and MPs, bureaucrats and industrialists who consume “without producing”. In the Orwellian sense, “He[the rich] sets them to work, he gives back to them the bare minimum that will prevent them from starving,

and the rest he keeps for himself (Orwell 9). If any part of India shines, and it shines brilliantly in metropolitan cities, it is because of the wealth created by the ill -paid and under-fed labours and weavers, vendors, milkmen and underpaid farmers who live in poverty and but ceaselessly earn wealth for the nation. Their labour is lost as somebody is stealing it and stashing it “in a small, beautiful country in Europe full of white people and balck money(79-80). In her amazing book *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* Arundhati Roy rightly observes: “India does not live in her villages. India dies in her villages. India gets kicked around in her villages. India lives in her cities. India’s villages live only to serve her cities (Roy 70-71).

In *The white Tiger* Adiga presents a contrasting picture of India neatly cut into two worlds: the India of darkness and the India of light. The riches of a few is sharply contrasted with animal –like existence of the majority of people who live in perpetual poverty, helplessness, hopelessness, and misery. Hardly anything escapes from the penetrating eyes of Adiga who toured India as a journalist of the prestigious magazine *Time* . The critics and commentators differ in their assessment of Adiga’s portrayal/ representation of India in *The White Tiger*. In critics’ opinion Adiga is exaggerating corruption, hypocrisy, and other negative aspects of Indian life and intentionally underestimates India’s noticeable growth in the fields of space science, economics and telecommunication. But India as portrayed in the novel is not shining for majority of its people. The majority of population lives without basic amenities of life. Adiga notes it in his inimitable style:

Electricity poles – defunct.

Water tap- broken.

Children – too lean and short for their age, and with over- sized heads from which vivid eyes shine, like the guilty conscience of the government of India. (20)

There is no doubt about the fact that the country is progressing on economic front but the fruits of this development and growth are not fairly distributed among different sections of society. The Human Development Report 2013 released by United Nations Developmental



Programme (UNDP) clearly indicates the dismal picture and dangerous consequences of inequality and uneven development in third world countries including India.

Unless people can participate meaningfully in the events and processes that shape their lives, national human development paths will be neither desirable nor sustainable. People should be able to influence policymaking and results—and young people in particular should be able to look forward to greater economic opportunities and political participation and accountability. Dissatisfaction is increasingly high in both the North and the South as people call for more opportunities to voice their concerns and influence policy in order to ensure basic social protection and social progress. Among the most active protesters are young people. In part this is a response to limited employment opportunities for educated young people. History is replete with popular rebellions against unresponsive governments. (Human Development Report 2013 P-6)

It appears that there is no difference between India as portrayed by Adiga in *The White Tiger* and the real India we see on day- to- day basis. It is evident in the following description that details the criminalization of Indian politics:

You see, a total of ninety-three criminal cases—for murder, rape, grand larceny, gun-smuggling, pimping, and many other such minor offences—are pending against the great Socialist and his ministers at the present moment. Not easy to get convictions when the judges are judging in Darkness, yet three convictions have been delivered, and three of the ministers are currently in jail, but continue to be ministers. (79-80)

Politics has become a haven for criminals who can easily circumvent law if there is a loud noise about their criminal activities. Today criminalization of politics is major issue which seriously undermines the spirit of democracy in our country and which is a major reason for mis-governance which largely accounts for corruption and other afflictions which ails Indian polity. Adiga does not hide this ugly aspect of Indian polity and portrays a realistic picture of corruption and criminalization in body-politic of Indian democracy. The poverty and lack of hygiene of the urban poor who live in juggis has been graphically portrayed. The description



may sound vulgar to the urbanite but it is a true picture of filth and squalor with which the urban poor live. It is the most common and conspicuous sight in Indian cities:

The men were defecating in the open like a defensive wall in front of the slum: making a line that no respectable human should cross. The wind wafted the stench of fresh shit towards me.

I found a gap in the line of the defecators. They squatted there like stone statues.

These people were building homes for the rich, but they lived in tents covered with blue tarpaulin sheets, and partitioned into lanes by lines of sewage. (260)

The very idea of a driver slitting the throat of his master is seen by the rich as an act of subversion. The plot of *The white Tiger* is simple and shows the rags-to riches story of the protagonist who slits his master throat and decamps with money “that ultimately changed the half-baked person from a hunted criminal into a solid pillar of Bangalorean society”(290). This act of premeditated murder raises ethical and existential questions. The murder is most foul as Balram bites the hand that feeds and after the crime he not only gets away from it but also justifies it as an existential act. With crime thriller plot, the story unfolds though the letters of Balram addressed to the Chinese Premier Jiabao. The narrative unfolds layer after layer and the reader get the bitter taste of all the afflictions most of the Indians live with. What is remarkable about Adiga’s narrative is that it instantly transports the reader to the real- life situations in real India. Note the following:

Go to a tea shop anywhere along the Ganga, sir, and look at the men working in that tea shop – men, I say, but better to call them human spiders that go crawling in between and under the tables with rags in their hands, crushed humans in crushed uniforms, sluggish, unshaven, in their thirties or forties or fifties but still ‘boys’. But that is your fate if you do your job well – with honesty, dedication, and sincerity, the way Gandhi would have done it, no doubt. (51)



No doubt Adiga chooses stereotyped themes like poverty, inequality and corruption, and initially the reader find it stale and outdated as these clichéd themes have stopped moving the reader. But the reading of the novel assumes more importance in the context of globalization and other economic forces which are increasingly impacting the lives of millions of people living in India and other third world countries. The novel realistically details the ineffective system and the poor quality governance at all levels of society. Our efforts to combat poverty, illiteracy and inequality have proved futile in the sense that majority of our population, even after 67 years of independence, lives ignoble life without the basic and bare amenities. The post-90s phase of liberalisation has created immense wealth and now cinema halls have been replaced with multiplexes, and traditional bazzars with shopping malls. One can easily note the mushroom growth of more branded cloth shops, wine shops selling foreign liquor, the Chinese toys shops, foreign university campuses, international automobile companies and many other consumable goods marketed by MNCs. All restrictions on the trade of foreign companies have been lifted. The entry of Wall Mart in Indian market is our latest gesture of generosity towards foreign trade and investment. Balam, the protagonist of the novel, finds himself in an alien land when his employer Ashok takes him to Delhi. The tall multi-storey buildings, malls, multiplexes, smooth and wide roads, five star hotels, casinos, beautiful brown haired prostitutes from foreign countries and everything is available for a price which only a few individuals can afford. Adiga presents two Indias in the narrative: "Please understand, Your Excellency, that India is two countries in one: an India of Light, and an India of Darkness" (14). The affluent live in posh colonies and enjoy the world class facilities and the poor perpetually remain dispossessed and deprived. The world is neatly divided into separate categories, one thriving at the cost of the other.

There is no doubt about the fact that globalization has created wealth and economies, and improved living standards and quality of life of people in some parts of the world. The sense of isolation, as was earlier experienced by the isolated countries, has now been



replaced with connectedness. The technological advancements in communication, transport, industry, space and agriculture are easily and speedily exchanged among, men, institutions and nations. It is important to note here that corporate globalization operates mainly through three international institutions: the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. The IMF and the WB were created immediately after the World War II as “a part of a concerted effort to finance the rebuilding of Europe after the devastation of World War II and to save the world from future economic depression”(Stiglitz 11). The IMF is an international institution that reports neither to men and nations whose money finances its working nor to those whose life and destiny it affects. It is accountable to the ministries of finance and the central banks of governments of the world which control its working on the basis of an intriguing pattern of voting that takes into account the economic strength of nations at the end of W.W II. “There have been some minor adjustments since, but the major developed countries run the show, with only one country, the United States, having effective veto”(ibid 12). The WTO has been constantly pressuring the developing countries to curtail subsidy in agriculture sector. Very recently during the Ninth Ministerial Conference, held in Bali, Indonesia, in the first week of December 2013, the key players adopted tough stand against liberal policies of the developing countries for providing food security to the poor population. Arundhati Roy has similar views about these global institutions:

For all the endless chatter about democracy, today the world is run by three of the most secretive institutions in the world: the International Monetary Fund; the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, all three of which, in turn, are dominated by the United States. Their decisions are made in secret. The people who head them are appointed behind closed doors. Nobody really knows anything about them, their policies, their belief, their intentions. Nobody elected them. Nobody said they could make decisions on their behalf. A world run by a handful of greedy bankers and CEOs whom nobody elected can't possibly last (Roy, 2005:43-44)



Written in a realist mode the novelist uses different representational devices to expose the oppressive power structures which deprive the majority of people of all benefits of science, technology, and the growth of economy and democratic intuitions. The country takes pride in the empowerment of a few women in politics, banking sector, sports and civil administration but these few iconic women—Sonia Gandhi, Mayawati, Jai Lalitha, Mamta Banerjee, Sania Mirza, Saina Nehwal, Kiran Bedi, Chanda Kocher and a few more -- do not represent the majority of women who remain uneducated, unemployed and uninformed throughout their life and face discrimination and humiliation at every step and stage of their life. Various welfare schemes, introduced by the Govt. from time to time, in the name of Women Education, Food Security Act, Health Insurance Scheme, Kisan Credit Card, Employment Guarantee Schemes and other pre-poll sops hardly serve any purpose due to the poor implementation of Govt. Programmes and the poor and inefficient system of governance. Most of the schemes are poll gimmicks which do more harm than good. These create false consciousness and hide from public view the unequal relations of production. These present distorted images of reality and people are made to believe partial truths as whole truths. The entire game “implicitly or explicitly [supports] the interests of the dominant groups who socially, politically, economically and culturally benefit from the economic organization of society” (Storey 4). People do not need free laptop, free cycle, free mobile phone, or free electricity, instead they need a sensitive political system which can understand the aspirations of the people, take care of quality education and upbringing of our children, and which can provide more free and fair opportunities of jobs for the youth. A country with rich human resources, which takes pride in its rich heritage, glorious past and its technological advancement esp. in the area of space science maintains two parallel systems: one for the rich and the other for the poor. The poor men’s children go to Govt. schools, the rich men’s children have many options from Public Schools to DPS, Doon schools and foreign institutions; the poor when they fall sick, go to the doctorless government hospitals, the rich go to the best corporate hospitals; the rich travel in chauffeur-driven car, the poor waste the whole day waiting for a bus maintained by the



public transportation system. This disparity is most conspicuous in education and health sectors which are run most inefficiently and run with public money or taxpayer's money. The standards of school, college and the university education vary and depend on the class that these institutions cater to. With the introduction of RTE Bill free and compulsory education has been promised to the poor and underprivileged. The conditions in which most of the schools in rural areas function are deplorably and hopelessly poor. The school teachers are more worried about the Mid-day Meals, census work and preparing list of BPL families and old age pensioners. One can easily understand the causes of poor quality of education in Govt-run schools which produce half baked persons like Balram Halwai, the protagonist of the novel. The result is that now India has a large army of unemployable youth. Our best brain trained in good institutions serve other countries. The half-baked persons like Balram remain encaged in the Rooster Coop and there is no way to break this coop. All opportunities, are foreclosed. Adiga aptly argues: "These days, there are just two castes: Men with Big Bellies, and Men with Small Bellies. And only two destinies: eat –or get eaten up" (64). Amartya Sen in his *The Argumentative India* aptly remarks:

Nehru's hope of overcoming class divisions in the economic, social and political progress of the country remains largely unfulfilled. The barriers to progress come not only from old dividing lines, but also from new ones. Sometimes the very institutions that were created to overcome disparities and barriers have tended to act as reactionary influences in reinforcing inequalities. There are many examples of such 'friendly fires', of which I have discussed two particular cases.

A major difficulty lies in the weak institutional structure of primary schools in much of India, which are often run inefficiently (Sen 216). ...Effective elementary education has in practice ceased to be free in substantial parts of the country, which of course is a violation of a basic right. All this seems to be reinforced by a sharp class division between teachers and the poorer families. (217)



The only option available with the poor is to live in poverty and despair and when they cannot bear any more of it, they commit suicide or they kill someone they can lay their hands on. Balram kills Ashok because he had no choice and that is why he justifies it as an existential act and as Sartre argues “there is no reality except in action”. He gains his essence through individual choices and actions. Balram asserts his identity and existence through the act of killing. The causes of the growing culture of violence and intolerance are not difficult to understand as the resources of the country are not fairly and justly distributed among the people. The corruption is inherently political and unequal power distribution between different sections of society lies at the root of it. As a result marginalized sections of society feel alienated from the mainstream society and politics and the gap “between those who make the decisions and those who have to suffer them” (Roy, 2005: 81) keeps widening. This gives rise to the mood of cynicism which breeds unending cycle of violence and hatred. Now violence has become a national menace where underprivileged sections of society take recourse to violence in order to get their voice heard. The killing of police and military and CRPF personals and more recently the brutal massacre of Congress leaders by the *Naxals* in Chhattisgarh is clear indication of the disconnect between the peripheral and main stream population. Our Govt. appears helpless in the face of such conflicts where one section of our society is pitied against the other

A careful analysis of various representational devices used by the novelist points towards the fact that Adiga is neither misrepresenting India nor its corruption, maladministration and poverty. The use of letters (epistolary form) as narrative technique gives an edge to the narrator who gives a detailed account of society, its practices, the working of its institutions, and its problems. The symbols and imagery used by the novelist are perfectly in tune with tone and the tenor of the narrative. Animal imagery has been extensively used in the description of characters both from ‘darkness’ and ‘light’.

My whole life I have been treated like donkey. All I want is that one son of mine –at least- should live like a man (30).

The narrative is replete with animal imagery which suggest the meaningless and animal-like existence of the majority of population: Lizard, mosquitoes, tiger, monkeys, dogs, cockroaches, the white tiger, zoo and many other images from the animal world have been used to comment on human affairs. For example, the landlords are given animal names: “the Wild Boar, the Raven, the Stork the Buffalo. All four animals lived in High-walled mansions just outside Luxman Garh—the landlord’s quarters” (25).

Adiga uses irony as a principle of structure and as one of the representational devices to highlight the difference between the ‘India of darkness’ and ‘India of light’. The following illustrations show Adiga’s ingenuity in the use of irony as a trope. The truth thus conveyed is realistically true and artistically probable.

- i) There – I’m revealing the secret to a successful escape. The police searched for me in darkness: but I hid myself in light (118).
- ii) Around six o’clock that day, as the government ledger no doubt accurately reported, my father was permanently cured of his tuberculosis (50).
- iii) Like eunuchs discussing the Kama Sutra, the voters discuss the elections in Laxmangarh.(98)

There is no way to get the ‘real world’ into a work of fiction except through language, and other representational devices like symbols, similes and metaphors. The symbols used by Adiga adequately present to the reader the worldview which he wants to convey. The characters are symbols who represent the whole class to which they belong. One of the notable symbols is the symbol of Rooster Coop which accurately defines and describe the helplessness and despair of the poor and dispossessed.

The greatest thing to come out of this country in the ten thousand years of its history is the Rooster Coop....Go to Old Delhi, behind the Jama Masjid, and look at the way they keep chickens there in the market. Hundreds of pale hens and brightly coloured roosters, stuffed tightly into wire-mesh cages, packed as tightly as worms in a belly,



pecking each other and shitting on each other, jostling just for breathing space; the whole cage giving off a horrible stench – the stench of terrified, feathered flesh. On the wooden desk above this coop sits a grinning young butcher, showing off the flesh and organs of a recently chopped-up chicken, still oleaginous with a coating of dark blood. The roosters in the coop smell the blood from above. They see the organs of their brothers lying around them. They know they're next. Yet they do not rebel. They do not try to get out of the coop.

The very same thing is done with human beings in this country....

Or you wouldn't need the Communist Party to shoot people and a secret police to raid their houses at night and put them in jail like I've heard you have over there. Here in India we have no dictatorship. No secret police.

That's because we have the coop. (173-74)

Chandelier is another potent symbol in the novel that signifies the need of light to illumine the dark area. And the novelist makes repeated use of this symbol.

The novelist shows that colonial conditions and colonial relations exist in the country with the only difference that there are native colonisers who colonise their own people more systematically, more legitimately and more frequently. They are more ruthless in oppressing the poor because there is no fear of the 1857- like mutiny. The same people get elected term after term in the State Legislature and Parliament. They get popular mandate to colonise their own people for next five years. The way most of our ministers and public representatives conduct themselves in public and flaunt their muscle and money power and the power of Red becom atop their official vehicle followed by a contingent of Escort vehicles with sirens carrying Security forces would belittle or put to shame the imperial show of strength by the Britishers during the Raj. That is why there is a noticeable disconnect between the rich and

the poor, between the people and the people in power. And there is a noticeable gap between what they have and what 'India of darkness' does not have: As Fanon observes:

The settler's town is a well-fed town, an easy-going town; its belly is always full of good things, the settler's town is a town of white people, of foreigners. The town belonging to the colonized people or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, people by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where, nor how. It is world without spaciousness; men live on top of each other. The native town is hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light.... The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dream of possession—all manner of possession: to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed, with his wife, if possible. (Fanon30)

One can easily understand the mind and mentality of the perpetually exploited people who long for a life of comfort as 'they' have in 'India of light'. Balram represents those uncountable Indians who remain without a name and exact date of birth. They get a name and a date of birth when they get enrolled in a school during some special drive for the implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act /RTE. Balram represents those uncountable faces, 'muna', 'chotu', 'chutku' whom we encounter on tea shops and road-side dahaba all over India. Child Labour Law appears too small before their superhuman struggle for existence.

When Balram is in Delhi with his master Ashok, he finds that there are many people like his master who enjoy the best things of the world. He tries to mimic, perhaps unconsciously appropriating Bhaba's concept of mimicry, his master in every possible manner. Balram wants to taste the same whisky that his master drinks, shops at the same mall where the master shops, sleeps with brown haired blonde as his master does. It is here that Balram finds some space for subversive resistance. Balram is constantly reminded of his mother's death, his father death in a Govt. doctorless hospital, his brother's wasted life. One

can easily note the disconnect between the neo-coloniser and the neo-colonised. They live side by side but they do not understand each other as they exist at different existential planes.

To have a madman with thoughts of blood and theft in his head, sitting just ten inches in front of you, and not to know it. Not to have a hint, even. What blindness you people are capable of. Here you are, sitting in glass buildings and talking on the phone night after night to Americans who are thousands of miles away, but you don't have the faintest idea what's happening to the man who's driving your car!(257)

Though cast in the mould of a crime thriller *The White Tiger* is a consciousness raising novel that brings to the fore some of the disturbing facts about contemporary society: the problem of misgovernance, our inability to use our vast human and natural resources, our inability to combat corruption in all walks of life, our inability to build a democratic culture, our inability to enforce discipline in public institutions like education, health, transport to name only a few, our inability to choose honest and dedicated leaders for governance from local panchayat to the Parliament, absence of democratic spirit in our democratic institutions, our inability to build a just and egalitarian society. The present system of governance has promoted indiscipline, corruption, casteism, regionalism, and religious fundamentalism, and the culture of violence and intolerance. The incidents of violence and the growing civil unrest and insurgency in various parts of the country are mainly due to the lack of vision and foresight in the policy makers of our country and inefficient system manned by corrupt political leaders and bureaucrats. As a creative writer Adiga does offer any solution to any of these problems but he underlines the need for radical transformations not only of the *structure of government* but of the whole polity. The novelist does not in any sense glorify the act of violence of a half-baked person Balram. The rooster coop of poverty and helplessness traps many millions of men and women effectively and induces in them the feeling of anxiety, despair, anguish and forlornness. There is an urgent need to break this rooster coop by quality education and quality and participatory governance and to understand and address the contradictions of our contemporary society. The contradictions as



underlined by B.R Ambedkar are very serious and demand immediate attention of those who make decisions and whose decisions impact the life of millions of people.

How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has laboriously built up. (Ambedkar)

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Revisiting a Classic: Major Scobie's 'Life-lie' in Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter*

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Abstract Major Scobie is a responsible police officer, father, husband and lover. However, his sense of responsibility for the happiness of others, particularly Lousie and Helen, his wife and the woman he forms a relationship with, impinges upon his existence to such an extent that pity and responsibility become the dominant strain of his character to the extent of making Scobie unavailable for any interpersonal relationship. He is unable to love either Lousie, to whom he is bound by the sacrament of marriage, or Helen, who initially reminds him of his dead daughter and later becomes his lover. Unable to resolve the conflict arising out of his sense of responsibility for the happiness of both these women, Scobie silently sacrifices his own life. He feigns that he is suffering from angina and takes an overdose of medicine to end his own life in order to relieve both Lousie and Helen from the burden of unproductive relationship with him. The paper makes use concepts and formulations of existential philosophy and analytical psychology, particularly Alfred Adler's concept of "life-lie" to analyse Scobie's life and death.

Key Terms: Catholicism, sacraments, animosity, archetype, life-lie.

Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* (1969) is localized in a West African British colony during World War II. It is the story of Major Scobie, the Deputy Commissioner of Police, who has been serving there for fifteen years. His daughter Catherine has died before the novel opens and he can no longer love his wife, Lousie, who is faded and exhausted, although he feels responsible for her happiness. In Lousie's absence, Scobie comes across a child-widow, Helen Rolt, who is the victim of a torpedoed ship. Scobie feels



attracted towards Helen out of pity for her and the two become friends immediately. The two share their pasts with each other. Even though Scobie is much older than Helen and he is also a responsible police officer, the two suddenly find them in the act of making love. This proves to be a climactic act in Scobie's life and determines the course of his life henceforth and leads him to commit suicide. This paper seeks to analyse Scobie's dilemma vis-à-vis his relationship with the two women, the resulting despair and his suicide in terms of concepts and formulations of existential philosophy and analytical psychology, particularly with regards to Alfred Adler's concept of "life-lie".

Scobie's relationship with Lousie has degenerated into a mechanical, anxiety-ridden one. Whenever he returned home from work, Scobie called out to Lousie. This was a habit he had formed in the early days of their relationship. But now, Lousie had become a mere fixture, "as much a fixture as the handcuffs on the nails" (Greene 1969: 15) in his office. "The less he needed Lousie the more conscious he became of the responsibility for her happiness" (21). There were "times of ugliness when he loved her, when pity and responsibility reached the intensity of passion (21). Thus, Scobie's sense of responsibility towards Lousie has a touch of sentimentality to it. He remembers the vow he had made to keep her happy at the time of their marriage as "awful".

Ironically, if Scobie is bound to Lousie out of a feeling of responsibility and pathos, it is pathos which takes Scobie to Helen. When he first sees Helen, she is clutching a stamp album in her hand. In fact, there is nothing attractive about Helen when she is rescued. Her young face is worn out and the hair has gone dead. Scobie first conceives Helen as a helpless child and wonders: "How could a child like that act the part of a woman whose husband had been drowned more or less before her eyes?" (131). His thoughts about Helen continue to revolve around the child-concept. Ever since he saw Helen for the first time, "It was the stamp album and not the face that haunted his memory, for no reason he could understand, and the wedding ring on her finger, as though a child had dressed up" (117). Scobie wonders what Helen would do when she returned home. He feels anxious when Helen says that probably she would be conscripted. "He thought: if my child lived, she too would have been

conscripted, flung into some grim dormitory, to find her own way” (150). One agrees with John Spurling therefore when he remarks that “Although Scobie’s child is dead before *The Heart of the Matter* opens, and his life with Lousie is that of a childless marriage, he is pre-eminently a father figure” (Spurling 1983: 40). There are several episodes in the narrative which support this view. [For instance, Scobie plays the part of a surrogate father to a dying girl in the hospital.]

As such, driven by his loneliness on account of the death of his daughter and his failed relationship with Lousie, “Scobie extends himself in sympathy and compassion towards Helen. . . . Scobie feels drawn to her by her loneliness and innocence.” (Kulshrestha 1977: 101). Scobie opens out to share the secrets of his heart with Helen, who reciprocates by sharing her own past with the Major. Scobie notices that Helen has removed the wedding ring that was hanging loose in her finger and asks her about her husband. He assures Helen that “It’s easier to get over a thing if you talk about it” (147), but he is startled by Helen’s reply: “He’s been dead – how long – is it eight weeks yet? -- and he’s so dead, so completely dead” (147). Scobie too relates to Helen the episode of his daughter’s death: how unsure and muddled he felt when he received the cable about Catherine’s death first followed by the one about her sickness. “He had never mentioned this before to anyone. Now he brought out the exact words of each cable carefully” (148). Scobie is surprised to realise how easily they had come over two deaths without being unnecessarily sentimental or pathetic. He begins to suspect that his feeling of ease with Helen, like he did with Lousie in their younger days, might not be the camouflage “of an enemy who works in terms of friendship, trust and pity” (153). Although the major tries to ward off his suspicion on account of the difference in their age, but true to his premonition, Scobie and Helen find themselves in the act of making love, their passions orchestrated by the noise of the rain falling regularly on the tin roof.

Soon after his cohabitation with Helen, Scobie’s old, lurking sense of pity and responsibility, which is the bane of his relationship with Lousie, creeps in to spoil the joy of his togetherness with Helen. His sense of responsibility is now coupled with a feeling of guilt as well. Scobie had believed that in the hot and humid West African climate his body had



“lost the sense of lust” (151). The enormity of Scobie’s guilt at the sudden, unexpected twist in his relationship with Helen has been expressed by Greene in the following terms:

Was it a butterfly that died in the act of love? But human beings were condemned to consequences. The responsibility as well as the guilt was his . . . he knew what he was about. He had sworn to preserve Lousie’s happiness, and now he had accepted another and contradictory responsibility. He felt tired by all the lies he would sometimes have to tell: he felt the wounds of those victims who had not yet bled.” (154)

Scobie holds that Helen, being a child, could not be held responsible for anything. It is he who has to think and plan for both of them and shoulder the responsibility for their future. Scobie “embarked for the first time in his life on the long legalistic arguments of deceit” (154). He understands well enough that he has exchanged future sadness in return of his compassion for Helen. Although Scobie’s experience has also taught him that “no human being can really understand another, and no one can arrange other’s happiness” (31), he once again endeavours to accept the responsibility for Helen’s wellbeing and happiness.

The difference between Lousie and Helen soon dwindles into a similarity that detracts Scobie by its mundane aspect. Helen now taunts and coaxes Scobie in the same manner as Lousie did. Scobie now goes to meet Helen only after it is dark. Helen tells him that she has become tired of his caution: “You come here after dark and you go after dark. It’s so-so ignoble” (170). Their love making also develops into a routine and Helen frets about it as well: “We always make love here. Among the junior officials furniture. I don’t believe we’ll know how to do it anywhere else” (170). Hearing Helen talk like this, Scobie is at once reminded of Lousie. He writes a letter to Helen declaring how much he loved her: “I love you more than myself, more than my wife, more than God, I think. . . . I want more than anything in the world to make you happy” (173). This desperate promise to Helen constituted yet another oath “as ineffaceable as the vow by the Ealing altar” (181). By making such a promise, Scobie hopes to earn at least some measure of peace and solicitude for himself.

The ironic difference between Scobie’s conception of himself as a responsible man and his attempt to evade the crisis in his life by making promises that he might not be able to

fulfil provides an insight into his precarious situation at this stage. As Scobie carries the letter to Helen's lodging, he feels that he carried "a sense of corruption" (173) with him. Scobie's inability to respond fully and positively to his relationship with either Lousie or Helen is perhaps due to a pervasive narcissistic strain in his character. This is suggested by his readiness to pity the people who are associated with him or be responsible for their lives. That Scobie cannot love others is obliquely pointed out by Lousie when she says, "Do you love anybody, Tikki, except yourself?" (24). His obsession with being a responsible and kind man is also hinted at in Helen's ironical remark at a party: "He was so kind to me in hospital at Pende, but I think he only likes the sick" (184). Scobie himself wonders whether he really loves either of the women in his life: "Do I, in my heart, love either of them, or is it that the automatic, terrible pity goes out to any human need?" (98).

Erich Fromm explains that the ability to love depends not only on one's willingness to emerge from narcissism, "it depends on our capacity to grow, to develop a productive orientation towards the world and ourselves" (Fromm 1958: 121). This process of development "requires one quality as a necessary condition: *Faith*" (Fromm 121). Faith in one's self is the condition of our ability to make promises to others and to have faith requires courage, the ability to take risk and the readiness to accept pain and disappointment. Scobie initially shows the courage to promise happiness for Lousie and later Helen. But over the years his faith has given way to despair. This is because Scobie is not able to detach himself from the image that he has conceived of himself. Nor is he able to associate responsibility with love and concern. In fact, it is responsibility that he wants to evade. He can find happiness only away from human intimacy. He feels bound to Lousie merely "by the pathos of her unattractiveness" (27). However, he resents so many things about Lousie including her very presence. Most of the time Scobie feels at peace only while he is away from Lousie – in the bathroom or his office. At the same time, as Marcel Morel observes, Scobie is "too weak, psychically speaking, to endure the sight of another's suffering" (Morel 1956: 41). He does not want to hurt either Helen or Lousie.



Scobie has already rejected the Catholic option of giving up Helen after his confession. He had gone to the confession box and told the priest out rightly that he had committed adultery many times. However, his confession does not provide him any solace as he finds it impossible to promise, in the name of God, that he will stop visiting the woman in his life. Even the words of prayer fail him. In fact, Scobie had never been a devout Catholic. In fact, he had converted to Catholicism to marry Lousie. However, Catholicism, particularly the sacrament of marriage, ¹continues to impinge upon his psyche through Lousie. As such, Scobie has the feeling that he is even involving God in his sin: “To take my God in mortal sin” (202). The other option available to him is to let Lousie know the worst. Since Scobie cannot resolve the conflicting claims of Lousie and Helen without causing pain to either one of them, there is no choice left open for him. In terms of existential philosophy, Scobie is driven to a “limit situation”. According to Jaspers, “. . . the limit situation is one in which the existent comes to the boundaries of his existence. It may be death, or guilt, or suffering that brings him to this situation. . .” (Jaspers quoted by Macquarrie 1987: 245). Scobie is not able to place faith either in his own wisdom or in his religion. According to Laurence Lerner, Scobie mistrusts God because he cannot shrug off his part in Helen’s happiness: “. . . the selfish action and the right action would, in his case, be the same, and he has to do the wrong compassionate action, even if it means giving up salvation” (Lerner 1963: 222).

Thus Scobie decides to die for love which has pushed him into a state of mortal sin. He decides to commit the ultimate sin of despair – suicide. In order to damn himself, Scobie decides to go to the Mass² with Lousie which he has earlier evaded by feigning sickness. When the priest comes down the altar bearing the Cross, Scobie makes one last attempt at prayer: ““O God, I offer up my damnation to you. Take it. Use it for them’, and was aware of the pale papery taste of his eternal sentence on the tongue” (217). However, even in sacrificing himself for the sake of others, Scobie is not able to emerge out of his obsession with his own self, whether it be as a responsible policeman, a father, a husband, a lover and now a martyr of sorts. Scobie has always claimed to be a responsible and sober, grown-up man. It appears now that his sense of pity and responsibility reflect his pride – that he can

even die or be damned in order to make others happy³. This trait of Scobie's character may be understood with reference to Alfred Adler's concept of "life-lie"⁴. According to Adler, the concept of life-lie partakes of a situation where a person believes that he is committed to some higher cause and the fulfilment of that cause requires the person to die. However, such a person does not want to claim himself a martyr socially as this would be contrary to his secret but higher purpose. As such, the person pretends to be sick; his sickness grows and becomes fatal resulting in his death. Scobie too plans his suicide very methodically to silently pass out of the reach of Lousie, Helen and God to accord them peace.

Scobie carefully studies all the symptoms of angina, a disease he has read about in a book on medical guidance. Then he begins to pose that he is suffering from severe pain and sleeplessness. Even though the doctor whom Scobie goes to consult does not specify angina as the particular cause of Scobie's trouble, he prescribes Evipan tablets to mitigate the symptoms. While Scobie is planning his suicide thus, he keeps on praying for death: "My God, you'll never have more complete contrition. . . . Kill me. Now. Before I hurt *you* again" (243-4).

As the next step, Scobie tells the Commissioner that he has been diagnosed as a case of angina and he will have to retire. He also begins to record the supposed attacks of pain he has in his diary to authenticate his "life-lie" [as a case in point, his diary entry reads: "6-19 November. . . . Pain has become more frequent. . . . Like a vice. Lasts about one minute. . . . Last night or two have slept badly in spite of Evipan. . . (251-52).]. Meanwhile, he secretly stores the Evipan tablets that he does not consume. The night he is to commit suicide he calls Lousie to bid her goodnight. She kisses him on the forehead and Scobie thinks: "There must be nothing strange on this last night, and nothing she would remember with regret" (255-56). As he swallows the overdose of Evipan tablets, Scobie tries to pray, but he does not know what he should be sorry for. He says aloud, "Dear God, I love. . . ." (257), and then fell down on the ground.

Thus, Scobie's lack of love and faith in his relationship with Lousie leads him to the breach of the sacrament of marriage. Furthermore, his inability to give up Helen and return to



the safer, conventional way of life makes him violate the sacrament of the Holy Communion. Scobie's utter lack of faith in anyone leads him inexorably to death, although given his self-love and his inability to respond resolutely and meaningfully to the crisis in his life, he continues to pose as a silent martyr even in his death.

Notes

¹Catholic Christianity, both eastern and western, recognizes seven sacraments: Baptism, the Mass, Confirmation, Holy Orders, Penance, Matrimony and, lastly extreme Unction.

² The Holy Mass partakes of the symbolism of the broken body and outpoured blood of Christ implying sacrifice. This makes the rite commemorative or representative of the Crucifixion of Christ, which is theologically interpreted as the atoning sacrifice offered for the sins of mankind. Scobie, however, subverts the sacrificial principle by ironically juxtaposing Christ's sacrifice with his suicide.

³Graham Green remarks about Scobie elsewhere that his character was intended "to show that pity can be the expression of an almost monstrous pride" [see Greene, *Ways of Escape* (London: Bodley Head, 1980), 93-4].

⁴See Alfred Adler, "Life-Lie and responsibility", *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology*, trans. P. Radin (1925; rpt. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Turbner & Co.: 1946), 236-45.

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Animal and the Apocalypse: Religion and Urban Ecology in Indra

Sinha's Animal's People

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Abstract: The emerging field of Ecocriticism has revolutionized the study of literary texts by drawing attention to the relationship between the poetics and politics of environmental concerns. The paper attempts to explore how Indra Sinha's novel *Animal's People* (2007) deploys religious tropes and imagery as a textual strategy to raise questions about urban ecology and environmental activism. Based on the events of the 1984 Bhopal disaster, Sinha's novel (which was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2007) can be read as an engagement with the ethics and politics of socio-centric environmentalism where both ecology and human society become victims of economic and political manipulation.

Key Words: Mythology, Religion, Animal, Environment, Ecocriticism.

The paper attempts to explore how Indra Sinha's novel *Animal's People* (2007) deploys religious tropes and imagery as a textual strategy to raise questions about urban ecology and environmental activism. The deployment of mythical narratives highlights the centrality of religious eclecticism in the novel. Just as the cosmopolitan worldview of Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004) gets underscored through the coming together of folk mythology and ecology especially through the legend of the forest goddess Bon Bibi, Sinha's *Animal's People* also brings together narratives from Hinduism, Islam and Christianity as embodied in the idea of destruction/Qayamat/Apocalypse:

Tonight is this night the night of Qayamat which Ma calls Apokalis, a word in which is Kali's name, who's also called Ma. Yes, Ma is Kali Ma, why did I never think of

this? Garlanded with bones she'll stalk the streets of Khaufpur crying the end of the world. (333)

The sense of apocalypse connects the traumatic memories of the factory disaster to a sense of future marked by retribution and justice. In the quoted passage, the image of the Goddess Kali who signifies death and destruction gets juxtaposed with the night of the "Apo(kali)s" thereby bringing out a larger humanistic concern with survival and struggle. It is important to see how on the one hand, the protagonist who is named as 'Animal' rejects any kind of religious identification/affiliation yet at the same time he is also aware of diverse religious discourses. It is through Animal that the author incorporates polyglotism in the narrative not just in terms of language but also through the various mythical narratives. This polyglottic mixture of religious discourses serves to emphasize the secular worldview of the *Khaufpuris* in the novel as these marginalized people manage to transcend their religious and communal barriers and thereby stand united against the oppression and injustice meted out by the Company. In other words, the transformation of the sacred into the secular then offers a space where collective human agency can be voiced and harnessed, as for instance, the activist Zafar often cites mythical codes of heroism as a rhetorical strategy to sustain the collective struggle. He is inspired by the figure of Imam Hussein, who is a warrior martyr from Islamic mythology and serves as an icon of strength and endurance against the powers of evil. In fact, the myth of Hussein then becomes a central force that connects the *Khaufpuris* to a sense of collective identity and memory.

The mythological narratives in the novel also perform a crucial function in relation to the representation of trauma itself. Mythology becomes the site where trauma can be articulated. Throughout the novel Animal describes that night of the disaster through gothic and surreal images and invokes Hindu and Islamic mythology in order to convey a sense of horror that could not be described otherwise through conventional tropes of language. In the Third Tape, Animal questions:



Do you suppose anyone can explain, why did the Kampani choose this city to make its factory? Why this land? Is it by chance that the old name for this place is Kali's ground? Is it by chance that Siva her husband wears cobras round his neck? (32)

In the cited passage, Animal yet again refers to Goddess Kali and her husband Siva as both these Hindu deities signify time, mortality and the terror of destruction. It becomes a moment where Animal attempts to explain the trauma through the irrational or the supernatural. Despite his conscious rejection of religion, Animal subconsciously resorts to religious iconography in order to rationalize the collective suffering. The fire walking episode in the novel also becomes a significant moment in this context.

On the occasion of *Ashara Mubarak* or the ninth night of Muharram- which is a mourning festival among the Muslims to memorialize the killing of Imam Hussein- Animal accepts the challenge to walk over the fire. It is worth noting how the entire scene has a carnival like atmosphere where the mythical narrative of death, loss and mourning is manifested through the ritualized and performative act of inflicting pain and torture onto the physical body. Through a rich narrative structure, the *Ashara Mubarak* invokes the night of that chemical disaster through the image of the infernal fire. Animal offers a long, intense monologue punctuated by the cry of "Ya Hussein" that transforms his trauma into a moment of catharsis. Animal's body then becomes the embodiment of the collective suffering of the Khaufpuris and at one point he even considers surrendering to the fire in a moment of anguish and defeat. But what is also remarkable about Animal's response to the *Ashara Mubarak* is the way in which he yet again secularizes the whole event. As he says in the Fourteenth Tape:

The mourners are defiant, never will they give in to evil powers. For me, who am neither Muslim, nor Hindu, nor Isayi, this is a music that could also comfort Isa miyan dying on the cross or go with Sri Rama into exile from Ayodhya. It's all one to me, what I like is the defiance, I like it a lot. (215)

In a very subtle way the fire walking episode aligns Animal with the various mythical figures of martyrdom such as Jesus Christ and Hussein whereby he is transformed into an archetype of suffering humanity itself. The *Ashara Mubbarak* performs another crucial function as it brings together characters like Elli, Zafar and Somnath who represent different worldviews and sentiments. It is interesting how the fire walk reminds Elli of the “hell hole” or the hazardous furnace where her father worked at the steel mill. In other words, the fire itself becomes a loaded metaphor, an image of terror and de-humanization that connects Elli’s memory of Pennsylvania with the inhabitants of Khaufpur. In fact, Sinha’s novel celebrates a cosmopolitan and secular ethos as evident in the inter-communal romantic affair between Zafar and Nisha or in the marriage of Somnath and Elli.

Mythical and religious narratives henceforth allow cosmopolitan values to emerge in the novel. Apart from religion, Hindustani classical music as emblemized in the character of Somraj plays a significant role in the novel. Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee in his analysis of Sinha’s novel argues how the underlying philosophy of classical music connects the world of the human with that of the non-human (Mukherjee 158). For instance, Somraj observes how the frog’s croaking inspires the sixth note of the Indian classical scale. In other words, Somraj and his music embody the “principle of unity through dualities in aesthetic, social, political and environmental dimensions” (Mukherjee 159). Music facilitates the romantic union of Somraj and Elli which also symbolizes the union of two different cultures. In other words, music, in the manner of mythology, too becomes the site of cosmopolitan ideals in the novel. This reminds us of a similar episode in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* where the worldviews of Piya, Fokir and Kanai get interconnected through Fokir’s song and Kanai’s translated version of it. However Mukerjee’s discussion of the trope of music in the novel does not take into account the thematization of trauma. Just as mythology enables Animal to articulate his trauma, music for Somnath becomes a constant effort to recuperate from his trauma. Somnath who was once the “Awaaz-e-Khaufpur”, the “Voice of Khaufpur” is no longer the cultural representative of the town because of the lung damage he suffered from



the chemical disaster. The loss of his voice then reflects the symbolic silence of Khaufpur itself whose traumatic history remains unheard in the national and international forum.

Animal's imagination, apart from mythology, is also shaped by popular Bollywood and Hindi songs. In Tape Eight he mentions to Elli a song from the Hindi film *Jaanvar*- a melodramatic tale of romantic love that mirrors his own aspirations- "The name means Animal, so it's my movie" (94). In the novel, Animal comes across as the stock figure of the urban flaneur and given this subtext of Bollywood, he also reminds us of the cinematic figure of the *tapori* or the street thug. He also uses the metaphor of cinema to assert his position as a speaking subject who controls the narrative on his own terms rather than just offering what the journalist wants to hear. In the second tape, he tells Chunaram "In my movie there is only one star and it's me" (9). There is an interesting episode in the fifth tape where 9/11 attack on the twin towers is juxtaposed with the factory disaster at Bhopal. While the former gets international media coverage, the massive tragedy at Khaufpur is often left unspoken and unrepresented in mainstream media. As Animal observes "Here in Khaufpur we had that night. Nothing like that happened anywhere else" (61). He sees the 9/11 destruction as a constructed hyper-reality, a trick similar to that of "Bollywallah special-effects" as he calls it. As readers we catch the irony in the fact that while an event of violent terrorist attack can be represented in popular media, stories of environmental degradation never reach the news. There is an apparent gap in how reality is perceived by the First and the Third World. However, as the novel progresses we see how the townspeople finally manage to draw international attention to the questions of legality and justice.

Animal's bawdiness, dark humour, comic wit, voyeurism, multilingual performance and his cynical yet poignant contemplations bring out the liminality in his character. As Mukherjee argues, the character of the Animal embodies both human and non-human attributes. If hunger and hyper sexuality define his animal instincts, his linguistic abilities confirm his humanness (Mukherjee 151). And as we have seen his humanness is also defined through his knowledge of religious iconography, mythology, music and Bollywood.



Endowed with this liminality, Animal can freely negotiate not just between “humans of various kinds, but also between non-humans and humans” (Mukherjee 152) At the same time Animal does not exercise absolute agency even when he has access to certain people and places. As Patrick Murphy points out in his essay “Community Resilience and the Cosmopolitan Role in the Novels of Ghosh, Grace and Sinha”, how despite his polilingualism Animal cannot be officially heard given his deformity and status as an outcast. Rather it is only the cosmopolitans such as Elli and Zafar who have voices that can be heard by government officials, lawyers and Khaufur elite (Murphy 160). Nevertheless, the figure of the Animal also becomes symbolic of the collective de-humanization suffered by the subalterns in the wake of economic exploitation and environmental disasters.

As mentioned before, the urban ecology occupies centre stage in *Animal's People*. As Lawrence Buell observes in his essay “Ecocriticism: Some Emerging Trends”, while the First Wave ecocriticism privileged rural and wild spaces over urban areas, second wave ecocriticism has challenged that dichotomy and has also reclaimed metropolitan landscape as an equally fruitful ground for ecological work (Buell 93). First Wave studies followed a preservationist ideal where “environmentalism equals nature protection in thinly populated remote areas” where as Second Wave ecocriticism examines the other historical strand of environmentalist thinking-“public health environmentalism, whose geographic gaze was directed more at landscapes of urban and/or industrial transformation rather than at country or wilderness, and whose environmental ethics and politics were sociocentric rather than ecocentric” (Buell 94). In other words, issues such as work place safety and waste disposal then become central to questions of environmentalism. Sinha’s *Animal's People* can be read as an engagement with a similar ethics and politics of socio-centric environmentalism where both ecology and human society become victims of economic and political manipulation.

The questions of environmental and human safety in the context of global corporatism occupy centre stage in Sinha’s novel which is a fictional re-telling of the aftermath of the 1984 Bhopal Gas Disaster. Rob Nixon in his essay “Neo-Liberalism, Slow Violence, and the



Environmental Picaresque” argues how Sinha’s novel becomes a critique of the contemporary neo-liberal order where Animal and the community at large are stripped of their basic humanity due to the exploitation by transnational corporations and other forms of absentee corporate colonialism. (Nixon 449). As Nixon observes, the novel engages with “a local materiality while exposing the web of transnational forces that permeate and shape the local” (Nixon 450). The idea of ‘slow violence’ also becomes important in Nixon’s essay as the various form of chemical and radiological slow violence cannot be represented unlike the other forms of spectacular violence (Nixon 445). This is also reminiscent of the 9/11 allusion in the novel which juxtaposes the spectacular violence in America with the “slow” and unrepresentable violence of Khaufpur/Bhopal. Pablo Mukherjee also mentions in his book how the American media interpreted the Bhopal Gas disaster as an Indian failure of management and human error and its incompatibility with advanced technology of the West (Mukherjee 137).

To conclude, Sinha in his novel celebrates collective human agency that can resist and challenge the hegemonic state structures. As the closing lines of the novel end on an affirmative note where Animal sees himself not as an individual but in terms of a collectivity- “tomorrow there will be more of us” (366). He redefines humanness on his own terms and emerges as the representative voice of the de-humanized subaltern. While Sinha primarily engages with the question of socio-environmental activism, he also advocates a cosmopolitan ethos through the various tropes of polyglottic language, religion and culture that allow various communal, social and racial identities to be transcended. This paper has explored how religious and mythological narratives in the text become cosmopolitan forces that can bring individuals together for collective activism. The secularizing impulse as embodied in Animal becomes a highly resourceful element in the micro world of Khaufpur to counter the repressive apparatus of the state and global imperialism.



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Gender and Feminism: Examining the Discourse

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Abstract That gender is a socio-cultural construct independent of and often opposed to the actual biological realities and experiences of being male and female, is an idea that has, for quite a long time, been on the intellectual horizon of our age. Cultural theorists have consistently pointed out the patriarchal origin of the gender-discourse, harped upon its pseudo-scientific framework, and stressed its inability as an identity-marker to contain, accept and reconcile differences. However, gendering as a distinct politico-cultural practice continues unabated in our everyday lives, interfering with our lived personal and social identities via pre-scripted representations of the 'masculine' and the 'feminine'. The conflation of biology with sexuality further complicates matters when gender shifts from being an accepted mode of being in the world and goes on to regulate and establish accepted modes of intimacy and sexual conduct within the private sphere. For a society that envisages a humanist approach to life and craves the protection of individual freedom at all costs, there can be no threat more potent than the category of gender. If patriarchy is, at all, to be challenged, the assault must begin by contesting the most cherished of its myths – gender. Borrowing insights from feminism at large and particularly from the philosophy of Judith Butler, the proposed paper shall attempt to bring out the performative nature of gender and posit an inquiry into the possibility of the practice of 'de-gendering' in contemporary socio-cultural discourse.

Keywords: Gender, male, female, performance, patriarchy, culture, feminism.



“Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically *incredible*.” (Butler; 1990: 193)

Gender, in the simplest of terms, may be understood as a conceptual category that socially recognizes, classifies, views and interprets the human world as being primarily constituted by two different biological sexes – male and female. The chief political apparatuses of humanity -the State and the Law uphold this binary division in classifying every ‘citizen’ and ‘adult’ as either man or woman so that gender, as Judith Butler puts it, comes to figure as “a precondition for the production and maintenance of legible humanity” (2004; 11). Culturally, the concept of gender develops further ramifications when different communities or groups of people belonging to different religions, geographical territories, linguistic groups, etc., at different periods of time, tend to associate particular sets of conduct and modes of values with the biological fact of being ‘male’ and ‘female’, thereby generating gender conventions of the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’, and defining behaviour, personality, opportunity and even destiny through biological difference. Despite widespread notions of increasing egalitarianism, it is worthwhile observing that the everyday world that we inhabit, both private and public, is inevitably and unerringly gendered. From children’s toys to fashion, from colours to emotions, from the patterning of leisure activities to the choice of profession and career and from the viability of domestic and family roles to religious prescriptions and cultural wisdom, gender plays a subtly coercive role in our everyday lives and choices. People tend to think, act, feel, believe, behave, hope, aspire, intuit, understand and predict in certain ways because they have been taught from infancy to perceive themselves as either ‘males’ or ‘females’ or to visualize the people that they are dealing with, as such. Since the normativity of a gendered vision is, for the most part, instilled in us through early socialization practices and manifests itself in processes and decisions psychologically unexamined, the identity of gender as a lens through which the world is viewed rather than as a factor actually ‘given’, tends to go often unrealized.



However, it is pivotal to recognize that gender as a conceptual category is inextricably enmeshed in issues of power and ideology and that gender historically understood as “one way of culturally configuring a body, is open to a continual remaking”. (9) Thus, Butler goes on to insist that:

Terms such as “masculine” and “feminine” are notoriously changeable; there are social histories for each term; their meanings change radically depending upon geopolitical boundaries and cultural constraints on who is imagining whom, and for what purpose. (2004; 9-10)

Feminism, since its earliest inception, has consistently sought to draw public attention to the idea that gender, rather than being a natural premise of structuring human life, is a socio-cultural construct that has been wielded by a patriarchal epistemology to justify, rationalize and perpetuate the subordination, devaluation and marginalization of women in the domestic, social and political spheres. The longest revolution as Juliet Mitchell calls it, feminism, is both a political stance and a theory that, by focusing on gender as a subject of analysis, exposes its flaws and attempts to set up an activist platform for women to demand equality, rights and justice. Feminists are of the opinion that in most known societies, it is the socio-culturally received ideas of gender which are responsible for women’s lower status and value, more limited access to valuable resources, and less autonomy and opportunity to make choices over their lives than men. Throughout its long history, feminism has sought to disturb the complacent certainties of a patriarchal culture, to assert a belief in sexual equality and to eradicate sexist domination with a view to transforming society. The fact, however, remains that while the focus of feminism has, for the greater part, remained on bargaining for equality despite biological differences, the idea of difference itself has stayed put in its place via the gender discourse which buttressed by scientific research over the years, has expanded to enmesh within its effect almost all walks of public and private life.



However, the relationship of feminism to gender and difference is not as simple and uncomplicated as one may imagine for while one camp of feminism identifies biological difference as the germ of all evils, another camp extols it and finds in the celebration of such difference, the potential for women's liberation and empowerment. The Anglo-American feminist tradition, particularly its second-wave, exemplified in the writings of scholars such as Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Mary Ellman, Kate Millett, Shulamith Firestone, Germaine Greer, etc., built its arguments for women's equality against the cultural assumptions of gender, arguing for a transformation in production, reproduction, sexuality and the socialization of children in order to change the status of women. This second-wave feminism inaugurated by Beauvoir's landmark work *The Second Sex* (1949), is opposed to the gendered idea of women's special values or virtues and envisages a future for women on equal terms with men. To idealize women's specifically feminine traits would imply agreement, according to Beauvoir, with "a myth invented by men to confine women to their oppressed state. For women it is not a question of asserting themselves as women, but of becoming full-scale human beings." Through chapters that range over the girl child, the wife, the mother, the prostitute, the narcissist, the lesbian, and the woman in love, Beauvoir explores different aspects of her argument, insisting that woman, framed through patriarchal discourse, has been dehumanized and must aspire for equality if she is to regain her humanity.

The French feminist tradition, on the other hand, has flourished by taking its conceptual stance with and for difference. Helene Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray are three illustrious names in French feminism whose theoretical position is based on the idea that women's emancipation can be achieved only through an acknowledgement rather than dismissal of their sexual difference. Thus, in her essay, "The Laugh of the Medusa", Cixous discusses how women have been repressed through their bodies throughout history and urges them to use the female body as a medium of communication, a tool through which women can speak. She insists that the existing language, being a male construct, is unequipped to serve as a medium for the expression of women and formulates her concept of *écriture*



feminine as an attempt to inscribe femininity into language, to inscribe female body and female difference in language and text. Irigaray also believes that language itself must change if women are to have their own subjectivity recognized at a cultural level and argues that while it is necessary to alter cultural norms to recognize women as autonomous beings in their own right rather than as being 'not-men', it is equally as important to address the problematic nature of individual relationships between women - especially the mother/daughter relationship. Julia Kristeva also emphasizes the maternal function and its importance in the development of subjectivity and access to culture and language, arguing that "real female innovation (in whatever field) will only come about when maternity, female creation and the link between them are better understood".

With Third-Wave feminism, however, the notion of difference has, rather than being simplistically negotiated through battling or embracing, been recognized for its subtle nuances. Third-wave feminism seeks to challenge any universal definitions of femininity or even feminism, and by accepting postmodern notions of the fluidity of gender, attempts to explore new ways of being and belonging in the world. Most third-wave feminists prefer not to call themselves 'feminists', as they find the word insensitive to the potential oppressions inherent in all gender roles. In her Introduction to *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*, Rebecca Walker writes; whether the young women who refuse the feminist label realize it or not, on some level they recognize that an ideal woman born of prevalent notions of how empowered women look, act, or think is simply another impossible contrivance of perfect womanhood, another scripted role to perform in the name of biology and virtue.

With the advent of the new millennium, feminism has decisively sided with the New Gender Politics of transgender, transsexuality, intersex and queer in an attempt to dismantle the category of gender altogether and in a bid to establish new and open relationships with difference. The category of gender as culture critics have realized, does not merely victimize



the woman or the sexually deviant figure but also limits via pre-scripted ideals of masculinity, the full development of ordinary men as individuals. With gendered notions at work in every field from the expression of emotions to the division of labour, there are a range of behavioural modes and activities that are characteristically dubbed 'un-masculine', thus, attempting to keep in place a binary division of the world into 'masculine' and 'feminine'.

The greatest justification and rationalization for the socio-cultural idea of gender comes from the biological fact of sexual difference in that the entire living world is looked upon as being uniformly divided into two sexes, male and female which, by nature are and ought to be functionally distinct. Such strict binary division, however, as researches over the years, have amply indicated, is not the norm in nature. As Germaine Greer points out:

The animal and vegetable worlds are not universally divided into two sexes...; some lucky creatures are male and female by turns; some fungi and protozoa have more than two sexes and more than one way of coupling them. The degree of distinguishability between the sexes can vary from something so tiny as to be almost imperceptible to a degree of difference so great that scientists remained for a long time ignorant of the fact that species classified as distinct were in fact male and female of the same species. (29)

In the human world too, the idea of a strict binary and polar biological division into two distinct sexes, fails to incorporate within itself a range of other biological realities. As medical researchers document, there are at least three karyotype variations between the chromosomal female (XX) and chromosomal male (XY) which result in mixed sexual formations. As Anne Fausto-Sterling writes:

Medical investigators recognize the concept of the intersexual body. But medicine uses the term "intersex" as a catch-all for three major subgroups with some mixture of male and female characteristics: the so-called true hermaphrodites, whom I call herms, who possess one testis and one ovary (the sperm- and egg- producing vessels,

or gonads); male pseudo-hermaphrodites ("merms"), who have testes and some aspects of female genitalia but no ovaries; and female pseudo-hermaphrodites ("ferms"), who have ovaries and some aspects of the male genitalia but lack testes."

Apart from intersex individuals, there are transgenders whose sex, brain and body are not congruent, with brain physiology in most cases representing that of the opposite sex and giving rise thereby to problems of gender determination. In fact, as biologists aver, chromosomes and hormones which go into the constitution of the biological sex of an individual, work in multiple and unaccounted ways with the result that the sex of an individual need not always be one and determinate. Greer writes:

Nature herself is not always unambiguous. Sometimes a girl child may have so well-developed a clitoris that it is assumed that she is a boy. Likewise many male children may be underdeveloped, or their genitals deformed or hidden and it is assumed that they are girls. Sometimes they accept their sex as described, and regard themselves as defective members of the wrong sex, assuming the behaviour and attitudes of that sex, despite special conflicts. (33)

To make matters worse, biology and sexuality are categorically co-related into the assumption that the two sexes that exist must have an affinity towards, and sexual desire for the other, thus, mandating a culturally compulsory heterosexual bonding. Such regulation of intimate relationships in the private sphere fails to acknowledge other patterns of intimacy such as homosexuality and trans-sexuality, stifling thereby individuality, free choice, and social harmony. Biological sex and individually preferred sexuality, however, are two different issues that cannot be related or said to follow from one another. As Butler puts it:

Sexuality does not follow from gender in the sense that what gender you "are" determines what kind of sexuality you will "have." We try to speak in ordinary ways about these matters, stating our gender, disclosing our sexuality, but we are, quite inadvertently, caught up in ontological thickets and epistemological quandaries. Am I a gender after all? And do I "have" a sexuality? (2004; 16)



Greer, on the other hand, insists that much of sexual behavior which is charted and categorized as deviant or abnormal tends to stem from the mandatory two-sex theory and the absence of acknowledgement of mixed biologies:

Most homosexuality results from the inability of the person to adapt to his given sex role, and ought not to be treated as genetic and pathological, but the prejudiced language of *abnormality* offers the homosexual no way of expressing this rejection, so he must consider himself a freak. The 'normal' sex roles that we learn to play from our infancy are no more natural than the antics of a transvestite. In order to approximate those shapes and attitudes which are considered normal and desirable, both sexes deform themselves, justifying the process by referring to the primary, genetic difference between the sexes. (33)

Sexuality, however, states Butler, is not always a matter of biological determinism or of personal choice, for sexuality linked to desire is a desire for acknowledgement by the Other and is, thereby, in a gendered world, unconsciously governed by the Other's ideas of the self:

We come into the world on the condition that the social world is already there, laying the groundwork for us. This implies that I cannot persist without norms of recognition that support my persistence: the sense of possibility pertaining to me must first be imagined from somewhere else before I can begin to imagine myself. My reflexivity is not only socially mediated, but socially constituted. I cannot be who I am without drawing upon the sociality of norms that precede and exceed me. In this sense, I am outside myself from the outset, and must be, in order to survive, and in order to enter into the realm of the possible. (32)

Mapping the idea of sexuality on that of humanity, Butler insists that just as desiring beings, we depend upon the acknowledgement of the Other, similarly our identity as members of a shared human world also depends upon our relation to Others. The term 'human', Butler states, for all its efficacy and temptation, must be approached with caution for who qualifies as 'human' is a decision that has culturally remained a matter of power and prerogative and



not very long ago, we have been witness to ages which refused to countenance women and people of colour as humans. As she points out,

The category of the “human” retains within itself the workings of the power differential of race as part of its own historicity. But the history of the category is not over, and the “human” is not captured once and for all. That the category is crafted in time, and that it works through excluding a wide range of minorities means that its rearticulation will begin precisely at the point where the excluded speak to and from such a category. (13)

This category of the human which time and again, like gender, keeps on being defined in advance, must be questioned, critiqued, transformed and extended through what Butler defines as Cultural Translation which is not, according to her, a process where new ideas are incorporated into the old lexicon. Rather, such translation in her words,

will compel each language to change in order to apprehend the other, and this apprehension, at the limit of what is familiar, parochial, and already known, will be the occasion for both an ethical and social transformation. It will constitute a loss, a disorientation, but one in which the human stands a chance of coming into being anew. (38-39)

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A Journey: From *Nostohnirh* to Charulata

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Abstract: Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Ray are two high-flying names in the sky of art, culture and literature. They have glorified Bengal as well as India in the sphere of whole universe. Tagore wrote many legendary novels which were later taken as the scripts of Indian films. Such an epoch making novel of Tagore was *Nostohnirh* (*The Broken Nest*) which was transformed into a film in the hand of renowned director, Satyajit Ray. Ray not only took the story, he also mixed the plot with his imagination. This compilation leads the novel to become almost a similar famous film in Bengali, 'Charulata'. My article will try to highlight this artistic approach of Ray along with his adoption of the novel.

Key words: Tagore, Ray, *Nostohnirh*, Charulata, Bhupati, Amal.

Rabindranath Tagore's stories exemplify his remarkable abilities to enter into the complexities of human relationships profoundly. Within the seemingly simple plots, he could explore the psychological aspects of his characters properly. They seem to be the true representatives of their time. As a result they bring out the sociological aspects of the then Bengali society. In his highly acclaimed novel *Nostohnirh* (*The Broken Nest*), Tagore simply portrays with extraordinary compassion and lyricism the predicament of women in traditional Bengali contexts, through the loneliness of an intelligent, beautiful woman who is neglected by her husband.

The story of the novel instantly takes us back to 1879 Calcutta to show the inherent seed of India's early freedom movement for independence. It also vividly presents the restrictions which were placed on women education and also on the educated Indian women.

It seems Victorian England but instead it is Victorian India in which a neglected wife, through her self-awareness, begins to perceive the futility of a male dominated society which is a hollow facade of beards, braces and boredom.

There is a controversy regarding the storyline of the novel. The story seems to have an autobiographical affinity with the novelist as it tends to reflect Tagore's own personal experiences. During his adulthood, Tagore and Kadambari Devi, his older brother Jyotirindranath's child bride, were very much fond of each other. Rabindranath was twelve years younger than Jyotirindranath, but he was only two years younger than his sister-in-law, Kadambari Devi. They two youngsters used to spend a lot of time together and became close companions with common interests in poetry and art. After few days Rabindranath had an arranged marriage with Mrinalini Devi at the age of twenty three. Shortly after their marriage Kadambari Devi committed suicide, and it has always been assumed that her close relationship with young Rabi lead to this tragic incident.

This novel has been interpreted in various perspectives but it has been given the stature of an art form from merely an entertaining piece when Satyajit Ray, an Indian filmmaker who is regarded as one of the greatest pioneers of world cinema, attempted to transform the book to a film. He has transformed *Nostanirh* into *Charulata*, the character who is the epicentre of *Nostanirh*. *Charulata* is often rated as Ray's one of the finest films. Even he himself mentioned it as his own personal favourite: "It's the one with the fewest flaws". Certainly it is one of Ray's most polished and aesthetically ambitious efforts. It is with this film that Ray fully asserted his own personal artistic dominance. He wrote the script and storyboards, composed the main musical themes, helped in designing the sets, and for the first time personally took over control of the camera.

Tagore's *Nostanirh* was published in 1901 and Ray's *Charulata* was released in 1964. The difference is more than 50 years and so, the transformed 'Charulata' has several interesting thematic layers that make the film much more than culture-bound love story. One



obvious theme, which attracts the most discussion about, is an exquisitely rendered tale of female empowerment as well as a fascinating fable about the bequest of Empire in India. To what extent were educated Indian women expected to conform to a restricted domestic role? And to what extent intellectual independence of the women was to be encouraged? Charulata's intellectual development in the story directly relates to these questions.

Tagore shows us the loneliness and sluggishness of Charu through his artistic words but Ray through the visual elegance and fluidity shows us Charu, trapped in the stuffy, brocaded cage of her house, trying to amuse herself. This is immediately evident in the long, all-but-wordless sequence. Where-as Tagore introduces the story with the busy life of Bhupati, his ponderings over his newspaper and political affair, Ray opens with Charu embroidering a wreathed 'B' on a handkerchief as a gift for her husband. Calling the servant to serve Bhupati his tea, she leafs through a book lying on the bed. She discards the book and selects another from the bookshelf. But, when she hears noises outside in the street, she takes her opera glasses all of a sudden. And like a bird Charu flies from window to window, watching the passersby. She finds a street musician with his monkey, a chanting group of porters trotting with a palanquin, a portly Brahmin with his black umbrella. Ray uses a visual motif here. Showing Charulata looking at the world through her opera glasses Ray actually here wants to present her confinement. She may need to do this on account of near-sightedness, but the opera-glasses symbolize Charulata's non-involvement with the world. She is only a spectator. When Bhupati wanders past, barely a couple of feet away from her but too engrossed in a book to notice her. Now, she turns her glasses on him who seems to be a just another strange specimen from the intriguing, unattainable outside world to her. The scene also hints at the distance between this couple.

Bhupati is a decent and ethical man. He tries to follow the rules. He strives for a world in which justice prevails and the common good thrives. His concerns centre round how to build a world that achieves these aims. By deliberately and rigorously following such a path, he believes that a progression towards a better world can be achieved. He is totally

engrossed in his own world. Later on becoming vaguely aware of Charu's discontent and fearing she may be lonely, he invites her ne'er-do-well brother Umapada and his wife, Mandakini, to stay with them. He recruits Umapada as manager of his newspaper, the Sentinel's finances. Manda, a featherheaded chatterbox, proves poor company for her sister-in-law.

Then, there comes the breakthrough. Ray presents a sudden rainstorm which is symbolic enough. Because, accompanying the storm, a human appears in the scene. It is the cousin brother of Bhupati, Amal. He is of twenty three years old and a person full of enthusiasm. He arrives at Bhupati's place for an extended stay, just finishing his college studies. His interests are not in practical affairs, but in poetry and literature. He shares his interest with Charulata who is also fond of arts. Here the contrast between Bhupati and Amal is striking. Bhupati is orderly, logical, and methodical. He is interested in the practical problems of the modern Indian society. Amal, on the other hand, is a free spirit interested in the eternal mysteries of life and art.

The next phase concerns the deepening relationship between Amal and Charulata. Amal has been tasked by Bhupati to relieve his wife's boredom by encouraging her literary interests. In the early scenes, Amal appears rather to be self-obsessed and given to theatrical poetry recitations and song recitals. But when they together go out into the estate garden, the richness of nature seems to open up their horizons. Charulata spends her time joyously swinging on a swing hanging from a garden tree, while Amal lies on his back nearby trying to dream up inspired verse worthy of his ambitions.

Ray makes this garden scene most intimately lyrical. It is the first time the action has escaped from the confinement of the house, and the sense of freedom and release is infectious. In the novel, garden scene occurs several times as they use to visit the garden frequently but Ray in his film presented all the garden episodes almost together to give the impression of a single, continuous event, a seamless emotional crescendo. Among these



episodes two moments in particular attain a level of rapt intensity rarely equaled in Ray's work, both underscored by music. The first is when Charu, having just exhorted Amal to write, swings back and forth, singing softly; Ray's camera swings with her, holding her face in close-up, for nearly a minute. Then, when Amal finds inspiration, we get a montage of the Bengali writing filling his notebook, line superimposed upon line in a series of cross-fades, while sitar and shehnai gently hail his creativity.

Charulata wants to treasure these moments with such intensity that she urges Amal not to publish these verses which he has composed in her company. She wants those words to belong to them only. She wants to imprint those verses in their hearts only. This is not just a trivial request. When words are exchanged in discourse, there is always a contextual bond between the sender and the recipient that cannot be decontextualized without losing something vital. For Charulata, Amal's composed words are intimately her words – they are sent to her and written into a personalized notebook that Charulata had prepared for Amal.

Amal also encourages Charu to try her hand in writing. She feels much amusement in that and tries to write. She shares her writing only with Amal. But, her feeling of satisfaction with this sense of personal engagement is somewhat weakened when she realizes that Amal's encouragement of her writing was apparently done on the instructions of her husband. And much further to Charulata's consternation, Amal then goes ahead and publishes his poetry in a literary magazine anyway. He is thrilled, because it is apparently his first publication. It brings him fame. But Charulata is disappointed with his apparent self-involvement and betrayal of their private discourse. Here, we are left to wonder whether the swing scene represented real movement towards freedom or merely stays as a back-and-forth stasis.

Charulata's only option now is to play that public game, too. She struggles to write something of her own, and after numerous false starts, she succeeds. She gets her memoir published in an even more prestigious magazine than the one that published Amal's work. Now, she and Amal are equals and truly engaged on the interpersonal plane of things. But



this level of engagement leads to stress-inducing feelings of love. Seeing Amal's dilapidated slippers, she gives to him the hand-made slippers which she has been making for her husband. Finally, in a moment of emotional weakness, she breaks down and momentarily embraces Amal. This passionate gesture is about as far as Ray could go within the moral conventions of Indian cinema at the time.

Meanwhile, Bhupati's world of progressive political engagement is moving forward too. He and his fellow Bengali Brahmo progressives are thrilled when the British Liberal Party wins the election back in England, which foretells a more liberal attitude towards their Indian colonial activities. While they are celebrating with a concert party, Umapada robs Bhupati's account. Then safely and secretly he leaves Bhupati's estate with Manda. We subsequently learn that Umapada had been mismanaging Bhupati's funds since his recruitment. As a result Bhupati's newspaper is now bankrupt.

Amal and Charulata are blithely unaware of this treachery. They now engage privately in a witty alliterative game involving only words that begin with the letter 'B'. But, Amal starts to worry about the larger implications of their relationship. In this moment Bhupati informs about Umapada's infidelity to him. He also says that what really disturbs him, more than the material loss, is the idea that someone close to him would blatantly cheat him right under his nose.

Amal silently takes it to heart. He realizes that he too has undermined Bhupati's trust unintentionally by going down a path that will certainly destabilize Bhupati's marriage with Charulata. Amal at once maps his future way. He hastily packs his bags and departs the estate, leaving only a cursory good-bye note on the table. In the original text we find that out of his sense of duty to his elder brother he approves his own marriage proposal which he was declining previously and leaves for Burdwan and then to foreign. In Ray's *Charulata* there is the marriage proposal but later, he did not show us anything about Amal's marriage. Thus, Ray ends his film in a different way. He did not follow the ending of the Tagore's novel

exactly. Towards the end of the film, Amal leaves Bhupati's estate only to restore Bhupati's conjugal life. His ultimate aim is to protect his cousin brother's 'home'. This escapism of Amal signifies that all escapisms in this world are not cowardice but something noble.

The possibilities of higher fulfillment lie in the direction of the relationship between Charulata and Amal. They would not deny Bhupati's aims, but they aspire to go beyond Bhupati's just world. This is a world where human creativity rises above the mechanics of ethical rules. The world they seek is a mystical union - one of love, but not just carnal passion. However, Amal comes to see that in his present circumstances, he cannot go further without compromising the larger concern of social harmony. He makes his compromise and abandons Charulata. But this compromise in this instance is a tragedy.

At the end, Charulata is crushed by Amal's sudden departure, but she tries to conceal her disappointment. Again she returns to her own old world using her opera glasses. It signifies that she has gone back to being a spectator rather than an active agent. Bhupati eventually finds out his wife's disappointment and finally realizes that he has not only lost his 'world' but also his 'home' too. He has lost his newspaper which demonstrates political life, as well as his wife who represents his domestic life. Completely shattered within, Bhupati goes out in his carriage to ponder over his future life. He realizes the complete hollowness of this life. In one hand, he is a person who is now in bankrupt condition because of his relative's disloyalty; on the other hand, he has lost the sincerity of his own wife. He returns home with a confused state of mind. Charulata also suffers from the duality of her mind. She is burnt within out of her pangs of conscience. She is totally obscured about her future life. She does not know how to receive her husband. Ultimately she approaches him, but with a frowning mind. Charulata stretches out her hand towards Bhupati, and the film ends with a freeze frame showing their hands are not quite touching each other. Here, Ray keeps an eternal enigma about their union. We are remained unaware whether their hands will be united or not.



Ray's use of music is also a significant part of the film. Both Charu and Amal are given to breaking spontaneously into song, and two of Tagore's compositions act as leitmotif. We hear the tune of one of them, "Mama chitte" ("Who dances in my heart?"), played over the opening images, and Amal sings another, "Phule phule" ("Every bud and every blossom sways and nods in the gentle breeze"). Later, Charu takes up this song in the garden scene as they grow ever closer emotionally. Even, Manda, who has observed the pair together in the garden, afterward slyly sings a line of this song to Amal. Ray weaves variations on both songs into his own score.

From its lyrical high point in the garden scene, the mood of Charulata gradually swings. Her mind is full of emotional conflict and, eventually, leads to desolation. The mood swing of Charu is perfectly visible in the restriction of camera movement and in the lighting, which grows more shadowy and sombre as Bhupati sees his trust betrayed and Charu realizes what she has lost. Ray ends the film on a freeze-frame—or rather, a series of freeze-frames. Two hands, Charu's and Bhupati's, are moving tentatively towards each other, almost close but yet to be joined. Ray's tanpura score rises in a plangent upsurge. On the screen appears the title of Tagore's story, *Nostohnirh (The Broken Nest)*. Is it permanently broken? Ray, subtle and imprecise as ever, leaves that for the audience to decide.

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Post Colonial Diasporic Perspective in Amitav Ghosh: An Overview

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Abstract: 'Post colonialism' or 'post colonial' (sometimes hyphenated as 'post-colonialism', 'post-colonial') with a loose knot allocates a set of theoretical approaches which center on effects and consequences of colonization. It is the decolonization of the mind. It challenges of power relationships and frees the colonized self from gaze of colonizer. Many postcolonial writers have employed the literary forms and techniques of the colonial language and used allegory, disrupted narrative flow, magic realism, irony and so on to create alternative views of the colonial situations. This appropriation demonstrates the ability of postcolonial writers to use the "tools" of metropolitan language- the language emanating from the colonial centre, the metropolis- against itself. But due to globalization and aftermath movement of people, capital and commodities across national borders a new form of colonial domination has been generated, often termed 'neocolonialism' that results in the merging of cultural practices, the assimilation of the foreign into the native and the encounter between different cultures. Metropolis across the world have become cosmopolitan, multicultural and hybridized with globalization. Immigrants transform the nature of cities with their cultural practices and politics. It does not take the form of violent conquest but is a more diffused, insidious and persistent form that makes as much use of culture as it does of the political strategies. It is in this context of globalized cultural regimes, of new forms of domination and exploitation, of multiple displacements and cultural alignments that new approaches to culture and literature and new forms of writing and cultural practices emerge. From here the diasporic writings came in existence. The novelist Amitav Ghosh presents the cross-cultural, transnational diasporic dualism of migrated far-off living denizens of the globalised world in many of his



novels. This paper intends to scrutinize his zeal for the colonial diasporic formation through the prisms of culture and narrative in his novels, *The Shadow Lines* and *The Culcutta Chromosome* as well as to study his novels as a post colonial diasporic discourse.

Key words: Colonialism, Colonization, Diaspora, Globalization, Neocolonialism, Outsider, Post colonialism, Trans-national identity.

Introduction

Colonization is generally mistaken mostly as a political process, perhaps because of the etymological associations with the word 'colony'. The word 'colony' in English, according to etymological dictionaries, was borrowed from Latin and used in the sixteenth century to mean farm, settlement, landed estate, etc; the word acquires the derivational form 'colonized' during the seventeenth century and, with the European colonies all over the world, expands into 'colonized', 'colonial', 'colonist', 'colonization', of late it is used in other forms like 'post colonial', 'neo-colonial', 'decolonize', 'decolonizing' etc. Colonization can be described as the process of settlement by Europeans in Asian, African and South Americans territories. Colonization found its climatic moments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was an exploitation mechanism- economic exploitation of resources, the use of native peoples, the conquest of territory and markets- based on the difference in race, culture, forms of knowledge, technological advancement and political systems between the Europeans and the natives (Nayar, 2010:154).

Within the colonial paradigm, cultural subjugation meant the transformation in representation of lands and regions as spaces of mystiques and exoticism for the European traveler, as in Andre Gide's novel *The Immoralist*; or as sinister, impenetrable spaces which nonetheless held out promise of commercial exploitation, as in Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*. Moreover, it involved representations of the colonized as irrational, overemotional, disorderly, and incoherent- familiar examples include Dr. Aziz in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, and the chaotic, swirling crowds of Lahore in Rudyard



Kipling's *Kim*. Where existing or traditional cultural forms were recognized by the colonizers, their value was generally undermined by the categorizing them as naïve, mythic, superstitious and aesthetically crude- all rationales for situating colonized cultures outside the modern Eurocentric sphere. It was to these biased representations that the postcolonial literature responded not only to reverse the fictionality of the colonizer's narrative but also to show how colonial representations had an impact on the totality of life for the colonized, from the formation of colonial public policy and education to the constructions of identity. While this resistance largely involved armed struggle, intervention also occurred on the cultural and aesthetic levels (Goodman, 2004:89-90). As Edward Said points out, thus there emerged what has come to be termed postcolonial literature- writing by the (post)colonial subject as resistance to the colonial subjugation (Said, 1993).

The Canon of post colonialism may be said to have originated in the mind twentieth-century texts of Franz Fanon, Aime csaire and Albert Memmi. However, it is with publication of the texts, such as, *The Empire Writes Back* (1987) by Bill Ashcroft, *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said and the *Encyclopedia of Post-colonial Literature* by Benson that post colonial studies became an institutional endeavor. The word 'post colonialism', though widely used, implies 'other-Colonialism', but as we know, colonialism/hegemony/domination never ends and perhaps began with Adam and Eve. The nomenclature of 'post-colonialism' is used to refer 'to all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day'. Post colonialism refers to a historical phase undergone by the third world countries after the decline of colonialism: for example, when countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean separated from the European empires were left to rebuild themselves and find their separate identity which became the core motive of the postcolonial writers. They interpreted colonialism as something more than mere military political power, viewing it as a process of cultural domination through representation, discourse and domination. The postcolonial theory is an inclusive and inquisitorial field that probes the relationships between the centre and the



peripheries, the colonizer and the colonized. It can also be seen as a “corrective to the hegemonizing impulse of the Western-centered discourse” (Goodman, 2004:91).

With advent of the globalization a new form of colonialism starts where the nation-state borders are made porous in order to facilitate this movement. Transnational solidarities and political alliances between anti-globalization groups are forged across national borders. Immigrants transform the nature of cities with their cultural practices and politics. In an incisive readings of the new forms of colonialism generated by the globalization Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have called it ‘Empire’ which is new of rule. It is decentered and deterritorialized. It erodes the sovereignty of nation-states and incorporates the nation into global realm. There are no identifiable or recognizable structures of power here because the financial, military and political centres are multilayered and diffused.

In such ambiance the concept of ‘Diaspora’ has been originated. Elleke Boehmer describes the immigrant and diasporic authors as ‘ex-colonial by birth’, ‘Third World’ in cultural interest, cosmopolitan in almost every other way’ who work ‘within the precincts of the Western metropolis while at the same time retaining thematic and political connections with national background’ (1995:233).

The essential features of a diasporic writing can be easily perceived in Amitav Ghosh’s novels *The Shadow Lines* and *The Calcutta Chromosome* among which first deals with nostalgic history and latter concentrates on science to show his effort to form post colonial perception for changing the West established paradigm.

Post Colonial Diaspora and History in Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*

Presently Indian English fiction is dominated by the second generation of postcolonial writers, who were born after decolonization. These writers were born in Indian soil and write in English with more dynamic, distinctive voice, vigor, boom and a level of self reliance than colonials. Writers like Salman Rushdie, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Rohinton Mistry, Vikram Seth



and Amitav Ghosh have liberated Indian English Literature from the colonial yoke. Amitav Ghosh is perhaps its most scholarly practitioner. Ghosh is a traveller in the physical as well as the Metaphysical sense, a writer of formidable learning and intelligence. Amitav Ghosh was born on 1956 in Kolkata, India. He grew up in Bangladesh (Then East Pakistan), Sri Lanka, Iran and India. After publication of his first novel, *The Circle of Reason* in 1986 he found critical acclaim in literary circle and later on his other novel *The Shadow Lines* (1988) was honoured with Sahitya Akademi Award. His novel *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996) received the Arthur C. Clarke Award. His works such as *The Glass Palace* (2000), and *The Hungry Tide* (2004) were considered as Best works in English fiction in contemporary times and *Sea of Poppies* (2008) was shortlisted for the Booker prize, the first volume of *The Ibis* trilogy, set in the 1830s, just before the Opium War which encapsulates the colonial history of the East. Ghosh's *River of Smoke* (2011), is the second volume of *The Ibis* trilogy. The third, *Flood of Fire*, completing the trilogy, has been published in 2015.

Amitav Ghosh's novel, *The Shadow Lines* “admittedly set in postcolonial India” (Haewley, 2005:34) is one of finest novels of Amitav Ghosh which won Sahitya Akademi Award in 1989. Ghosh has tried to suffuse his sense of belonging, national Identity, landscape, rituals, national culture and tradition which form the core of post colonial fiction in the texture of *The Shadow Lines*. In this context, it would be apt to quote Silvia Albertazzi in her essay, “Crossing *The Shadow Lines*”, as she writes:

In my opinion, Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Shadow Lines* is probably the most important Fictional work to have appeared in South Asia Literature in the last decade. It sums up and fictionalizes all the major issues of post colonial literature the search for identity, the need for independence and the difficult relationship with Colonial Culture, The rewriting of colonial past, and attempt at creating a new language and a new narrative form and the use language of personal memory to understand Communal past. (B.K. Sharma, 2011:18)



Post colonial criticism examines man made borders as efforts to identify a particular group as against another group. This is predominantly true of India as an independent nation with the partition of 1947 which drew imaginary lines a thwart India and also causing much fatality from the consequential riots. Amitav Ghosh in *The Shadow Lines*, seems to move effortlessly across national boundaries as Robert Dixon puts it, “A culture rooted in a single place, but a discursive space that flows across political and national boundaries and even across generations in time” (1996:9). Dixon's remark refers to obscure lines of the title *The Shadow Lines* are far more than just the margins created by politicians. It suggests that they are also the lines of segregation that separate colonized and colonizer.

The Shadow Lines has quite a lot of post colonial features such as an element of the incredible and bewilderment of time and space, dislodgment, a sense of loss and reminiscence and disintegration of individuality which is the common ground of postcolonial discourse. Unlike the use of reminiscence in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, where the third person narrator's focus is impersonal and the view point shift from story line to story line through different narrative voices, *The Shadow Lines* has the narrator as a participant in the story. The novel *The Shadow Lines* sketches few historical events like the freedom movement in Bengal, The Second World War, the partition of India in 1947, and the spontaneous communal ignition in the form of riots in Bangladesh and India and so on. The story line of the novel is woven around two families the family of Dutta Chaudhari of Bengal and the family of price of London and the anonymous narrator's associations with them.

Authors and thinkers like Derek Walcott that the migrant often possesses the double consciousness, a leftover native one and a First World one. In this sense also Ghosh is very postcolonial author in relation with the novel *The Shadow Line*. Evoking the post colonial trauma in the aftermath of India's separation from Pakistan, Ghosh visualizes the recuperative exercise of transnational imagination to overcome communitarian strain. He dexterously employs all the postcolonial narrator's actions and behaviour in this novel. *The Shadow Lines* aptly reveals that cultural divide, communal struggle and misunderstanding lead to a state of

crisis in India. Ghosh shows that drawing of 'the Shadow Lines' between people and nations is a mere illusion. It is a tale of a family, which used to live in Dhaka before partition in 1947, is shifted to Kolkata. The novel is divided in two parts- 'Going Away' and 'Coming Home'. In the second section of the novel Ghosh returns to the Indian sub continent, to Kolkata and Dhaka. In this section, the narrator as Chronicler tries to understand the various nuance and meanings of political freedom.

The post colonial thinker Jan Mohammed makes a mention of the immigrant's intellectual-cultural position as the 'specular border intellect': standing at the border of two cultures, looking critically at both, neither assimilating nor combining either of them. On this ground it can be said that *The Shadow Lines* is, basically a memory novel. It is a family saga which is also a roller coaster ride through the currents of history. The novel covers a large span of period; it tells the story of the three generations of the narrator's family spread over Dhaka, Calcutta and London chronologically, the story begins with a passage about the time in Colonial India when the narrator was not even born. The novel begins thus: "In 1939, thirteen years before I was born, my father's aunt Mayadebi, went to England with her husband and her son, Tridib" (*The Shadow Lines* 3), that is, with a recollection of an event that had taken place not in the narrator's life but long ago in someone else's a moment from the past that continues to exist in present through the narrator's memory of its importance in the reminiscence of his mentor and alter ego, Tridib; a memory of a memory that has become through the narrator's exercise of the imagination a part of his own experience. The novel tells the story of three generations of the narrator's family spread over Calcutta, Dhaka and London and lines up characters from different nationalities, religions and cultures of the world. The grandmother, Jethamoshi, Mayadebi and Shaheb are representatives of the first generation, the father the mothers and Jatin are eccentric representatives of the second generation, Ila, Nick, May and the narrator are representatives of the third generation. In short, *The Shadow Lines* is a "text of the postcolonial genre that seeks to reconstruct history" (Singh, 2009:61) and it has placed Amitav Ghosh among the leading Indian novelists in



postcolonial literature. Having penned several novels, Ghosh has been seen to reinvent himself with his every work but this novel undoubtedly remains one his best. He has also been hailed as the most cosmopolitan among the contemporary Indian writers (Nagarjan, 2008: 76).

Diaspora and Science in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*

The Calcutta Chromosome (1996), the fourth novel by Ghosh, is a complex amalgamation of science and history. This novel deals with multifaceted themes. It is a novel about a scientific discovery; a novel about the deprivation of a colonized nation and its people, a novel about the silent struggle of the 'Subaltern' people against the marginalization of their culture and also a novel about the conflict between 'Science' and counter 'science'. In the disguise of a science thriller, the novel deals with many sensitive issues and discourses which help the novel to stand in a unique position. Being a member of the colonized culture which was forcefully suppressed by the British colonizers for a long 200 years, Amitav Ghosh, seems to cherish the conscious memory of the past and his novel. *The Calcutta Chromosome* seems to act as if the empire is writing back about its own suppressed history. Apparently, the novel deals with the history of the discovery of malaria parasite by the British scientist Ronald Ross. The accepted fact is that Sir Ronald Ross is the person who is responsible for the discovery of plasmodium falciparum virus in the year 1898 and for which he was awarded prestigious Nobel Prize for medicine in the year 1906. But, the gamut of mystery starts by two consecutive articles by L. Murugan, an employee of the "Life watch organization". The two successive articles by Murugan, "Certain systematic Discrepancies in Ronald Ross's Account of Plasmodium B" and "Alternative Interpretation of Late 19th century Malaria Research: Is there a secret History?" evoked a kind of suspense about the authenticity of Ronald Ross's discovery. In Ghosh's narrative technique, somehow it is assumed that the author consciously resists the extreme braggadocio of the West for their knowledge and their conviction that post colonial argument how knowledge becomes the part and parcel of the power struggle between the first and third world countries can be pointed



out in Ghosh's literary endeavour. Edward Said, in his article "*Orientalism Reconsidered*" explains:

How Knowledge that is non dominative and non-coercive can be produced in a setting that is deeply inscribed with the politics, the considerations, the positions and the strategies of power. (Selden and Widdowson, 1993:190)

In novel *The Calcutta Chromosome* the difference of knowledge in two different cultures becomes the root of all the complexities. 'Knowledge' for the West which is particularized as the established norms of 'science' does not approve the authenticity of native 'counter science' as the latter belongs to the native culture which is the 'other' to the West. Therefore, everything related to the "Other" should be discarded. *The Calcutta Chromosome* emphasizes the various peculiar aspects of a novel that draws upon several genres and modes, the postcolonial to the scientific thriller from the postmodern to the mystery tale.

In novel *The Calcutta Chromosome* the subtitle of the text "a novel of fevers, delirium and discovery", the titles of the two sections 'August 20: Mosquito Day' and 'The day After', and the opening lyric penned by Nobel Prize awarded Ronald Ross all contribute to the mysterious atmosphere bestowed upon this quasi-scientific thriller. In other words, it is an instable world that seems to be doomed to chaos and simultaneously manipulated by secret powers. Not only does it clearly introduce the atmosphere of a medical thriller within a colonial or post colonial-perspective, but it further extends its thematic implications by hinting at the discourse of "bio-culture" is the form of Narrative mystery akin to the science fiction motifs of catastrophic pestilence and human destruction.

In the novel, Ronald Ross did not discover the mysteries of the Malaria parasite; it was a group of underground practitioners of a different, mystical 'Science', natives of India, who helped to guide Ross to the conclusions for which he is famous. The novel, however, reflects a post colonial understanding of the scientific mechanism at work. The mystery at the heart of the story is never completely resolved by the author, leaving much to the reader's



understanding and interpretation. According to Franz Fanon, the anti-colonial resistance was always persistent in the minds of the native people simultaneously along with the practice of colonization. That is why the cult members never directly opposed the colonizers; rather they have accepted their activities in order to set their own profit. Their practice of the 'counter-science' is the guiding force by which they run an equal and lateral research process on a greater experiment. Murugan tries to provide a justified explanation of the activities of the native scientists.

In *The Calcutta Chromosome*, the question of knowledge is explored in relation to science- the research on Malaria and history- the reconstruction of the different stages in that research. Murugan is the driving force in the process; he casts doubts on official science and history, he puts together bits and pieces trying to uncover what have been left out by the official reports, giving voice to those who have been kept silent. In his enquiry about the official story of the research on Malaria, Murugan sweeps across centuries and continent. He goes back to the first studies done in the 1840s down to 1927, When Dr. Wagner Jaugger another Nobel Laureate incidentally discovered that artificially induced malaria could cure the last stage of Syphilis, or dementia paralytica; he crosses from Europe to Asia, from Africa to north America.

In several narratives by him, Amitav Ghosh has always transcended the barriers of place and time. In this particular novel also he takes all the marginalized nations in consideration. Amitav Ghosh incorporates the social history within his novels in order to make unanimous appeal to the humanity. The history of suppression is not only the history of India, but, this kind of suppression has been the common fate of all the colonized nations of the world. He frequently shifts from America to Egypt to Calcutta and in this process all these nations become a homogenous world which speaks in the same tune against the suppression of European colonization. The members of the cult or who are involved with it are from various nations which have been the former colonies of the British Empire. For example, Antar is an Egyptian, Murugan, Margala, lakhsman, Urmila, Sonali, Phulboni, Tara



are Indian by birth but some of them live aboard for their livelihood Mrs. Aratonian is an Armenian woman, Mario is a Guyanese woman of Indian Origin, Tara's friend Lucky is an American. All of them, as if, crave for Justice for once being deprived of their desired place in the history (Krishnaswamy, 2001: 114).

In this novel Amitav Ghosh, introduces another very unique literary device 'Magic realism' in order to vent forth his wild fantasies, his liberal use of myths from both Indian and Egyptian Mythologies, the use of archetypal 'mother' figure in portraying women characters of the novel, the use of the images of Egyptian sun-gods "Horus", "Osiris" and "Amun Ra". In order to depict the idea of immortality, the repeated fusion of spiritualism, theosophical concepts and 'counter-science' with science, wild fantasy regarding the concept of transmigration of soul from one body to another-altogether point towards his love for this post modernist literary discourse.

Conclusion

With this discussion of Ghosh's two novels *The Shadow Lines* and *The Calcutta Chromosome* it can be concluded that Amitav Ghosh is unmistakably a creative artist whose work of art stands unique among the galaxy of the contemporary Indian novelists. In his approach he has been always humanitarian and positive. His novels always speak for the persistence of the humane qualities and strong emotional ties among the people avoiding the restrictions of race, ethnicity and culture. In his novels we find the voice of humanist Amitav whose cries are always meant for the suffering humanity irrespective of class, creed and nation. Though Amitav Ghosh does not like to be labeled a post colonial writer, the fact remains that his fictional discourse is no doubt post colonial diasporic because in his novels he raises the issues advocated by the post colonialism. His fiction cumulatively constitutes a telling critique of colonialism and diasporic transnational identity. Through his novels Ghosh endorses the weightless, nomadic, placeless state of being embodied in the figure of the migrant.



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Seeking a Contemporary Interpretation and Relevance of Shakespeare's *King Lear*

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Abstract William Shakespeare's *King Lear* has intrigued, surprised, confused, excited and confounded researchers, scholars and critics for over three centuries and with the turn of every age several new interpretations have unfurled making the famous tragedy ever more relevant through its themes in the present day. In this paper, an attempt has been made to establish current themes in this ancient tale as relevant in the modern times. Lear's dilemmas of a tyrannical father, corruption due to political power, the dominance of egotistical and headstrong autocrats, flatterers who dote on a leader leading to a wrong decision and Lear's senile dementia are also contemporary concerns of the present time. Does this tragedy still appeal to us and seem as realistic as it had been when it was originally written? What could be the implications of Lear's turmoil and the consequences of its hasty decision that were heavily impacted by the false assurances of his materialistic but pragmatic daughters and courtiers? *King Lear* has raised an echo of emotional, literary and scholarly reactions and debates through a massive body of critical evaluations. An effort has also been made to visualize similar conflicts in the modern day and seek to speculate upon what could have been their probable consequences.

Keywords: Filial ingratitude, unnatural scene, tragedy, deception, blindness, insanity

Innumerable critics have chorused great admiration of William Shakespeare from time to time:



It happens very rarely in the history of literature that a craftsman who has acquired perfect control of his medium and a masterly ease in handling the techniques and conventions of his day is also a universal genius of the highest order, combining with his technical proficiency a unique ability to render experience in poetic language and an uncanny intuitive understanding of human psychology. Man of the theatre, poet, and expert in the human passions Shakespeare has appealed equally to those who admire the art with which he renders a story in terms of the acted drama or the insight with which he presents states of minds and complexities of attitude or the unsurpassed brilliance he shows in giving the conviction and a new dimension to the utterances of his characters through the poetic speech he puts in their mouths.

(Daiches 246)

William Shakespeare's King Lear has intrigued, surprised, confused, excited and confounded researchers, scholars and critics for over three centuries and with the turn of every age several new interpretations have unfurled making the famous tragedy ever more relevant through its themes in the present day. In this paper, an attempt has been made to establish current themes in this ancient tale as relevant in the modern times. Lear's dilemmas of a tyrannical father, corruption due to political power, the dominance of egotistical and headstrong autocrats, flatterers who dote on a leader leading to a wrong decision and Lear's senile dementia are also contemporary concerns of the present time. Does this tragedy still appeal to us and seem as realistic as it had been when it was originally written? What could be the implications of Lear's turmoil and the consequences of its hasty decision that were heavily impacted by the false assurances of his materialistic but pragmatic daughters and courtiers?

King Lear has raised an echo of emotional, literary and scholarly reactions and debates through a massive body of critical evaluations. An effort has also been made to visualize similar conflicts in the modern day and seek to speculate upon what could have been their probable consequences.



King Lear, Shakespeare's tragedy, evinces the series of disastrous power struggles that follow when *King Lear* close to his death distributes his realm between his two conniving daughters.

It brings together a set of important people with conflicting goals and desires, and the chaos is unleashed when they all pursue at once as well as when some of them don't act at all. To me, that's very realistic because that's how life is.

King Lear is replete with moral ambiguities. David Daiches comments,

It says more about man than any other of Shakespeare's plays. The ambiguity if the modern world is never so effectively illustrated as by the rapid and apparently effortless way in which Shakespeare can turn out fierce disapproval of Lear into profound sympathy for him. In this teeming tragedy, with its cunning alternation of prose and verse. Its paradoxical play with reason and madness and innumerable pairs of apparent contraries, Shakespeare challenges all the categories with which men comfort themselves into a delusion that they know the moral universe they live in. Perhaps the ultimate statement made by tragedy is that the moral universe is more complicated and more self-contradictory than we can allow ourselves to think in daily lives. (280)

Shakespeare's *King Lear* offers many crucial reflections on life, presents real-life issues, can aid in a moral development of individuals in the present day.

Lear's disastrous flight from reason occurs when he foolishly thinks that his kingdom divided kingdom will survive and his daughters' proclamations of love is a commodity that can be quantified, measured and justly rewarded (Macleish, Unwin 102). "His judgement was corrupted in preferring the extravagant and lying protestations of his elder daughters to the sincere and just ones of his youngest" (Jennens 366). When impulse and passion instead of reason governs a kingdom, it can bring about an irrevocable catastrophe. A society cannot be founded upon satisfying desires and appetites of selected, powerful and dominant individuals.

A civilised society requires morals and laws which cannot emerge from these varied and uncertain sources. A civilised society should protect the weak and guards property; so naturally it has to set and defend observable limits. This is when King Lear as the King of his territory failed in his purpose in order to satisfy his daughters.

The strength of character through goodness, patience, just, self-control, honesty, generosity, self-sacrifice, self-denial, sacrifice and humility are some of the virtues that reign supreme in not only *King Lear* but also all plays of Shakespeare. These virtues that characterize a responsible citizen are highly commendable qualities in people in the present day.

It is evident from the play the Lear could not live upto the measure for these virtues. However, Shakespeare's realism surfaces when Lear is found to evolve as a round character, showing an occasional gleam of rare human virtues like that of an affectionate father and an able administrator but lapses back to his delirium of insanity.

Cordelia has strength of character because she is consistent, truthful, remains loyal to her father till the end of the story but in most cases vulnerable, helpless, meek, not aggressive or assertive, long suffering quiet restrained, humble, driven by affection, sense of duty, patient, self-controlled; trustworthy, and forgiving and considerate of her father's unstable emotions and predicament.

The mounting anarchy of Lear's world is the consequence of the distortion of familial and social connections. King Lear exiles his favourite daughter, Cordelia, for a trivial folly, and those daughters he does favour soon turn against him. The artless virtues of respect, faith, and concern are pivotal here. If these are ignored or dismissed then chaos invariably follows. Even in nuclear families of the day a similar situation can be perceived.



Many character in *King Lear* make references to the idea of the senses, specifically sight. This inspires one to explore beyond what is visible and apparent. For instance Kind Lear could not "see" that his daughters Regan and Goneril had flattered him in order to gain a more opulent portion of their inheritance. Thus he had not foreseen what could have been the result of such a hasty decision. This also refers to the necessity of predicting or sensing the possible consequences before acting even today.

Moreover, the maiming of Gloucester's eyes is a metaphorical representation of the fact that it is only when one encounters an instance of a misfortune that one starts "seeing" or perceiving the reality of a situation. Gloucester's subsequent reflection proclaiming ("I stumbled when I saw" (IV.i.19) etc.) is a pictorial delineation of this aspect which originally featured in the first scene of *King Lear*.

Regan goes further, proclaiming "I profess / Myself an enemy to all other joys / Which the most precious square of sense possesses" (I.i. 72-74).

Goneril proclaims that Lear is "dearer than eyesight" (I.i.56) to her. It is perhaps because she values this eyesight that she ironically suggests that Gloucester's eyes should be put out as a punishment for his "treachery".

Since Gloucester, the Earl of Kent aggravates Lear's fury on rebuking Cordelia and disowning and depriving her of her rightful inheritance, Lear in further rage exclaims "Out of my sight!" (I.i.157). Ironically Kent gently admonishes Lear reminding him to "See better, Lear, and let me still remain / The true blank of thine eye." (I.i.158-9).

Existentialist perspectives of the modern day can also be evident through Lear's discourse with Cordelia on "nothing" This presents yet another element in the imagery of the play. This also reverberates, among other scenes, some of his later dialogues with the Fool. (I.iv.130) The latter taunts Lear, "Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?" *King Lear*



centres on many aspects that bring to the fore the futility of sheer existence—in other words-- "nothing". Lear's "favoured" daughters, Regan and Goneril seem to promise much in the beginning, but after being dissatisfied with his entourage they begin whittling down the number of Lear's knights. In the end, they leave him with nothing, and their "natural" affection dwindle to nothing as well. Lear is progressively impoverished to nothing, stripped of everything -- kingdom, knights, dignity, sanity, clothes, his last loving daughter, and finally life itself.

Evaluating *King Lear* against the background or theme of "Reason in Madness and Madness in Reason" is an over explored area of study. However, it is not extremely difficult to imagine Lear in the modern day appearance of an old man in sneakers and jeans and a considerable amount of wealth but still hungering for appreciation, admiration and continual reassurance of being great and benevolent by his people. Much of the shuffling of such power equation in any given family in India would still exhibit a similar interplay. Goneril and Regan and still representative of the younger generation who try to woo and flatter affluent relatives or custodians in order to inherit their wealth and get the latter give up the ownership of the wealth as well as movable or immovable property even though they are alive and might still need it.

Fool: Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

King Lear: No.

Fool: Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

King Lear: Why?

Fool: Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

The Fool bitterly satirizes such property disputes in *King Lear*. Moreover Lear's complacency, love for flattery and continuous patronizing thrives in the present day in various forms of favouritism, nepotism (groupism and power politics) both in one's family or in the work place.



Keeping the play's relevance of contemporary interpretations in mind Clemen aptly remarks, "The problems of life, the aspects of man's nature and the vicissitudes to which he is subject in the world as presented in Shakespeare's plays are numerous and cover a very wide field of human experience." (Clemen 61) Thus a majority of these elements are "eternal themes of life" with which each generation can successfully relate and respond.

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Redefining Self-Identity In Shashi Deshpande's Novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*

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Abstract In this study, an attempt has made to scrutinize Shashi Deshpande's novel to show how she is conscious about the gender identity and the women communities that have come up in the contemporary India. The study is based on the hypothesis that Shashi Deshpande's novel effectively depicts the gender discrimination of modern India. The present study attempts to focus on Deshpande's novel in terms of their thematic and political concerns. In addition, the study investigates redefining self-identity. The purpose of the present study is to find out whether the gender discrimination and human behaviour can be explained in terms of the primary membership of human beings to various communities which are defined by caste, status, income, profession, gender and education. The present study makes an attempt to read certain selected novel of Shashi Deshpande with an objective of locating the community structures embedded in them. It also tries to detect the class interest of the perspective that travels along her narratives as the point of view. The study is based on the hypothesis that Deshpande's novel reveals her views and opinions on community. Shashi Deshpande has tried to project a realistic picture of Indian society and the middle class educated woman who is financially independent in this novel. All characters belong to the middle class, are sensitive, intelligent, educated and career-oriented. Deshpande endeavors to establish woman as an individual who breaks the traditional constraints and redefines her identity. With the



availability educational and vocational opportunities, the educated middle and upper class woman, particularly in urban areas, have become conscious of their rights and responsibilities. Deshpande's women in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* show this consciousness. Shashi Deshpande takes up for study the issues and problems of contemporary middle class women. These women are aware of the social and cultural problems of the male-dominated society. Shashi Deshpande has tried to project a realistic picture of Indian society and the middle class educated woman who is financially independent in this novel. All characters belong to the middle class, are sensitive, intelligent, educated and career-oriented. Deshpande endeavors to establish woman as an individual who breaks the traditional constraints and redefines her identity. With the availability educational and vocational opportunities, the educated middle and upper class woman, particularly in urban areas, have become conscious of their rights and responsibilities. Deshpande's women in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* show this consciousness. Shashi Deshpande takes up for study the issues and problems of contemporary middle class women. These women are aware of the social and cultural problems of the male-dominated soc Shashi Deshpande makes such the focal character of her narratives and juxtaposes other character with them to show how higher social class male gender and urban society afford certain privileges in Indian society. Further Deshpande also makes a micro segmentation of Indian society by bringing the variables such as caste, gender and geographical location which makes subtle differences with in a class. She also helps reader to look largely into the lives of Indian women, both employed and unemployed women. She implies that women of better education and financial freedom, though are still victims of patriarchal bias, are less oppressed as compare to the less fortunate women. She indicates that women from lower caste and lower class are vulnerable as they are the victims of the domestic violence, rape and discrimination. The basic methodology used in the study is those of analytical study where in fiction is considered as valuable social document and by analyzing fiction, social structures too are analyzed. The scope of this study is the possibility of using the same parameters in analyzing the works of various other Indian English novelists and in making the study of literature an interdisciplinary exercise.



Key words: identity, class, community, women.

Shashi Deshpande is interested in the whole society; but somehow, being a woman herself; she confines to the limited range of experience the gender affords to her. Hence, she tries to identify with the mundane realities and complex structure of society as perceived by women. Deshpande has also highlighted the class struggle and sufferings of the Indian women. Her characters raise many questions regarding the conventional definition of identity. *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is the pathetic story of Saru and her struggle. Deshpande shows that Saru gets an inferior treatment at the hands of her mother and her husband on account of her gender. She is discriminated against in comparison to her brother. Saru is the narrator of the novel. She remembers her childhood experiences and her stay in her father's home gives Saru an opportunity to re-assess her relationship with her father, her dead mother, her dead brother, Dhruva and her children Renu and Abhi. She finds that Father lives along with Madhav. She tries to understand herself and others by redefining her relations. This makes her mentally strong to face realities. The darkness no longer holds any terror and Saru is highly self-determined and she discards traditional rules. She rejects her mother to become a Doctor and she rejects caste to marry outside; and defies social limitation by using Boozie, her friend, to advance her career. These moves are possible for her because she is economically independent and it gives her courage to take an action against social system.

In this novel, Saru; a successful married doctor rejects her husband, Manohar. She returns to her father's home after fifteen years. By doing so, she tries to bridge the gap between herself and her father. This novel is also concerned with the suffering of the modern educated Indian woman who is in search of her individuality. Saru, who is such a woman, also tries to fight from the constraints of caste based traditional social system. Saru's parental home is a symbol of tradition and the old values which gives no room for women. Saru cannot breathe the air of freedom that obstructs the growth of a Saru as human being. The feeling of homelessness indicates of her inner disintegration and dilemma. Thus Deshpande shows how women are



marginalized, as a community, in families. Though Saru becomes leading doctor, she knows that the society does not appreciate women's professionalism. She observes: That's the only rule to follow if you want a happy marriage. Don't even try to reverse the doctor-nurse, executive-secretary, principal-teacher role (137).

In Indian society woman, in order to get liberty, find marriage as a substitute Once Saru and her husband had been invited for tea by one of the friends. Saru recalls an incident where the man ill-treats his wife: 'He did not introduce her to us, and so strong was the man's disregard of her presence that we ignored her too. We ate our food, sipped the tea and gulped the water as if they had been brought to us by a nameless waiter in a hotel' (158).

In our society, even today a woman is supposed to behave according to husband's will. Saru says "Everything in a girl's life, it seemed was shaped to that single purpose of pleasing a male. But what did you do when you failed to please?"(163) Economic freedom and separate identity are not given to woman. Saru believes that woman has a potential, caliber and rational idea but she is helpless. Saru says: The man went out to work and earn money the woman stayed at home ,looked after it, the man and their children It was not the perfect pattern, nor the best, but it was there, complete, not gnawed into bits by doubts and uncertainties (161).

Shashi Deshpande concentrates on a transitional phase in the lives of the small Maharastrian community in Bombay. In the novel characters are not fictionalized but are based on the experience of human relationship that of between a mother and a girl, between a father and a daughter, a brother and a sister, a husband and a wife. In all these, the woman occupies the central point. Deshpande's female characters have choice of freedom not only rationally but also sexually. Therefore it urges them too search for alternative to extra-marital sex. Female characters are disturbed by their sexual hunger. Female characters make an effort for expression all the way through sexual affiliation or affair with men other than their husband. Ramesh Srivastava examines Deshpande's women in the context of their social behavior:

Critics find her women, "creatures of conventional morality: they are the ones who are unfairly abused, misused and ill-used. But they believe in conformity and compromise for the sake of retention of domestic harmony rather than revolt which might result in the disruption of familial concord" (Srivastava: 2003)

Deshpande's women characters reflect a state of confusion at the opening of a novel but gradually they improve on situation throughout a course and they introspect. In traditional Indian society, sex is considered as a taboo. Saru is unfit in this situation but Saru's silence against her sexual dilemma shows modern woman's problem. Saru says: "I could nothing, I can never do anything. I just endure." (182) Survival is the characteristic of Indian women. Saru represents this community of women who can live even when they are denied love. Saru says: All the indignities of a woman's life, borne silently and as long as possible, because 'how do you tell anyone about these things? Everything kept secret, their very womanhood a source of deep shame to them'(107).

Saru is a modern Indian woman. She does not observe any religious practices. But along with her Mother, Saru goes on every Friday to the temple. Saru remembers how temple becomes a site of alternative female community: 'the cheerful babble of female talk that made me feel warm and secure. There was, I now realize, a kind of comradeship among the woman, as if they were soldiers fighting in the same war' (100). Saru seek freedom within the limitations of her moral obligation and social responsibilities. Saru identifies herself with the community of women. She says: "I would be a woman, my problems a part of women's problems. But this is mine; Saru's and has as much to do with what I am, apart from my being a woman"(121). Saru also represents the New Woman, who is on her way to liberate herself. Deshpande's female characters prefer to freedom not only rationally but also sexually. Saru establishes sexual relations with other men to satisfy her sexual hunger. She also hates her mother for her gloomy face. Deshpande does not encourage woman's depression. Dr.S.Prasanna Sree observes:



In the words of S.P.Swain: Saru's journey is a journey from self-alienation to self-identification, from negation to assertion, from difference to confidence. She learns to trust her feminine self. (S.Prasanna Sree: 2003)

Saru also prefers like a modern urban Indian woman to draw support from her friends rather than her relatives. Manda is one of the childhood friends of Saru. Saru about Saru's mother's death. Saru wants moral support and security from her. Her feeling rises against her husband's brutality. She knows that she has done wrong to her mother-father, husband and children. Jasbir Jain rightly point outs:

Saru's life itself has become a testing ground for the principles of femininity and masculinity and the boundaries that demarcate these roles. (Jain: 2003)

As a liberated woman Saru is not ready to change her name after her marriage. She is surprised to know that her friend Smita has changed her name to Gitanaqli just to make her husband happy. Saru hates such women. But Saru has great respect for the self-reliant teacher friend Nalu who scorns all compromise and live a meaningful life. Saru says: "Where a woman had no choice but to go on Human nature may not change, but isn't there such a thing as a frame of mind, a way of thinking, which is shaped by the age you live in?"(70)

Saru criticizes and scorns for the traditional approach of a modern working class woman. The drawback of a woman's personality is, she believes, they please their husband. Saru says: "Everything in a girl's life, it seemed, was shaped to that single purpose of pleasing a male. But what did you do when you failed to please? There was no answer to that. At least, no one had given her an answer so far"(163). Deshpande shows in this novel that even today, when women are educated, professional and independent; they are the puppets in the hands of their husband. Smita is always in search of protection. She does not work as per her desire. She is ready to do any work if her husband asks her to do. Therefore, she does not hesitate to change

her name. Saru's mother favors her brother, Dhruva. At home, Saru is insecure and lonely. Saru's mother believes that a girl to be liability and a boy an asset. Saru remembers how her mother had installed in her a negative self-image: "I was an ugly girl .At least, my mother told me so. I can remember her eyeing me dispassionately, saying. 'You will never be good looking. You are dark for that'" (61).

Education invokes personality and consciousness, which was, not exists in the older generation as R.K Dhawan observes how Saru represents the educated Indian women:

The new emancipated women of Saru's generation are non-conformists who are discontented with the rhetoric of equality between man and woman they want to liberate themselves from the shackles of tradition and exercise their rights for the manifestation of their individual capabilities and the realization of their feminine selves through identity-assertion and self-affirmation.(Dhawan:1991)

Traditional Indian society does not accept a woman as a separate identity apart from that of a daughter, wife, and mother but after Independence attitudes and mental set up have changed in case of educated middle class. Dr Suresh Mane observes

Education and civilization may descend from the higher to the inferior classes, and so communicated may impart new vigour to the community, but they will never ascend from the lower classes to those above them; they can only, if imparted solely to the lower classes, lead to general convulsion of which foreigners would be the first victims.(Mane:2006)

Shashi Deshpande depicts a character that is in search of identity. Her characters accept the confined mobility in life. Therefore, Saru compromises with crucial situation and proves herself as an educated woman. Saru makes her journey to her father's house after 15 years to find her existence. This displacement forces her to think. She is in dilemma but she

controls her life. The status of working woman facilitates her to face the basic needs it adds a new dimension to female mobility. Saru gains her mobility through education. Saru represents a middle class woman in a present society. She revolts against traditions because of her education but at the end of novel, she compromises with the ground reality. Saru's problem is the problem of educated class. Saru's job draws her away from her family and from her husband. Deshpande's says: She knew now it was her middle –class upbringing and ideas that had made her regard an unemployed husband as a nightmare, a horrible humiliation.... when he had managed to get a lecturer's job in a private college. With her hospital pay and his salary, they would manage .But he had not been convinced (152).

Saru realizes that there is lack of communication with her own children. Jasbir Jain writes about the dilemma of a professional woman who is caught between her family and job:

Sarita can not forget her children, or the sick needing her expert attention; and so she decides to face her home again...
(Jain: 2003)

However, Saru is neither a committed mother nor a thorough professional. Deshpande observes: "She was not a wife, not a mother, not a professional woman whom others looked up to. She was the wronged child again, the unloved daughter, the scapegoat." (182) Being educated, Saru is financially independent; her financial position brings security to her. Saru thinks that it was easier in the past that woman had no other choice. Saru is a model to Manu but later Manu becomes a cruel man and starts insulting Saru. every time. Saru maintains her position in society by acquiring higher education and better quality life. She recalls: It was marvel how we managed to live. Manu's salary, never very much, barely covered our expenses. And for two years, was earning nothing. At first it didn't matter that I was out of all the things that were so much a part of student life-the parties the eating out, the movies, casual trips...we told each other, would change once I had my degree (92).



Deshpande's women characters are stronger than they are in real life. Deshpande reveals a community of women in their humbleness, nervousness and chaos as observed in a transitional era. Sarbjit K.Sandhu explains the nature of the new class of Deshpande's women:

As pinpointed by Dr promilla Kapur The educated women demand more sexual freedom and independence but are not very sure about what they should do with the same, which leads them to a bitter confusion, anxiety and tension. (Jain:2003)

Deshpande's women characters are not historical or aristocratic but they are common social members. They face reality of their lives and finds individuality. They also define themselves. Despite his education and artistic background, Manu's pride shows in the form of sexual sadism .Manu becomes cruel and rude. Manu's problem is Saru's career and her achievement. Manu is ready to get her back at home. Manu gives her the courage to face father after 15 years. Manu is her liberator, ideal romantic brave man who saves her from her insecure life but he is also the oppressor. In Indian society, Man's relationship with her wife is like a relationship between master and slave. Manu represents a member of male dominated society. Saru has an extra marital relationship with Padmakar. He was a classmate in medical college. Presently he works as a medical practioner. Padmakar forces to have close relationship with Saru. However, after long time Saru wants to break her relationship. When Saru returns to her parental home. Saru visits to her father's house in a small town. This house and the members of the house represent the rural community. Saru realizes that the house and the community have not changed. Saru, the protagonist in '*The Dark Hold No Terrors*' represents middle class. They also represent the community of educated, employed urban women who have their financial, independence and better freedom of choice. Shashi Deshpande makes such the focal character of her narratives and juxtaposes other character with them to show how higher social class male gender and urban society afford certain



privileges in Indian society. Deshpande also looks at various social institutions such marriage, education and religion and their influences on society.

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Ram Chandra Guha's *India After Gandhi* as a Historical Novel

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Abstract Ram Chandra Guha's *India After Gandhi* is a historical novel which minutely describes the major and minor incidents after partition. The novelist seemed to be an observer who observed all what happened on national stage after partition. He has dealt with a wide array of topics like integration of princely states to linguistic issues, from wars with China to liberation of Bangladesh, from Nehru's non-alignment to Indira's emergency, from Mandal commission to Babri Masjid demolition, from Kashmir troubles to Naga insurgency, from Khalistan to river disputes, from Kashmir dispute to LTTE troubles, from refugee issues to Operation Blue star, from party politics to regional leaders and from refugee problems to corrupt Congress leaders among many others. The novel is a commentary on the post-independent India. It highlights the issues a postcolonial nation usually faces as an aftermath of colonial policies in the colonized countries.

Keywords: Historical narrative, Post-colonial, post-independence, war.

Ram Chandra Guha's *India After Gandhi* is a record of post-independence post-partition history. He has attempted to throw light on almost all the major incidents since Gandhi departed from this world. The non-fiction deals with the historical facts. Everything that happened after independence and partition is well recorded in the novel. He has dealt with a wide array of topics like integration of princely states to linguistic issues, from wars with China to liberation of Bangladesh, from Nehru's non-alignment to Indira's emergency, from Mandal commission to Babri Masjid demolition, from Kashmir troubles to Naga insurgency, from Khalistan to river disputes, from Kashmir dispute to LTTE troubles, from



refugee issues to Operation Blue star, from party politics to regional leaders and from refugee problems to corrupt Congress leaders among many others.

The novel seems to be a commentary on the history of India. The novelist has cited several examples quoting foreign newspapers like Daily herald, representatives like Strachey and leaders like Nixon. It helps in determining the idea of India through other nations that time.

The novel deals with the major historical incidents like the integration of princely states in to India and the newly created state Pakistan. The novel provides a commentary on all the incidents whether major or minor dealing with the integration of princely states. Guha states an incident when Pakistan refused to obey by the referendum related to Junagarh. Jinnah preferred to the decision of the ruler to join any of the states while India preferred to a democratic way and emphasized more on the will of the public of the concerned states as Guha states:

Pakistan now suggested the withdrawal of all armed forces in the state, and the holding of a plebiscite under an 'impartial interim administration.' Ironically, Pakistan had rejected the idea of a plebiscite in the case of Junagadh. Jinnah's position then was that the will of the ruler would decide which dominion a princely state would join. India instead referred the matter to the will of the people. Having done this in Junagadh, they could not now so easily duck the question in Kashmir. However, the Indian government insisted a plebiscite could be conducted under a National Conference administration whose leader, Sheikh Abdullah, was the 'most popular political leader in the state. (Guha 67-68)

Guha has also described India's war with China. It describes the defeat not only of India but also of Nehru as Prime Minister.

Apart from the several thousand Indian soldiers dead or injured, the casualties of the China war included the chief of army staff, General P. N. Thapar (who resigned, citing ill health), the failed strategic thinker Lieutenant General B. M. Kaul (who was

retired prematurely) and the defense minister, V. K. Krishna Menon (who was sacked). A greater casualty still was the reputation of Jawaharlal Nehru. The border war was Nehru's most consequential failure in fifteen years as prime minister. (Guha 249)

The novel criticizes Nehru for not being able to anticipate the border issue with China that subsequently resulted into war with China. Isaac Chotiner states:

Some years later, India found itself unprepared for a border war with China that had long been percolating. Guha argues persuasively that Nehru, the old ant colonialist, ignored China's sensitivity about the border, which the Chinese saw as an illegitimate boundary drawn by the British. (The New York Times)

Guha has described how the defeat of India with China resulted into defame of Nehru. It had a negative impact of Nehru on his party:

The China war had weakened Nehru's position not just in India or the world, but within the Congress Party itself. The focus of decision-making had now shifted from the prime minister's home to the Congress Parliamentary Party. Unlike in the past, Nehru could no longer get the party to always do his bidding in matters big and small. For instance, he had not welcomed the Kamaraj plan, on the grounds that it would deplete his government of experience and talent. (Guha 254)

The novel describes how despite all the oppositions in the party, Nehru continued his reforms in the country. Despite all the obstructions, Nehru kept on working for the advancement of women, minorities and untouchables. He continued his never tiring attempts to work for the downtrodden people. He constitutionalized all these reforms with great efforts as Isaac Chotiner states:

Despite enormous obstacles within his own Congress Party, Nehru set out to ensure more rights for women and the downtrodden. Guha expertly traces Nehru's leadership in the writing of India's Constitution, where legislators overcame



potentially fatal disagreements over issues like what language the document would appear in. The finished product, which Guha refers to as a liberal, humanist credo, not only protected numerous basic rights but also provided reservations for “untouchables.” (The New York Times)

Guha has also described the state of emergency in his novel. He describes how Indira Gandhi implemented the emergency in the country and civil rights were suspended because of emergency. Guha mentions the emergency in his novel:

Once the decision was taken, it was executed with remarkable swiftness. On the 25th, S. S. Ray helped draft an ordinance declaring a state of internal emergency, which a pliant president, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, signed as soon as it was put in front of him. That night the power supply to all of Delhi’s newspaper offices was switched off, so that there were no editions on the 26th. Police swooped down on the opposition leaders, taking JP, Morarji Desai and many others off to jail. The next day the public of Delhi, and of India as a whole, was told by state-controlled radio that an emergency had been declared, and all civil liberties suspended. (Guha 353)

As Guha has taken into account all the major political incidents after Gandhi, he has also described the historical incidents of Blue star and demand of Khalistan as he states in these words:

Brar was briefed by two lieutenant generals, Sundarji and Dayal. The government, he was told, believed that the situation in the Punjab had passed out of control of the civil administration. The centre’s attempts to arrive at a settlement with Akalis had run aground. The Akalis had failed to convince Bhindranwale to dismantle the fortifications and leave the temple and they were themselves getting more militant. The Akali leader Sant Longowal had announced that on 3 June he would lead a movement to stop the passage of grain from the state. A siege was considered, and rejected, because of the fear of a rebellion in the countryside. The prime minister had thus decided, ‘after much reluctance’, that the militants had to be flushed out. Brar was asked to plan and lead what was being called ‘Operation Bluestar’, with the

mandate that it should be finished in forty-eight hours if possible, with no damage to the Golden Temple itself and with minimum loss of life. (Guha 405)

In the prologue, the author remarks that India is an unnatural nation that has several divisions based on caste, language, religion and class. There are more dividing than uniting factors in India. Because of these inevitable divisions, India seems to be a failed democracy as people vote in the name of caste and creed which necessarily does not serve the purpose of a true democracy in world's largest democratic country.

Guha has described the Kashmir issue in a lofty manner. Some complete chapters have been dedicated to the problems in Kashmir. He has called the 1951 elections as 'The Biggest Gamble in History' and has described it in a beautiful manner. Guha also describes the meeting of Security Council between India and Pakistan. He very frankly admits the defeat of India at Security Council. Guha comments on the incident in these words:

Through January and February, the Security Council held several sittings on Kashmir. Pakistan, represented by the superbly gifted orator Sir Zafrullah Khan, was able to present a far better case than India. Khan convinced the delegates that the invasion was a consequence of the tragic riots across northern India in 1946–7; it was a 'natural' reaction of Muslims to the sufferings of their fellows. He accused the Indians of perpetrating 'genocide' in East Punjab, forcing 6 million Muslims to flee to Pakistan. The Kashmir problem was recast as part of the unfinished business of Partition. India suffered a significant symbolic defeat when the Security Council altered the agenda item from the 'Jammu and Kashmir Question' to the 'India-Pakistan Question'. (Guha 67)

Guha has described how Nehru took this defeat seriously and felt regretted going to United Nations as Guha states here:

By now, Nehru bitterly regretted going to the United Nations. He was shocked, he told Mountbatten, to find that 'power politics and not ethics were ruling an organization which 'was being completely run by the Americans', who, like the British, 'had made no bones of [their] sympathy for the Pakistan case'. Within the

Cabinet, pressure grew for the renewal of hostilities, for the throwing out of the invaders from northern Kashmir. (Guha 68)

Guha also describes the war of 1948 between India and Pakistan. It describes how India recaptured Kargil that paved way for saving Leh and Ladakh as Guha states here:

The two armies battled on through the later months of 1948. In November both Dras and Kargil were recaptured by the Indians, making Leh and Ladakh safe for the moment. In the same month, the hills around Poonch were also cleared. However, the northern and western parts of Kashmir were still in the control of Pakistan. Some Indian commanders wanted to move on, and asked for the redeployment of three brigades from the plains. Their request was not granted. For one thing, winter was about to set in. (Guha 68-69)

The novel describes how Abdullah spoke at a mosque in order to win the favor of the Muslim on Kashmir issue. Abdullah's emotional speech at the mosque won the hearts of the Muslims and they resolved to be with India as Guha states:

In Srinagar Korbela went to hear Abdullah speak at a mosque. The audience of 4,000 listened 'with rapt attention, their faith and loyalty quite obvious in their faces. Nor could we notice any police, so often used to induce such loyalty.' The Commission then visited Pakistan, where they found that it would not consider any solution, which gave the fate of Kashmir, with its Muslim majority, to India. (Guha 69-70)

Guha's *India After Gandhi* is an account of the major historical incidents of India. It describes in details everything that happened to India after Gandhi passed away. The novel is truly a historical novel as it is a commentary on all the major and minor incidents which happened after partition.



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Ezekiel's Attitude Towards Fair Sex: A Literary study of Women's Position in the Poetry of Nissim Ezekiel

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Abstract: Women in Ezekiel's poetry possess such a distinguished position without which Ezekiel's poetry will stagger and lacks one of its most prominent elements. Ezekiel's passions towards flesh and at the same time his deep belief in women and marriage and a merciful mother at the same time give a special space to women in his poetry. Once women are reduced to the 'beasts of sex' and once they are the 'singing voice' of life and sometimes a self-sacrificing mother in "The Scorpion night". It was Ezekiel's affairs with fair sex that made his family to leave him alone when he was expired in a hospital suffering from Alzheimer. This article aims to have an objective analysis on Ezekiel's poetry.

Key words: Women, Ezekiel, fair sex, passion.

Women in Ezekiel's poetry possess such a distinguished position without which Ezekiel's poetry will stagger and lacks one of its most prominent features. Ezekiel's passions towards flesh and at the same time his deep belief in women and marriage as the only redemption for the modern Men to be 'as original as when the world was made' give a special space to women in his poetry. Generally speaking, there is a paradoxical vision on women in Ezekiel's works. Once women are reduced to the 'beasts of sex' and once they are the 'singing voice' of life. For Ezekiel, the only salvation is to get back home where there is love of wife and children: 'A bit of land, a woman and a child or two'. The numerous use of sexual images and sexual parts of women's body such as 'breasts', 'Tights', 'hair', 'eyes', 'arms' and etc, has made some critics to call Ezekiel a 'womanizer'. The poem 'Description' is a telling example where he describes the whole sexy body of a naked lady. R.Raj Rao in his biography of Nissim Ezekiel considers Ezekiel's relationship with women as "those women with whom he was sexually involved. Then there were women like Toni Patel,

Minakshi Raja and Gauri Deshpande, who were friends of the ‘Platonic’ variety.” Such affairs, finally made Ezekiel’s wife to express her deep sorrow: ‘He {Nissim Ezekiel} left me just because of this American lady {Linda Hess}.’ That’s the reason as to why Ezekiel’s family left him alone when he was expired in a hospital suffering from Alzheimer.

From his first volume of poetry, *A Time to Change* (1952) to his last work *Latter-Day Psalms* (1982) woman has played an unavoidable role in Ezekiel’s poetry. Nevertheless, this role has never been stable. Sometimes the presence of woman is nothing more than a desire for flesh and sex. The poem ‘Description’ is a case in point where the poet’s thirst for sexual parts are exposed through the bare descriptions of the lady’s body:

I will begin-but how should I begin?_
With hair, your hair,
Remembered hair,
Touched, smelt, lying silence there
Upon your head, beneath your arms,
And then between your tights a wonder
Of hair, secret
..... (Collected Poems 48)

Such a passionate expression of the lady’s naked body might be deemed as a mere desire for discourse. Looked at from this perspective, it is obvious that the woman in this poem is reduced to a means for sexual gratification. Ezekiel’s lustful images and his appeal for more sex are demonstrated in another poem ‘To a Certain Lady’; Sucking like a leech upon the flesh, Crude acceptance of the need for one another (CP 29).

‘Two Nights of Love’ from Ezekiel’s second collection *Sixty Poems* is another poem through which Ezekiel reveals his deep passion towards the opposite sex and his thirst for more

‘Threshing thighs and breasts’:
After a night of love I dreamt of love
Unconfined to threshing thighs and breasts
That bear the weight of me with spirit
Light and free. (47)

The second part of the poem demonstrates more appeal for the flesh and the act itself:

After a night of love I turned to love,
The threshing thighs, the singing breasts,
Exhausted by the act, desiring it again
Within a freedom old as earth
And fresh as God's name..... (47)

Most of these poems were written at a time when Ezekiel was a young bachelor in London and passionately drawn to the opposite sex. In real life, he had surreptitious affairs with some ladies. He not only made no effort to refuse such affairs but also put them frankly in his poetry and dedicated them to the same ladies. Ezekiel's devotion towards such women was so much so that he dedicated his second volume of poetry '*Sixty Poems*' (1953) to 'Elizabeth' or one of his poems '*A Warning*' to Linda Hess, who was one of his well-known beloveds. In his biography of Nissim Ezekiel, R.Raj Rao exposes Ezekiel's open relationship with different women by quoting from a friend as he calls him 'Mr. X': Not only did Nissim have the audacity to have extra-marital affairs, but he also flaunted them by writing about them.

One could assume that Ezekiel's intellectual and rational mind was so submerged by his poetry that he never considered the dire consequences of such poems in his family life. And such was Ezekiel's tragic old age life, when he was left alone by his family. In one of his '*Poster Poems*' he shouts out his thought and looks down on the bound of marriage:

Let all the servants of the world be attractive,
Let them have bright faces and clean cloths,
Let them have fine figures and sweet voices,
Let the masters divorce their wives and marry the servants. (CP 208)

But there are other poems by Ezekiel which reflect a different aspect of the fair sex. They are deemed as virtuous and valuable and are assigned a lofty place. She becomes the only redemption for the modern Man. Marriage and family play a significant role. Many of his poems portrayed the modern Man as always being corrupted by the urban society and defeated by the alluring and false glamour of the environment. In such cases, Ezekiel's solution is to seek love and this love is to be found only in a woman as wife. In his poem '*A*

Time to Change’ while being hopeless and harassed by the world, the poet persona takes refuge in love, woman and family:

To own a singing voice and a talking voice,
A bit of land, a woman and a child or two,
Accommodated to their needs and changing moods
And patiently to build a life with these. (6)

In another poem ‘*To A Certain Lady*’ Ezekiel illustrates the differences of love making with ‘*Strangers*’ and ‘*Common place*’ women. He craftsmanly depicts the vices and virtues of such love making; the former bringing exhaustion and the latter making home and family:

By contact with the unknown and strange,
A feeling for the mystery
Of man and woman joined, exhaustion
At the act, desire for it again;
By contact with the commonplace,
A feeling for touch of wood and water,
The sight of pictures on the wall,
Books, carpets, curtains, glass,
The simple thing that make a home. (248)

In other part of the same poem, the poet persona asks his wife to compromise the entire shaky situation and just take refuge in love and family:

Always we must be lovers,
Man and wife at work upon the hard
Mass of marital which is the world.
Related all the time to one another and to life,
Not merely keeping house and paying bills
And being worried when the kids are ill. (248)

Surprisingly, the very moral and valuable vision of the woman as a wife and the only source of the real love appears to be a nagging woman who disturbs the creativity of a man like Ezekiel. It is not out of place that Ezekiel makes fun of her. The poem “Songs to be



Shouted out” from ‘Songs for Nandu Bhende’ depicts Ezekiel’s real and ordinary life and that’s what he detests as a creative person:

I come home in the evening
And my wife shouts at me:
Did you post that letter?
Did you make that telephone call?
Did you pay that bill?
What do you do all day? (Fun Sings for Nandu Bhende’ 2)

But his final lines represent his inner view towards women where he writes:

Shout at me woman!
Pull me up for this and that
.....
Shout at me woman!
What else are wives for? (2)

It seems that some of Ezekiel’s women represent the image of nagging and commonplace wives. Since Ezekiel was a creative poet and a well-known critic, he needed his own solitude to pursue his poetry; but his wife as a dutiful and commonplace wife couldn’t tolerate it and it brought about everyday quarrelling. That’s why Ezekiel used to leave his house very early in the morning and would settle in his office and work on his poetry or guide other poets. In his poem, “To a Certain Lady” the nagging wife keeps nagging and Ezekiel’s solution is to compromise, but, in fact, he makes fun of her:

Lady, don’t nag.
If you want that expensive lipstick
Buy it, for God’s sake-no time-
I mean, really, why should I approve it? (CP 154)

In his other poem, “The Way it Went” Ezekiel considers his marital life as a tragedy. He considers his family as people who just waste his time and eat his money. As a creative poet, he cannot believe that it’s him imprisoned in a very ordinary life.

Twenty-seven or so

I met the girl who's now
My wife
.....
So I put my arms around her,
She becomes a wife,
I am now a husband. (CP 270)

Such a shrewish wife is not supposed to cease her nagging even in Ezekiel's poet persona's life. Being bothered by his own wife, Ezekiel scatters the same bothering shadow on the '*Railway Clerk*' where a railway clerk is chatting with a friend and accusing his wife for all the misery. Though a kind of social critical theme is breathing on the background of the poem, but Ezekiel tries to fulfill his intention through an image of a nagging wife:

It is not my fault.
I do what I'm told
But still I'm blamed. (184)

Such an abrupt opening lines are Ezekiel's prelude to grasp the main idea, but what is more problematic for Ezekiel seems to be the wife and her mother. The poet persona believes in himself as a dutiful clerk but his promotion is always neglected and his leave is refused:

This year, my leave application
Was twice refused. (184)

However, the poet persona blames his wife for such an unfortunate life he has.

My wife is always asking for more money.
Money, money, where to get money?
My job is such, no one is giving bribe.
.....
My wife's mother is confined to bed
And I am only support. (184)

The way Ezekiel depicts his marriage and all these years, seems very funny and at the same time disgusting. Marriage, such an important event, is depicted as a mocking scene where he puts his hands around a girl and they become wife and husband. In fact Ezekiel tries

to reduce his marriage as the worst for himself. That is why he questions himself in the same poem:

How on earth did all happen?

.....

Who in heaven played this trick on me?

Ezekiel considers his whole marital life as a '*nightmare*' and finally admits:

O well, I'll be damned,

Is all that I can say.

In his most autobiographical poem 'Jewish Wedding in Bombay' Ezekiel in a tongue-in – cheek remark depicts his marriage as follows:

Her mother shed a tear or two but wasn't really

Crying. It was the thing to do, so she did it.

Enjoying every moment. The bride laughed when i

Sympathised, and said don't be silly. (CP 234)

The most ridiculous part of the poem is where the ceremony is over and the bride asks for sex:

We lay on a floor-mattress in the kitchen of my wife's

Family apartment and though it was past midnight, she

Kept saying let's do it darling let's do it darling

So we did it. (234)

After some times, the nagging woman starts her incessant nagging in the same poem and accuses Ezekiel for ravishing her virginity:

During our first serious marriage quarrel she said why did

You take my virginity from me? I would gladly have

Returned it, but not one of the books I had read instructed

Me how. (235)

Yet, apart from all nagging and quarreling, Ezekiel never tried to divorce his wife. Though they were separated and were asked by many friends to divorce, Ezekiel never did that. R.Raj Rao, Ezekiel's biographer shares his thoughts on this matter in his book:



I had a serious chat with him on the subject, and asked him why he didn't set both himself and Daisy free, if misery was all there was left to their marriage. I discovered it was the moralist in him that opted against such a course of action. (Rao 174)

In fact, Ezekiel distinguished the separation from divorce. For Ezekiel marriage was sacred while divorce was considered as a sin. He always argued that a separation allows the man to have the best of the both worlds. While the man is away from his wife and free to please himself as he wishes, he also continues to provide his wife, give a visit, support her and above all the wife has not been abandoned. Ezekiel himself once confessed that:

Marriage can be a failure in so many different ways, but if it comes to the point of enmity between partners; then to preach to either one of them would be folly.....in marriage the rules of the game are known to both parties.....having children, bringing them up, and becoming grandparents in spite of all the quarrels. (Rao 174)

Finally, Ezekiel has another woman in his poetry that might be the most valuable one for him. Ezekiel has used the image of his mother in some of his poems. He himself confesses that he was always touched by his mother's love. The most memorable poem of Ezekiel might be 'The Night of Scorpion' where he depicts a real mother whose passion towards children is admirable. It is the story of a mother stung by a scorpion at a rainy night. Many critics consider this poem as one of the literary epochs in Indian English Poetry and some remember it as '*Poem of Poems*'. Ezekiel's craftsmanly depiction of such a simple event shows a lovely mother who is poisoned by a scorpion but still is grateful to God that the scorpion has spared her children. Such devotion by a mother cannot be ignored in Ezekiel's mind and would be praised in his poetry. The poem has been so anthologized that as soon as one mentions the title of the poem any scholars or students of English Literature will recite it:

I remember the night my mother
Was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours
Of steady rain had driven him
To crawl beneath a sack of rice. (CP 130)

The poem exhibits a mutual love between a mother and her children. As a child, Ezekiel demonstrates all his love for his mother. While the son is watching such horrible scene and

worried about his mother, the mother reveals her unforgettable words in Indian English Literature:

Thank God the scorpion picked on me
And spared my children. (131)

Such is Ezekiel's love for his mother and his family. That's why he dedicated his last volume of poetry 'Latter-Day Psalms' to his wife and children. In his poem 'Cows' Ezekiel depicts his seventy years old mother who heartily collects money for her school while complaining about the cows on the pavements:

She knows that the cows are holy,
Worshiped by the parents
Of the children in her school.
Even gods ought not to clutter up
The pavements-that's her view. (161)

Apart from Ezekiel's three visions on women, a feminist reading of Ezekiel's poems will approve the idea that there is an inherent patriarchal authority in Ezekiel's poetry. In Ezekiel's poetry there is always the lover who peruses the beloved and not the other way round. Since the poet himself is a man, unavoidably a kind of male oriented attitude exists in the poems. As an example, in his much known poem 'Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher' such masculine voice is felt. Beloved or the woman is reduced to a bird of prey, so the love making would be a kind of hunting and the patient by lover might be interpreted as seduction. In such a situation the beloved cannot resist and is surrendered to the lover. Ultimately, the beloved should know that she is loved and cannot start a game on her own.

Ezekiel's belief on marriage, divorce and separation also follows the same masculine view. Apart from Ezekiel's religious belief on the act of divorcing as a sin, divorcing his wife always excited his pity towards her and never made him to commit such a cruel act. Ezekiel believed that women are both economically and emotionally depended on men and without husbands they are helpless creatures. While, the emergence of a new movement such as Feminism in the modern world looks down on such patriarchy views and believe in the



potentiality of women the same as men and sometimes more than men in undertaking and fulfilling any responsibilities. The same patriarch vision made Ezekiel to avoid the act of divorcing. Ezekiel chose the separation and served and provided his wife and children as much as he could.

Finally, women in Ezekiel's poetry possess shaky roles. Unlike his views on poetry and different art forms that were always firm and stable, his vision on women was quite unsteady. Depending on Ezekiel's age and mood each woman plays a different role in his poetry. Once, the woman is a prostitute or a strange lady for sexual gratification. Sexual images, using different parts of a woman like breasts, thighs, arms, hair, lips and etc and a straightforward appeal for sex and touching the opposite sex makes no doubt that such desired women are not something more than 'Beasts of sex'. Unexpectedly, woman in Ezekiel's poetry possesses such a high and moral position like a wife and the source of true love without which the peace would not be gained and finally it becomes a spiritual figure like a mother.

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Re- writing Body: a Critical Study of Poetry by Meena Kandasamy

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Abstract: Body as a trope, in Meena Kandasamy's, poetry is projected in its discursivity as a space for mediation of Foucauldian micro-politics of power. This paper entails an exploration of the depiction of some recurrent themes in Kandasamy's poetry like sexuality, gender roles and myths, which carry vital importance in the critical study of gender within feminist discourse, in order to show that Kandasamy's poetry is a gendered-sociological critique that attempts to reclaim the female body figuratively and metaphorically from the clutches of androcentric patriarchal discourse.

Key words: Feminist poetry, re-writing body, gender roles, counter-culture

"Meena Kandasamy is a feisty new entrant into the duck pool called Indian English poetry", opines Anjum Hasan. A champion of Dalit rights, Kandasamy is known for her extremely polemical writing imbued with militant spirit and voice of dissent against casteist mindset and gender oppression. Unlike other Dalit writers, who reject the standard language, which they feel smacks of class, and write predominantly in vernaculars, she writes in English, thereby transcending the treacherous schism between regional and national, she heralds the arrival of Dalit perspective in Indian English poetry.

Subhash Jeyan in his review of *Ms. Militancy*, purports that Kandasamy shows an awareness, "of how female body is used as an instrument of control, by naming it, fixing it within a discourse whose concerns are very different" (n. pag.). This paper attempts to explicate, how select poems by Meena Kandasamy's published in two collections namely; *Touch* (2006) and *Ms. Militancy* (2010) visibilize the violence effectuated upon bodies of women as a tangible manifestation of patriarchal ideology. It entails an exploration of the depiction of some recurrent themes in Kandasamy's poetry like sexuality, gender roles and



myths, which carry vital importance in the critical study of gender within feminist discourse, in order to show that Kandasamy's poetry is a gendered-sociological critique that attempts to reclaim the female body figuratively and metaphorically from the clutches of androcentric patriarchal discourse. The 'body' is kept central to analysis and understood as described by Elizabeth Grosz; an inscriptive surface; "as the site of the intermingling of mind and culture... the symptom and mode of expression and communication of a hidden interior or depth" (116).

Several poems in *Touch* like, "Lines addressed to a warrior," "If everything comes crashing down" are replete with the trope of body and corporeal images used to portray the entire spectrum of emotions like love, desire, passion, dejection, despair and scorn, making the body not just the vehicle for physical gratification but something sublime. In "Storming in tea-cups" the mundane process of making tea is transformed into a seductive ritual and a metaphor for union of lovers, she writes:

as you sweat in its vapours
and imagine how the tea tastes
against his lips his teeth his tongue
and the pale pink insides of his throat

.....

as you pour it into his cup
with eyes mirroring supernovas and
study the desirable brown of the tea

an entire shade
that fits exactly
between the desert sand of your skin
and the date palm of his.

almost the color



of your possible child. (*Touch* 10-26)

Documenting the embodied ways of being in the world, she situates body and socio/cultural world in a mutually constitutive relationship, “which entails the reflection on the habitus of the body, and on the image of, and experiential changes to, the body itself” (Price and Sheldick 19) as purported by Simone de Beauvoir. In her poem, “An angel meeting me” she writes:

And he, healthy boy
well fed, white with his rosy cheeks,
will wonder about me,
pity my bony body those thin ribs
and worry
and feel my twisted ears
and the scars on my hands,
(reminders of the flirtation
of my skin and a cruel cane)
and perhaps lift my skirt. (*Touch* 10 - 19)

The lines insinuate psychological repression and regulation of desire through discipline and punishment in making of Foucauldian ‘docile bodies.’ “[T]he body as object and target of power . . . the body that is manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys and responds....A body that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Foucault 136). The scars on the poet’s body are an outwardly reminder of the disciplinary measures; and of the fact she “went to school” (*Touch* 118). The lines depict how girls are subdued to be feeble and passive. The untamable, rebellious kind who retaliate and express anger are labeled as heretics or are vilified as immoral. In the manner of narrating an incident from her teenage, in her poem “Aftermath,” Kandasamy proclaims that “slander is a slaughterhouse,” as her brashness was misconstrued to be licentiousness; puking due to consumption of six glasses of orange juice the previous night, mistaken to be morning sickness by teachers and students



alike, who unscrupulously cast aspersions on her, making her contemplate “chaste suicide ideas” (*Touch* 120).

even best friends seek answers as the
rumours inflame.. your anger is mistaken
to be towards a crude imagined lover who
disowned you. you know the nauseous
truth of your thighs: you are virgin. But
evidence will not be revenge, for, so many
smoky eyes implore you to supplicate, to
admit alleged truths, impeaching faces lay
down rules: don't shout or scream, but
swallow the shame. next, confess the sin. (*Touch* 21- 30)

The triviality of the cause of sickness and the inordinate sabotage caused to poet's integrity due to it, documented by the poem is a telling critique of the socialization, to which young girls are subjected in our society. Numerous poems in *Touch* interrogate gender roles and stereotypes to expose their mediation and construction. For instance, Kandasamy's "You" is a rejoinder to Yevgeni Vinokurov's poem by the same name. In his poem Vinokurov, who has the reputation of being one of Russia's most influential modern poets, records his impressions about a lady engrossed in domiciliary activities, whom he calls a 'goddess'. The poet contemplates about his feelings for her, as she sings away her mornings in the kitchen; "bangs pots and pans around", "sweeps the floor" and pads around barefoot in his jacket. By posing the questions, "*Love? No! Whatever gave you that idea?*" (*Touch* 130), Vinokurov interrogates the assumptions of readers about his feelings for this lady. The poet denies being in love with her, but then contradicts himself by declaring that he will die if ever she leaves him, suggesting that the woman is indispensable for him and paramount for his existence. Kandasamy begins her poem with a retort to Vinokurov ; "if, or when, she left you / ... [y]ou wouldn't care to die" and would simply arrange for "a better maid (Yes, the

pun implied)” (130). She then goes on to prophesize; “Oh, I know some draft girl will come. / And she too, poor creature will slave away. / Singing in the kitchen. / Barefooted / And you will tell your friends. / And others about: Your new goddess” (130). The poem problematizes the certain taken for granted supposition of appropriating domestic labour to women as ‘proper.’ The metaphor of “rigid eyes” in the poem evinces, what Laura Mulvey describes as the ‘male gaze’. “Woman as image and man as the bearer of the look” (Mulvey 4) in the poem divulge the asymmetrical power dynamics in the poet’s relationship with the lady, as she is passive to the active gaze of the poet. The poem by Kandasamy, embodies a response to this visual and textual construction of gender and ‘deification’ by Virokurov; as well as a condemnation of cultural practice across societies whereby, self-effacing, reticent and stoic women are glorified, their apotheosis or adulation stemming from their quality of being ‘modest’ and “... [her] kind, / the ones that fight, rebel, hit at you / the ones who wouldn’t mind a swear word or two, are [labeled] the she demons. / . . . [f]rom Lilith there / to Kali here” (*Touch* 131). Kandasamy attempts a sort of disruption of this androcentric discourse, whereby life of a woman is largely documented in the context of man’s reaction to the event, in her poem “Excerpts from a study guide,” in which she brings forth ‘female gaze’ in an endeavor to win back the body and redirect the male gaze:

Teach him not to seek
Where he has been taught to find . . .
.....
Lead him to count the moles
On your skin but force him to begin
With the beauty spot above your lips . . .
Talk to him of that summer of chickenpox
That left you almost unscathed, but show him
The beautiful gash where metal seared eight year skin. . .
.....
He shall chart and plot



And map, but shrewd girl

Bring him up to worship you. (*Touch* 2-28)

Akin to Das' poetry, which Kandasamy admits has been a formidable influence upon her; Kandasamy's poetry is also poetry of self-actualization, embodying genuine private fears and anxieties in a confessional tone. Though the confessional mode "is not as radical as we find in Mamang Dai, Archana Sahani and Kamala Das" yet "[s]he explores a wide range of subjective possibilities and relates them to her own identity and sociological formulations," according to Jaydeep Sarangi.

Afeefa Banu in making critical evaluation of Kamala Das' poetry remarks that she writes within patriarchal framework as, "[s]he is not someone who has grit and is in control of her emotions and situations. There are other types of sufferings too in this world. There is too much poverty and deprivation outside oneself, which finds but little space in her poetry" (34). Kandasamy writes with a sense of political commitment, examining the personal and then elevating the experience to a sort of 'strategic essentialism' (Gayatri Spivak's term) invoking the collective category of 'women'; that becomes her cherished differentia from Kamala Das, in dealing with themes like: man-woman relationship, marriage, sexuality, cathartic value of writing and a quest for selfhood, that form the leitmotif in the writings of both. For instance, her prize winning poem "My lover speaks of rape" traverses the terrain of violence and violation within man-woman relationship to demystify rape; busting the myth that rape occurs only among strangers; showing that "[v]iolence can come from love, from a very intimate person" (Kandasamy) with aggression often being the trigger than sexual desire. The reader can discern that the poem is implicitly suggestive of Kandasamy's own ordeal with domestic abuse and the tumultuous relationship with her intemperate ex-husband; any discussion about whom she declines, except to admit that she has divorced him and moved on.

Flaming green of a morning that awaits rain

And my lover speaks of rape through silences. . .



Green turns to unsightly teal of hospital beds
And he is softer than feathers, but I fly away
To shield myself from the retch of the burns
Ward, the shrill sound of dying declarations,
The floral pink white sad skins of dowry deaths.
.....
Colorless noon filters in through bluish glass
And coffee keeps him company. She chatters
Away telling her own, every woman's story;
He listens, like for the first time. Tragedy in
Bridal bed remains a fresh, flushing bruise across
Brown yellow skinscapes, vibrant but made
Muted through years of silent, waiting skin,
I am absent. They talk of everyday assault that
Turns blue, violet and black in high-color symphony.
Open eyes, open hands, his open all clear soul.... (Touch 1-20)

In an interview Kandasamy admits that writing has cathartic value for her. She says, "I write out of my helplessness. I write because I want to rebel and this is the only way I know how . . . it lets me have the thrill of being a guerilla fighter without the fear of succumbing to bullets." Thus, body in Kandasamy's poetry is both '*constative* and *performative*' (Abidi and Haider 145), as in writing the body, Kandasamy writes herself into her poems, attempting an exploration of her subjectivity. For instance, the lines of her poem "He replaces poetry" read:

I try the mad-woman antics: I have pulled my hair and
Bruised my thin wrists and bit the insides of my cheeks till
They have bled a warm red sourness and I have starved
In arrogance to call the words home to me and thrown up
To clear me of him but he, strong dark man, refuses to budge, (*Touch 6- 10*)

As apparent in these lines and several others that I have quoted elsewhere too, Kandasamy “physically materializes what she is thinking; [and] signifies it with her body” (Cixous 351) In other words, her poems are, what Helene Cixous described as the ‘female sexed text’, in her seminal essay ‘The Laugh of the Medusa’:

She doesn’t speak, she throws her trembling body forward; she lets go of herself, she flies; all of her passes into her voice and it is with her body that she vitally supports the “logic” of speech. . . . Her speech even when “theoretical” or political is never simple or linear or “objective,” generalized; she draws her story into history. (351)

The category of ‘woman,’ as represented in Kandasamy’s poems, is not undifferentiated, homogenous or conflict free, rather it manifests ‘heteroglossia’ (Bakhtin’s term); allowing “conflicting voices to be heard from contending perspectives” (Sarangi). Her narrative though autographical in several poems also embodies ‘polyphony’ of perspectives, in the Bakhtinian sense. For instance in the poem “Marriama” she laments in the voice of a Dalit woman; fracturing the monolithic image of ‘Indian Woman’, exposing the tensions, contradictions and articulating the ‘difference’ within the category. Similarly the poem “Sacred thread” makes a travesty of the Brahmanical ritual ceremony of ‘*Upanayanam*,’ through the perspective of an eighty year old, poverty stricken beggar, who “[w]ith her old old metaphors, /and skinny hands cutting sea breeze / in the wildest gesticulations” narrates the tale, of how the “priest celebrated a twice-birth / ceremony of a three year old” (*Touch* 85), making the poet seek respite from the “never ending long drawn recital,” when the poet suddenly realizes :

her eyes mock me, satire embedded in tears,
as stifled chuckles escape sunken toothless jaws.
“He- the three year old,
It was only a bull,” she says.
“The priest doesn’t have male progeny”. (*Touch* 42-46)



The beggar goes away smiling because she got to eat the ‘*Mahaprasad*’ rather the “Remains of a Royal Feast,” “the waste of it” achieving “a temporary nirvana” from the agony of hunger but her departure leaves the poet with a haunting sense of grief (ibid.). The poem brings out the differentiated class positions of the two women, highlighting their iniquitous access to means of sustenance. In a self reflexive manner the poet also critiques the pretentious nature of her concern for beggar as she dispassionately asks her in the beginning of the poem “Did you eat?” and then calls it, “a matter of routine, / flimsy gossip with a neighborhood beggar” (ibid.). Similarly, the poem “Precious moments” elicits the struggles of two women on the opposite ends of the spectrum of inequality, struggling to come to terms with their respective depravities and the “convoluted laws” governing surrogacy and adoption. One is an affluent westerner yearning for a child; a childless mother who is also, “the Consulate General of the United States in India / with her husband, an Ambassador in Brazil” (*Touch* 108); and the other is an anonymous woman suffering utter destitution both socially and economically, selling away her reproductive capability through contract pregnancies.

A would have been foster mother
writes emotional letters bearing costly checks
to lawyers who promise the fight.
Asha, remains her hope
And an homage to a dead daughter.
Elsewhere, in a dingy hutment
her biological Lambadi pregnant mother
sleeps on Family Planning posters.
Her coming kid is already booked. (*Touch* 32- 40)

The poem is imbricated within the contentious issue of ‘commercial surrogacy’ that has proved to be the litmus test for feminists; with the pro- surrogacy faction arguing that the decision of women who wish to act as surrogates should be respected, whereas the anti-



surrogacy faction condemning it, equating it with the unethical practice of human trafficking purporting that it undermines the bodily integrity of women, reducing them to the status of containers and children to the status of commodities. The poem does not resolve the debate, rather uncovers the market context within which commercial surrogacy operates on the principle of demand and supply. Infested with unlicensed brokers, agents and policy mishmash, the unregulated market promotes innumerable scandals and child selling rackets. It exploits poor, inadequately informed, illiterate, Third World women who often enter an agreement with commissioning parents by signing the contract in a language they cannot read. The poem poses several questions about adoption laws, social justice, the positivistic attitude to new reproductive biotechnology and the fate of such children, like Asha. Caught in the conundrum, she spends her precious childhood at an orphanage. “Her life fills a single page in a tattered file marked URGENT / of the child Welfare Department / . . . Her future ends here” (*Touch* 108).

Taking inspiration from Anne Sexton’s revisionist retelling of Grimm Brothers’ fairytales in *Transformations* and Carol Ann Duffy’s telling of the female side of the story in *The World’s Wife*, Meena Kandasamy retells the Hindu and Tamil myths from feminist perspective in her second anthology of poems *Ms. Militancy*. Aware of the revolutionary potential of such retelling, she endeavors to “lay claim to religious space” and “seek a share in story telling” in order to reclaim the goddesses as women from the “sterilized patriarchy approved story” (Kandasamy). In “Dead woman walking” Kandasamy retells the myth of *Karaikal Ammaiyar*, one of the greatest figures in Tamil mythology, a devotee of lord Shiva, a demon-goddess hunting cremation grounds; and brings a different perspective to her story by suggesting that “suspected of infidelity for being ravishingly beautiful” she is not someone who deserted her husband in devotion of lord Shiva, instead was abandoned by her husband who was “a merchant shifty-eyed” (*Militancy* 8). The poem opens with an image of Ammaiyar that corresponds to the popular iconography on temple walls but Kandasamy employs it to bring out the anguish felt by a dejected woman. As a spiritless woman, with

unsteady steps, matted and unruly hair, sunken cheeks counter balanced by protruding eyes, bruised wrist and wrinkled skin; Ammaiyar wanders in asylum cloisters, suffering from epileptic fits of speech and song, bearing only a single tale of dejection between her “sobbing pendulous breast” (*Militancy* 17). Her opting for instant old age in exchange of her beauty is synonymous with rejection of the normative standards of femininity. Likewise, Kandasamy’s poem “Jouissance”, as a text blends overt citation of post structuralist feminist theory and covert allusion to the myth of *Ahalya*, sage *Gautama*’s wife turned into a stone for alleged promiscuity, to represent the discourse into which women are born as ‘subjects’, thus parodying and innovating upon the prevalent conventions, in postmodernist sense. The poem also explicitly shows the influence of what Kandasamy admits as, “reading a lot of feminist literature” of “every radical feminist that walked this earth”. The lines of the poem read:

An angry philosopher froze
His philandering wife: passivity
As punishment for promiscuity.
Rendered senseless, set in stone,
She stared in unceasing surprise
As her sage husband toured
The world with his treatises on
What pleasure meant to women
And a powerpoint presentation
That showed close-up photos
Of her fixed phantom face
.....
Other women grasped the game.
They knew no man would ever
Let them be, ever set them free.
So, when asked, they answered
With wide-eyed wonder
Yes yes yes o yes yes yes



O yes yes yes yes yes yes. (*Militancy* 1-25)

Not just this poem, intertextual elements pervade the whole corpus of Kandasamy, as several poems appear to be in conversation with each other, extending themes and drawing upon recurrent common motifs. The poem also literally and figuratively, embodies a moment of Kristevan *jouissance*, in the concluding lines.

To conclude, it can be said that, Meena Kandasamy channelizes her resentment and anger into poetry to deconstruct the very moral grounds which form the premise of such moralizing and conditioning for women. For instance, the poem “Backstreet girls” addressed to the moral police, in a mocking tone and colloquial style appropriates negative stereotypes like ‘slut’ ‘shrew’ ‘witch’ ‘bitch’ into positive assertions of unbridled female sexuality. Making a candid and guiltless admission of non-conformist behaviour and sexual freedom, the poet persona declares to the votaries of tradition and cultural orthodoxy that “[t]here will be no blood on our bridal beds” (*Militancy* 14). Admonished as licentious, women like her would be regarded unsuitable for marriage but ironically, this would liberate the so called ‘vicious’ women from the bondage of domesticity that ensues on being somebody’s wife. The adjective ‘backstreet’ implies a ‘counter-culture’; the use of pronouns ‘we’ and ‘our’ in the poem evinces a sense of assertiveness and solidarity among such rebellious women. To me the novelty of Kandasamy’s poetry lies in the fact that the ‘I’ in her poems (often written in small case) is at once autobiographical and collective as well as mythical. It registers not a unified essentialized subject, rather is an inventory of multiple subjectivities in a performative mode, enabling the insertion of voices of the oppressed and marginalized in her ‘personal voice’. Body as a trope, is projected in its discursivity as a space for mediation of Foucauldian micro-politics of power. Interestingly, she wrests this power through the subversion of norms about propriety of conduct, in Bakhtinian ‘carnavalesque’ manner, writing the ‘body’ in a flamboyant and celebratory mode, with no trace of shame whatsoever about it.



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Language, the Anthropocene and the Challenges of Representation: Reading Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

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Abstract: The era of the Anthropocene is a challenge to the various modes of representation. Fiction-one of the most potent forms of world building is often baffled by the sheer challenge of representing the cross wave of opposing ideas that is the Anthropocene. With the advent of the Anthropocene the very forms of representation seem inadequate. The novel by Amitav Ghosh is manifest with the same problem of representation. Man fails to balance the natural acts with his own subjective/objective endeavor. The human history and progression cannot reconcile or properly grasp at the overwhelming truth that is nature. In being a complex web of relations Ghosh tries to portray the challenging existence of man in this even more challenging era of the Anthropocene. The tidal country is a present issue and through the spacio-temporal structure Ghosh's depiction can explicate the present concern. I want to show how language can play a part in substantiating the challenges evident in the era of the Anthropocene.

Keywords: Representation, Anthropocene, language, man/nature.

Introduction

In his recent work of non-fiction, *The Great Derangement*, Amitav Ghosh talks about the “uncanny intimacy of our relationship with the non-human” (43). Our era has failed to portray true nature or perhaps have gone close to it. In fiction as well as politics and history the modes of representation have become more individualistic and avoids the voice of the non-human. These subaltern voices now speak to us from a different angle. What is nature? How do we define what it is in this new era of the so called Anthropocene? The word nature



comes from “the Latin word *natura*, or ‘essential qualities, innate disposition’, and in ancient times, literally meant ‘birth’” (“Nature”). Man, on the other hand, from the birth of time has been considered the highest authority, God’s greatest creation. He created a niche for his grand race within nature. Nature has always been the opposite of what he is. Early faith portrays man as an overbearing master and nature as submissive. He has the power of ordering things. From the Bible to the Sefer Yetzirah, all contemplate man as the authority of all meanings. He is given the power to name all things. The recent era of the Anthropocene calls for a new way of looking at the universe. Man’s indomitable quest in the renaissance to his scientific aptitude in this post post-modern world has given way to a disjointed universe. The term introduced by Eugene F. Stoermer was popularized by Paul Crutzen and has caused an uproar in the scientific realm as well as the other realms of human knowledge. It is “a proposed epoch that begins when human activities started to have a significant global impact on earth’s geology and ecosystems” (“Anthropocene”). The Anthropocene is the new geological epoch replacing the previous era of the Holocene. How the existence of human beings have changed the world around is evident without much effort. Urbanization, use of invaluable natural resources and nuclear experiments have ravaged the environment and we constantly live under threat of total annihilation. Human intervention has led to an unequal sharing of nature. My aim is to analyze this era in a different light. One of these instruments of torture is man’s representation of nature. How far is it possible in this new era to re-present nature in our accursed tongue? Can the incompleteness of language form an agreement with this era of the Anthropocene? Can this incompleteness comprehend its multiplicity?

Methodology

I shall use Manuel Arias-Maldonado’s book *Environment and Society: Socionatural Relations in the Anthropocene* to first situate my argument in the dichotomy of man/nature. Then I shall analyze the linguistic means through which man re-presents nature as my aim is to situate the incompleteness of language within this era of the Anthropocene. Finally I shall



aim at a linguistic analysis of the text by Amitav Ghosh to validate my point and conclude my paper with a certain viewpoint.

Socionatural context of the Anthropocene

Manuel Arias-Maldonado in *Environment and Society: Socionatural Relations in the Anthropocene* says that, “nature is that what was not artificial”(18). From the birth of human history man and nature has been engaged in a war for supremacy. According to John Stuart Mill nature is “all the powers existing in either the outer or the inner world and everything which takes place by means of those powers” (as cited in Arias-Maldonado 18). Related to this struggle is the concept of history. Both have their own stories to tell but history does not take sides so easily for “natural history is also social history” and it is difficult to assert whose history it is as “it is now difficult to tell whether humanity is absent or not from a given natural process or a certain natural entity”(18). How do we take sides to define nature? Rather than delving deep into the concept of ontology history is apparently a more relevant technique as Maldonado asserts in the book that “history rather than ontology, is the proper guide for understanding nature today” (19). History traces the growth of human society as well as nature. Here I must point out that History is also a form of narrative, a linguistic construct. Nature has always been constructed. It is also important to note the stress on the process of hybridization that takes place “to think of nature as a gradable concept” (19). Systematic stylization of nature has been a part of western and non-western tradition for centuries. The human thought coincides with the purported incompleteness of nature to pave the way for a new understanding. It is the “intellectual apprehension of nature” (20). Maldonado says that a materialist stance is needed to trace a guided view of human history side by side the natural world. But how to come out of this dichotomy? According to Maldonado Darwin’s revolutionary thesis has given man a position back in the natural structure. This “common genealogy” has retraced the steps of history and culture altogether and before Darwin nature “designated the visible material world as well as the creative forces underlying it” (21). Evolution is a common process, social and natural. The author says that



the cities made by man proclaim an orderly realm, “as opposed to the chaotic outer nature” (22). These manmade constructs have gained a place in this discourse braving the dust and decay of time. My analysis later on will show how marks of civilization are relevant to this study. From the Middle Ages to modern times man has used these scientific instruments to dominate nature. Deforestation and Man-made buildings have paved the way for civilization and the history of mankind has marched on hand in hand with architectural developments. The author says that Darwin’s thesis has also exposed a vital point, that nature “had a history of its own; a history in which chance and randomness also have a place” (25). This chance and randomness is part of human history as well. All this demanded “a thorough revision of the human-nature dividing line” (27). Man’s need to survive has paved the way for an “aggressive adaptation” (31). It was through the ordering of nature that this was achieved and “the Anthropocene hypothesis may be the most resounding cultural acknowledgement of such process so far” (34). But the socio-natural history counters this outright dualism as the author says, “human beings create an artificial, man-made world that sets them apart from nature” (37). Linguistic construction is a part of this world. This unrestricted dominion has recently made Man to rethink the options. Here I agree with the author who says that, “the frontiers between human and natural [has] become porous” (42). What has revealed itself is a new form of hybrid where Man and Nature cannot be distinguished. The social history of nature has paved the way for the Anthropocene and this dualism cannot exist anymore as “nature in the Anthropocene cannot be identified with pristine nature” (49). This hybridization is the key to this era. Its plurality is unburdened by the notion of a singular nature, the Anthropocene is “the ultimate expression of the socionatural hybridization” (69). This entangled universe is no more a book from which all secrets can be unearthed but a complex web of relations as Amitav Ghosh in *The Great Derangement* says, “it was not until the late nineteenth century that nature lost that power to evoke that form of terror and awe that was associated with the ‘sublime’”(75).



Anthropocene and language

One of the components of social paradigm is the use of language. By relating the Anthropocene to a social context we may analyze in depth the socio-cultural methodology in the light of this era. This man-made universe is not possible without the improvisation of language. Language has unearthed the secret desire of man to colonize his objective world. But like the other tools of man this one is also complex and deceptive. These marks are as insignificant as brick and mortar. In this essay I want to show how Amitav Ghosh tries to portray this unnatural effort of Man trying to conquer nature through language and other spacio-geographical tools but fails to do so. I want to show how language and architectural mapping as instruments fail in this multifaceted era of the Anthropocene. I will analyze the novel from a point of view embedded in the Anthropocene to see how far human forms of representation, especially language, can re-present nature. Mimetic representation has also been a form of scientific quest since man's creation. It is another tool with which we try to reconcile our unparalleled universe. Language is a tool, a medium for this mimetic representation. In the novel characters such as Piya, Horen, Fokir, Mashima and Kanai weave an uncommon web of language; all inadequate.

Analyzing the novel

Amitav Ghosh's novel from the very beginning tries to cope with the adverse nature of the tidal country. This whole spacio-geographical landscape is built upon man's quest to dominate nature. "Jowar", "Bhata", "Bhatir Desh" all are part of what Ghosh calls "translated universe". It is through translating that we have made up our own version of it. Ghosh in *The Hungry Tide* refers to the word "Mohona" as a seductive one, "wrapped in many layers of beguilement" (7). If the word is such then the object's meaning must be stranger than the word itself. It is an example of the incompleteness of language. From the very beginning the mangrove or the "Bada Bon" portrays its resistance, "mangrove leaves are leathery and tough" (7). Piya comes to study the cetacean population of the area but she does not know



Bengali, the prevalent mode of communication in the area. She seeks the help of Kanai to form her thought of the world around her. There are constant references to the vanishing cetacean population of the area, “the cetacean population has kind of disappeared from view. . . . There hasn’t ever been a proper survey” (11). All the places have weird names or so it seems to Piya as most of them are named after real persons. A scientific mind such as Piya’s names things based on their characteristics and does not understand this logic. For instance “Lucy Bari” strikes her as an awkward name but she comes to understand that the names of the places mostly come from stories as Kanai says, “I’ll tell you the story of how it got its name” (13). The whole story seems to be a struggle between man’s process of naming things and the nameless nature whose songs are as elusive as the delirious cantos of Fokir, another character in the novel. To nature we are all foreigners. The Canning station seemed to the author to be “pounded into the earth by the sheer weight of the traffic that passed over it” (17). This sheer weight of civilization marks the earth like some wild animal marks its territory. Just like the scent of the tiger is lost as the tide reaches its peak so are the markings made by humans.

According to Kanai’s uncle every great river has the mark of its conquest. Port Canning is Matla River’s mark. There is also the old predicament that the Matla shall rise and devour as it does not tolerate conquests. Sounds have a weird way of reproducing the earth, as Ghosh in *The Hungry Tide* says, “The sounds seemed almost to form articulate patterns, as if to suggest they were giving voice to the depths of the earth itself” (24). Now the ecological concerns are there from the very beginning like the reduced wildlife and the decreased level of water. An environmentalist such as Piya is Man’s search for an answer to the question why nature is in such a state. Horen is a local resident. His answer to Mashima’s question as he says, “Jongol korte geslam” [went foresting] is another way of saying that it is man’s intervention that makes the forest come alive (27). The verb used refers to some human activity that makes nature a part of daily life. It is man’s innate nature to be the overbearing master of the universe. The myths and legends of forest gods such as “Bon Bibi”, “Shah



Jongoli”, “Dokkhin Rai” and his demons are examples of representing nature through human terms. Piya’s incident with the picture of the dolphin and Mej-da’s [another character in the novel] misunderstanding of it as a bird is another example of man’s disproportioned representation of nature. When she goes out to find the dolphin she cannot find any in the places described in the zoologist’s book (42). It is a land of misplaced identities as the author says, “the speciality of mangroves is that they do not merely recolonize land; they erase time” (50). They also recolonize the marked territories of humans. But the people come anyway to settle and to resettle, it is “For the land” as Kanai says (51). Marks of English colonization are still visible. These are the marks of civilization and this constant ebb and flow of time writes and rewrites nature. Perhaps the reduced population of tigers and crocodiles is due to S’ Daniel’s age old proclamation of giving awards to anyone who kills a tiger or a crocodile. He wanted to build a new society, one based on man’s idealisms, but the rhythm of ebb and flow do not tolerate dreamers. Sir Daniel Hamilton’s efforts and Lord Canning’s obsession for immortalizing his name is washed away by the tides of time. The steps of the Ghat and Lucy Bari are examples of such. Then again there is Nirmal and Nilima’s project of establishing civilization. Its result- the “Badabon development trust”. For some language is an instrument and for some a barrier. For Piya the Bengali language was an “angry flood trying to break down her door” (93). The words like “Gamchha” [a towel] and “Lungi” [cloth to cover the lower part of the body] are as remotely enchanting to her as new words are to a child’s ear. In the same rhythm alongside language progresses Piya’s probing into nature. The appearance of the new born calf is promising but later on we see the dead calf floating and on it is a gash the size of a propeller. This is what human intervention has done. In the Morichjhapi incident we see Man’s incorrigible quest for land as it is the most valuable thing. Although the soil was rocky and the environment adverse to human habitation they have found a way. There are so many languages and this “Mohona” of languages has only tried to colonize the land. In the meantime Piya searches for an answer whether this land has found a way to co-ordinate with the humans and developed a symbiotic relation. Its bio-diversity baffles her as the words baffle us. Moyna says about Kusum that she is “a Jhor” [like a storm]



(131). How can a human being be like a storm without the intervention of language? There is this deep symbiosis between nature and language as well. Piya tries to map the habitat of the orcaella as humans and their history try to map the landscapes of time.

The struggle with language

The concepts like “keystone species” and “biomass” makes Piya in *The Hungry Tide* think, “She had thought of these concepts . . . for who was it who had said that the definition of nature was that it included everything not formed by human intention?”-This is the very definition of nature that we are trying to cope up with (142). It is what we cannot name, the unnamable. This is nature’s individual identity without human interpretation but we must now see nature for what it really is, a hybridization. Here the two worlds have gotten too much entangled to discriminate. “Fragments of brick” are the marks of an old lost civilization at “Garjontola”(149). The name of the place is another childish comparison with nature’s fury. Here the very language seems inappropriate to take up the project of familiarization. As the author muses on the irrelevance of the English language he says, “Listening to its advance, it occurred to him to wonder why, in English, silence is commonly said to ‘fall’ or ‘descend’ as though it were a curtain or a knife” (154). There is a deep resistance in the people that live with the “mud, thatch and bamboo” (170). In Nirmal’s notebook it is evident in the industrious struggle on Morichjhapi. The schoolmasters’ effort of teaching the children of the place about the history of the land is futile as the war is already upon them, survival is the only boon to fight for. Many ships in the pages of history have tried to conquer the tides but failed as the author gives us a list of historical names. It is similar to the degrading population of orcaella whose origins even lead back to Calcutta. Both man and nature has never stopped fighting. Kanai is astonished after learning the number of killings by tigers each day as he says, “Perhaps it has something to do with overpopulation?” (240). It is a place of many cooked up theories but like language they have failed to evolve alongside nature, “the mud banks of the tide country are shaped not only by rivers of silt, but also by rivers of language: Bengali, English, Arabic, Hindi, Arakanese and who knows what else?”



(247). Languages crisscross each other to form a “mohona”, a confluence of meanings and interpretations. Just like Nirmal’s notebook it is unfinished. Even Kanai’s desire for Piya is in language and this language transforms her into the desire, “a language made flesh” (269).

The language of nature

Language weaves the world as it weaves human relations. It is this hybrid exceptionality of language to conform that makes it an uneven entity. We try to recreate nature through our words. In the story Kanai tells Nilima about the invention of the word ‘cyclone’ and this invented word at last gathers up its force and wipes out the petty signs of human signification. Its force can only be gesticulated, neither appropriated nor deciphered. Fokir who is the closest to nature lies closest to it as he takes his final rest. In *The Hungry Tide* Moyna says that “He’s like a child”, a child of nature” as she talks about Fokir (155). Each character tries to portray each other through their language. To Kanai, Fokir sits like a parrot perching on the rod inside a cage and to Moyna the love for Fokir is inexplicable. To Piya, Fokir is the mediator between the world and her gnostic realm. He is not the only character in the story that the author fumbles to portray through language. It is evident in different parts of the world that varieties of local fishermen have a deep bond with nature. They are half human as their souls are immersed in nature’s melodious tune. These are the hybrids on whose social identities nature has stuck to. Men like Fokir are important to establish a deep bond with nature. The existence of men like him are the evidence of humans who are free from notions of culture or order. They are as unpredictable as the weather. Fokir did not have a proper education but he knows about nature more than Piya. These are the men whose lives have intertwined so much with the wilderness that it is evident in their deep reverence to nature. The praise of “bon bibi” is an example of this inarticulate bond.

Conclusions

Language is not only a social phenomenon but a political one as well. Superiority in our universe is dealt out to those that have a more refined language. But this superior arsenal



proves futile in this new era of the Anthropocene. The brave new world of the tidal country proves to be a hindrance to our grand project of linguistic colonization. The whole novel is like a chess game between man and nature and it ends in a stale mate for man as his linguistic moves are mimed by nature's incomprehensible shifts. It is as Nirmal answers Fokir's question in the words of the poet that [nature] "already know[s] by instinct/ we're not comfortably at home/ in our translated world" (Ghosh 206).

In the article Tickell in 'Societal responses to the anthropocene' says that, "it falls to this generation to try and measure the impact on society, and work out what might be done to mitigate or adapt to change in the broad human interest" (926). Piya is instrumental in this change as she is trying to understand nature not by linguistic domination but by a new era understanding of nature but it is possible only by absolute submission to nature like Fokir. Like all the characters in the novel she also feels the incompleteness of language. This is similar to man's plight in the era of the Anthropocene. In 'Imagining Anew: Challenges of Representing the Anthropocene', Gerrard, Handwerk and Wilke says that this new era calls for a "transdisciplinarity in the production of knowledge" and even humanities can play a vital role in it (151). So this can pave the way for new research as the goal of research is progress. In the novel it is Piya's efforts that lead us to a new era of consciousness, it is not only scientific but humanitarian as well. Maps on the G.P.S imitate the human paths where a new communication has formed between man and nature. Man has moved directly from dominant and destroyer to play the role of the protector. He is not merely a survivor but an active participant in the upcoming change.

Language is a key to this understanding. Analyze the language and we will notice this fractured universe. Anthropocene looks forward to the future as Representation of nature and talk of the new era is a prologue to a change. We evince nature's barren façade and man's plight for change from a land monger to a conscientious being. Like all forms of representation that tries to portray this era, Amitav Ghosh tries to re-present nature with hopes, disappointments and future propositions. Sir Francis Bacon's grand project of placing



nature into a rack to make it give away its secrets is not the way of the Anthropocene. It is a much bigger picture than Prospero's great globe. This era demands that we come out of our interpellated universe and see nature for what it really is- a multifarious system of balancing acts. In *The Great Derangement*, Amitav Ghosh talks about older forms of literature as inadequate and shows us how the discontinuities of spatial and temporal representation mark a similarity with the discontinuities in nature. He calls for a new era where this derangement will pave the way for new modes of representation and it "will find expression in a transformed and renewed art and literature" (217).

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Writing History, Narrating Nation: A Postcolonial Reading of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

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Abstract

This paper intends to examine the interface between history and fiction in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Drawing on Linda Hutcheon's concept of "historiographic metafiction" a term coined by her in late 1980s, where she states that "the simultaneous and overt assertion and crossing of boundaries is more postmodern" (113) and that historiographic metafiction, not historical fiction, serves to narrate the past (113) and Hayden White's notion of metahistory, it is argued that the inseparable comingling of historical and fictional in the novel leads to subversive formation of alternate histories, which interrogate fixities, accuracies, authenticity and objectivity of historical narratives. According to Hutcheon in "A poetics of Postmodernism", works of historiographic metafiction are "those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages." Historiographic metafiction includes John Foler's *The French Liutenant's Woman* (1969), E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* (1975), William Kennedy's *Legs* (1975), A.S. Byatt's *Possession* (1990), Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992), Thomas Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon* (1997), and many others. The paper further looks into innovative narrative strategies—magic realism, intertextuality, unreliable narration, amnesia, narcissistic narration and so on— that Rushdie employs to foreground indissoluble connections between personal and political, familial and national, fact and fiction, history and myth, and psychological and cultural. Salman Rushdie has portrayed nation as a body through this novel and hence "body" can be seen as a "literal text". My attempt is to study his idea of body as a cultural signifier and reamalgamate the dismembered history.



Keywords: History, fiction, historiographic metafiction, magic realism, postcolonialism, *Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie.

Midnight's Children as a postcolonial text

Postcolonialism refers to the period after colonialism. To borrow, Ngugi wa Thiongo's phrase, it is about "decolonizing the mind".

Historian claims history to be the faithful reproduction of past but in fact history is not the faithful reproduction instead it is a reconstruction of the past. While this reconstructing of history, historians filters, selects, eliminates, foregrounds, backgrounds, and even manipulates historical events and information due to which history is discursively constructed and fiction is historically conditioned. There are many European texts that claim their superiority over the other literature. Some of them are like Joseph Conrad's "*Heart of Darkness*"(1902) where Africa is exposed as a dark continent, Daniel Defoe's "*Robinson Crusoe*"(1719) where Friday is being subjected to slavery because of being non-European. There are many English novels on India which play with the same history. Few examples are like Charlotte Bronte's "*Jane Eyre*"(1847) in which it is mentioned that a Christian missionary decides to come to India in order to serve the Indians, Rudyard Kipling's "*The Jungle book*"(1894) which is the story of an Indian child living an uncivilized life in jungle among the animals, Philip Meadows Taylor's "*Confession of a Thug*"(1839) which tells the story of one of the most famous thug Aamir Ali who committed seven hundred murders, E.M. Forster's "*A Passage to India*"(1924) in which an Indian man is wrongly accused of raping a British woman, Paul Scott's "*The Jewel in the Crown*"(1966) which shows rape as a metaphor for imperialism, for depicting how an Indian man is accused of raping a British woman is in turn violated by the colonial machinery, "*Arabian Nights*" in which non-European women lack moral values. All these were nothing more than the politics of European mind. History of a nation is in a way handcuffed to colonialism. New writers who came after this tried to interrogate the historicity, narrativity, and authenticity of these texts.



The age of colonialism got over and because the descendants of once-colonized people live everywhere, the whole world is postcolonial as it implies an 'aftermath'. Edward Said, Tabish Kher, Chinua Achebe, Arundhati Roy, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Jean Rhys, Michael Ondaatje, Kiran Desai, Mulk Raj Anand, Salman Rushdie were some of those new writers who are also known as the postcolonial writers. In order to understand them we first of all need to know what is postcolonialism all about?

Postcolonialism comes from the political word colonialism signifying the practice by which a powerful country controls over the other country or countries. It is also the process of forming a community in the new land mainly to un-form or re-form the already existing community through trade, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, enslavement, and rebellions. The word has its Latin origin which means 'farming' or 'plantation'. Colonizers try to seed its own religion, culture, tradition, education, etc. on the land of colonized with a view that mind and thought of the colonized may also become the slave of the colonizer. Thus, colonialism is concerned with plantation. For example, when a plant is planted, with the passage of time it becomes a huge tree due to which other plants fall short to survive near it. Similarly, colonizers were also like plants which came to the new land where they were nurtured by the native and gradually when it grew and became a tree, it took the entire place and uprooted the natives like the other small plants. Best example of this is Daniel Defoe's "*Robinson Crusoe*" where Crusoe saves Friday from the cannibals and in return he is made a slave who later, on the name of civilization not only have to adopt his master's language but also his religion. Infact the name 'Friday' was also given to him by his master. Colonizer's first made us hate ourselves by making us feel inferior from within and then imposed their ideas upon us by proving it to be the best. Margaret Atwood in her novel "*The Blind Assassin*" defines colony 'as a place from which a profit is made, but not by the people who live there'. So, colonizers were only profited from this and not the colonized. In whichever direction human beings and materials travelled, the profit always flowed back into the so-called 'mother-country'. In simple words, postcolonialism is a period of time after



colonialism. It is the study that is characterized by the different methods of discourses which analyze and explain the cultural heritage of colonialism and imperialism that resulted in controlling a piece of a land or country. Postcolonialist writers tried to abuse the colonizers in their own language. Swami Vivekanand was one of the first Indian who questioned the colonizers on their domination. In his Chichago's address on 15th September, 1893 upon 'India and Hinduism at the World's Religion' he said that standing on a Christian land I criticize christianity. India has too much of religion than why you offered religion instead of bread? Tabish Kher wrote a novel mentioning the incident of thugi in London which is the story of a very famous thug Jack, the ripper who used to strangle people on the roads of London.

History and fiction in *Midnight's Children*

Salman Rushdie's "*Midnight's Children*" (1981) besides being a postcolonial text, is also a historiographic metafiction. His narcissistic narration that claims to be 'historical' evokes a number of issues- positionality, provisionality, intertextuality, ideology and narrativity- that comes very close to 'historiographic metafiction'- a coinage from Linda Hutcheon to describe the postmodern interaction/liaison of historiography and fiction. Let me briefly state what historiographic metafiction refers to before I proceed to demonstrate that how "*Midnight's Children*" manifests the confluence and convergence of historical and fictive. Hutcheon has used the term in relation to the novels like Garcia Marquez's "*One Hundred Years of Solitude*", Grass's "*The Tin Drum*", Fowles' "*A Maggot*", Doctorow's "*Loon Lake*", Rushdie's "*Shame*" and so on to show the paradoxes and contradictions of the self-reflexive and historical representation in these novels. Novels like these problematize the accessibility, nature and narrativisation of historical knowledge foregrounding the fact that "fiction and history are narratives distinguished by their frames" (Hutcheon, *A Poetics* 109).

American fiction in the late 1960s included some of the experimental text which broke out with the tradition of literary realism and failed to come under the genre of well established

terms like “anti-novel” or “anti-fiction”. This was the reason behind the birth of a new genre “metafiction”. Metafiction as a term was coined by William H. Gass in his essay entitled “*Philosophy and the Form of Fiction*” in 1970. (According to Oxford English Dictionary) “It is a fiction in which author self-consciously alludes to artificiality or literariness of a work by parodying or departing from novelistic conventions and traditional techniques”.

- Historiographic metafiction both install (inscribe) and then blur the line between fiction and history. These novels show history to be textually constructed and fictions to be historically conditioned.
- These novels are highly self-conscious.
- Historiographic metafiction bridges the fissure between historical and fictional works by recombining the two genres.
- Beyond reconnecting history and fiction, Linda Hutcheon remarks that "postmodern fiction suggests that to re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological" (209).

The protagonist of Salman Rushdie’s novel *Midnight’s Children* is Saleem Sinai and through him Rushdie tries to make the connection between historical and personal. This boundary between historical and personal, in the novel, is blurred in such a way that historical becomes personal and personal becomes historical and what is exactly personal and historical remains unclear for the reader. Saleem Sinai’s life is connected to history in such a way that it cannot be separated. So, Rushdie in the very beginning of the novel tells us that Saleem Sinai is handcuffed to history. Beginning with Saleem’s birth on the day of India’s independence, Rushdie very beautifully connects Saleem’s personal life with history as if history is happening for him. His rewriting of Indian history is the part of subaltern historiography from the viewpoint of an individual. Salman Rushdie tells that history is not only which is documented in historical archives or written in our history books but it is also



which lives in the mind of people who saw it happening. Thus, there are alternative histories also that are based on memories.

Rushdie through this novel raises the issue of history being partial or the history presented to us is in parts. He foregrounds his argument through the episode of perforated sheet in the novel where Dr. Adam Aziz first sees Naseem Ghani in parts through perforated sheet. Naseem didn't show herself as a whole to Dr. Aziz until the day they got married. This has the metaphorical significance because the partial, sequential, and gradual visibility of Naseem Ghani to Dr. Aziz symbolizes the partial history. As Dr. Aziz looks Naseem through a perforated linen sheet similarly the history which comes to us is also filtered through a perforated sheet. It is impossible to know the history as a whole because nobody can claim to know everything correctly that happened in the past. Historians write history by collecting data and giving his own narrative to his own data but this narrative don't trust the memories of people. Common man have also participated in some or the other way in the history of India and so their memories are also the history but it is not considered so. Thus, official history debunks and silences other's history. The day Dr. Aziz first saw Naseem was the same day when the World War got ended. Here again we see the co-mingling of personal and historical event. Later Dr. Aziz realizes that he made the mistake of loving Naseem in fragments as she was seen through a perforated sheet. Amina Sinai also falls in love with Ahmed Sinai in parts as she describes "each day she selected one fragment of Ahmed Sinai, and concentrated her entire being upon it until it became wholly familiar; until she felt fondness rising up within her and becoming affection and, finally, love" (*Midnight's Children* 87). These shows that India before independence or becoming a whole nation was also in fragments because there were all together five hundred sixty Riyasats (estates) and princely states. So, the whole idea of nation comes much later. Thus, Rushdie makes the connection of Dr. Aziz's falling in love with Naseem in fragments and India as a nation of political division.

With the help of mercurochrome, Rushdie raises the problem of differentiating between blood and mercurochrome. With this problem he foregrounds the problem of how to differentiate between official history and personal history. During the Jallianwala Bagh episode (Dr. Aziz) “he is, I know, feeling very scared, because his nose is itching worse than it ever has” (40). General R.E.H. Dyre was the Martial Law Commander of Amritsar at that time and as he arrives Dr. Aziz’s nose starts tickling. The General had come with fifty men, twenty-five on each sides of him. When they were ordered to shoot by him at that very moment Dr. Aziz sneezes loudly making the sound ‘yaakh-thoo’ and falls on the ground. General’s order to shoot was similar to Dr. Aziz’s ‘yaakh-thoo’. The chattering sound of the teeth is compared to the sound of the guns. A man falls upon Dr. Aziz whose shirt was colored red. Here Dr. Aziz gets confused to understand that whether the red color on the man’s shirt was the blood or the mercurochrome which Dr. Aziz had with himself. Later when Dr. Aziz goes back to his home, Naseem thinks that it is the medicine over his shirt and he is trying to fool her but after knowing the truth she faints. Thus, Official history and Personal history is also very similar to each other and its very difficult to distinguish between them.

Through the character of William Methwold, Rushdie tries to show us that how old and worn out the British rule has become in India which in turn needs to be overthrown. Homi Catrack refuses to switch on the ceiling fan because there was the chance of its falling as it has become old and weak similar to the British rule. When Ahmed and Amina Senai comes to Mumbai, they buy the house of William Methwold and this indicates the transfer of power from a Britisher to an Indian. The day when Ahmed and Amina Senai gets the control over the house was the same day the British Raj transferred the governing power of the nation to India and Pakistan. Thus, the transfer of the power of the nation or the government becomes similar to the deeds of the house. Amina Senai is still unhappy even after getting the control of the house because she is not allowed to change anything in the house. This indicates that much of the thing which was happening during the British Rule will continue to



happen even in the independent nation and in the post-colonial time. She was for long not able to replace the photographs of the British women with the photographs of her dead forefathers. This shows that our past cannot be easily revived because it is certainly affected by the British Rule. So, post-colonization will not decolonize abruptly rather it will take time. This is one of the reason why we still follow the rules made by our colonizers. This shows that the affair which takes place within the four walls of our house has an indirect relation with the political events which happens outside.

Through the swapping episode of Saleem and Shiva, Rushdie raises the idea of fictional history. He questions the authenticity of associating self with the history. We are very proud of our family, religion, cast, etc. and fight over our glorious past. However none of us know that how authentic our ancestral history is. Shiva was born to Ahmed and Amina Sinai and Saleem was born to Wee Willy Winki and Vanita, however he was the illegitimate and the bastard child of William Methwold and Vanita. Throughout the novel Saleem's long nose is seen as the inherited nose of his grandfather Dr. Adam Aziz but infact his long nose is the result of inheritance of William Methwold's long European nose whose mother was a French woman. Both the kids were swapped by Mary Pereira in the nursing home and so this foregrounds the falsification of history. Nobody can claim about their glorious ancestry or history with authenticity because nobody knows that the history with which we associate ourselves is true or false. This tells us the unreliability and inauthenticity of the history.

Magic realism as a postcolonial counter narrative

Rushdie uses magic realist mode to challenge colonial, official historiography. The choice of comingling two seemingly antithetical narrative modes is significant. It is often argued that the dominant narrative mode of the West has been realism, faithful reproduction of empirical reality into art. On the other hand, the East has been stereotypically described having/preferring magical narratives. By choosing to relate Indian history in magic realist



mode, Rushdie intermingles objective, scientific and empirical reality with metaphoric, mystical and magical realities.

Saleem Sinai with his powers of telepathy, can access to the minds of his fellow citizens and know their thoughts, aspirations, dreams, visions, desires, and ideas. He is narrating the Indian history from 1915-1977 i.e. thirty-two years before his birth and thirty-two years after his birth omnisciently because of his magical powers. The more closer to midnight his birth was, the more powerful he was. He was gifted with this magical power of telepathy because of being born on the propitious hour of midnight on the day of India's independence. He can rewrite history and is able to mingle real with magical, fictional with historical, and historical with personal only because of his telepathic power.

The prophecy of Ramram Seth about the birth of Saleem and Shiva makes this novel a proleptic narrative which means flash forward. The prophecy was- "There will be two heads- but you shall see only one- there will be knees and a nose and a nose and knees. Nose and knees and knees and nose... 'Newspaper praises him, two mothers raise him! Bicyclists love him-but, crowds will shove him! Sisters will weep; cobra will creep...' and DeoShiva, guard us! 'Washing will hide him-voices will guide him! Friends mutilate him-blood will betray him!', spittoons will brain him-doctors will drain him-jungle will claim him-wizards reclaim him! Soldiers will try him-tyrants will fry him..."He will have sons without having sons! He will be old before he is old! And he will die... before he is dead" (*Midnight's Children* 114). Through this Rushdie gives us the glimpse of what is about to happen in the novel.

Rushdie used the body of Saleem Sinai as a metaphor for India. Each time the nation divides, there is a crack in the body of Saleem Sinai. As Saleem says "I feel cracks widening down the length of my body..." "I have begun to crack all over like an old jug-that my poor body, singular, unlovely buffeted by too much history, subjected to drainage above and drainage below, mutilated by doors, brained by spittoons, has started coming apart at the seams". Saleem's teacher laughs at his face saying that "In the face of thees ugly ape you

don't see the whole map of India?" (206). The pulling of hair and the bald spot of Saleem signifies the irrational creation of new state from the old existing states of India. There were linguistic, religious, cultural and traditional lines drawn on the map of India which resulted in the formation of new states like Tamil Nadu in 1773 and Andhra Pradesh in 1956.

Thus *Midnight's Children* foregrounds the idea that historical representations are not objective recuperations of past in the present rather they do reveal mediated, metaphorical, subjective and ideological nature of historical representation. Historiographic metafictional narrative strategies of the novel indicate the problematic historical fabrication of facts and fictions in history. The novel marks an experimental moment of the postmodern novel which refuses the claims of writing a convincing past without acknowledging its discursivity and discards the hermeneutical process of historiography.

In conclusion, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* proves the statement of Linda Hutcheon that the novel is self-reflexive and also lays claim to historical events and personages. On the other side, it is called as postmodern novel/literature.

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Nationalism Exposed as a Myth in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*

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Abstract: In 1981, Salman Rushdie wrote *Midnight's Children* that allegorized the legacy of Partition and attempted to comment on its reality. The novel's protagonist, Saleem Sinai, is born on the midnight of 15th August, 1947, the time when India gained independence from British Rule. With the one thousand and one children born at the stroke of the midnight hour, all of whom are endowed with special powers, Saleem is telepathically connected. In this way, Saleem comes to signify India itself, the personal coalescing with the political. In his search for a "meaning," he constructs a past where he assumes himself responsible for the key events in the nation's history, the course of his life linked to that of India. This coincidence becomes both a blessing as well as a curse to him. But at the same time, the novel is Rushdie's critique of the idea of individual identity as entwined with nation, and diverse populations coming together under the unified banner of nationalism. Even though nationalism was important to fight against the British rule, the gradual foregrounding of the nationalist movement through religion became a weapon for the British. This led to new interpretations of historical events and ancient texts. The non-linear representation of time in the novel represents the artificiality of history. Moreover, Saleem's presentation as an unreliable narrator points to the same goal of showing nation as a construct. But Rushdie also hopes that the generation to follow will create a counter-myth of their country. This paper studies how Rushdie's novel shows his scepticism towards nationalism that he sees nothing more than a myth, and the construction of nation as an ideological tool.

Keywords: Nationalism, Myth, *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie, Political, Personal, Ideology, Nation, meaning, identity, British, India.



The very concept of nation is a construct of the European imperial powers, just as history is their possession, both allowing them to perceive themselves as suited to rule over others as colonial powers, regarding them as history-less and nation-less. For India under the British rule, nationalism was therefore needed to unite the masses together to fight against the colonizers as being the “other,” but such a unified identity was difficult to accept for the Indians separated by diverse cultures, languages and religions. By linking identity particularly with religion, the British not only maintained their own hegemony but also tidied up the country’s diversity by dividing the Indians along religious lines. Boundaries got clearly defined, thereby increasing antagonism as new interpretations of ancient texts and historical events came up. In Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, the country’s diversity comes together in the protagonist, Saleem Sinai, born at the stroke of the midnight hour of India’s independence, with his “destinies indissolubly chained” to that of the new-born nation (Rushdie 3). Born with magical powers “to look into the hearts and minds of men,” (Rushdie 277) his head is occupied by “the so-called teeming millions, of masses and classes alike” (Rushdie 232). By showing Saleem as India itself, Rushdie attempts to show how this becomes the cause behind political victimisation of the country. In the quest for a “meaning,” he constructs a self-centred past in the form of a narrative. However, with the events of the nation paralleling those of his life, the construction of the nation is exposed as a myth.

In *Midnight’s Children*, Rushdie wants to show that attempts to homogenise India have altogether failed. In his essay, “The Riddle of Midnight: India, August 1987” he argues how a “sense” of Indian history spans thousands of years, yet “a united India” never existed. Even after attaining independence, India remained more imagined than real: “And then that midnight, the thing that had never existed was suddenly “free”. But what on earth was it? On what common ground (if any) did it, does it, stand?” (Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* 27) This is also what Saleem ironically says in the novel:



This year [1947] there was [...] a new myth to celebrate, because a nation which had never previously existed was about to win its freedom, catapulting us... into a mythical land, a country which would never exist except by the efforts of a phenomenal collective will – except in a dream we all agreed to dream; it was a mass fantasy shared in varying degrees by Bengali and Punjabi, Madrasi and Jat, and would periodically need the sanctification and renewal which can only be provided by rituals of blood. (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 150)

When Aadam Aziz returns home from Germany, he tries to go back to his previous perception of it, but fails to do so. However, he has to accept and subscribe to his newly cultured self, just as India has no choice but to enter a world and carve a new place for itself only to fail in acquiring stability. In his *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie observes about reconstructing history: “if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge which gives rise to profound uncertainties ... that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost: that will in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind” (Rushdie 11).

The definition of nation itself keeps changing. Hugh Seton-Watson says, the phenomenon of nation continues to exist even though no “scientific definition” of the term can be devised. Abdulrazak Gurnah notes how Saleem remains absent from his own history for over hundred pages of the novel (95). The Midnight's Children Conference in the novel further exposes the myth of the nation. With five hundred and eighty one men and women possessing some magical power in keeping with the proximity of their birth to the midnight hour, the idea highlights the impossibility of the promise of national fulfilment. Gurnah further observes how the promise is broken as Nehru's ambition begins to break down because of corruption and cynicism.

Rushdie's depiction of Saleem as an unreliable narrator emphasizes the idea of nation as a construct. In the narration of India's history, he forgets and confuses some important events, later confesses about them, but is almost unapologetic. Rushdie, in the essay, “Errata:



Or, Unreliable Narration in *Midnight's Children*” clarifies that he made Saleem make many of these mistakes intentionally to show that he is “cutting up history to suit himself... that Saleem is capable of distortions both great and small” (*Imaginary Homelands* 24). Another aspect of the narrative that throws light on the artificial nature of history is the non-linearity of time. Not only does Saleem keep going back and forth in time, but he is also constantly interrupted. Instead of following a chronological order, events from disparate times are juxtaposed to make Saleem the protagonist. At the same time, it also shows how the historian is dependent on the inaccuracy of memory. He firmly believes in his version of history, and history is inextricably linked to memory. Rushdie says in an interview, “Memory has its own special kind. It selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and mollifies also, but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no same human being ever trusts someone else’s version more than his own” (Rushdie). Memory authenticates, and at the same time, invalidates the official version of the historian. Saleem’s inconsistent memory reveals how the past is reconstructed by the strategies of history-writing. Saleem’s version of history is based on the selective process of memory and hence the quest for the “truth” remains the burden of memory (Badhwar). Therefore, Rushdie makes us look at the nation and history with suspicion, both being the products of memory and narrative, which are themselves to be distrusted.

Rushdie’s use of magic realism in the novel helps accentuate the multiplicity of historical perspectives. Putting “magic” and “realism,” two contrasting words on the same level leads to the creation of a third space that allows for plurality of interpretations, hence doing away with the notion of absolute truth. This is similar to postmodernist thinking about history that negates the existence of fact by linking it to narratives. According to Elizabeth Tonkin, histories are “arguments created by people in particular conditions” (18). Versions of history are fashioned by those in power in order to uphold and validate their position. Uma Parameswaran resents that the version of history that Rushdie provides is only fairly authentic, lacking a reliable interpretation (57-60). However, the question is, is there any such



thing as authentic history at all? As it is said, history is victor's version of events. Rushdie reflects, "History is always ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish, and capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge" (*Imaginary Homelands* 25).

Rushdie claims to have reached this understanding while writing *Midnight's Children*. In the novel, Saleem has to recognize the diversity of historical standpoints and view them all as equally valid. He admits, "there are so many stories to tell, too many...so dense a commingling...I have been a swallower of lives; to know me...you'll have to swallow the lot as well." Saleem is forced to think historically and consider the formation of his national identity, which he realizes is plural, often contradictory or conflicting, and never stable because of the diversity of the nation. In an interview, Rushdie says of *Midnight's Children*, "There are aspects in it which try to speak what is officially taboo ...that are falsifications of reality which the State attempts to make...it becomes important... to say that the things that happened in India during the Emergency did happen." Cundy observes the subversive potential of magic realism in *Midnight's Children* saying, "subversions of realism can be used as much for the purposes of oppression as liberation" (39). Reality depends upon perspective. It is to create alternative realities that Rushdie employs fantasy and subverts realism.

Underlying Rushdie's description of Indira Gandhi in almost monstrous terms in the novel is the resentment of the masses at the time of the Emergency. The forced sterilization of the "midnight children" signifies parliamentary members rendered impotent, incapable of wielding their powers to any good effect. Yet, Rushdie does not give us a hopeless picture in the end. He is optimistic about the future of the country represented by the new generation. It is said of Aadam Sinai, son of Parvati and Shiva, two of the most powerful midnight's children: "he Emergency-born, will be and is already more cautious, biding his time; but when he acts, he will be impossible to resist" (Rushdie 594). He, and the other such children,



born with the benefits of observation and caution, will generate a counter-myth, hence acknowledging the defensive power of nationalism.

However, even after almost seventy years of India's independence, having crossed several generations, tortured nationalistic debates are rampant in the country. The prevailing parochial nationalism stands against the liberal democratic vision of the Constitution. In the name of nationalism, what exists is ideological conservatism, scant space for free speech, privileging of the majority religious community while marginalizing many, and silencing of the dissent. Such hyper-nationalism brings a society in a state of frenzy, where meanings of words begin to alter, such that "intolerance" becomes an abusive word, dissent and freedom of expression become "anti-national." Many a times, nationalism is confused with patriotism. Those asking for freedom from sectarianism are being charged with sedition; those protesting against caste system are being silenced; secular voices of rationalist writers, thinkers and intellectuals are being censored. If it was about intolerance yesterday, it is nationalism today, and could be anything else tomorrow. Romila Thapar said, "History is essential to a national ideology, but it has to be a shared one. It cannot be a history based on one identity" (Goswami). Nations are no more than ideas created to homogenize contemporary social and political boundaries into historical geopolitical boundaries. Albert Camus was perhaps right in saying, "I love my country too much to be a nationalist" (Albert).



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Arupa Patangia Kalita's *Felanee* and Multiculturalism

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Abstract: The term 'multiculturalism', has been used to describe to a culturally diverse society but also refers to a kind of policy that aims at protecting cultural diversity. Multiculturalism is a theory about culture and its value. Arupa Patangia Kalita, (1956) is a well-known voice of North-East India. In this article I have focused on multiculturalism as seen in Arupa Patangia Kalita's novel *Felanee*. Formation of identities of which ethnic identity is one of the most recent manifestations, has resulted in violent conflict situation in the state. Arupa Patangia Kalita is constantly referring to the past history and memory, making historical judgments about contemporary issues, because it is only through knowledge of its history that society can have knowledge of itself to know the present. The novel encompasses the fortunes of a group of displaced women of different ethnicities who are subjected to an atmosphere of fear and violence during the Assam agitation, the rise of the ULFA and the Bodo movement, due to the violence unleashed by ethno-nationalist elements in Assam of the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Such situations are the greatest impediments to social and economic development. It is important to note Felanee's hybrid identity – she has an Assamese, Bodo and Bengali ancestry and functions as a review of the ethnic absolutism that marked a major aspect of both the Assam agitation and the Bodo movement. Felanee's hybrid identity, functions as a review of the ethnic absolutism that marked a major aspect of both the Assam agitation and the Bodo movement. Arupa Patangia Kalita's protagonist Felanee, thus emerges as a change agent in the society. Through the friendship between Felanee, Minoti, Jon's mother, Meera's mother, Arupa Patangia Kalita foregrounds the success and solidarity which make them ready to face challenges related to race, class and gender oppression and

leads to healing and survival. The writer has witnessed the great changes in Assam's history during her life time and therefore she turned to be a harbinger of those changes in Assam. Being a witness to crime against humanity Arupa Patangia Kalita recounts the themes of negotiation, peace and hope in an environment of violence, displacement, loss and death. She wrote for the sake of all those who were subjected to injustice, inequality, poverty, discrimination and exploitation. In turning attention to the waves in which violence and domination affect human beings and not necessarily women, the crucial point to stress is to create a cultural sensitivity to the impact of violence and to reduce the risk of violence for everyone.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, ethnicity, violence, cultural sensitivity, hope.

The term 'multiculturalism', has been used to describe to a culturally diverse society but also refers to a kind of policy that aims at protecting cultural diversity. Multiculturalism is a theory about culture and its value. Arupa Patangia Kalita, (1956) is a well-known voice of North-East India. In this article I have focused on multiculturalism as seen in Arupa Patangia Kalita's novel *Felanee*.

The North-East has a culturally diverse society and since the past the people have lived in harmony, but in contemporary times situations of ethnic violence and insurgency has caused disturbance in the region. Formation of identities of which ethnic identity is one of the most recent manifestations has resulted in violent conflict situation in the state. Arupa Patangia Kalita is constantly referring to the past history and memory, making historical judgments about contemporary issues, because it is only through knowledge of its history that society can have knowledge of itself to know the present.

In *Felanee*, Arupa Patangia Kalita portrays the disturbed and troubled social life, a gradually spreading political consciousness, newly emerging human relationships, moral and immoral situations, intimate glimpses of people's life and institutional changes occurring in a



village of Assam during the 1960s,70s and 80s; the havoc it caused to the lives of the people. The novel narrates about the socio-political unrest in Assam.

Political environment is suggested in the lines: “Election booths, cars and homes of traitors will be burnt.” (2011:11). “Words like ‘foreigners’, ‘agitation’, ‘AASU’, ‘constitution’, ‘Landabo treaty, student’s body, peaceful resistance and strikes-a few names like Prafulla Mahanta and Bhriku Phukan were heard frequently. Everyone talked of curfew, nomination papers, election army and police ... “Nabin started losing business with the constant strikesPutukon was frequently away from home ... all that he read was newspapers and more newspapers ... Suddenly there was the sound of gun fires. The police was firing, the road was deserted. Felanee recollects her nightmarish experience... leeches stuck to her eyelids. Any moment now the boys would set fire to the dry banana bark.” (2011:114).

The novel encompasses the fortunes of a group of displaced women of different ethnicities who are subjected to an atmosphere of fear and violence during the Assam agitation, the rise of the ULFA and the Bodo movement, due to the violence unleashed by ethno-nationalist elements in Assam of the 1960s,70s and 80s. Such situations are the greatest impediments to social and economic development. The women living here live a life of extreme hardship, and yet they survive and negotiate threats. “They were a group of dirty people, Jon’s ma, Minoti, Kali Boori, Phool, Jaggu, Jaggu’s ailing wife, Bulen, Sumala, Nabin, Ratna’s ma, - BuraDorjee.” (2011: 168). They give the protagonist Felanee emotional as well as economic sustenance and despite their own poverty, help her to start a petty business. The women are engaged in making *murhas(stools)*, *moori (puffed rice)*, selling vegetables,— which sustains them physically, emotionally and economically, and thereby help in alleviating poverty.

The sense of victimization is manifested in the lines when Felanee accuses the Bodo insurgent-Bulen about his corrupt ways and abuses him saying, “Take your money steeped in

sin! Call your bandhs. Keep killing people. If we can, we will survive. If not, we will die! ... you don't know these men. They have blood on their hands. Once they have tasted blood, they are greedy for more. Then again there are other kinds of greed that get them. The greed for women, the greed for money, the greed for power, the yearning for loot and plunder and the greed for what it brings in." (2011:243-245).

Felanee has a hybrid identity of the Bengali, the Assamese and the Bodo communities. She is a Bengali because her mother was a Bengali, she has been married to an Assamese and through her father she belongs to the Bodo community. Traditionally women adapt to different cultures more easily, giving up their origins more often than men when marrying into another community. In a patriarchal society, they are made to give up the family names or have no family name. Even in their self-identity, women are socially more related to the 'other' in their strong identification with the family, and their historically and socially inculcated dedication to others. Thus the writer speaks of Felanee's hybrid identity— she has Bodo and Bengali ancestry and functions as a review of the ethnic absolutism that marked a major aspect of both the Assam agitation and the Bodo movement. This critique reaches its culmination in the following passage:

"While rubbing the bloodstains from her sador, she wondered about the various people whose genes ran in her blood ... Her grandmother, Ratnamala's? ... Her grandfather, the elephant mahout Kinaram Bodo's? ... What about her mother? Did she have more from Ratnamala or Kinaram? And what about herself? Did her blood have stronger genes from Khitish Ghosh ... Felanee thought of her grandmother, Ratnamala's gold chain, and the dokhona woven by Kinaram's mother. She had her mother's shell bangles set in gold. She had the Muga clothes that Moni's father had given her when Moni was born. What should she wear? What should she keep? Baishya had asked her to take off the shell bangles lest people mistook her for a Bengali ... Bulen, on the other hand told her, that if she wanted to survive, she should wear a dokhona." And the two boys with their guns told her that if she



kept company. With 'these mixed people' she wouldn't be alive for long. What could she do now to keep alive?"(2011:185-186).

Keeping quiet for a while she uttered only one word 'human'. Bulen insists her to wear the dress of the Bodo's: "As of now, all Bodo's must wear their own dress only ... No haven't you seen how they have occupied their own thrones, after having promised to throw out foreigners? They are all amassing wealth. What have they done for us? What did we get? They have destroyed and finished my home and hearth. They have made my woman mad. We have to get our own state. We must ... It was a green and red dokhona with yellow flower border. In a prickly tone, "If you want to survive wear this ... We won't drive any one away. They will all have to live together amicably. But in our state, our law will prevail. "Think about yourself. And if you really want to do something worthwhile, get rid of these clothes and wear your clan's clothes." (2011:176) But Felanee says, "My own dress is this piece of cloth that covers me adequately. I neither need a separate dress, nor a separate state. All I need is something to wear and one square meal." (2011:212)

Felanee is aware of the diversity of attitude and opinion around her, rather than closing herself off to the belief that everyone thinks alike. She is therefore more democratic. To her all cultures are held to be intrinsically valuable, worth preserving, and should be held to develop. Through the friendship between Felanee, Minoti, Jon's mother, Meera's mother, Arupa Patangia Kalita foregrounds the success and solidarity which make them ready to face challenges related to race, class and gender oppression and leads to healing and survival. All of them sat beside each other remembered the past, continued to worry about the future and shared sorrow; their heart was shredded into thousand pieces and was utterly broken. The presence of a 'women's culture', is evident in the bonding of the women in *Felanee*. "Hugging each other, they were both overcome with emotion. Their gruesome and horrible experiences came flooding back and overwhelmed them, crushing their spirit. Sobbing quietly... Pray to the Goddess. She will look after you," she said, folding her hands in prayer.

Felanee did the same. (2011:59). The women therefore find strength from their inner self and by networking with the women of their kind.

In such a scenario, women have been found to play a prominent role in rebuilding conflict ridden societies and social resources – women who have to put up a brave front to make ends meet. “As long as the market is not disturbed, there isn’t much to worry about.” ... “Yes, it’s a blow when the markets remain closed ... There seems to be something or the other wrong all the time! ... After the bank robbery, we lost four market days ... That was a big loss.” (2011:155).

Although violence, degradation and paralyzed human lives are the central theme of *Felanee*, yet the writer constantly displays the protagonist’s empathy and concern about the happenings around her. Throughout the tension, turmoil and curfew of long hours and days that took place in the name of ‘golden Assam’, ‘change and progress’ and demand for independent law and Bodo state what ordinary civilian wanted is only food and shelter for survival... She said. “You know it doesn’t even take a night to destroy a home, but to build it...” “It is really hard to make a living. All that I ask of you is, please don’t block the avenues to our daily bread” (2011:181). During the conflicts and quest for identity Felanee emerges as a fighter and participant, leader and activist.

The writer has witnessed the great changes in Assam’s history during her life time and therefore she turned to be a harbinger of those changes in Assam. She wrote for the sake of all those who were subjected to injustice, inequality, poverty, discrimination and exploitation. In turning attention to the waves in which violence and domination affect human beings and not necessarily women, the crucial point to stress is to create a cultural sensitivity to the impact of violence and to reduce the risk of violence for everyone.

The protagonist critiques the bloodshed, revenge and the concept of boundary that is going on at the cost of innocent people’s lives. “Who will live in their independent country?

And who will live in Bulen's state? What will they divide? Could they divide the water in rivers; the trees, the land, the people? (2011:185).

Being a witness to crime against humanity Arupa Patangia Kalita recounts the themes of negotiation, peace and hope in an environment of violence, displacement, loss and death. She attempts to share the feelings, experiences and trauma of the contemporary displaced men and women.

"Felanee felt suddenly enraged. She remembered what Kali Boori had once told her. All that these women could do was to cry. Who would get them out of their misery? ... Will all of you keep quiet?" Felanee shouted at them. "Who are you crying for? Which men will come to your rescue, do you think? ... Living or dying is one and the same thing for us. It doesn't really make any difference," Jon's Ma sighed ... Then, you agree that you all are not afraid to die." (2011:290-299) . "None of them were going to leave without taking their men, back with them ... The curfew was lifted. Word got round about these women and their demands. A lot of people from the town came and stood around them ... The women remained stubborn. Their answer to any query was that they wanted the release of their men ... the media people arrived on the scene. They took photographs. ... 'We want our menfolk back' ... It's the same whether we live or die' ... they wanted the release of their menfolk. They all felt the same way ... just a little before nightfall ... their menfolk were really standing beside them. Together now they returned to the settlement. They went past the destroyed forest past the main road and then on to the silent and quiet settlement. Others awaited them on the road. They all walked back together ... and a knowing smile spread across Felanee's face. (2011:299-301). Felanee concludes thus, "Talking on and on the women managed to cut a lot of reeds between them ..." It gives the women a heightened sense of energy to work together and participate in the productive activities of the society ... "They all tied up their bundles and readied themselves to leave. Suddenly it started to drizzle ... Like before, they stepped gingerly on the wooden rail track and eventually reached the road."(2011:311-312).



Arupa Patangia Kalita thereby offers a critique of the society and social mores, attempting to reshape the social-political order. As culture is a continuous process of reconstruction of tradition, the writer hopes to precipitate a breakthrough gradually or abruptly to a socio-political or cultural order--an order based on premises of universalism and equality.

The writer suggests that conflict can be managed through negotiation with members of the community, and looks forward to fulfilling their lives in security and peace. Fear, violence and situations of extreme dehumanization do not foreclose capacities for the nurturing of ethical bonds and possibilities of collective action. *Felanee* shows how situations due to insurgency, ethnic conflict, violence and denial, cause human misery and reflect powerfully on ethical issues that arise in the wake of immense dehumanization. Through their experiences the women gain confidence and leadership abilities as well as a sense of obligation and duty towards the sustenance of a culturally diverse society, and the maintenance of cultural harmony in the state.

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Exploring Gay Sexuality in R. Raja Rao's *The Boyfriend*

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Abstract: The Research paper seeks to close a gap in existing critical scholarship by attending precisely to the nexus between sexuality and literature. It explores how gender and sexuality are conceived and conceptualized in Indian Concept. The paper studies R. Raja Rao's fictional work *The Boy Friend* and finds out how the social space has changed in Post 1980s? The article also deliberates on important questions about gay sexuality such as how it is shaped and executed in the fictional world of R. Raja Rao and what does it reflect towards the changing social space of post 1980s. The paper will also attend to sexual desires, acts and sexual interactions which form an integral part of an alternate sexual identity.

Key Words: Sexuality, Gay, Gender, Queer and Homosexual desire.

Sexuality pervades every aspect of social existence in all the societies and remains an inscrutable theme of research in literature. Its perils outweigh its pleasures and it is often perceived as shameful for the dangers it involves like rape, incest, exploitation, cruelty and humiliation. It is interesting enough to note that in a country like India known as 'the land of the Kama Sutra', sex and its expression, remains carefully confined to privacy of homes and any public display of it is condemned. Historically, essentialist arguments have cast the subject as taboo, and even within relationships where sex is sanctioned specifically heterosexual relationships, it remains a difficult subject to navigate and explore, leave alone the case of "illegitimate sexualities". Resultantly "history of sexology and sexuality . . . remains more or less excluded from the historiography of India" while it is relatively "well mapped within the Euro American setting" (Srivastava 25). However, over the last few years



feminist, postcolonial gender and queer theorists have interrogated the ways in which sexuality is conceived and constructed. As a result, with the changing times and today it is considered an appropriate and legitimate subject of enquiry.

Generally, sexuality refers to one's sexual orientation and the capacity to have erotic experiences and responses towards other beings. However, on a deeper level these responses are shaped by a network of "... stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances...linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power" (Foucault 105). As per Michel Foucault sexuality is "a historical construct" which is produced through mechanisms of knowledge and power. Knowledge of it is necessary to gain control of it, to regulate it more effectively and power to hold it in check. In the Indian context, both knowledge and power work hand in hand either to desexualize or hetero-sexualize the social space and it is made possible through the "triple edict of taboo, nonexistence, and silence" (5). The pervasiveness of moral panics concerning the sex and gender like the most recent move of government to ban porn sites in India and that of erotic cartoon character Savita Bhabhi back in 2009 indicates that sexuality remains an elusive and complex topic that requires continued critical reflection from time to time.

A survey of recent scholarship available on the subject reveals that much critical attention has tended to focus on film, theatre, and the visual arts rather than on literature. However, this is not surprising in the given scenario of dominant visual culture of media-saturated societies. As far as this research paper is concerned, it seeks to close a gap in existing critical scholarship by attending precisely to the nexus between sexuality and literature. The study will deliberate on important questions about gay sexuality such as how it is shaped and executed in the fictional world of R. Raja Rao and what does it reflect towards the changing social space of post 1980s.

The Boyfriend is the story of Yudi Pandava—a prolific freelancer, who writes for newspapers and magazines like *The Hindu*, *Metropolis* and *Debonair*. He hooks up with all sorts of men from young boys to old seasoned fags, who attract him. In one such encounter he meets Milind Mahadik, a semi literate dalit boy who is half his age, in a public toilet at the Churchgate Railway Station. Milind hides his original name and proclaims himself as Kishore. Yudi meets him for several times and gradually the casual sex partner becomes his boy love. Meanwhile, Kishore is lost and Yudi's efforts to find his heartthrob go in vain. After a few months, Yudi luckily meets Kishore in a lift; this time he tells him his real name as Milind and then starts the obsessive affair of Yudi and Milind. Yudi being older and of upper middle class introduces the boy to the places brimming with feverish sexual activity like Café Volga, gay pub Testosterone and gay hangout places like Azad Maidan. He gives the guy a peep into better life style different than him. Milind, on the other hand, acquaints Yudi with “shady Bombay, of which he knew next to nothing” (87). Both explore each other's Bombay, entering each other's territory and each looking a misfit. Yudi helps Milind find a job, teaches him the way of the world, only to find out that he is lost yet again. This time Yudi is madly in love with him and he is hurt even more badly. He visits his family living at Dagdi Chawl time and again to know about his whereabouts.

Milind, on the other hand, secretly landed up in A.K. Modelling Agency located at Goregaon which served as a ‘gurukul’ owned by a leading Bollywood actor. The agency presented a wonderful “opportunity to lead a double life: to be a hetero by day and homo by night”. To go by its name “the boys modelled for products ranging from vests and briefs to contraceptives and cosmetics. Their ads didn't appear on TV, or even in glossies like Femina and Society. They appear in the vernacular press on cheap parchment paper. . . . Modelling, however, was not the boys' only work . . . their *real* work [was] . . . as call boys” (179). Milind was having everything in agency, a good place to live, enough to eat and pocket money, what else he could desire for? But “No matter how many Esteems he rode in”, his self concept was shattered. Soon, Milind determines to leave the agency to return to his

family and they decide to get him married to Leela thinking that responsibility will mend him. He also agrees readily so as to purge his guilt of being “a dhandewala, a whore” (201). Before starting his new life, he meets Yudi one last time to end up everything. They decide to meet at Café Volga; there, much to Yudi’s surprise Milind behaves egregiously. He abruptly leaves the place after “thrusting the wedding card into Yudi’s hands”. Yudi becomes extremely upset on hearing the news but Milind callously leaves him alone, heartbroken and crying. Hereafter, Gauri, a painter whose marriage proposal Yudi had declined many times becomes the solace of his life. However Yudi keeps at bay Gauri’s thoughts of their marriage. After a span of three years, Milind is shown as a lousy person who is not able to foot his family responsibility and hence returns to Yudi, of course not for love but for easy money.

Before delving deep, it is appropriate to explicate briefly the underlying tone of the work. The novel is one of the first gay novels of India written by an openly gay writer R. Raja Rao, who is a professor of literature and a leading queer activist. The author unhesitatingly describes the gay underbelly of Bombay, its gay cruising places: in certain parts of certain toilets, certain bogeys of certain trains, certain areas of certain parks, which stop being mere public places to become the erotic sites. The places become forums for delirious homosexual activity where all kinds of men- rich, poor, beggars and thieves come to hustle with other men. Some of these men are seasoned old fags, some bright eyed boys looking for ‘sugar daddies’ and many others are married men taking a quick pick up on their way home to their wives, to their other lives. Through the story, the author acquaints us with various features of gay life: issues of class, caste affecting gay identity, gay rape, police atrocities, AIDS epidemic, marginalization of women in gay subculture, binary oppositions between koti/ panthi, active/passive, fucker/fucked, bottoms up/down and gay/bisexual. The novel runs like a detailed commentary on aspects of gay magazines like Bombay Dost to localized gay lingo, from eco- feminism to HIV campaigns, from cheap road side businesses to the business like that of AK Modelling Agency.

The story quite highlights the undercover gay life in the city having “more homos than the populations of London and Paris put together” (92) where gays live a life full of fear, hiding, chiding and ostracisation. It focuses our attention to the homophobia of Indian society and the law for which same-sex sexuality becomes the primary site of governance. Resultantly, a person of alternate sexuality constantly lives under the dread of being caught and booked for Sodomy under the Sec. 377 of IPC which defines gay sex as ‘carnal intercourse against the order of nature’. Homophobia promotes a climate full of hiding, assault and terror so as to cause Milind to fake his name and address and Yudi to bring his partners blindfolded to his flat. Section 377 of IPC becomes the base of Yudi’s ostracisation by a casual sex partner on a one night stand. While cruising through a public loo, he picked up a well built man named Dnyaneshwar and his worst dreams come true as the man turns out to be a police cop. He not only threatens to expose Yudi but also extorts money from him. In the same context Fernandez and Gomathy also take note: “. . . public exposure and coercion by the police is the principal form of state violence sanctioned by Section 377” (Srivastava 146).

R. Raja Rao’s fictional world also registers other dangers of gay life namely molestation, harassment and commodification of sex. This becomes clear from the fact that the protagonist Yudi had his first brush with gayness through a forced sexual encounter in Azad Maidan. Although, he being of homosexual orientation, enjoyed it and continued with it in his later life. He gets attracted towards men from all walks of life irrespective of caste, class and colour but especially from the working class. For him, gayness is like the only religion where these categories dissolve. This comes alive when Milind and Yudi meet in a bar; Milind picked up each wafer on the plate, bit into it, and threw it back on the plate. Yudi asked him what he was doing. At this Milind responded:

‘Testing if my caste really doesn’t bother you. Eat my jhootha if it doesn’t.’

‘Oh no, not again,’ Yudi replied infuriated. He took a half eaten wafer and popped it into his mouth. ‘There you are. Are you convinced now?’

‘No! Eat the whole lot!’

‘Stop it!’ Yudi howled, causing the Xavierites to look in their direction.

‘Cool down,’ Milind said. ‘I was only joking.’ [Yudi explains]

‘Homos are no different from Bhangis. Both are Untouchables. So why should I have

a

problem eating your jhootha?’

‘But you are a Brahmin, aren’t you?’

‘No, I am a homosexual. Gay by caste. Gay by religion.’

‘. . . homosexuals have no caste or religion. They have only their homosexuality.’ (81)

Milind does not understand his rationale and Yudi further simplifies “Straight people are Brahmins, gays Shudras. So you see, both you and I are Shudras. That’s why we are best friends” (82). This instance clearly states the marginalization of the queer people as Yudi equates homosexual men to ‘shudras’ and straight men to ‘brahmins’. Indeed, equating gay men to ‘shudras’ and not to any other caste points towards the condition of this group of people in the society at a time which was well before the current scenario of queer pride parades, rallies and letter writing by LGBT forums, support groups and the gay activism. Therefore, the coalition of sexual outcasts serves as a survival tactic in a largely heteronormative society in the fictional world as well as in the real life of gay men. Similarly, Yudi also moves his army of queens to avenge the bisexual police cop, Dnyaneshwar. In the bar Testosterone, Yudi spotted Gulab, “the undisputed queen of queens” with his gang and he at once mobilised his army for “Operation Stonewall”. While Yudi sat on “The Wall” and smoked cigarette, the queens stripped the cop and manhandled him (35). They not only recovered his money but also managed to teach him a lesson so that the bugger never turned up again to blackmail Yudi.

Rao has portrayed sexuality as a malleable force which defragments the social class striations though it itself is fraught with certain other modern day threats. In 1990s and thereafter, people of alternate sexuality started making public appearance and it became easy



to be part of NGOs, LGBT help groups, forums etc. posing a gay identity. This context of gay individuality is explored by Kuhu Chanana in her paper *Polyvalent Power Structures in the Gay Writings of Contemporary Indian-English Writers* with special reference to R. Raja Rao and Hoshang Merchant. The author explores R. Raja Rao's play, *Six Inches*, where "class trumps over sexuality and many a times straight men pose as gay men to gain benefit from sugar daddies"(152). In the fictional work under study, Yudi also contemplates "Perhaps the boy wasn't innocent after all, and harboured similar ideas of trying to track him down- and not for love and thrills. Everybody wants a sugar daddy; the difference in age and income between the boy and himself made him a fit candidate for the post" (Rao 22). This doubt of fake gay identity and the intention of finding a sugar daddy in one's partner is one of the traps of gay life and it threatens and weakens the cause of gay activism in India considerably. As many men fake as gays but actually they are straight so that they can attract other men for an endless supply of easy money, gifts and other free bees. Yudi's boy love also seems to be on the same track, as the writer writes, ". . . Milind had found a sugar daddy! That was what gay men all over the world looked for anyway: sugar daddies. So why should Yudi be surprised or sad?" (113). However, Yudi gladly plays the role, he spends lavishly on the boy as if he has an endless supply of money. Towards the end also, when Milind is in financial crises, Yudi rescues him by resuming his pocket money that too with arrears and interest.

While studying the condition of LGBT community in the post 1990s Mumbai—the financial capital of India, it is found that the rise of capitalism has not left homosexuals untouched. This is why sex was commodified and the queer identity was cast in a materialist mould (Bhaskaran 12). In a similar vein, we see the business of AK Modelling Agency which not only provides male models for ads but also thrives on male prostitution. The agency represents a horrifying picture of male brothel which caters to the needs of its gay clients having "huge disposable incomes". The customer profile of the agency revealed that most of the men were in the age group of fifties and sixties. The agency's CEO Menon had a penchant for hunks rather than queens so the active/manly men were preferred over

passive/womanly men. The choice of the agency in choosing only smart and active boys, the professional precision with which its business is being run and the age of its customers establishes the view point that there is a direct relationship of gay culture and commodification of sex. Another incident from the story also puts forth somewhat similar when Yudi's boy love is lost for the second time and he goes to his family to search for him. There he loses his self control and sounds more desperate for Milind than any of his family members. Therefore, when Milind returns to his family from AK Modelling Agency, he finds himself in a horrifying situation. He had become the laughing stock of his family and all of them asked him:

‘Milya, who is this Yudi? . . . He seemed more worried about your absence than all of us put together! He did not look like any of your other friends, Pramod, David and the rest.

. . . Dagdi Chawl joined his parents here and corroborated all they said:

‘What kind of womanly man is your friend? He was almost in tears when we told him you had left home.’(207).

It is worth noting that the sight of desperate Yudi amuses Milind's mother and brother. They compare the “chhakka” to macho friends of Milind like Pramod and David, and “found him wanting!” (207). But still the Mahadiks encourage the presence of Yudi in their sons' wedding. The apparent reason behind it seems to be the higher social status of Yudi. Quite possibly, they see Yudi's social status or perhaps his sexual interest as a means of drawing fringe benefits or for earning an income or so long as Milind still marries and fulfills their heteronormative expectations. The rising consumer culture of 90s is also hinted at by the author's remarks: “After his assignment at A.K., Modelling Agency, he wasn't going to let anyone touch his body for free. Not even his wife, who paid for it by doing his cooking and washing” (230).

Further, in the context of AK Modelling Agency where boys work in advertisements ranging from vests and briefs to cosmetics, it is worth mentioning that this occurrence is peculiar to post 1980s where male models started appearing in ads of cosmetic products, in

spite of the fact that traditionally ‘beauty’ is an exclusively feminine area. Men are not considered to be great consumers of cosmetics and grooming products. About this changed notion of masculinity from being macho to being not so macho in post 1980s, Sukriti Sobti in her article entitled *From Macho to Meterosexual: Change in Image of the Hindi Film Hero*, avers that after 1980s, the image of man changed from masculine, macho man to meterosexual man who is “gentler, less obdurate and existing in a world where love and family are important”. Yudi, the “tender gender bender” fits well in this image of meterosexual man who relies more on emotive display than on outward aggression. Citing Mark Stimpson, who coined the term meterosexual in 1994, a meterosexual man is the one “with a strong aesthetic sense, who spends a great deal of time and money on his appearance and lifestyle.” Stimpson sees gay men as early prototypes for meterosexuality but later he started believing that sexuality of meterosexual men was immaterial and they could be gay, straight or bisexual. Sobti quotes Prasenjit Chowdhury regarding the onscreen men of post 1980s: “. . . the new breed of men . . . wear pink shirts, cry on screen, raise babies and sell fairness creams”. The protagonist, Yudi seems to set a perfect example of a meterosexual man who is comfortable in the new skin of not being so macho like the Bollywood icon of angry young man, Amitabh Bachchan in Indian cinema. The fact that Yudi is open about his effeminate sexuality and the acceptance of him in his journalist circles foregrounds the changed prototype of manliness in certain parts of metro society. Even his mother is never shown to have confronted his sexuality. She seems to have accepted the fact that her son is different and so she sidelines herself from his life.

In the Indian culture, masculinity is constructed and manifested in a male dominated social set up where being a male becomes synonymous with being a warrior, vigilante and a protector. In a homosexual relationship however comes a crisis as both the partners want to act masculine and in the absence of any authentic role models of same sex couples, partners often tend to behave as heterosexual couples producing the compulsory gender binary. In *The Boyfriend*, Yudi and Milind also mimic the heterosexual marriage.

They lit a fire in the fucking room, and were about to go round it seven times, when a major dispute arose between them. Each wanted to be the engine as they encircled the fire. Each had a strong case. Milind's was that he was 'active' . . . Yudi's that he was the bread winner. In the end, of course, Yudi capitulated. At his age, love rarely came without sacrifice. He [even] fished out a chiffon sari that his mother had once left behind, draped himself in it, and became the bride [hence inverting the gendered roles of society, sexuality wins and gender is dropped]. Milind made him up with Vico Turmeric paste, bindi, kajal, nail-polish. Put sindoor in his maang. Tied the pallu of the sari to his own jabba. When they were done, they were round the fire seven times, with Yudi saying these words and Milind repeating them:

'I promise to be your humsafar, trust me, till death [s] do us apart.'(107)

It is worth noting that both the partners insist on playing the part of a 'man' as in any heterosexual Hindu style of wedding. Although both the partners are gay, still the manliness cannot be compromised and dropped altogether to play a submissive feminine role. It is clear that masculinity presses both the men to play the part of an "engine" and whosoever plays the feminine role is effeminate and inferior. Yudi's self-image gets shattered and annihilated. Other than this, the above episode also portrays the sad picture of gay world where gays either die of extreme isolation or develop some psychological disorder. The dire need of life-long companionship, union and relationships in gay world has given birth to the current scenario of Pride Queer Marches/Out Parades to get recognition for same- sex marriage. If the same sex couples are given rights as the heterosexual couples, then it will not only result in acceptance of LGBT people but will also establish their marriage in its truest sense. Thus, the depiction of this aping of marriage is also a dig at compulsive heteronormativity.

Drawing on the above given instance of mock marriage, it is clear that it is Milind who is over conscious towards the affectation of being male. He conflates his sexual role with perceptions of masculinity thereby limiting himself as a sex partner. However, Yudi is satisfied with whatever role he is to play. The attitudes of Milind and Yudi have something to do with their social class as per Michael Pollak "class origin has different effect on sexual

behaviour on one hand, and on the guilt feelings caused by homosexuality on the other. The higher one climbs in social hierarchy, the fewer becomes one's sexual contacts and with increasing age they diminish more rapidly in the higher classes than in the world of the working class . . . However much stronger feeling of guilt seems to be experienced by the working classes than by the higher executive class . . . socialization in the lower classes is very rigid and clearly defined in terms of restrictions and demands" (qtd. in Chanana 154). Thus throughout the novel, one notices internalized guilt of Milind made explicit in playing this card of being 'macho' and youthful proving Yudi effeminate. On the contrary, Yudi is comfortable in his skin and has no apparent guilt feelings. He loves him genuinely and openly without being conscious of what people around may make out about them. Once at the gay bar Testosterone, a rich man starts eyeing Milind and like a hero, Yudi fought for his 'heroine' bravely leaving Milind feeling humiliated as "He was no woman to be fought over"(94).

This incident offended Milind's idea of masculinity which is identical with being a penetrator and active player in the sexual act since socialization that begins in the family and continues through patriarchal cultural institutions, inculcates in men and women the dynamics of domination/subordination with regard to sexuality. So it is projected that masculinity indicates sexual dominance whereas femininity points to sexual submissiveness. Thus, hierarchical gender differentiation is extended to a hierarchical sexual demarcation. As Catherine MacKinnon comments ". . . genders are created through the eroticization of dominance and submission. The man/woman difference and the dominance/submission dynamic define each other. This is the social meaning of sex". In the context of the episode at Testosterone, Milind's proud manliness was falsified and nothing could restore his lost honour. This reaction of Milind is also explained by the writer himself through Yudi's self reasoning:

Whenever Yudi picked up strangers and took them home, he gladly offered them the active role in bed. He had a theory based on the years of experience. As long as men



were allowed to penetrate, there was no fear of their returning afterwards to demand money or beat you up. . . It was only when these men were penetrated that they became wounded tigers. They felt emasculated. They could then even murder. Currency notes, wrist watches, walkmans . . . couldn't restore their lost masculinity. (12)

Additionally, Milind's readily saying 'yes' for marriage also indicates the Indian conception of sexuality among men. It is commonly believed that homosexuality is just a testing phase which soon passes away. So Milind's decision of marriage indicates that he has chosen his sexuality and it also becomes symbolic of his desire to feel like a man. It can be easily inferred that Milind is not able to relate to homosexual feeling as a natural way to live because the social structures and traditions of Indian set up are an antithesis where such a desire is involved. For Milind, living a life without producing children would result in an abrupt halt to his place in the patrilineage of his caste. For him, to refuse marriage to a woman would be equal to refusing to become a man. Conversely, after getting married, he is not able to support and run his family as a man would. It comes as a serious blow to his masculinity and Yudi returns to his sexual self. It is his wife Leela only who suggests to him to go to his 'Krishna' and ask for some help not comprehending the sexual exchange this will entail.

However, the marriage of Milind also testifies to the agony of a terrified gay man who gets married not for the sake of it but to avoid 'shame' of being a gay. As Ruth Vanita and Hoshang Merchant have pointed out about Indian culture which is a 'shame culture' unlike the 'guilt culture' of the West. The 'shame culture' simply means that deviant sexual behaviour is not detested for any intrinsic reason, but for the shame it brings when exposed. It is for this reason that a majority of gay men get married in the name of social duty. The same statistics are being depicted by AK agency's customer profile. It unfolds "Besides being gay or bisexual . . . About one half were married" (180). This proves that most gay men live a double life. In the same context of intermittent role playing between heterosexual and non



heterosexual behaviours, Milind and Yudi keep leading the game of social hide and seek interchangeably. Money-wise, experience-wise and by logic of being openly gay, Yudi remains powerful while Milind drives his power through his youth. Thus even in gay culture, hierarchies are easily set, pertaining to various situations and conditions.

The novel also foregrounds the subjugation of women in gay subculture. It is surprising to note that gay men who themselves form a sexual minority tend to overpower women. For instance, Gauri is a woman of substance but the writer has portrayed her as a caricature. She is shown as a woman who is not only out to entice Yudi but is also meant to serve him every now and then. Towards the end of the story also when the protagonist falls ill, Gauri is made available by the author to nurse him. To add to her insult, the author portrays the final reunion of Milind and Yudi in Gauri's presence which leaves her dejected and shattered. If we delve deep into the reasons for gay fraternity's resentment towards women, it can be accorded to the biased assumption of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. The law, after all, speaks of penetrative sex keeping lesbians out of its purview (Srivastava 144). In the end, Gauri is shown to have lost interest in correcting and reforming Yudi's sexual interests. Rather to align with him, she goes to the extent of experimenting with lesbianism to align to her love. Thus, we see all of Gauri's efforts to 'normalize' and 'reform' him are nullified by the writer.

Raja Rao, in the novel, also endeavours to acquaint the reader with the heterosexist assumption of the medical world that considers homosexuality a disease. This is made overt in a scene when Yudi and Milind visit a doctor for treatment of STD (Sexually Transmitted Disease). The doctor chides them for being shameless as the couple "... openly admit[s] that they have contracted the warts through anal intercourse". The doctor keeps telling them "No unnatural sex, no warts" assuming the role of moral police. This incident clearly indicates that the Indian medical science and sexology endorse heteronormativity and 1990s Mumbai did not embrace homosexuals openly. It was AIDS epidemic which made same-sex desire visible in India against the orthodox claims of homosexuality being 'a western import'.



Thus, it can be safely concluded that R. Raja Rao, through the story, has interwoven the social fabric of 1990s which juxtaposes both the expression and repression of sexuality. The success of the novel lies in the fact that it has touched social and private life of Yudi and Milind together and also as separate males belonging to two different strata of the community. The book is extremely important from the point of literary history as it sets to mainstream the hitherto marginalized subject of sex, sexuality and male homosexual desire. Further, the novel amply highlights the closely related aspects of sexuality like desire, pleasure, anxiety, control, and need.

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Bestanding *Kosher Pukka*: Role of *Filius Nullius* in the *Mahabharata*

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Abstract: Ancient Indian society had a very hypocritical view regarding an illegitimate child. The various religious texts and myths are profused with a huge number of great people who were illegitimate children and had no paternal certainty. Being an encyclopaedia of Indian civilization, the *Mahabharata* has a profound influence on the Indian society. Despite all these knowledge and experiences, one can understand the trauma and humiliation that the illegitimate children had to face by giving a deep reading to the epic. In the *Mahabharata*, there are numerous examples of illegitimate children who were great people in the past and who were maltreated by the ancient Hindu society. The present paper is an attempt to show how the illegitimate children were treated as the objects to serve the 'legitimate heir' in the *Mahabharata*.

Key Words: Illegitimate, Legitimate, *Filius Nullius*, *Kosher Pukka*.

Legitimacy, according to western case law, is a social position given to a child, born to parents who are legally married to each other and to a child conceived before the parents obtain a legal divorce. Contrarily, illegitimacy (or bastardity) is the status of a child born out of a wed-lock. *Filius Nullius* is a Latin word for 'son of nobody' (especially in law) and *Kosher Pukka* means 'the legitimate heir'. The repercussions of illegitimacy have mainly related to a child's right of inheritance to the putative father's estate and the child's right to bear the father's surname or title. The children born out of wed-lock have been frowned upon by the society and they enjoy no virtual status in the society. Unfair treatment and stigma towards the illegitimate child permeates all aspects of the society. However, this prejudiced conduct towards bastardy is not new.

Ancient Indian society had a very hypocritical view regarding an illegitimate child. The various religious texts and myths are profused with a huge number of great people who

were illegitimate children and had no paternal certainty. Being an encyclopaedia of Indian civilization, the *Mahabharata* has a profound influence on the Indian society. The religious, social and cultural make up of the whole of the Indian subcontinent and much of the rest of Asia has been deeply influenced by this popular epic. The numerous myths and legends from the *Mahabharata* are considered as the treasures of information of ancient customs, traditions and ways of living for the country.

VedVyasa declares:

“Yannehastinakutrachit”

“Whatever is not found in this,

You will not find anywhere.” (Ganguli, XVIII. 5.50)

It is a *Mahakavya* and contains the core knowledge of the *Vedas*, the essence of the *Sastras*, of *Vedangas*, of *Itihaasa*, *Purana*, *Dharamsastra* and *Upvedas*. It throws light on astronomy, astrophysics, judicial systems; expounds the past, present and future, old age, death, fear, the reality or otherwise of objects, happiness and sorrows of life, duties and stages of life. It is, therefore, called the ‘fifth *Veda*’ and the most authentic commentary on ancient Indian life and polity.

Despite all these knowledge and experiences, one can understand the trauma and humiliation that the illegitimate children had to face by giving a deep reading to the epic. In the *Mahabharata*, there are numerous examples of illegitimate children who were great people in the past and who were maltreated by the ancient Hindu society and were treated as the objects to serve the ‘legitimate heir’.

Little is written about Satyawati, the great grandmother of the *Pandavas* and *Kauravas* princes, although she transformed the royal lineage of Hastinapura despite her low caste origins. But Satyawati was no ordinary woman. She was the daughter of Chedi king Uparichara Vasu who during the course of a hunt rested under a tree and ejected joyful semen while thinking about his wife. He did not want to waste the semen and so, he wrapped the semen in a leaf and gave it to a parrot to carry it to his wife so that she could bear a child with it. On the way to palace, parrot was attacked by a falcon and semen was consumed by a

cursed celestial-nymph-turned-fish Adrika. Few days later, some fishermen caught this fish and found twin children: a boy and a girl in its belly. They presented it to the king Uparichara who accepted the male child and declined the female child to be raised by fisherman chieftain Dusaharaj (a ferryman).

Satyavati had a small emanating body and teased as *Matsyagandha*. She ferried people across the river *Kalindi* (Yamuna). One day, while ferrying sage *Prashara* across a river, he expressed his desire to make love to *Matsyagandha* and have a child by her. Finding him indefatigable and, pragmatically concerned that he might upset the boat in midstream, she surrendered herself on two conditions: that her virginity shall remain intact and that the dreadful body-odour of fish is removed. Her wishes were granted by *Prashara*. She bore him a son called *Vyasa*. The son was raised by the father and brought up as an ascetic sage, but before he returned to the forest life, he promised his mother he would come and help her whenever she faced difficulty.

The tale of *Prashara* and *Matsya-gandha* can be seen as a tale of sexual exploitation of a young girl by a powerful elderly sage, or it can-be seen as a tale of sex hospitality that was prevalent in the epic age when fathers and husbands offered their daughters and wives to guests, sages and kings. Or it can-be seen as an attempt by *Matsya-gandha* to manipulate a sage by offering him sexual favours. (Pattanaik 35)

Matsya-gandha (who stinks of a fish), transformed into *Yojanagandha* (whose fragrance can be smelled across a yojana), captivated the attention of *Shantanu*, the king of *Hastinapuri*. Although she married him on the condition that her children would inherit the throne. Thus, she manoeuvred the crown prince *Bhishma* out of reckoning. But fate played her false and both her sons died childless leaving widows *Ambika* and *Ambalika*. This created crisis as there was no legitimate heir to the throne of *Hastinapur*. So, *Satyavati* asked *Bhishma* to do his duty as a step brother and begot sons on the widows of his brother by *Levirate* (*Niyoga*). But *Bhishma* did not decline from his vow as he considered it sacred.

A desperate *Satyavati* then sent for her first son *Vyasa*. As no 'legitimate heir' is left, illegitimate is summoned as a matter of necessity. So he fathered *Pandu* by *Ambalika* who

became the future king and Dhritrashtra by Ambika who was blind. But along with them, Vidura, a healthy son was born out of the union of Vyasa and a maid. Though fit to be a king, he would never be allowed to wear the crown as he was born of a maid. "The law states that only children of the lawfully wedded wife are the true sons, not the children of concubines" (Pattnaik 40). Therefore, some laws made Vidura the illegitimate son and Dhritrashtra and Pandu the legitimate sons of Vichitravirya, there were the other laws which prevented Dhritrashtra from becoming a king. As the law says that only a person who is physically fit, can be a king. Pandu was made king by superseding Dhritrashtra who was born blind. Ironically, even Pandu is physically unfit; his disability (sterility or impotency) is not evident as blindness.

But soon fate turned off its table and Pandu had renounced the palacely pleasures due to the curse of sage Kindama. So in the absence of Pandu, the throne of Hastinapur was ruled by blind king and blindfolded queen. More to Pandu's distress, Gandhari, wife of Dhritrashtra was pregnant before his own wives. Not only fate had taken the crown from him, it had also left him in a state whereby he could never father kings. Kunti consoled her husband and told him the magic formula given to her by sage Durvasa by which she could call upon any Sky-god and had a child with him instantly. She also explained to him how according to the laws of marriage, children born by the wife belonged to the husband whether he fathered them or not.

Women were bound to husbands, enabling all men to know who their fathers were. They could only have children by their husbands and if their husbands were unable to give them children, they could go to men chosen by their husbands. So it is that the father of the planet Mercury is the planet Jupiter even though it was moon who conceived him in the womb of the stars. (Pattnaik 47)

This delighted Pandu and he decided to take advantage of this law. With his permission, Kunti invoked Yama, the lord of Dharma and got Yudhishtra; Vayu, the god of wind and conceived Bhima; and called upon Indra, king of the Devas and ruler of the sky and conceived Arjuna. After this, Kunti refused to invoke other gods as it was laid in Dharma that

the number of men a woman was allowed to go to if her husband could not give her children was restricted to three. Including the husband, a woman thus could be with up to four men in her life. If she went to a fifth man, she was deemed a whore. Ironically, Kunti had a son before marriage with sun god and moreover, it was only Kunti who later in the epic would let Draupadi marry all five of her sons.

Then Pandu asked Kunti to invoke gods for Madri and she invoked Ashwini Twins, lords of the morning and evening star and gave Madri two sons Nakula, the handsomest man in the world and Sahadeva, the most knowledgeable man of the world. After that Kunti refused to invoke Gods even for Madri because she would not let the junior wife to have more sons, hence more power than her. Thus, the five sons of Pandu, three by Kunti and two by Madri, became known as the Pandavas. Collectively, the five sons had the five qualities of the perfect king- honesty, strength, skill, beauty and wisdom. This agitated Gandhari as Kunti had become a mother before her. She had conceived much earlier but mysteriously her pregnancy continued for two years. She told her maid to get an iron bar and struck her on her belly. The maid kept striking her until Gandhari's womb quivered and pushed out a ball of flesh, cold as iron. Gandhari again wailed on her cruel fate.

Once again the illegitimate son Vyasa was called upon out of necessity. He ordered the maid of Gandhari to break the ball of flesh into hundred small pieces and put them in jars full of ghee. Eventually they incubated over a period of year and thus were born the hundred sons and a daughter of Gandhari and Dhritrashtra. Collectively the sons were called Kauravas. Moreover, during his wife's long pregnancy, Dhritrashtra had taken for his pleasure a maid and bore him a son called Yuyutsu. He was an extremely capable man but like Vidura, a maid's son was not allowed to wear the crown. Soon after the death of Pandu in forest and Madri leaping into the fire of his funeral pyre, leaving her two sons in the care of Kunti, the widow Kunti along with her five sons had returned to Hastinapur so that her sons could be raised as princes in the royal household of the Kurus.

Bhishma appointed Kripa as tutor to all the five Pandavas and the hundred Kauravas. Even the birth of Kripa was not normal one. Shantanu, the father of Bhishma had found a boy

and a girl, abandoned in the forest, near the trident and pot, indicating that they were the children of a sage Sharadwana and a celestial nymph Janpadi. Shantanu raised them in the palace and named them Kripa and Kripa. Kripa grew up to be a teacher and Kripa was given in marriage to Drona. Drona was the son of sage Bhardwaja. He was born in a pot into which his father has split semen at the sight of a beautiful Apsara called Ghrutachi. In time, Kripa gave birth to a son, Ashwathama. Thus, Kripa, Kripa and Drona were illegitimate children born after nymphs seduce ascetics and made them break their vow of celibacy.

Further, Bhishma made Drona the royal tutor of the Kuru Princes but Drona accepted it on the condition that the knowledge given by him to his students would be used to capture Draupad, king of Panchala, alive. Meanwhile Pandavas had been able to capture Draupada, alive and Drona had insulted him in order to take revenge from him. Now, under the tutelage of Drona, Arjuna had established himself as a greatest archer of the world. But suddenly, Eklavya appeared as a Greatest Archer who when denied of being taught by Drona, had made effigy of his master and practiced before it and achieved excellence in archery. But in order to keep his words, Drona demanded that the right thumb of Eklavya as guru-dakshina. Without a moment's hesitation, Eklavya pulled out knife, sliced his right thumb and placed it at his Guru's feet. This incident demonstrates how greatness needs not to be achieved by being better than others; it can also be achieved by pulling down others who are better.

On the graduation ceremony of the Kuru princes, Drona organised a tournament to showcase before the people of Hastinapur the skills of his students. There, the star pupil Arjuna was challenged by another archer, identifying himself as Karna. Karna outshined Arjuna in every challenge but even then he was not declared as a winner because he was the son of a charioteer and had no right to compete with the people of the royal household. But originally, Karna was the son of Kunti, born before her marriage. Pleased with her services, the sage Durvasa had given Kunti a magic formula by which she could call upon any Deva she wished and have a child by him. Curious to test the mantra out, without realising the consequences of such an action she had invoked Surya, the sun-god. Surya appeared before her and gave her a son with a pair of earrings attached to his ears and golden armour that



clings to his chest. A terrified Kunti, in order to save her reputation, abandoned the child in a basket and left it to a river's whim.

Although Karna was rejected by all, Duryodhana came to his rescue and accepted him as his friend and also made him the king of Anga. He accepted Karna as an equal. But the matter became worse than ever. But both the Kunti and Gandhari fear that their sons would have to share their inheritance with their cousins. Kauravas were of the opinion that the Pandavas were not the true sons of Pandu as they were conceived by the law of Niyoga through other men. So, rightfully Kauravas had the royal bloodline. But by that logic, the blood of the Pratipa and Shantanu flowed only in Bhishma. Neither Pandu nor Dhritrashtra belonged to the original bloodline. They were the sprouts of Vyasa's seeds nurtured in the wombs of the princess of Kashi. So, both Pandavas and Kauravas had not the royal bloodline by that logic. But each one believed that they were the rightful heirs to the throne.

Even the people were not sure who should be a king. At first, they sided with Yudhishtira who was honest, nice and noble. Supporting him were four brothers, one strong, one skilled, one beautiful and one wise. On the other side, they had sympathy towards Duryodhana, son of a blind father and a blind-folded mother, whose friend Karna, treated so harshly by the Pandavas, was not only the strong but also generous.

Finally, on the recommendation of Bhishma and Vidura, Dhritrashtra appointed Yudhishtira as the heir apparent. But this declaration made Kauravas burn with jealousy. They hatched a deadly conspiracy of burning the pandavas alive in lac house. But with the help of Vidura, Pandavas escaped from the lac house and disguised themselves as Brahmins. They took refuge in the forest where they were attacked by a rakshasa called Hidimb, brother of Baka, who recognised Bhima as the killer of his brother. After a fierce duel, Bhima overpowered him and strangled him to death. By seeing this, rather than getting angry, Hidimb's sister Hidimba was drawn by Bhima's strength and valour and expressed her desire to marry Bhima. With the acceptance by Kunti, they both got married according to the demonic rites. Their union produced a very powerful son for Bhima, named Ghatotakacha, who was to show his valour in the grand war of Mahabharata after some time. But Kunti was

not comfortable with Bhima's relationship with the rakshash woman and so asked him to move on as his destiny lay in the palace, not in the forest.

After this, Pandavas along with Kunti went to the forest outside Panchala where they heard about Swayamvara arranged by King Draupada of Panchala for his daughter Draupadi's (Panchaali's) marriage. They went there disguised themselves as Brahmins. The father of the bride had asked all the participants to string the highly stiff bow and shoot the eye of a fish rotating on a wheel suspended from the roof of the hall while looking at his reflection in a vat of oil. Even the birth of Draupadi was not normal one. Burning with humiliation after his defeat by the students of Drona, Draupada invoked Shiva, the destructive form of God, and sought a way to destroy not just Drona but also his Patrons, the Kuru clan. He performed Yajna in order to invoke a magic potion which when consumed could give woman children. So, through the fire of Yajna, emerged two children: a man called Drishtadyumna who would kill Drona and a woman called Draupadi who would marry into the Kuru household and divide it.

However, many archers from the different regions of Bharatavarsha tried their lucks and shot arrows everywhere except at the eye of the fish. The only person who could shot the arrow at the aim was Karna but Draupadi rejected Karna on the grounds of his apparent social status. Therefore, Draupada compromised and allowed priests to participate. Draupadi accepted her father's compromise, and married a priest who turned out to be a warrior in disguise. Thus, Vyasa had drawn attention to the folly of being driven more by external apparent truths rather than by underlying actual truths. Therefore, with a mere statement of Kunti, Draupadi became the common wife of five Pandavas brothers, though it was Arjuna who had won her at Swayamvara. Vyasa never clarifies why Kunti does not retract her statement when she realizes that what Arjuna is referring to is a woman and not a thing. Kunti knows that the only strength she has is the unity of her sons. She insists they marry the same woman because she fears if Draupadi only marries Arjuna, sexual jealousy will cause a rift between the brothers.



However, the whole city of Hastinapur rejoiced when they learnt about the survival of Pandavas from the terrible fire and their arrival at Hastinapur with Kunti, Draupadi and all powerful Krishna (incarnation of God, Vishnu). But Pandavas kept wondering who among their relatives had hatched the plot to kill them. Among these gossips, Vidura advised Dhritrashtra to renounce the throne and give it to Yudhishtra as per law. Out of love and affection for his own sons, the king refused to give it all to Yudhishtra and in a public ceremony announced the division of kingdom. He gave the forest of Khandava-prastha to Pandavas, a wide forest, full of birds, trees, beasts, turtles, animals, insects, nagas, rakshasa, etc. It was set on fire by Pandavas to clear the land. Nothing had survived the great conflagration except one demon Maya, who helped Pandavas to build a great city, named Indra-Prastha, the city of Indra (paradise on earth).

Meanwhile, Indra-prastha became the prosperous city, full of orchards, fields, pastures, markets, rivers, priests, warriors, farmers, herdsmen and artisans from all over the world. This created envy among the Kauravas who had the most productive share of property with themselves. Then, Shakuni, maternal uncle of Duryodhana came up with a plan of taking everything back from the Pandavas by inviting them to play gamble. Yudhishtira who was addicted to gambling readily accepted the invitation but lost each and everything in the game including his brothers, wife and even himself. Draupadi was dragged to court where the elders maintained the stony silence and the pandavas hung their heads in shame. Kauravas ridiculed and mocked at the Pandavas and Draupadi.

Unable to bear her insult, Draupadi voice boomed across the hall but trembled Dhritrashtra hobbled towards her and granted her boons in order to pacify her anger. Draupadi demanded freedom of her husbands and restoration of their possessions. Thus, Draupadi became the raft that had saved the drowning Pandavas. But the Pandavas had to leave their city and move into the forest for thirteen years. Those thirteen years including one year of disguise at the kingdom of Virata, Pandavas were constantly accompanied by Rishis, angels, demons, Indra, Hanuman, Yama, etc., who taught them important lessons of life and eventually they were transformed and transgressed upto a greater extent.

Therefore, after years of exile, Krishna went to Hastinapuri as Pandavas' messenger and asked for at least five villages for Pandavas so that they may live there with dignity. But Duryodhana denied giving even a needle point of territory to his cousins. Ourageously Pandavas declared war against Kauravas. And moreover Krishna adopted every measure of *Saam Daam Dand Bhed* to secure victory on Pandavas' side. He even declared the truth of Karna's birth to him:

Karna, the men that Duryodhana fights are your own brothers... that mean your are a Pandava, the first one, elder than Yudhishtira. And since Arjuna was asked by Kunti to share Draupadi with all his brothers, she is your wife too. Should you change sides? You will be the king of Indra-Prastha and Draupadi will be your queen and the five Pandavas will serve you and Kunti will bless you. (Ganguli 219)

Karna denied all the offers and showed his loyalty towards Duryodhana. He could never betray that faith which stood by him when the world rejected him. Through karna Vyasa represented many conflicts of life which every person had to be gone: friendship or family, personal ambition or universal good, loyalty or opportunity. Likewise all the kings with their armies, soldiers, chariots, horses and elephants from all over the Bharatvarsha converged on Kurukshetra like the tributaries of rivers, either to join Pandavas or Kauravas. As the sun reached the zenith, the warriors began to slay one another in the battle. With each passing day victory eluded either. So, on the ninth day, Krishna suggested Pandavas to give sacrifice to Kali. Arjuna barely remembered Ulupi yet hugged Iravan (again an illegitimate one) as a son, for he had to give him as a sacrifice to Kali. Thus, on the tenth day, the victory had moved to Pandavas by suspending Bhishma with arrows.

After the death of Bhishma, the great Kaurava leader, Dronacharya took the charge and led the forces. Moreover, Karna also stepped into the forces. Moreover, Karna also stepped into the battle field. But again Krishna along with Indra had played their game in order to protect Pandavas from Karna. One day, a beggar came to Karna begging for alms. He asked Karna for his earrings and armour that had been part of his body since the day of his birth. Without a second thought, Karna gave them up as a gift to the poor man. The man

turned out to be Indra, king of Pantheon of Gods. Pleased with Karna's charity, he granted him a celestial spear that never missed its mark.

Drona arranged the soldiers in a dreaded wheel formation called 'Chakravayuh'. Only Arjuna could break it. Divining the fact that karna would kill arjuna with divine spear, Krishna made Arjuna not to hear the helping cries of the Pandavas. So, the son of Arjuna, Abhimanyu entered the formation to break it up but he did not know the way of escaping out from there. Thus, the Kaurava warriors jumped on him like wild dogs and cut him into pieces mercilessly.

The death of Abhimanyu made the war more personal and Arjuna decided to kill Jayadhrata. After the death of Jayadhrata, Drona became angry and ordered his troops to continue fighting even after the sunset. Seeing this, Krishna told Bhima to summon his son, Ghatokacha, by Hidimbi, for rakshasas were invincible at night. Ghatokacha appeared and smashed the armies of Kaurava into thousand pieces. Therefore, compelled and persuaded by Duryodhana, Karna used his spear against Ghatokacha. Again his death made the war more personal than before because now like Arjuna, Bhima had also suffered the loss of son. Now the eyes of Pandavas were set at Drona, the great warrior, whose prime motivation came from his son Ashwathama. So, Pandavas told a lie about the death of Ashwathama (though it was truth also, a partial truth; death of elephant named Ashwathama) and death this made the devastated father to shun his spear down and to sit down in deep meditation ready to die. Thus instructed by Krishna, Dhristadyumna, son of Drupada, commander in one sweep severed the neck of Drona.

Now, the fight has shifted from the warriors to the fight between brothers i.e. between Karna and Pandavas. Kunti could not bear the idea of fighting brother against brother and so she paid a visit to Karna, revealing him the whole truth of his birth. She persuaded him to join the side of Pandavas. But Karna declared that he would never abandon his friend Duryodhana and moreover, he would not kill her sons except Arjuna. Kunti wanted to bless Karna but she couldn't. How could she wish Karna against the sons of Pandu. Therefore, on the seventeenth



day of war, all energies of the Pandava camp were directed against Karna. Karna captured the four Pandavas but set them free as per the vow made to Kunti.

Karna's arrow was able to push Arjuna's chariot barely ten yards while Arjuna's chariot was able to push his hundred yards back. Yet every time when Karna did so, Krishna praised him ecstatically. Because, on Karna's chariot stood two men. But on Arjuna's chariot sat Nara and Narayana and on his banner sat Hanuman. Therefore, pushing Karna's chariot was easier than that of Arjuna's. The duel between Arjuna and Karna continued all the day until just before the sun was about to set, Karna's wheel got stuck in the ground. Karna recapitulated the curse of his guru Parshuram and Bhoo-Devi and knew that he would die soon. But like a true warrior, he got down from his chariot and tried to release the wheel. The moment he turned his back, Arjuna shot an arrow at him which ripped through Karna's heart.

That day, it is said, the sun set faster to mourn for his son. Faraway, in the Pandava battle camp, Kunti wept for her first born, the son she could never publically acknowledge. The charioteers of Pandava's as well as Kauravas's army stopped to mourn for that son of charioteer who belonged to nowhere. Duryodhana was inconsolable in his grief. For, victory had no meaning for him without Karna by his side. After the death of this great warrior, all warriors one after another were slayed down by the Pandavas..

The victorious Pandavas returned to the battle camp where they were warmly welcomed by Draupadi. Eighteen days had passed with passing of eighteen armies, over one billion, two hundred and twenty million people. Among the wailing woman and orphans, there was another woman who kept wandering among the dead Kauravas. She was Kunti, searching for her eldest son Karna. After knowing the relationship between Kunti and Karna, all were grief stricken to remember how victory had come to them stained in their brother's blood. It was evident from Kunti's revelation that son born of youthful indiscretion were never acknowledged publicly, till it became necessary. For this discretion Kunti was blamed by her son Yudhishtira who cursed the whole women race because Kunti, a woman, held back from him the identity of Karna.

However he does not pause to think about those social norms which made his mother so powerless, so insecure, that she behaved against her natural inclination in abandoning her son. Kunti's righteous son does not see her misery or share it; he is only angry with her for having made him a party to his brother's death. (Shah 94)

The situation remains same with other women in the epic. Satyawati did not disclose the identity of her pre-marriage illegitimate son, Vyasa, until necessary. Moreover, Bhima also exclaimed in the *Sabha-Parva* that the progeny born of Draupadi, insulted and defiled as she was by others would be of no use to the Pandavas. "The above instances lead us to draw the sole conclusion that children born outside the recognized marriage were not welcome, even if they could not be wished away; hence their inclusion in the list of recognized sons (Shah 94)".

Such is the nature of man-made laws: ignorant of the past and insensitive to present. Although Vidura was fit to be a King than Pandu and Dhritrashtra, but he wouldn't be a king according to law. Draupadi could be divided among five brothers but her sons were of no use to the Pandavas' Kingdom. Even the identity of Vyasa and Karna were only revealed by their respective mothers when it became necessary for consolidating their powerful position in Hastinapur. Thus, illegitimate children in the society were often stigmatised. The treatment given to them in the *Mahabharata* was indicative of the way the Hindu society treated the illegitimate children. They only acted as objects to serve the legitimates.

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From 'Here' to 'There' In Neil Bissoondath's novel *A casual Brutality*

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Abstract We are living in an age of globalization. Globalization no longer simply describes international happening, but the term has broadened to include other dimensions, too. Thus, the globalization refers not merely to the spheres of economics but also draws attention to the Western World and the deprivation of the so called developing countries. In this present paper I am trying to put forth diasporic experiences, cultural hybridity, loss, loneliness, homelessness, nostalgia, migration, multiple ethnicities and the complex mosaic of man-women relationship in migrant space. To the extent, mostly the immigrant fiction is concerned with Identity; it may well encompass stories in which protagonists feel uneasy with their cultural tradition or even they reject it. Ramabai Espinet, Neil Bissoondath, Rohinton Mistry, Bharti Mukharjee, Kavita Daswani, faced the cultural, social problems as immigrants in Canada, and America. It is crucial to perceive that in order to arrive at an adequate understanding of the narratives of many Canadian immigrant authors writing about multiculturalism, specific post colonial experiences are indispensable into their contexts. An immigrant writer postulates his writing into that concerned with 'here' for ex. Canada, India etc and 'There' the country of origin of the respective writer. The mental landscapes of the writers have two poles, there and here- but this is not a cheap polarity of eelgrass and snow, of a vapid idealized image of a past that is the focus of Nostalgia and a simplified alienating here. 'There' and 'Here' interlocked. These two terms refer more to spatial configurations. As far as concerning, Neil Bissoondath's 'Casual Brutality' the novel is about immigrant aspect, multiculturalization, diasporic sensibilities, migration, dislocation itineraries, which include the experiences of both the homeland and the host nation.

Key words : Nostalgia, multiculturalisation, identity crisis, Displacement migration, disintegration etc.



Introduction

The notion of the Diaspora is a recent term in Post colonial studies. Recent Post-Colonial literature and theory has advocated the futility of nostalgically looking towards origin and the roots. Neil Devindra Bissoondath was Trinidadian novelist. He wrote his first novel, *A casual Brutality* (1988), *The Innocence of Age* (1992), *The World Within Her* (1999), really his writing is related with diasporic aspects.

Neil Bissoondath first novel, is set on the fictive Caribbean Island of Casaquemada. In this novel, Raj's view of Caribbean nature will be examined as an example of his alienation from his country of origins first. Among the south, Asian Canadian writers from the Caribbean, Neil Bissoondath may be regarded as the most perceptive and skilled commentator on characteristic themes of disorder and persecution leading to displacement, and ultimately to inner disorder. In a casual Brutality there is catastrophic portrayal of decay and disintegration. On metaphorical level, A 'casual Brutality' alludes to the political, social and cultural crisis on casaquemada in terms of illness and disease. According to Bissoondath Caribbean society is suffering from an illness that is nearly fatal.

"All Ideas of selfness and service took a plane out of Casaquemada years ago. It is one of our diseases" (Bissoondath 219).

That place and atmosphere seem especially detrimental to mental health is underlined by Surein, who suffers from Paranoia, and Jan and Raj, who both develop Claustrophobia. Surein paranoia exemplifies a problematic Identity construction. The political situation of Casaquemada is equally critical. While Raj suggests that there remains only one chance of cure for. Ex. letting the illness run its course and trust the body politic to heal itself, grapplers diagnosis suggest a therapy more radical. To his mind, casaquemada, is rotten, corrupt and self deceptive. It is a nation that is not multicultural at heart but merely celebrated the carnival of intolerance (201). Casaquemada is a society that is portrayed as racist and racist. The theorem of race (88) informs the segregationist character of society in the case of



Madera, who doesn't believe on racial difference. For Madera, racial difference is a crucial factor in determining one's cultural identity. Raj on the other hand, can't deny the humanist Ideals underlying his professional training as doctor. Just as medicines view on man acknowledged no essential difference between different races and ethnicities. Despite the fact that Madera feels suppressed and victims by colonialism, post- colonialism and neo-colonialism. Thus, it is not surprise that the protagonist of his first novel finds himself coveting the lack of community in Canada (163).

I had not come to Toronto to find casaquemada, or to play the role of ethic,
Deracinated and costumed, Drawing around
Himself the defensive postures of the land
Left behind. And this display of the rakish
This attempt at third world exoticism
Seemed me a trap, a way of sealing
The personality, of rendering it harmless
To all but the Individual. (Bissoondath 221).

This is how the casaquemada society reflects the community. Violence and violation figure very important leitmotif in 'A casual Brutality. It can be seen in raj's Carribean experience as well his stay in Canada. Surins threat of using violence against Raj is mirrored by Andy's aggression against Raj in Canada. The cultural gap between the Carribean and Canada is really felt by the central characters of the novel. Jan Can't help but feel " Fucking helpless in this place" (140) while Raj thinks and deplores the lack of control by imagining a time when "everything had at least seemed manageable (33).

This novel is grim reality of bleakness of life in the post- colonial Carribean. In Carribean society where hope is replaced by illusions, the seemingly oxymoronic becomes paradoxical. Violence is tragic in that Raj's wife and the child die. Raj's Carribean identity is foregrounded by Bissoondath and thus made strange and self- consciousness. The function of casual Brutalities lies in objectifying Raj's conflict between Canadian and Carribean culture.



Violence must be understood in the context of a personal crisis. In experiencing the dark side of casaquemada as the violence of the other. This novel is depiction of ‘Here’ means of the Carribean Society. Throught the novel, the representation of the Island is deeply disturbing and its portrayal is one of “decay and disintegration, and the recurrent images in the novel are those of brutality, forlornness and annihilation. The story is told by raj, who leaves the Island to become a doctor. He decides to study medicine in Canada to escape from the smallness of the Island and doesn’t want to be trapped in the family business and his return is not something thought out but almost casual. The picture that Bissoondath paints of brutality, violence. Poverty, ethnic conflicts, greed, corruption, racism, through various characters and the events through the novel alludes to the political, social, and cultural crisis on casaquemada in terms of its illness and disease. The novel begins with hopelessness of the narrator Dr. Raj Ramsingh, a doctor at the casaquemada, where it seems that law and order has collapsed, and Ram is waiting for the plane to leave the Island again for Canada. Raj’s grandmother, uncle Grapper, have come to him off at the airport grappler advises Raj to reconsider his decision to leave the Island forever, but Raj seems very firm as he is not ready to rely on “illusive hope” of the Island which spreads pessimism among the optimist like Raj. At the age of eighteen Raj’s left for Canada, but he didn’t know much about place where he is going, but only they have some lazy romantic ideas, about the destination.

Raj carries with him only the paper and the plastic his passport, travelers cheques, his Canadian citizenship and social insurance. For Grapppler, Raj is unlucky, as he leaves the Island with nothing, has lost his wife and son. But on the other hand, Raj seems quite lucky as he has citizenship of another country Canada. And in this way he can escape from his homeland. A politically disturbed Island, to other place and start a new life. Grapppler considers that human Psyche is disturbed, rich man can’t understand the difficulties and the pain of a poor, and probably he would be Jealous about the ‘other’ one. There is a feeling of uneasiness, shown in this novel. The struggle of haves and have not which results into the differences and marginalization among the existing social groups. For Raj, rich people who



have everything and still possess dual citizenship and can migrate anytime to other countries. The sense of Insecurity of the other creates social imbalance for them about convince him to stay on, but fails his decision of never returning hurts her a lot because she would feel loneliness in an old age when always craves for a company rather than being alone.

He starts writing about his experiences on Island, which moves back and forth in time, and the remaining chapters are the full description of the same. His loneliness, uncertainty, insecurity, alienation, dilemma, helplessness and anxiety clearly reflected in his writing. Raj seems himself as a symbol of hope who can be helpful to the society to remove pain and grief. In this novel Mrs. Lal is suffering from cancer and her reports suggests that she can hardly live. Still Raj searches for away 'hope' of survival in Mrs. Lal's report which is futile because the cancer is deeply embedded in her body. Raj said," the situation of Casaquemada, is a veiled Promise of violence delivered with carefully weighed calculation, an offering safety spoken of a causal brutality."It was a sign of forthcoming violence where people who have money will be targeted by the poor, frustrated people minority groups of the Island who feel so oppressed and marginalized. Moreover Raj feels confined on casaquemada, where there is no country as opposed to city, geographically. It is a simple Island. The Casaquemada itself means 'Lopez dead'. The quest for identity is also found in this novel," I am, by birth casaquemada, where there is no country as opposed to 'city'. Geographically it is a simple Island. The casaquemada itself means 'Lopez dead'. The quest for Identity is also found in this novel, "I am. By birth, casaquemada, by necessity disguised as choice, Canadian." It is the story of double migration. Even it is about racial segregation. The following extract about English cricket team in West Indies summarizes the "Otherness".

Everywhere all over the Island radios were turned to the cricket broadcast, men walked around with transistors held to their ears women carried them In their bags, at school during the Lunch break, boys in the classrooms and teachers in the staffroom clustered around the radios, the transmission more grapping for being distant and fuzzy with static when a west Indian batsman hit a six or reached his century a



collective cheer went up, the school sounding from tea street like a hive of suddenly stirred bees. (Bissoondath 13)

This suggests that the Island practices reverse racism against white people. All the people support the west Indian team which means white are perpetual outsiders. To Raj, and Kayso, Canada is less corrupt country, “Canada has got to be one of the most naive countries in the world. I mean, you people just have no Idea, no Idea at all, what the no idea at all, what the world corruption means. Where I came from people don’t steal thousand, you know, they steal millions. And is a small place, everything is personal, It have no such things as a dispassionate system of law. You attack an Individual, you attack the group. And is the group that turning on you, every man Jack, because everybody’s part of the system, you have to be if you going to survive (Bissoondath 19).

Not only Jan but Raj also surprised by seeing the current conditions of Lopez City where so many beggars of every age are homeless and wandering through streets. Raj says:

Casaquemada had never been a place
That locked after its unfortunate and
Its handicapped. That was left to
Families, and when they couldn’t or
Wouldn’t cope, those Incapable of fending
For themselves were abandoned to the
Lottery of the streets; a game of
Change that had no winners, only
Varieties of losers – (22)

According to Raj Canada at least tried to abolish poverty by introducing some schemes whereas in casaquemada life is worth less than a house. For Bissoondath Carribean / Casaquemada, Society had becomes guilty of imposing a collective Identity on the Individual. This Island had gone exotic change. Police night Sticks, submachine guns, armed



robberies, are become common on the Island. Really Bissoodaths detects, “Cultural and moral degeneration within casaquemada post colonial society” (31)

In this way, I would like to conclude my paper ascertain that the post colonial reality is depicted by Neil Bissoondath in the casual Brutality. The feeling of uneasiness homelessness, otherness, double sense-consciousness are the aspects of writing of diasporic writers, So this novel is about contemporary diasporic discourse of Caribbean society.

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From Spirituality to Psychology: The Study of The Bhagavadgita from the Perspective of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

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Abstract

The Bhagavadgita is one of the momentous scriptures of Hinduism abounding in art and wisdom. This research paper examines and explores the therapy process involved in The Bhagavadgita in which Lord Krishna helped the grief-stricken Arjuna. Arjuna's tale of woe and suffering and Lord Krishna's celestial teachings are moulded into the framework of cognitive behavioural therapy. The paper adopts an interdisciplinary approach and quintessentially weaves psychology and spirituality. The Bhagavadgita, an ethereal manuscript has always been the statue of sustenance in the times of spiritual, social, and psychological disintegration of man from *Kaliyug* to *Kalyug*.

Keywords: The Bhagavadgita, cognitive behavioural therapy, interdisciplinary approach, psychology, spirituality.

Philosophy in India is essentially spiritual. India's old flame of spiritual spirit is still burning as throughout its life it has been living with one purpose. It has fought for truth and against error. The Bhagavadgita and the *Upanishads* are the great literature of the country and at the same time the vehicle of the great systems of thought. The *Gita* or the *Lord's Song* is an inspiring call for a dedicated life. The purpose of the *Gita* is to teach an art of living by which even the humblest of daily tasks are ennobled and spiritualised. This esoteric work has the power to make a common man a man of God. Lord Krishna says



I am the father of this world, the mother, the supporter and the grandsire. I am the object of knowledge, the purifier. I am the syllable Aum. I am the goal, the upholder, the lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge, the upholder, the lord, the witness, the abode, the refuge and the friend. I am the origin and the dissolution, the ground, the resting place and the imperishable seed. I give heat; I withhold and send forth the rain. I am immortality and also death, I am being as well as non-being, O Arjuna. (The Bhagavadgita 290)

The Bhagavadgita is a 700-verse Hindu scripture in Sanskrit that is part of the longest Indian epic Mahabharata. The *Gita* is spoken mainly by Lord Krishna, who is explaining the purpose of life to Arjuna. The Bhagavadgita has been accepted as an eminent scripture and an incomparable converse between God and Man. If the title of this sacred Hindu poem were paraphrased, it would read “The Holy Song of God Himself, who, at the beginning of Kali-Yuga or the dark age, descended upon the earth to aid and instruct Man” (Judge 1). The *Gita* means song, and Bhagavad is one of the names of Krishna. Edwin Arnold called it *The Song Celestial*; Humbolt characterized it as “ the most beautiful, the only true philosophical song in any known tongue” (Munshi 8).

The spiritual essence of The Bhagavadgita is aplenty. Mahatma Gandhi was quoted as saying that whenever he had a problem The Bhagavadgita offered an answer and the solution. For a student of psychology The Bhagavadgita offers a valuable case study for lessons in psychotherapy – resolution of conflict and successful resumption of action from a state of acute anxiety and guilt laden depression that precipitated inaction.

This research paper makes a humble attempt to discuss the therapy process involved in The Bhagavadgita in which Lord Krishna helped the grief-stricken Arjuna through dialogue and discussion. In The Bhagavadgita, Arjuna was the patient and Lord Krishna was the therapist. The Krishna delivered single session therapy to Arjuna.



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: An Introduction

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a talking therapy that can help in managing problems by changing the way one thinks and behaves. Cognitive behavioral therapy has become effective mainstream psychosocial treatments for many emotional and behavioral problems over the past 50 years. Wilson says

Research has shown that CBT is one of the most effective treatments for the management of anxiety. With cognitive behavioral therapy, one works with a mental health counsellor (psychotherapist or therapist) in a structured way, attending a limited number of sessions. (75)

The term CBT has become as broad as to defy clear definition. The Web site of the Association for Advancement of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, the premier multidisciplinary, international organization devoted to CBT, avoids a specific definition of the term, instead describing the organization's mission as

...the advancement of a scientific approach to the understanding and amelioration of problems of the human condition. These aims are achieved through the investigation and application of behavioral, cognitive, and other evidence-based principles to assessment, prevention, and treatment.
(http://www.abct.org/Information/?m=mInformation&fa=fs_ANXIETY)

Cognitive behavioral therapy helps the person in being aware of inaccurate or negative thinking, so he can view challenging situations more clearly and respond to them in a more effective way. Cognitive behavioral therapy can be a very helpful tool in treating mental disorders or illnesses, such as anxiety or depression. But not everyone who benefits from cognitive behavioral therapy has a mental health condition. It can be an effective tool to help anyone learn how to better manage stressful life situations. It is based on the concept that



thoughts, feelings, physical sensations and actions are interconnected, and that negative thoughts and feelings can trap the person in a vicious cycle. CBT aims to help the person in cracking this cycle by breaking down overwhelming problems into smaller parts and showing him how to change these negative patterns to improve the way he feels.

Psychology in Spirituality: The Application

When The Bhagavadgita is studied in the light of cognitive behavioral therapy, Arjuna exhibits negative behavioral patterns as his mind was overpowered by anxiety and deceit. Though Arjuna was not suffering from any psychological disorder in psychological terms but his inner turmoil in the form of conflict overpowers him. This projected the high negative energy level because of fear of killing his relatives and lack of faith in God lurking in his mind.

This *Pandava* prince was veteran and great warrior who played proactive role in the preparation of the *Mahabharata* war. He drove to the battlefield with zeal. After viewing the warriors on the field he was filled with guilt, anxiety and, doubt. His attachment towards his loved ones drove him to drop his weapon and quitting the combat.

Lord Krishna acts as a divine therapist who through his incantatory discourse converts Arjuna's negative energy into positive one. Lord Krishna is an incarnation of the Divine; he is the embodiment of Visnu. Arjuna is the pupil and Lord Krishna is his teacher. The teacher guides his pupil, Arjuna. He was fighting with the forces of darkness, falsehood limitation, and mortality which bar the way to the higher world. He took refuge under, the world teacher, *jagadguru*, who counsels and cures him.

The Pandava Price, Arjuna: An Emblem of Despondent Being

Arjuna was much anxious and depressed in the middle of the field viewing all his kins, mentors and relatives at the commencement of the *Mahabharata* war. Verses 29, 30, 32, 44

and 45 of chapter 1 narrated the psychopathology of Arjuna as he mentioned it to Krishna. The symptoms of anxiety explained in verses 29 and 30 as “weakness of the limbs”, “dryness of the mouth”, “shivering of the body”, “goose skin”, “trembling”, “burning sensation throughout the body”, “dizziness” etc while symptoms of depression were recited in the verses 32, 44 and 45 as “his preference of death to war”, “guilt of killing kins, relatives, mentors and friends”, “unwillingness to fight”, “gloominess”, “negative thinking process”, “desire to quit kingdom and pleasure”.

Level I of CBT: Target Emotion

The first step of cognitive behavioral therapy is to select the “target emotion” (Westbrook 23). The therapist analyses the effect of the target emotion on the person’s thought. He then examines how target emotion and “feeling based thinking” (Westbrook 36) are leading the person to act. While analysing the target emotion one can include past, present and potential future actions. The target emotion of Arjuna is anxiety and guilt. Arjuna was still tied with the threads of past and he was guided by social conventions and customary morality and not by his individual perception of truth. He was not willing to slay his former teacher who gave him guidance. He believes that even though the enemies are aggressors, he must not kill them. He says in chapter1 verse 34-35

Teachers, fathers, sons and also grandfathers; uncles and father-in-law, grandsons and brothers-in-law and kinsmen. These I would not consent to kill although they kill me, O Madhusudana. How shall I strike Bhishma and Drona who are worthy of worship, O Krishna. (The Bhagavadgita 111)

Arjuna also predicts the future events which enhance his anxiety. He says in chapter1 verse 40-41



In the ruin of a family, its ancient laws are destroyed: and when the laws perish, the whole family yields to lawlessness. And when lawlessness prevails, O Varsneya, the women of the family become corrupted and when women are corrupted, confusion of caste arises. (The Bhagavadgita 104)

Anxiety comes with a host of physical and mental sensations like phobias, panic attacks etc. When Arjuna sees his own people arrayed and eager for fight he becomes severely anxious. He says in chapter1 verse 29-30 “My limbs quail, my mouth goes dry, my body shakes and my hair stands on end. The bow (Gandiva) slips from my hand and my skin too is burning all over. I am not able to stand steady. My mind is reeling” (The Bhagavadgita 100).

After looking at the main thinking errors the therapist analyses the situation which gives rise to these problematic thinking patterns which are called triggers. Rich Tenant defines triggers as “an actual event, a memory, an image, a past event, a future event, a physical sensations, or emotional behavior” (Wilson 38). The thoughts of fighting with kinsmen triggered Arjuna’s anxiety, fear, shame, guilt, and depression. The narrator Sanjaya says in chapter1 verse 26 “There saw Arjuna standing fathers and grandfathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, sons and grandsons, father-in-laws and friends; was overcome with great compassion, grief and dejection...” (The Bhagavadgita 99).

Level II of CBT: Cognitive Response

In response to this trigger, a series of thoughts spring up which in psychological terms is known as “cognitive response” (Wilson 23). The cognitive response to the trigger can be very quick. This quick and automatic thinking is known as negative automatic thoughts (NAT) which is the fundamental level of CBT. . NATs are extreme, distorted, and unhelpful ways of interpreting an event or situation.



Arjuna thinks that participating in this war is evil. He did not realize that wives and children, teachers and kinsmen are dear not for their own sake but for the sake of Self. His actions were still “rooted in desire” (The Bhagavadgita 106). In chapter1 verse36 he says

What pleasure can be ours, O Krishna, after we have slain the sons of Dhrtarastra?
Only sin will accrue to us if we kill these malignants, And I see evil omens, O
Kesava, nor do I forsee any good by slaying my own people. I do not long for
victory, O Krishna, nor kingdom nor pleasures. (The Bhagavadgita 100)

Arjuna’s attention to omens indicates his mental weakness and instability. He also mechanically thinks that he cannot be happy with this war as he says “It is not right that we slay our kinsmen, the sons of Dhrtarastra. Indeed, how can we be happy, O Madhava, if we kill our own people?” (The Bhagavadgita 103).

The cognitive distortions can be categorized into further types. The first is catastrophising which is when “one takes an event and imagines all sorts of terrors and nightmare scenarios resulting from it” (Wilson 23). The person predicts catastrophic, negative and terrible outcomes of the situation. Arjuna himself assumes the devastating outcomes and says in chapter1 verse 45 “Alas, what a great sin have we resolved to commit in striving to slay our own people through our greed for the pleasures of the kingdom!” (The Bhagavadgita 105). Arjuna’s words are uttered in agony and love. He has his mind on the frontiers of two worlds.

Low frustration tolerance is characterised by thoughts like 'I can't bear this' or 'it's too difficult'. In the beginning itself Arjuna resolves not to fight; in chapter1 verse 46 he says “Far better would it be for me if the sons of Dhrtarstra, with weapons in hand, should slay me in the battle, while I remain unresisting and unarmed” (The Bhagavadgita 105). The narrator adds in verse 47 “Having spoken thus on the field of battle, Arjuna sank down on the seat of his chariot, casting away his bow and arrow, his spirit overwhelmed by sorrow” (The Bhagavadgita 106).



The baffled state of mind is noticed which rises out of anxiety. In chapter 2 verse 6, Arjuna says “Nor do we know which for us is better, whether we conquer them or they conquer us. The sons of Dhrtarastra, whom if we slew we should not care to live, are standing before us in battle array” (The Bhagavadgita 112). He further adds “My very being is stricken with the weakness of pity. With my mind bewildered about my duty, I ask thee. Tell me, for certain, which is better...” (The Bhagavadgita 113).

Personalization is also a form of cognitive distortion in which the person puts himself at the centre and considers him to be the reason of all the wrongs in his or others’ life. He also sometimes becomes selfish. Arjuna in chapter2 verse 5 says

It is better to live in this world by begging than to slay these honoured teachers. Though they are mindful of their gains, they are my teachers and by slaying them, only, I would enjoy in this world delights which are smeared with blood. (The Bhagavadgita 112)

He also says “So it is not right that we slay our kinsmen, the sons of Dhrtarastra. Indeed, how can we be happy, O Madhava, if we kill our own people” (The Bhagavadgita 103).

“Making demands” (Wilson 34) is a big thinking error. Arjuna demands Lord Krishna to slay his relatives with his *Sudarshan Chakra* as he is eternal and can do anything. But he forgot that without an aspiration from below there will not be an answering from above.

Core beliefs are the root cause of negative automatic thoughts and cognitive distortions. The person comprehends all the situations, the world, the future events in the light of his problem. The core belief for Arjuna was that he thinks he will be the cause of destruction of family and even cause of suffering to the spirit of dead. He says in chapter1 verse 41 “The destruction of a family destroy its ritual of righteousness...” (The Bhagavadgita 104). He further adds “This disorder carries down to hell the family and destroyers of family. The



spirits of their dead suffer in pain when deprived of ritual offerings of rice and water” (The Bhagavadgita 104). He believes that he cannot be at peace if he participates in this war. He says in chapter1 verse 37 “For neither the kingdom of the earth, nor the kingdom of the God in heaven, could give me peace from the fire of sorrow which thus burns my life” (The Bhagavadgita 103).

Level III of CBT: Avoidance and Giving Up

Unhealthy feelings like guilt and anxiety stem from rigid and unbalanced thoughts and beliefs. These types of feelings tend to lead to destructive behaviours like avoidance and giving up. Arjuna thinks that *Kauravas* are stricken blind by greed and have no understanding but the *Pandavas* are able to see the wrong, so it would be greater sin to slay them. In chapter1 verse 39, Arjuna says “Why should we not have the wisdom to turn away from this sin, O Jnardana, we who see the wrong in the destruction of the family?” (The Bhagavadgita 103) which affirms his avoidance.

Lord Krishna: The Psychotherapist of All Era

Cognitive behavioral therapist helps in reframing these negative thoughts. He aids the person with behavioral disorder in making his thoughts positive, healthy, and constructive. Rich Tenant says “The ABC Form is probably the tool most commonly used by CBT therapists” (Wilson 43). He devised two versions of this useful form. In the form I therapist records trigger events, thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. In form II he challenges and corrects unhelpful thinking.

In the ABC Form I ‘A’ is for activating events, or triggers, which are situations of past, present, or future that trigger off thoughts and beliefs. ‘B’ stands for belief. It represents the person’s thoughts and beliefs, and includes the meanings he attaches to his trigger and how



he thinks about himself in relation to the trigger. B determines how he ultimately feels and acts in response to trigger. 'C' is for consequences of behaviours and emotions.

The ABC Form II helps to correct thinking errors, change NATs, and thereby give a chance to feel a healthier negative emotion and act constructively. In form II 'D' stands for Dispute or questioning the validity of thoughts, NATs, and beliefs about trigger and looking for ways to correct negative thinking. 'E' stands for the Effect of challenging and changing thinking on both feelings and actions. 'F' stands for functional new thought or new way of thinking about the trigger and moves the person forward.

Lord Krishna acts as a divine therapist and pulls out Arjuna from the pit of depression and anxiety. Lord Krishna counsels Arjuna whose mind was overpowered with negative energies. His teachings have therapeutic effect as He filled Arjuna with positive energies and healthy thoughts. The forms given by Tennant fit very well into the structure of The Bhagavadgita. Lord Krishna has recorded the events of form I and has understood the pain, agony, guilt, and remorse of Arjuna. Now the teachings of Lord Krishna helped Arjuna in giving up his negative mindset.

Phase I of Supreme Counselling

The level I of the cognitive behavioral therapy is the knowledge of the distinction between Self and Body imparted by Lord Krishna. He begins with the verse 11 of chapter 2 and says "Thou grieves for those whom thou shouldst not grieve for, and yet thou speakest words about wisdom. Wise men do not grieve for the dead or for the living" (The Bhagavadgita 115). He makes Arjuna realize that he must not lament for slaying his kins and relatives because rebirth is the law of nature. When the gross physical body falls away, the vital and mental sheath still remains as the vehicle of the soul. He emphasized on the fact that self is invulnerable and says in chapter 2 verses 20-21

He is never born, nor does he die at any time, nor having come to be will again cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, permanent and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain. He who knows that it is indestructible and eternal, uncreated and unchanging, how can such a person slay any one, O Partha, or cause any one to slay?" (The Bhagavadgita 122)

He also adds in verse 22 "Just as a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, even so does the embodied soul cast off worn-out bodies and take on others that are new" (The Bhagavadgita 122).

Further, Lord Krishna pacified Arjuna by appealing to the sense of duty. He says that Arjuna's *svadharma* ("law of action") requires him to engage in battle. The social duty of the Kshatriya is to protect the right by the acceptance of battle. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that for warriors there is no more ennobling duty than a fair fight. It is a privilege that leads to heaven. He says in chapter 2 verses 31-32

Having regard for thine own duty, thou shouldst not falter, there exists no greater good for a Ksatriya than a battle enjoyed by duty. Happy are the Ksatriyas, O Partha, for whom such a war comes of its own accord as an open door to heaven. A Ksatriya's happiness consists not in domestic pleasure and comfort but in fighting for the right. (The Bhagavadgita 127)

He further adds that when the struggle between right and wrong is on, he who abstains from it out of false sentimentality, weakness and cowardice would be committing a sin. He says in verses 35-36 "But to forgo this fight for righteousness is to forgo the duty and honor: Is to fall into transgression. In death thy glory in heaven, in victory thy glory on earth. Arise therefore, Arjuna, with soul ready to fight" (The Bhagavadgita 128).



Lord Krishna, the divine therapist tries to pull out shackled Arjuna from the web of desires. He says that real state of freedom is the freedom from desires. He explains to Arjuna that attachment is the root cause of the desires. He says in chapter 2 verses 70-71

He unto whom all desires enter as waters into the sea, which, though ever being filled is ever motionless, attains to peace and not he who hugs his desires. He who abandons all desires and acts free from longing, without any sense of mineness or egotism, he attains to peace. (The Bhagavadgita 147)

Lord Krishna imparts The Yoga of knowledge and enlightened baffled Arjuna that he must not grieve and must readily participate in the battle.

Phase II of Supreme Counselling: *Karma Maraga*

The level II of the cognitive behavioral therapy is the knowledge of *karma yoga*. In this section Lord Krishna expounds the necessity for the performance of work without any selfish attachments to results. Arjuna asks Krishna that “why dost thou urge me to do this savage deed?” (The Bhagavadgita 149) to which Lord Krishna says in chapter 3 verse 4 “Not by absention from work does a man attain freedom from action; nor by mere renunciation does he attain of his perfection” (The Bhagavadgita 151). But all works is to be done in a spirit of sacrifice, for the sake of the Divine. He suggests that the liberated man has nothing to gain by action or non-action and is perfectly happy in the possession and enjoyment of Self, there is such a thing as desire less action which he undertakes for the welfare of the world. So Arjuna must come out from the realms of anxiety and fear and must fulfil his duty for the welfare of the humanity.

Phase III of Supreme Counselling: *Gyan Maraga*

The level III of cognitive behavioral therapy is *gyan maraga* (“the way of knowledge”). In this section Arjuna is called upon to perform action with the help of knowledge and



concentration. Lord Krishna gives the solution to this problem and says in chapter 4 verses 20-21

Having abandoned attachments to the fruit of works, ever content, without any kind of dependence, he does nothing though he is ever engaged in the work. Having no desires, with his heart and self under control, giving up all possessions, performing action by the body alone, he commits no wrong. (The Bhagavadgita 190)

Lord Krishna makes it clear that the status which is obtained by men of renunciation is reached by man of action also. In chapter 5 verse 2 he says “The renunciation of works and their unselfish performance both lead to the soul’s salvation. But of the two, the unselfish performance of works is better than their renunciation” (The Bhagavadgita 203).

The doubt in his heart whether it is better to fight or abstain is the product of ignorance. Lord Krishna resolves this problem of Arjuna in chapter 5 verse 15-16

The All-pervading Spirit does not take on the sin or the merit of any. Wisdom is enveloped by ignorance; thereby creatures are bewildered. But for those in whom ignorance is destroyed by wisdom, for them wisdom lights up the Supreme self like the sun. (The Bhagavadgita 209)

Phase IV of Supreme Counselling: *Dhyana Maraga*

The level IV of CBT deals with the perfect *yogi* who is the person who knows the Ultimate truth. He is aware that the complete effacement of the ego is essential for the vision of truth. There should be an elimination of all prejudices and idiosyncrasies. Lord Krishna in chapter 6 verse 17 says “Yoga is for the man who is temperate in food and recreation, who is restrained in his actions, whose sleep and waking are regulated, there ensues discipline which destroys all sorrow” (The Bhagavadgita 233). Lord Krishna suggests Arjuna that the perfect *yogi* should be aware of *Dhayana yoga* i.e. meditation. Lord Krishna makes Arjuna realize



that truth must be released from the clutches of practical interests which are bound up with exterior and material life. He says to Arjuna that he must get out of slavery to things to gain the glad freedom of spirit. He suggests that in order to take correct decision Arjuna must find respite in meditation. The divine therapist says

Shutting out all external objects, fixing the vision between the eyebrows, making even the inward and the outward breaths moving within the nostrils, the sage who has controlled the senses, mind and understanding, who is intent on liberation, who has cast away desire, fear and anger, he is ever freed. (The Bhagavadgita 216)

He further adds in chapter 6 verse 13-14

Holding the body, head and neck, erect and still, looking fixedly at the tip of his nose, without looking around (without allowing eyes to wander). Serene and fearless, firm in the vow of celibacy, subdued in mind, let him sit, harmonized, his mind turned to Me and intent on Me alone. (The Bhagavadgita 230).

Phase V of Supreme Counselling: *Bhakti Maraga*

In the level V of CBT, Lord Krishna gave *Bhakti maraga*. The teacher answers that those who worship God in His manifested form, have greater yoga knowledge. He adds that God is the deliverer, the saviour. When one sets his mind and heart on Him, He lifts us from the sea of death and secures a place in the eternal. He says in chapter 12 verses 3-5

Those who fixing their minds on Me worship Me, ever earnest and possessed of supreme faith- them do I consider most perfect in yoga. But those who worship the Imperishable, the Undefinable, the Unchanging, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the Unchanging and the Immobile, the Constant. By restraining all the senses, being even-minded in all conditions, rejoicing in the welfare of all creatures, they come to Me. (The Bhagavadgita 345)



The Final Phase

In the final level of cognitive behavioral therapy, Lord Krishna who acts as a divine therapist succeeded in eliminating all the negative thoughts from the mind of Arjuna. He relinquishes the idea that self is agent and says in chapter 18 verse 73

The supreme mystery, the discourse concerning the Self which thou hast given out of grace for me-by this my bewilderment is gone from me. Destroyed is my delusion and recognition has been gained by me through Thy grace, O Acyuta. I stand firm with my doubts dispelled. I shall act according to Thy word. (The Bhagavadgita 451)

Conclusion

Thus The Bhagavadgita when analyzed within the framework of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy shows how the mind develops from a pathetic state of anxiety and depression to the matured thinking. Lord Krishna who acts as a divine therapist counsels Arjuna. The Primordial Self suggests eternal pathways i.e. *gyan maraga*, *karma maraga*, *bhakti maraga*, and *dhyana maraga* which induced positive energy within Arjuna. The solutions provided by Lord Krishna are timeless and temporal. As the tree of human civilization grew and blossomed giving delight to man, to utter dismay and astonishment it also bore the fruits of 'difference' which gradually led to the socio-psychological crumbling. The Bhagavadgita, an ethereal manuscript has always been the statue of sustenance in the times of spiritual, social, and psychological disintegration of man from *Kali-yug* to *Kalyug*. The Supreme Self says in verse 7-8 of chapter 4.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥४-७॥



परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥४-८॥

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A Linguistic Study Of Tunde Bakare's Sermons As Instruments For Societal Emancipation

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Abstract

This paper sets out to investigate and interrogate the use of language and its manifest discourse features observable in the teachings of Tunde Bakare, a Pentecostal pastor based in Lagos, Southwest Nigeria. The teachings of Bakare are seen in different light by different people: a political commentator; an orator while others believe his business on the pulpit is purely that of winning souls for the life beyond. The focus of this paper therefore is to apply the theoretical principles of Systemic Functional Linguistics to examine critically the way in which Bakare packages his sermons, his manner of delivery and the various discourse features that emanate from such linguistic rendition. Data were generated from his published sermons. Some of his sermons with specific topical issues were subjected to a thorough linguistic analysis. And the results reveal his ability to manoeuvre language by intermingling it with political/oratorical prowess to achieve his aim as a preacher.

Key words: Linguistics, Sermons, Societal Emancipation, Tunde Bakare

Background And Literature Review

Sermons are known to play active roles in a multicultural and multilingual setting due to the fact that they serve as organs of social, political and moral education. The fulfilment of these functions is partly dependent on the effective use of language as a means of communication. If a Preacher and his or her congregation draw from the same pool of lexis, semantics, syntax and linguistic structure, communication in these genres will not only be enhanced but its teaching and practice will also align, thereby bridging the gap between the two: religion and politics. This paper opines that the church constitutes the discourse



community while the use of language by ministers – including sermons –in this case Bakare and his Congregation represents a genre, in other words a discourse type.

Hackett (1988) observes that Nigeria is a pluralistic society in which religion is a major fact of life which cannot be ignored. Williams (1997) also affirms this and argues that there has been enough religious unrest in Nigeria to suggest that religion has become a major factor in the country's contemporary body politics. Similarly, Oguntola-Laguda (2008) notes that, in a religiously homogeneous society, the aftermath of the interaction between religion and politics is political stability, but that is not the case with pluralistic societies like Nigeria where heterogeneity is a cause of religious and political crises. But, as he argues, we must recognize the symbiosis between religion and politics in Nigeria and how polity stands to benefit from it. This is where the role of language comes in. Krolick (2010) notes its role and power in crises management. Ker (2007) echoes these points by showing how religious songs and messages are often coloured by things and issues of this world or experiential exposure, thereby addressing societies' socio-political and economic issues, such as corruption, peace, stability, integration and development. Meanwhile Taiwo (2007) examines the social role of a preacher in relation to listeners, how the speaker makes linguistic choices in order to achieve persuasion and is in total control as the knower or expert, and assumes his audience are non-knowers, so his messages are characterized by information and directives. In none of these attempts is the character of religious language observed from as extensive a population as the corpus of sermons this work covers by investigating the keywords of sermons and examining their characteristics. Adedun & Mekiliuwa (2012) writing on the impact of Pentecostalism on the Nigerian populace observe that:

Pentecostalism has become an increasingly prominent feature of Nigerian religious spirituality in the past few decades. The dramatic growth of the Pentecostal movement and the universality of their activities are clearly visible in Nigerian socio cultural discourse in recent years. Ojo (2004, p. 2) asserts that "Pentecostalism in Nigeria presently constitutes a major social movement and Pentecostal spirituality continues to affect millions of citizen in various ways."

From the foregoing, one can say that this development is clearly aided by several peculiarities of the Nigerian socio-culture, such as political instability, economic recession, social tensions and uncertainty. Indeed, in the words of Bloom and Ottong (1987, p. 157), “religion offers protection against four major classes of uncertainty: contingency, powerlessness, scarcity, frustration and deprivation.” The reliance on English as the dominant medium of communication in Pentecostal discourse in Nigeria is also significant as it unites the multilingual congregations often found in urban cities, thus giving the movement social prominence nationally, and providing it access to the international arena.

The Language Of Sermons

The language of sermon is a unique and peculiar one. Various scholars according to Afful (2010) have shown in their researches that the language of clergymen and women in the pulpit is alive to face and politeness dynamics of communication as preachers seek to be persuasive to their congregations (Dzameshie, 1992; 1993; Crystal, 1994; Coker, 2010). The reason for this persuasion is that sermonic discourse is a type of persuasive discourse intended to change attitudes or behaviours (Keane, 1997; Uhunwangho, 2000). In delivering their sermons, preachers usually employ such logical persuasive strategies as deliberate and evocative phraseology (Uhunwangho, 2000), interrogative and imperative utterances (Taiwo, 2005, 2007), lexico-semantic and syntactic features (Afful, 2007; Ziwu, 2009) as well as make passionate ethical and emotional appeals (Coker, 2010). Afful (2010) observes that studies in sermonic discourse have increasingly shown that preachers are alive to face and politeness dynamics of communication as they seek to be persuasive to their audiences, thereby promoting an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consequently peace in the Christian community. Francis-Clare Fischer (2012) is of the opinion that:

The speaking style of the modern preacher needs to be larger than life; thereby lifting the listener out of the confused world of the everyday into a place of awe; this style is inspiring and gripping. The understated style which began in the 60's does not lift the listener but attempts to meet the listener “where they are.” They come to be lifted out of “where they are.”

Commenting on the language of the sermons of Adeboye, Onwubiko (1991: 30) observes that:

The use of proverbs and idioms in Adeboye's sermons is a characteristic of a mature language-user. It demands a thorough knowledge of local environment, social order and norms of actions. As a cultural form of communicative aesthetics, proverbs "are the philosophical and moral expositions shrunk to few words, and they form a mnemonic device in societies in which everything worth knowing are relevant to day-to-day life has to be committed to memory" (Onwubiko 1991: 30).

Although the said proverbs are derived from Yoruba culture, their application transcends that specific context. "There is a saying in Africa that you do not hide your nakedness from the one who is going to bury you". What is Yoruba is unmoored and crosses border to become African in application and scope. "A man never appreciates the superiority of the new wine until he has tasted the old" is a reference to his previous life of sin and wanton callousness. It is also a reference to the importance of the present and the future in relation to the Christian's past. Through this cultural speech form, Adeboye is said to negotiate a new identity that is both local and trans-local at the same time. Going by the above background we have laid, can one say the same thing about the sermon of Tunde Bakare whose sermons we have chosen as our source of data for this study? Kingston Ekeke (2012) while running a commentary on the language of Bakare on the pulpit observes that:

Recently, Dr. Tunde Bakare, Pastor of Latter Rain Ministries and Convener of Save Nigeria Group (SNG), in one of his sermons that has gone viral on the Internet, called for a change of government in Nigeria. He also called on President Goodluck Jonathan to resign and is currently attacking the President's wife, Mrs. Dame Patience Jonathan. As a result of his utterances against the presidency, Tunde Bakare the pastor and his political activism are being questioned by many. In fact, many see Pastor Tunde's political activism as awkward. Millions of Nigerians tend to distinguish political activism from religious activism. And this is due to various

interpretations of Scripture regarding God's Call. I think the erroneous views and convoluted biblical interpretation regarding those ordained to Ministry are as a result of improper exegesis of Scripture and misunderstanding of the subject of 'God's Call,' or 'The Call of God.' The call of God is not always associated with leading a Church or religious organization. It's not even about salvation or being called to the work of Ministry as priest, pastor, or bishop. The call of God is a call to purpose and destiny. It is a call that moves the "Called" and society from success to significance (39).

From the foregoing, one can observe that the language of Tunde Bakare's sermon is that of protest marking a sharp deviation from what ordinary should have been: the language of peace, persuasion and understanding. What then are the factors responsible for the nature of Bakare's sermonic linguistic portrayal? The mismanagement of the nation's economic resources, infrastructural collapse and political thuggery and prevalent corruption can be seen as the most vivid and identifiable factors that prompt the preacher to indulge in what could be termed by many as '*sermonic aberration*'.

Political Features In Sermons

Sermonic discourse is an emerging field in discourse analysis and sociolinguistics. Most studies that have been carried out in this area in the past were conducted from an ethnographic point of view, with observant participation in more or less structured discourse events. Howard-Malverde (1998), Dzameshie (1993, 1995) and Du Bois (1986) focus on linguistic codification of ritual practices, either in low regulated interactions or highly Catholic institutionalized genres: among them, homilies and sermons preached by legitimate religious agents (i.e. bishops and priests). From a cognitive-processes point of view, and also through participant observation, Balaban (1996, 1999) has analysed agency and legitimation among believers at a 'Marian apparition site' in the USA. While Crystal (1965), Crystal and Davy (1969) consider the language of religion from a linguistic stylistic perspective; Samarin (1976) relying on Hymes Speaking grid examines the sociolinguistic constituents of typical religious community. Babatunde (2007) is a speech acts analysis of evangelical Christian

sermons in Nigeria; Odebunmi (2007) is a stylistic analysis of electronic advertisements, Mekiliuwa and Adedun (2010) is *Discourse Features and Patterns in Sermonic Texts: an Analysis of a Nigerian Pentecostal Christian Sermon* and Taiwo (2007) looks at tenor in electronic media discourse in Nigeria. Departing markedly from previous studies, therefore, the current study sets out to examine the Sermons of Pastor Tunde Bakare from a Religious and Political perspective. As preaching genres are more visible and methodologically accessible, they happen to be the most studied within religious discourse in Nigeria, either from the point of view of their argumentative processes (Acebal, 2002, 2006) or from their conversational properties (Blanco, 2003; Vitale, 2003). Within this growing field of research, we can highlight those papers which, beyond the textual features that characterize preaching genres, focus on the relationships established between religious discourse and other discourse types. Arnoux (2004), Arnoux and Blanco (2003, 2004), Arnoux and Bonnin (2011) and Bonnin (2006, 2009, 2011) analyse different *corpora* of texts that display a constitutive tension between political and religious features, produced by priests, bishops and political actors in Argentina and Latin America. These relationships cannot be understood from an enumeration of formal linguistic features. On the contrary, they emerge at the confluence of discourse practices and social actors that claim to be exclusively religious *or* political. This distinction, made by speakers themselves, is crucial, because admitting the mixed nature of their utterances entails a de-legitimation of their position in their respective fields. A priest that admits a political intention or a politician that defends an explicitly religious motivation is most rare and marginal in contemporary democratic setting. Therefore, one of the main characteristics of sermonic discourse is that, although it produces *political effects* in terms of reception, it presents itself as non-political or even anti-political (Bonnin, 2009, 2011). As a result, political-religious *discourse* is not political as a *text*, and can, therefore, assume religious contents that would not be legitimate in the political arena. The same observation is made by Fairclough (1995), who analyses a critical pastoral letter from the USA National Conference of Catholic Bishops about nuclear weapons under the administration of Ronald Reagan. Fairclough states that:

employing a religious genre, 'they can draw upon an authoritative and unmitigated moral discourse which might be difficult for them to use if they were overtly addressing themselves to the outside (including the government)' (Fairclough, 1995: 204).

This paper explores some of the complexities of political–religious discourse in Nigeria as exemplified in the sermons of Tunde Bakare. The selected sermons are discourse events drawn from the preaching of Bakare to examine the relationships between political and religious discourse in Nigeria. It conveys political and religious discourse within the conflicts that surround the democratic regimes of the former presidents of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan. Throughout his sermons the mood and status of the Nigerian political setting seem to preoccupy his mind, while his political speeches flow with biblical imagery, religious dialogue, and spiritual references. As the Nation's political system move on, Bakare's political rhetoric becomes increasingly intertwined with his style of rendition which could be described as "*homiletics*" a mixture of homily and politics to the point where today, in hindsight, distinguishing the influences of his speeches on his sermons and his sermons on his speeches is a challenging task.

Theoretical Underpinning

This paper is adopts the theoretical principles of Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth, SFT) in the explication of the data. SFT examines language in relation to the social interactions which the language encodes and the cultures within which these social interactions are embedded. The four main theoretical postulations, according to Halliday's SFT are:

Language is functional

The function is to make meaning

These functions are influenced by the

Social and cultural contexts in which they are exchanged (Halliday 11)

SFT is concerned with how people use language because interaction alone does not provide a sufficiently reliable source of data for any linguistic or stylistic analysis. SFT also x-rays the structural patterning of language for use. Users of language do not only indulge in the

exchange of sounds and graphics but they interact for the purpose of making full meaning of any utterance or text. In his observation, Eggins (2004:11) opines that: the overall purpose of language is a semantic one; each text we participate in is a record of meanings that have been made in particular context (Eggins 11). Halliday's systemic linguistic theory starts any analysis of language with the social context and goes ahead to demonstrate how language is influenced by social context. One major aspect of the theory is the context of situation which the proponent of the theory says is obtained through a systematic relationship between the social environment on the one hand, and the functional organization of language on the other hand (Halliday, 1985:11). Halliday posits that language is structured to perform basically, three kinds of meanings which he referred to as: met functions: **ideational**, **textual** and **interpersonal** functions. While the ideational function relates to how the experiences of the world are conveyed, the textual function refers to how the linguistic elements in a text are linked to produce a cohesive and coherent whole. The transitivity system accounts for choices made in terms of actions. These actions are referred to as 'process' which are marked through the main verb or rather the finite verb in a sentence. Looking at Transitivity, Haymes (1989, p .53) states that "a clause is a cluster of words which represent some kind of process and the participant and the circumstances of that process". This therefore means that when we consider the 'process' of a clause, we are principally concerned about the agent of action (participants), the action itself (process) and the situations in terms of setting, place, or circumstance. The different process identified in systemic grammar (Halliday and Mathiessen, pp.179-280) are Materials process: this is the process of doing or happening e.g.

Data Presentation And Textual Analysis

Title of Sermon: Kingdom and Politics

Clausal Representation of the Text

1. The main objective of this paper is to bring the volatile subject of politics under the lens of Scripture, with a view to setting in order how believers can function in the political realm with a kingdom mindset, in order to accomplish a kingdom agenda in his domain.
2. Let me start with a declaration of "political thoughts or philosophies" most

unfortunately believed among us.

3. Politics is dirty.
4. This one thought has restrained many a good or woman from stepping into the political arena hence many righteous men who, as salt of the earth, should stem the rut and decay in politics, are afraid of stepping in.
5. Truthfully, not all believers have a calling into the political arena but many who have or sense such a calling shy away from same because of our belief that politics is dirty. The truth is: *politics is only as dirty as the people involved in it.*
6. The way to clean politics is to put righteous people in office.
7. Nigeria needs people who feel God's call to serve Him in politics.
8. Then we will have as leaders "able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain" (*Exodus 18:21*).
9. These are righteous politicians, people who serve Cod and others with integrity. Nigeria needs people at all levels of government who will take office with the kingdom perspective in view and a kingdom agenda to pursue.
10. *Politics is dirty only when dirty people hold office.* The institution of government itself is ordained of God.
11. The reason we are in this mess politically is that genuine Christians have forsaken politics.
12. We need godly men and women in politics to help clean it up.
13. Our government at all levels is in desperate need of people who can inject righteousness into our political bloodstream, for a society can never rise above the quality of its leadership.
14. The church and the state are separate.
15. Indeed and in truth, the church and the state are functionally separate and distinct institutions with specific spheres of responsibility and jurisdiction (*2 Chronicles 26:1-21*).

Identification Of Transitivity In Text 1

1.is.....to bringto setting can functionto accomplish... (material, material, relational, material, material)
2.start.....declaration.....believed.....(material, material, mental)
- 3.
4. Is.....(relational, intensive)
5. has restrained stepping should stemare afraid ... stepping... (material, material, material, material, material)
6. have a calling have ... sense shyis.....is...is Involved... (material, material, material, material, material, material, material, material, material)
7. to clean ... is..... to put ...(material, material, material).
8. needs feel to serve (material, mental, material)
9. have.....(relational, possessive)
10. are serve needs will take to pursue.....(material, material, material, material, material)
11.is..... hold..... is ordained.....(material, material, material)
12.are is have forsaken ...(material, material, material)
13. need to help clean...(material, material, material)
14.is in can inject can never rise ...(material, material, mental)
15. are.....(relational, intensive)

TABULAR REPRESENTATION OF CLAUSES

1

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>
The main objective of this paper	is to bring the volatile subject of politics under the lens of Scripture,	with a view to setting in order how believers can function in the political realm with a kingdom mindset, in order to accomplish a kingdom agenda in this domain.

2



3

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>
Truthfully, not all believers	have a calling into the political arena	but many who have or sense such a calling shy away from same because of our belief that politics is dirty.
The truth	Is	politics is only as dirty as the people involved in it.

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>
Politics	Is	dirty

4

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>
Let me	Start	with a declaration of "political thoughts or philosophies" most unfortunately
among us.		

5

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>
This one thought	has restrained	many a good or woman from stepping into the political arena hence
many righteous men	who, as salt of the earth, should stem the rut and decay in politics	are afraid of stepping in.

6

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Process</i>	<i>Circumstance</i>
The way to clean politics	is to put	righteous people in office

7



Participant	Process	Circumstance
Nigeria	needs	people who feel God's call to serve Him in politics.

8

Participants	Process	Circumstance
Then we	will have as	leaders "able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain"

9

Participants	Process	Circumstance
These are righteous politicians, people who perspective in view and a kingdom agenda to pursue.	Serve	God and others with integrity.
Nigeria	Needs	people at all levels of government who will take office with the kingdom

10

Participants	Process	Circumstance
<i>Politics</i>	<i>Is</i>	<i>dirty only when dirty people hold office</i>
The institution of government itself	. is	ordained of God.

11

Participants	Process	Circumstance
The reason we	Are	in this mess politically is that genuine Christians have forsaken politics.

12

Participants	Process	Circumstance
We	need	godly men and women in politics to help clean it up.



13

Participants	Process	Circumstance
Our government at all levels	Is	in desperate need of people who can inject righteousness into our political bloodstream, for a society can never rise above the quality of its leadership.

14

Participants	Process	Circumstance
The church and the state are.	Are	separate

15.

Participants	Process	Circumstance
Indeed and in truth, the church and the state	are	functionally separate and distinct institutions with specific spheres of responsibility and jurisdiction

Discussion Of Findings And Conclusion

Taking a critical look at the transitivity system in the speeches at the clausal level, there seems to be a particular way in which Pastor TundeBakare captures the essence of his message to relate with the audience. Through this means, he reveals the contents of his message either on the pulpit or outside the pulpit. The clauses are either calls to discipleship or outright condemnation of the political system. They are also ways of constructive engagement of political players in order to ensure a smooth leadership in the Nigerian socio-political environment. The speech is predominantly made up of material processes in the verbal form; thus demonstrating the nature and intention of the speaker. As a political and sermonic discourse, this demonstrates the commitment of the speaker to particular courses of actions that are intended to positively engage the politicians. The speaker opens the speech by stating emphatically why he engages in such an adventure: to mirror politics from the lenses of religion. This analysis explores the relationship between linguistic

structures and socially constructed meaning in a sermonic discourse. By employing Halliday's transitivity framework, the analysis attempts to reveal the ideology that underpins a sermon from a clausal and transitivity point of view. This study seeks common ground where systemic grammar and narrative, which have long been considered separate disciplines, can meet. Halliday's transitivity theory provides a useful linguistic framework for uncovering the main linguistic features of a certain sermonic discourse. The analysis of transitivity and its application to the discourse in this thesis basically follows Halliday's theoretical framework.

Transitivity is a part of the ideational function of the clause. The ideational function of the clause is concerned with the "transmission of ideas." Its function is that of "representing 'processes' or 'experiences': actions, events, processes of consciousness and relations". The term "process" is used in a...extended sense, "to cover all phenomena...and anything that can be expressed by a verb: event, whether physical or not, state, or relation". These semantic processes expressed by clauses have potentially three components: the process itself, which will be expressed by the verb phrase in a clause. The participants in the clause, which refer to the roles of entities that are directly involved in the process: the one that does, behaves or says, together with the passive one that is done to, said to, etc. The participants are not necessarily humans or even animate; the term "participant entities" would be more accurate. The participant entities are normally realized by noun phrases in the clause. The circumstances associated with the process, which are typically expressed by adverbial and prepositional phrases. Transitivity is an important semantic concept in the analysis of representation of reality because it enables us to analyze and represent the same event and situation in different ways. The transitivity patterns can also indicate the certain mind-set or worldview "framed by the authorial ideology" (Fowler).

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Strategies For English Teacher In Promoting Vocabulary Learning Among Students: A Practical Guide

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Abstract: Vocabulary knowledge, which is a key to the reading comprehension of English learners (ELs), must be a focus for every teacher in today's increasingly diverse schools, including those in the mainstream classroom. Vocabulary is the most important component of language knowledge; it is one of the best predictors of language performance. Teachers and textbook writers have been saying for years that we need vocabulary and grammar lists to help achieve the benchmarks. Students don't just 'pick up' vocabulary from reading and listening. It needs to be actively taught in the classroom. This research article strives to explore the practical strategies and methods for teaching vocabulary. Reading beyond text books make a student versatile in all fields. Teaching vocabulary is not just about words; it involves lexical phrases and knowledge of English language and strategies for learning and teaching it. *Memorizing* is a traditional and boring method for students. Students from rural side, face various challenges to make their own sentences in English. It is an ultimate job of an English teacher to create an inevitable enthusiasm among students to learn new words. A teacher's motivation and student-friendly teaching will enable vocabulary learning more effective.

Keywords: Interactive Teaching, Language Skills, Strategies, Vocabulary.



Introduction

Everyone loves to improve and strengthen word power. An English teacher plays a vital role for the students to increase their word power. An English class room creates a powerful commitment to inculcate new words. In class rooms only, students are able to apply new words clearly and concisely. An English teacher can correct their mistakes immediately. The students can expand their perceptions and become so smart and intelligent in applying the words in the suitable context. An English teacher creates a magic of transforming the learning of new and difficult words in to a fun activity.

Strategies for Promoting Vocabulary Learning Among Students

A teacher can spend at least the last ten minutes in a period for vocabulary building beyond the syllabus. The students should note the meaning of new words immediately and understand the context. In this way, their vocabulary will become a great source for their future. An English teacher should use creative techniques to imbibe new words with interactive activities.

A good academic record is not at all enough for getting employment. Good communication skills and basic writing skills are needed to shine better in career. Students from rural side, find difficult to make their own sentences in English. A language trainer should create catchy songs with the new words. By singing them, students will acquire new words so easily.

While teaching particular words, an English teacher should narrate the etymology of the words. It makes the learning process so interesting and elevating. Learning the root and origin of the words is an interesting activity. . Knowing these roots helps to understand the meaning of words. For example, the word "philanthropy "Phil" is love of knowledge, and "anthropy" comes from the Greek root that gives us anthropology, which is the study ("logy," means study of any kind) of anthropos, humankind. So a philanthropist must be someone who loves humans and does something about it.

Knowing the Greek and Latin roots of several prefixes and suffixes help the students to understand the meaning faster. For example, Two - binary, bimonthly Hundred – century,



centimeter Crossword puzzles are an excellent way to improve vocabulary skills. An English teacher can distribute cross word puzzles in the class room from newspapers or from internet sources and make the students complete them in the class rooms. Students will feel so enthusiastic to find out the answers for the puzzles. Anagrams and jumbled words can make the class room so lively and help to learn words so faster. Reading of homonyms and homophones will create new vistas in vocabulary learning.

A language trainer can give particular ten words on the spot and instruct the students to make a lively story with the given words. From this way, the students will know the application of the words. Repetition is the mother of all skills. But an English teacher should do the repetition and revision of words with an interesting and different methodology in the class room. Word association games help them to learn connotation and denotation. A recitation test will help to hone pronunciation skills. Reading aloud will be done in the class rooms to remove a boring climate in the class rooms. A language trainer should concentrate vocabulary of various fields. Words related to agriculture, engineering, medicine etc. should be concentrated separately in every week.

Books on building vocabulary are available in most bookstores. Encouraging students to present books among friends on birthdays will help the students to improve reading habits. Sunday newspaper contains versatile information. A language teacher should create an interest to read Sunday newspapers and make them share what they have read. An English teacher should update to use her/his language skills with the aid of modern technology and internet.

A well-versed vocabulary will enable a student to perform well in class discussions, to read general books faster and to shine in various fields. An English teacher should insist a student to develop a habit of reading for pleasure. Reading beyond text books make a student versatile in all fields. A student should know multiple features of a word. If students learn a new word, they should know its parts of speech, pronunciation, synonyms, antonyms, related words and example sentences using a new word. If they know in detail, they never make a mistake while applying this new word in their speaking and writing.



An intelligent and well-rounded student will be consistent in learning vocabulary. An English teacher will induce the taste in reading fiction, short stories, biographies and English poetry. Students will select fiction and poetry according to their taste and age. If they become accustomed to read, they automatically start reading bulky novels and literature.

An English teacher should insist the students to write accurate adjective for every student in the class. They should not repeat adjectives. For example, they may write, “hard working Hameed, smart Sathya, dedicated Divya. This practice will enable them to explore suitable adjectives.

An English teacher should imbibe the art of using right and exact word at the right time. Using appropriate words will develop our self-discipline. An English teacher should teach euphemistic expressions like “He passed away” instead of using “He died”. Students should include idioms and figurative speech in writing than in speaking.

An English teacher should evaluate his/her teaching methodology and improvise according to the latest technology. Attending workshops and implementing new skills make an English teacher competent in academic endeavors.

Conclusion

English vocabulary is complex, with three main aspects related to form, meaning, and use, as well as layers of meaning connected to the roots of individual words. In the era of globalization, classroom teachers are the ones who have a feel for their students’ needs and they are the ones who can decide whether to go one way or the other. But a balance is necessary to be found in developing one and ignoring the other.

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An Integrated Version of Pedagogy with Life Skills

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Abstract In order to deal with the demands and challenges of everyday life and to handle problems and questions that are faced daily one needs to possess certain life skills. The recent technological revolution, global economics, changed educational trends, personalized modern life style, corporate working culture are loaded with stress and frustration and insists on safe, tactful practices of life skills. Today's students need to develop thinking abilities, social and emotional competencies to navigate complex life and work environments. A focus on creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration is essential to prepare students for the future. As today's education is mainly focused on the transfer of knowledge through various methods of teaching, students score good grades in the examinations but relatively the personal adjustment in the society or the success rate in the job market is comparatively low on account of poor communicative abilities and attitudinal disorders. This research paper emphasizes to find out the existing level of awareness of the life skills in the student teachers and the difference shown after getting exposed to the practical sessions on life skills. Some suggestions which help to improve their pedagogy integrated with life skills are recommended.

Key words: changed educational trends, corporate culture, communication and collaboration, life skills.



Introduction

In a broader sense the skills one needs to make the most out of life are the life skills. Developing and practicing life skills- personal skills like self-awareness, self-esteem; psycho-social skills like sociability, tolerance reflective skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking - are the need of the day. These skills are usually associated with managing and living a better quality life. They help to accomplish the ambitions and live to the full potential.

Different life skills will be more or less relevant at different times. For example:

Study skills when at school and university

Negotiation skills when dealing with selling and buying

Employability skills to get a job

Presentation, organization, leadership, team spirit, time management skills to survive in the employment

Conflict resolution, stress- management, problem solving when in family and community (Luther King)

These set of life skills enable a person to deal any demand, situation or challenge effectively in day to day life. Life skills enhance the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour to grow as active and productive member of the society. A focus on creativity and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, social and emotional competencies to navigate complex life and work environments is essential to prepare students for the future.

Of all these skills, those that equip a person to fit into a social structure are known as soft skills. Soft skills are the personal character traits or qualities each one has. Life skills and soft skills through they overlap each other, these skills are supposed to be acquired by 21st century students in order to be better placed in their employment status. Hence the classroom teaching must integrate the enhancement of life skills along with their educational practices for a successful future.



The most important skills students need to practice are oral communication skills, team work and interpersonal skills, personal qualities and attitude. As the saying goes “The destiny of the nation is shaped in the classroom”, a country’s destiny depends on the strong personality shaped by the dedicated and committed teacher in the classroom. To achieve this, teachers need to have strong personality traits and effective communicative skills. It is the responsibility of the Teacher Education Institutions to mould teachers with effective soft skills and communicative abilities.

In the present technological era, where knowledge explosion is speeding up and the interaction with electronic gadgets is growing at leaps and bounds, the interpersonal relationships is diminishing. In this context to enable the students to develop their personality and to enhance their ability to talk freely inside and outside the class is a challenging task that needs to be addressed with utmost care. For this teachers must be trained to impart the personality enhancing and communicative skill so that the students imbibe these skill right from school level. Hence more focus should be on developing a pedagogy integrated with soft skills and communicative skills in teacher education. Teachers must teach students not only the subject knowledge but also the ethical value behind any concept so that each and every interaction will in turn helps them to cope up with any situation. As Peter Drucker says “We now accept the fact that learning is a lifelong process of keeping abreast of change. And the most pressing task is to teach people how to learn” (Drucker).

For example while teaching a lesson *Environment*, (IX class, SCERT English Text, Telangana State) teachers need to create an awareness of other living creatures that are on earth. Feelings like tolerance, empathy, cooperation, interdependency are instilled in students. Sentence like- *the earth doesn’t belong to man – man belongs to the Earth*- inspire the students and add to their insight and provides a scope to think and act. A lesson on *Khathmandu* provides a rich cultural experience and religious tolerance if taught effectively. To bring out the effective change in the society, the personality traits are supposed to be identified and groomed right at the teen age that is in high school stage. For this teachers are

well trained and classroom implementation is strictly monitored. As the saying goes “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a life-time” (Maimodines), if the teacher just teaches it helps them to pass the qualified academic tests and if the teacher implants it helps them to qualify the life tests.

This research paper aims at finding the initial level of awareness of life skills among the student teachers at colleges of education (B.Ed) and the improvement shown after the exposure to the life skills awareness program.

Conceptual frame work

A survey is conducted to estimate the level of awareness of the life skills and the impact of this awareness on the personality development of the student teachers at the colleges of education.

Sample: Twenty student teachers from B.ED, College of Education, are taken as the sample.

Tools of study: A questioner and interview techniques.

Objectives of study

- to focus on the level of awareness of the life skills among the B.Ed college students
- to study the syllabus to note the provision given to develop life skills among the student teachers
- to study the impact of learning these life skills at physical, psychological and emotional levels in the B.Ed course
- to estimate the significance of transferring life skills to school students, the teenagers

Based on the list of life skills, student teachers are asked to complete the questionnaire, which is considered as pretest (T1). The questionnaire consists of 15 activities with 4 multiple choice answers. The choices are graded to find their initial attitude to tackle the

given situation. For example to test the oral communicative ability a dialogue with blank space is given. To fill the blank 4 alternatives are provided. They are graded on four point scale (very poor, poor, average, good) based on their comprehensive ability of the given situation in terms of life skills, The choices are arranged from A-D to note the attitudinal level of students from very poor to good. After administering the T1, the questionnaires are collected and the data is tabulated.

Table 1: Data sheet with list of life skills on which situations are based in the questionnaire

S.No	Soft Skills	Very poor	poor	Average	good
1	Oral communication	5	11	3	1
2	Written communication	8	10	1	1
3.	Negotiating skill	7	8	2	3
4.	Interpersonal relationship	5	7	5	3
5	Time management	3	6	4	7
6	Initiating ability	9	6	4	1
7.	Flexibility for better understanding	4	10	2	4
8	Decision making	3	11	3	3
9	Ability to stand for truth / right	11	5	3	1
10	Analytical thinking	9	8	2	1
11.	Creative thinking	5	7	4	4
12	Empathetic	4	8	5	3
13	Team Spirit	4	6	7	3
14	Conflict management	5	6	5	4
15	Stress and Strain management	5	8	4	3

After collecting the questionnaires the obtained data is tabulated. Poor and very poor are considered as negative and average and good are considered as positive traits.

These same students are exposed to 15 sessions on life skills, every day one hour session. These sessions are mainly to bring awareness one life skills and their impact on the classroom teaching and their pedagogy. After these sessions post test (T2) is conducted on the same lines as test 1. The grades are noted. The behavioral change is established through the difference in Data obtained in T1 and T2.

Data Analysis

The following table shows the number of students and their negative as well as positive responses for each given task in the pre and post test.

Table 2: Table to show the difference between pre test and post test

Tests	No of students	grading	Questions														
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Pre test	20	1-2	16	18	15	12	9	15	7	14	14	16	17	12	10	11	13
		3-4	4	2	5	8	11	5	13	6	6	4	3	8	10	9	7
Post test	20	1-2	12	14	8	6	5	9	4	10	11	12	15	9	6	8	9
		3-4	8	6	12	14	15	11	16	10	9	8	5	11	14	12	11

Grading 1-2 denotes the student teachers' awareness of the particular life skill on the negative side. The greater the number is lesser the awareness is.

On the other hand 3-4 denotes the student teachers' awareness on positive side

The above table shows the difference in the awareness of the life skills before and after exposure to the sessions. In all the cases there is a change in the attitude and the post test T2 clearly shows the shift towards the positive side.



Certain skills like oral and written communication, decision making, problem solving, team spirit, analysis abilities, initiating ability, time management are comparatively well instilled after the sessions on life skills and the difference is distinctly noticed. The development of other skills like negotiating, leadership qualities, creativity show a slight difference. Though the difference is marginal, it is acknowledge on the positive side.

After their exposure to life skills session, student teachers achieved more awareness of dealing with the situations with positive attitude and improved their communicative ability. This provides them to handle the class room situations in a better way with an improved pedagogy.

Discussion

It was argued that there is no need of teaching life skills and these are imbibed by everyone in course of life. But the chance of imbibing is very feeble because of a number of factors. Due to nuclear families with both the parents working, children are deprived of being corrected at home. Schools are more ambitious to secure top ranks in academics rather than producing sensible citizens. Unlike in the olden days elderly individuals in the community ceased to bother and correct youngsters if any misbehavior is encountered. Moreover the society is running short of role models with ethical and moral values. These factors left no chance for the awareness and correction of wrong doings among the youth and there is no scope of passing the persona on to the next generation. Hence it is necessary to introduce life skills as a subject and some awareness should be brought among the student teachers, as they are the teachers of tomorrow. It should be an integral part of the education system and practicing life skills should be amalgamated with the classroom instruction.

Conclusion

For years together the focus of education is only to transmit the content from generation to generation. As knowledge transmission dominated the human touch, the smooth



comfortable inter personal relationship is at stake. By bringing certain awareness of life skills in the teacher community positive changes in the attitude of the students can be expected for a better society.

The need of the day is all about communication, interpersonal skills and positive attitude. Success is based on logical, rational thoughts and acts and these human elements can be best projected through life skills. That is the bottom line why a strong life skills set is considered important for better society.

One should see the world, and see himself as a scale with an equal balance of good and evil. When he does one good deed the scale is tipped to the good - he and the world is saved. When he does one evil deed the scale is tipped to the bad - he and the world is destroyed. (Maimonides)

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The March of the Emperor Penguins

Michael Lee Johnson

Emperor Penguins never set feet on land,
straight up their feet on ice, tuxedo's with short feathers
overlapped, waterproofed, inner down layers insulated with air.
Heads bobble fat fannies waddle, the march to the homeland begins.
70 miles the clan walks and slides away from the sea and back to the sea.
70 miles into the darkest, driest and coldest continent, Antarctica cradles up the South Pole.
High step, searching for partners for one year, away from predators, the mating party begins.
Mutual sex they turn check format a goal, breed their young, months of illness, hurt,
struggles, isolation, separation face in the winter the great white ghost of death.
Starvation is a 2-way trip the male is the mother 120 days, mother goes for food-
at one point tough they all must go back to the ocean and sea.
Emperor Penguins they dance and huddle.
Back they go to the ice, to the flow, and sea 50/50, millions of years ago.



SHE

Yashvi Manglik

Poet, Research Scholar

Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra

Open eyes amid unlit walls,
Solaced serene soul gone for a long stroll,
Big craving eyeballs desiring for an illumination,
As an innocent sinner yearn for resurrection,
Perpetually gazing at ceiling without a blink,
Wondering if little creature can be jinxed.

Anon, puerile heart harp on the same tune,
Anon, by ripened mind very strings are strewn,
Lay she lifeless & breathless,
Reflecting how come is she rendered SO helpless,
Introspecting when welled up lids shall flow,
Assuming numb and frozen she will SOON blow.

Yelling she for life old & carefree,
Where there were no anxiety but mirth and glee,
Where only reasons for shedding tears were missing toys & wounded knees,



But not poor shattered heart unable to heal,
Where waking up early for school was the most grief stricken deed,
But not writhing in bed at midnight and pining hard to sleep.
How simple were the desires and demanding art,
Maa's loving glance gratified innocent heart.

Gone are the days of bliss,
Agony & Pain are mates to reside amidst,
Thinking & interrogating to herself,
Closes she eyes to nurture the darkness within,
Embraced the sunrise with a bright smile but torment hidden,
Misery hidden !



What is Patriotism?

Dr.Ujjwala Kakarla

Extraordinary India,
A power house of
Spiritual treasure
For all the world nations
Contributing
To world unity
Through
Virtue of non-violence,
Taught by our Father of nation
Practiced by every Indian
As domestic principle
Walking hand in hand
As a single family
Spreading the patriotic fervor,
Variety in Unity
Liberated our country
From the manacles
of adversaries,
Free from rancor
And violence!

Advanced India
Exploring and inventing
New innovations
In the era of globalization
Still is steeped in



Deep poverty
When millions of Indians
Cannot read and write
And billions of people
Do not have basic amenities,
People electing the leaders
For incentives
Who do not keep up
Their promises
Want people to remain
In ignorance
Sinking the nation
In corruption
Shattering the dreams
Of our architects!
Our freedom fighters
Dreamt of an incredible India
When tears of
the poorest of the poor
Are wiped off,
And every woman to be given
Equal rights on par with men,
Worshipped as a goddess
And respected as a mother,
Have we attained such freedom?
Are we seeing that incredible India?
Indians are steeped in such an era
When advancements



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Are annihilating distance,
Breaking the law of
Unity in diversity
Fostering violence
Inviting our self destruction!
The dire need of every citizen
In the present
Is to come closer as
One in all
Fostering the sense of
Universal brotherhood
And set an example
To spread the message
Of broad minded approach
To Reality!
Igniting this passion of
Patriotic fervor in thy self,
Awakening every Indian
Acting as a beacon
To enlighten
The world nations
With gift of contemplation
Spreading the message of peace
Contributing to world unity!



The Other

Kaikasi V.S

Purple patches of dew drops
Lazily glitter my window pane
Do they reflect my solitude?
Do they smile at me?
The blankets of thoughts hover
The whispering sobs perish Deep—
Inside the caverns of my anxiety
The rain has stopped
The raw smell of earth persists
Time frozen
Seasons shaken
I wish I can tell them That---
I am the 'other'
The other, not the one in this blurred photograph
The other, whom you cannot label,
The other, for whom no land exists,
Except borders
Thresholds, nothing else
Words, umpteen numbers of them compete to name me
Yet I dwell within the wall of twin identity
I carve my space with my purple blood
I am the Other



THE VILLAIN

Vijayalaxmi Potu

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I came running to the railway station at around 9.30 at night in Nellore of Andhra Pradesh, India. The train was already on the platform. “My God I am lucky enough to catch the train,” I thought trying to slow down my breath. I searched for my compartment in the display boards and headed for boarding the train when I caught a glimpse of a lady in lavender colour saree, quite decently dressed and talking over to someone on her mobile. I could not help ‘eavesdropping’. “Oh this is not my train Jagan, while talking to you I would have boarded the wrong train. God!!” I heard her give a sigh of relief. I too looked at the train name and number to be sure. “Oh God! This is not my train”. I too started for the wrong train on the right platform. The railway digital board is showing that my train to Secunderabad is around 20 minutes late and going to arrive on the same platform. I too gave a sigh of relief and then came back from that place in search of a better place to stand or if possible sit. My light weight bag and laptop are not bothering much. What has been bothering me is the whereabouts of that lavender colour saree clad woman. Who is that Jagan? Is he her husband? Friend? Boy friend?

We always tend to opt for a/an (extra marital) relationship. Slowly I started strolling the whole platform from this end to that end in search of her. In that short glimpse also I could not help noticing her very bright eyes with very dark kajal applied. She did not care a pin for others and was totally immersed in her talk with that Jagan. Suddenly I envied that unknown Jagan. I bought one water bottle and a soft drink. Unable to find her I watched the present train depart slowly and the hustle and bustle of the passengers and the people who came to drop and bid adieu to the passengers, slowly coming down. Where has she gone? Suddenly I remembered that she too has to board the same train and the same bogie. This



great discovery of mine gave me an instant relief. I do not know how I had forgotten that fact. So it rejuvenated me and made me feel relaxed. So the moment the digital boards started displaying the railway bogie numbers, I took my baggage and went in search of S7. There it is. But she was not there. The train came with the usual thumping sound amidst the noise of the announcement “Your attention please train number” And so on. I stood near the compartment gate too weak to push the little crowd. Again that familiar voice with a small laughter cheered up my heart. Oh it was she, holding the strolley in her right hand with vanity bag on her shoulders and holding the mobile and talking to that JAGAN again. Two three people looked at her curiously but it did not deter her from her ‘important and incessant task.’ I tried to push her but she politely moved a little sideways not giving me any room to push her. As tall as I am or a little taller probably with a hefty built personality and fair and lively skin tone she appeared to be ‘La belle’ to me. When she finally sat down in her place I felt elated to find my place in her vicinity. I felt really grateful to the railway authorities to give me a berth near her knowing fully well that it has got nothing to do with them. Her phone talk continued with a ‘heartfull’ of laughter again. Suddenly she said “ayyo!(alas) Jagan I forgot to buy a water bottle, the train may move if I get down.” She was worried and probably by the advice of that JAGAN, she asked a person standing on the platform and asked him to call the water bottle vendor. “Water bottle (vendor) water bottle ...” The vendor did not turn up. “Can you please get me a water bottle?” she asked the same person. “Can’t you buy a water bottle instead of continuously talking on phone” he said in sharp local dialect of Telugu. I was taken aback by the answer and waited for her response. She gave a very bitter look with no intention of giving a retort. With her deep looks still on that person, the train slowly started ahead. Her call got cut. She was trying for calling back that person. She tried twice but stopped for a while. “You are also calling me up in the same time na,” she said and started inquiring about a host of other friends, : “Where is Madhu ? Where is Krishna? What is he? Where is your first love? Sorry you were her first love na?” her tone acquired a tone of teasing. “You should have accepted na poor thing..” and so on..... interrupted by her naughty laughter. “Where is Ram anna?” “You know why I call him anna? He scolded me



once for telling him "Thankyou." " Yes scolded", she continued," he felt hurt when I thanked him for the favour he has done to me." "Only people intimate to us can scold us." "yes yes that's how he feels about me. Some emotional relationships are thicker than blood relations.....yes... yes."

She paused for a while and burst out in laughter. She continuously laughed for five minutes her face glowing with the radiance of happiness, her hair slightly falling on her broad and fair forehead and a few hair falling into her eyes which she set apart with her long pink colour polished finger nails. She adjusted a little and sat a little upright and said "You did not change a bit Jagan after two decades too". TWO DECADES! My ears could not carry this heavy unbelievable truth to my mind. Slowly I understood that she might have been in late thirties or early forties but her skin tone is totally hiding her real age.

I realized that I sat cuddled in my place totally involved in this La Belle's world. I moved a little and adjusted and sat a little relaxed.

She opened her packet and started eating dosa as her dinner. "No problem continue, I'll listen to you while eating." She continued but had to be interrupted by her hiccups. While hiccupping she appeared to realize only then that she had no water with her. I took out my water bottle to give her but was superceded by another co passenger who gave her his water bottle and told her "No problem, You drink" She raised her large eyes in surprise and slightly nodded with a half-smile as a gesture of thanking him. She finished her dinner and threw the cover and papers of the cover out of the window of the train. She took a little water in her hands and washed her hands by putting her hands out of the window. She took another sip of water from the bottle and returned it to the owner still talking over phone. She thanked him again with her eyes and a continued smile on her lips.

Now she sat relaxed with her head resting on the back berth cushion. Her eyes became moist and her voice slowed down to whisper, "what can I say about me? What is there to tell you about me? I am a normal house wife. They have made me so. All my hopes were



dashed to earth. What else can I say about me? I feel embarrassed if some old friend meets me and asks, "where are you working?" "No one asks me are you working?" I am nothing in professional life and personal life also".

She breathed deeply and gave a deep sigh ; no, not relief, may be a sign of a lengthy forbearance of her personal tragedies.

"Hmm you call me college beauty...hmmmmm" she said. Till date husband call me beautiful only once. The other person was surprised as much as we did. The passenger who gave her water bottle looked into my face unbelievably.

"Can you bear to listen if I tell you that my husband tried to do away with me for three times." She covered her mouth with her left hand changing the mobile to her right hand and whispered "Murder murder, three murder attempts on my life. Ayyo don't feel sorry. Nothing to worry. I am still alive na. I am a stubborn sort of thing. Don't worry. I won't die so soon. For at least my children grow up and settle down I will be there for them. With all my will power I will live. Don't worry. Don't worry. That's why I did n't want to tell." "You know once he tried to stab me but I put my hand to stop it so I got deeply hurt in the left arm. Then he himself took me to the hospital since he could not stop the flowing blood. He told the hospital authorities that I got hurt myself with a knife while cutting vegetables. How silly na. How can I get hurt on my forearm if I am cutting vegetables. I'll get hurt on my palms or fingers na. I did not answer to their questions. Had I opened my mouth he would have been behind the bars."

"Third time he strangled me on my neck with his shoed leg and went out of the apartment thinking that I was dead." "He wanted to create an alibi after my death that he was not in the apartment. God saved me. My children were at school. Otherwise they would have been horrified. God saved my children from this horror. Poor things they would have been utterly shocked had they seen this."



“Ha...” another deep breathe and she closed her eyes after this narration. “Its okay. Its okay’, she said and cut the phone.

Unable to bear this unbearable horror episode the whole place became utterly silent. I started staring into the dark silent night seen out of the train window.

Suddenly I realized that it was not only me who has been observing and listening to her words with utmost involvement but also almost six to seven co passengers over there. All of them were stricken with the same kind of interest on her and her words. None of them appeared to be able to put up with her words. Silently the co passengers looked into one another’s eyes in dismay. To save all of us the Travelling Ticket Examiner came to check the tickets.

She silently handed over her copy of ticket and identity card into which my co passenger tried to peep in to find out her age. I lost all interest in trying to find out her age as it was hard for me to believe that her slim throat was strangled beneath her husband’s shoes to the point of death. My eyes did not get moist but my heart felt a strangulated pain. Sometimes tears are too trivial to reveal the pain I thought.

She put down the middle berth at the request of the other passenger and made her bed with a light lemon color bed sheet and a woolen shawl to cover herself.

She lied down on the bed and asked me to put off the lights. I immediately followed her instruction and put off the lights though I did not yet make my bed. It was necessary for all of us to stay in darkness for some time to acquaint ourselves with this gruesome truth.

She took her mobile phone and said, “I kept the phone in silent mode. I told you na that I am alright. No no don’t curse God. “ “ Still believe in God? What nonsense. I trust God more and more now. He listened to my prayers and enabled me to live in order to take care of my lovely children. Do you know what a lovely and naughty kids they are?”



“My cute dolls, both of them are a gift to me from God.” “OK it is quite late at night. The other passengers will get disturbed. Anyway you have my number now. You can call me anytime.”

“Problem,” “ha ha”, she laughed and said “what else is there for me to be scared of?”

“Ok ok. Good night and bye. Yes bye for now”.

By waving good night to that Jagan she kept her mobile in her bag and went to sleep leaving behind a sleepless night for all of us.

My whole night was spent in a pathetic mood unable to assimilate to the hard facts of life. Early in the morning the train reached its destination. I packed my belongings in a hurry and at once tried to recollect what had happened the previous night. I looked for her. She was there still sleeping. One by one we are getting down. The passenger who gave her water was beating on the window with his hand making some sound. She opened her drowsy eyes at the noise and after a couple of minutes’ realized where she was. Slowly she got up and packed her bed sheet and other things and got down of the train. I felt an inclination to look at her husband. I followed her. Again I felt uneasy to see him and slowed down my pace and stood in one side of the platform looking at her gait till she appeared. She walked away gracefully leaving a void in me.

‘La Belle’ (beautiful woman) I thought but who is that guy(her husband) who sans merci?



Faith and Love on God Creates Wonders!

Dr. Ujjwala Kakarla

Two research scholars of philosophy were researching on a rational topic, “God and Existence”. Although both were working on a similar stream, yet one scholar was a theist and another scholar was an atheist who wanted to prove their contrary proposition and facts on God and Existence. Both the scholars meet at a monastery during their course of research who involve in a conversation to know about each other’s objective and purpose of research which turns into contestation.

Theist : Are you researching on the topic with belief in God?

Atheist: No, I don’t believe in God. I am researching to prove that Existence is possible without unseen or imaginary God. God is just an imagination of mankind. It’s an illusion.

Theist : How can you say that God is an illusion? Not a tiny leaf rustles without God’s presence and will. The creation of the mysterious Existence is impossible without the power and will of omnipotent God.

Atheist : If we think that God exists, then His goal for human life is happiness in the world. God’s role is to provide comfortable environs for the mankind. Why is the World filled with so much of misery and suffering?

Theist: Man’s end is not happiness in the world but knowledge of God which will bring everlasting contentment. The problem of misery and suffering may be the greatest objection to the existence of God but the ultimate solution to the problem of suffering is God alone without whom we become despondent to lead our life with



hope.

Atheist: But mankind is in a state of rebellion alienated from God. They are more tempted and attracted towards evil rather than so called imaginary God. There is the presence of evil everywhere rather than goodness. If God exists why can't He abolish evil and make the world a better place to live!

Theist: Evil brings creator and creation into manifestation. So evil is a part of God's drama. Just as a villain is necessary in a play to personify evil if a hero has to be adored for his good so also evil creates suffering to awaken the mankind to long for God and Goodness.

Atheist: If evil is a part of God's drama then God is evil proving to be selfish in seeking His identity by suffering mankind.

Theist: The greatness of all enemies is man himself. A life without pain and suffering would be of little value. No lessons of growth would be learned to seek and know the Creator.

Atheist: Why should mankind suffer to know the creator? How is mankind benefitted in coming to know God through his suffering?

Theist: God is the final answer to the problem of suffering for He redeems mankind from evil and takes us into everlasting joy of an incommensurable good with Himself. God overrules evil for his own wise and holy ends for a greater good.

Atheist: Why is mankind bound to suffering unlike imaginary God?



Theist: Mankind is bound to birth and death cycle whereas God is not bound to it. Man suffers for his own bad acts. Whether it is good or bad act man should experience two states of pain and pleasure in life. God is beyond the cycle of karma. He is infinite goodness.

Atheist: How can you prove the existence of Unseen God to mankind?

Theist: Just as we use sense organs to experience pain and pleasure which cannot be seen, God also should be sensed, felt and experienced. The tool to realize God is to have an awareness of good and evil. For every good pattern created by God there is a corresponding pattern of evil. For wisdom there is ignorance; for love and forgiveness one should experience hatred and revenge; for calmness, peace and happiness one has to experience restlessness, anger and sorrow. Experiencing infinite goodness is to know and realize God.

As the argument was becoming intense between the researchers a monk from the monastery hears and approaches them to enlighten with his wise and pragmatic message: O' Lads, to know God, the source of infinite goodness is love and faith. The person who loves God with intense faith, no matter what he suffers, how awful his pain is, still says God is good to me and He exists. Love and faith are the tools which create wonders to realize God's presence and existence.



An insight into a rare soul longing for the ethereal: Goutam Karmakar is in conversation with an assured poetic voice Pashupati Jha

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About Pashupati Jha Pashupati Jha has emerged as one of the famous names among contemporary Indian Poets writing in English. Besides being a poet, he is a senior professor of English and former Head of the Dept. of Humanities at the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee. He has found his interest in poetry since long ago, and his PhD on the poetry of Sylvia Plath illustrates this in a more clear way. Till now he has successfully guided fifteen students for PhD degree and his devotion as a teacher gave him *The Outstanding Teacher Award of I.I.T. Roorkee* twice, in 2003 and 2007. He is teaching Creative Writing in English, Research Methodology, The Art of Fiction, Indian English Novels, and Technical Communication there. From January 2006 to December 2011 he has been the Chairman of Indian Association for English Studies (now AESI). He was also the President of 57th All India English Teachers' Conference, which was held in 2012 at Sardar Patel University, Gujarat.

Apart from his professional activities, he has written extensively on English literature. He has written over seventy research papers and book chapters along with a book on Sylvia Plath and a co-edited anthology *Reflections on English Studies*. But his fame rests on his poetry, which is his favourite forte. His five poetic collections *Cross and Creation* (2003), *Mother and Other Poems* (2005), *All in One* (2011), *Awaiting Eden Again* (2015) and *Taking on Tough Times* (2016) are praised for brevity, beauty, intensity, sincerity, wide thematic variations, and clear Indian sensibility. He is master of blending simple thoughts in lucid



languages without complexity and intellectualization. His poetry puts emphasis on love, which always remains a binding force in life and in poetic creation. His poetry is the outcome of his intense involvement in the cauldron of life. The prevailing mess of modern age always finds expression in his compositions and he has tried to provide alternative ways to escape from it. He is comprehensive and shows his distaste for over techno-centrism. However, he is an optimist at the core of his heart, for he believes that compassion and love can override any situation. He has received Michael Madhusudan Academy Award for his poetry in Kolkata in January, 2016 and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association for English Studies of India at the inaugural session of 61st All India English Teachers Conference at Nagpur in January, 2017.

In a conversation with Dr. Pashpati Jha, Goutam Karmakar got the chance to bathe into the rhythmical and lyrical lines of this conventional poet whose compositions bear a testimony to the fertility of his creative sensibility and perception. This conversation may not only resuscitate and invigorate a sleeping soul but also stimulate a poetic flavor to his readers and all poetry lovers in general.

TEXT OF THE INTERVIEW

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Sir your readers are known to your professional activities but unknown to your childhood days, schooling and college days. So can you tell a bit about yourself?

PASHUPATI JHA: I was born in a middle class family of teachers and Sanskrit scholars at Benipatti in Madhubani district, famous for Madhubani Painting, Mithila culture, meandering rivulets, and unending acres of green paddy fields and mango orchards. Mine was a joint family of about forty people, all bound to one another by internal affection. My aunts loved me as much as my own mother. As I was the lone school topper in the family, so I was



marked for special affection and care. My schooling was at my village, my higher education at C.M. College, Darbhanga, and my Ph.D. from IIT Delhi. Those days, sincerity was the hallmark of school and college education, and so I had a firm grounding in my subjects.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Have your childhood days and social surroundings inspired you to compose verse? And apart from these what are your other sources of inspiration?

PASHUPATI JHA: Yes, the atmosphere around me since my childhood was full of natural beauty, human bond, and unbound affection. In my village, there was no tension between castes and communities. In fact, friends of my early school days were washer men and Muslims. A deep sense of love for all automatically pervades my poems. Politics, later on, created the vicious rift for its own nefarious end; anguish for such a tension too is very much present in few of my poems. Both of my parents were very kind; the strain of intense compassion in my poetry is its outcome. A class topper was a hero those days, expected to recite his own poems on special occasions in the school. Therefore, I started writing Hindi poems since then itself; but I never published them. Writing English poems came when I shifted to English Honours from science subjects. I was thought to be a brilliant student and Prof Shankaranand Palit encouraged me to write poems in English. He remained the best teacher I have ever met in my life. I enjoyed reading almost all important poets from England, America, and India. But their inspiration or influence on me as such was never obvious to me. I wrote on my own, based on my own experience and observation, keenly sensitive to what was happening around me. My language is English but my spirit is Indian. There is strong Indian ethos, therefore, in my poetry. I have never tried to coat my experiences in Western colours. These lines of my poem, "Poetry," would indicate my preference for the ancient Oriental culture:

My poetry is not meant for moderns—



Did splaying literature
in the designer décor of AC rooms
suffocating Muse to untimely death.
It is meant for the old ancestors
edging out from their graves
eager and intent to listen
the ancient elemental music
once again.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: As a professor what are the lessons that you give foremost to your students? Do you influence them in any way to compose verse?

PASHUPATI JHA: A teacher's impact on students is through his sincerity as a teacher and his character as a human being. In most of the cases, a good teacher becomes the role model for his students. I stick to these ideas and serious students respect me like anything. I avoid overt moral lessons; they are implied in the way I teach them and interact with them. As I teach them an elective course, Creative Writing in English, so they are encouraged to write poems, a scene on a dramatic situation, a short story, and literary reviews. As they are B.Tech students, so initially they grumble, but later on they like creative writing very much. Many of these students write in their response form that this elective course should be made mandatory for all B.Tech students. Isn't it a surprising conclusion in an IIT?

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Your literary activities show that you are a voracious reader. So what are the books you have read while growing up? What are the books you are currently reading?

PASHUPATI JHA: I have been reading novels in large number since my school days itself. There are many novels I like; but *Wuthering Heights*, *War and Peace*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Heart of the Matter*, and *The God of Small Things* are my favourites.



Among poets, I like Shakespeare, Milton, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Yeats, Whitman, Frost, Ezekiel, Shiv K. Kumar, Niranjan Mohanty, Charu Sheel Singh, Prabhanjan Kumar Mishra and so on. But I have never been conscious of them while I write myself; subconsciously though, some of them might have sneaked into a few of my words, images, and expressions. Currently, whenever I get time from my teaching, research and related assignments, I concentrate on completing my sixth collection of poetry. I don't have time these days for reading a number of creative works.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: What inspires you to compose verse? At which age did you respond to the call of Muse?

PASHUPATI JHA: As stated earlier, I had been writing Hindi poems since my early school days. But I have been publishing English poems for the last twenty four years only, though I have been writing them since my MA days itself. Any moving scene or event inspires me to compose poems. My Muse likes to visit me when I am alone and walking or travelling. I jot down my first draft when I return home or early in the morning before others stir. Poetry for me has become a passion, and so anything that touches my heart may bring some lines from my poetic sensibility.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Does your professional experience help you to compose poems? Or do you believe that the desirable condition for a poet would include no work besides extensive reading, thinking and writing?

PASHUPATI JHA: It depends. But every poet has to support his family; poetry does not earn any money in India. My professional experience helps me in a different way. I meet and interact with my students and colleagues almost every day, and the majority of them are quite intelligent. I go deep down in the mind and heart of my students and research scholars, and their response too helps me in writing poems. So, usual conflict between profession and passion, the line of schism between the two, has gradually been blurred to almost nothing in



my case. Being the eldest son of the family, I could not afford to be free for enjoying leisure time. You have mentioned extensive reading in your question; yes, it helps. But a little more important is wide and varied experience of life.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: What are the prime themes of your five volumes of poetry? Kindly elaborate a bit each of your poetic collections.

PASHUPATI JHA: Variety is the key word for my poetic themes. I quote the remarks of Prof B.S. Naikar on it: “The thematic concern...ranges from birth to death, from identity/ego to cosmic consciousness, ..from science to art to religion; from pain to love, and from suffering to acceptance and resignation, thereby capturing the irony and paradox of human experience itself.” For me, my poetry covers the entire gamut of Indian experience, like the predicament of women, family-life, corrupt socio-political situation, crime, violence, communal tension. They also include my subtle, suggestive ways to come out of these tough predicaments. All my poetry collections are so closely linked that you cannot separate them. The only difference, if any, is the weakening holds of optimism in the last two collections, simply because the time has been very tough for me in the last few years. Writing poetry has given me great relief during these days.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: What is your definition and philosophy of love? In what way does love shape your poetry?

PASHUPATI JHA: Love for me is the most essential element of life. But it is an all expansive feeling, beginning from the individual and rising to the universal level. My poem, “Autobiography: Short and Simple,” begins with “I learnt love from my mother’s milk.” I even attribute mother’s love and sacrifice to poetic creation. An aspiring poet, in “Becoming a Poet,” tries all means to write a meaningful poem but fails. Ultimately, Muse visits him thus:

Years later, I saw the primal scene



of a young mother breast-feeding her babe
unmindful of the public gaze
affection flowing to the child
satisfaction flowing back to her
and the thaw in my ink
melted with the milk
and for days I had no respite.

I am against the growing cheapening of love as it is happening today; even coming down to the level of live-in relationship, where you take and break at your whim. Love, ideally, is an eternal attachment; in Hindu belief, marriage is meant for several births. As I have concluded my poem, "Absence and Essence" for everlasting marital bond:

All through the past decades of my life
living with you has become a habit,
which may die only with my death.
Or, not even with my death,
for soul survives the body.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Poems like *Mother*, *Dot to Distance* and many more show the concerns, love, sacrifices associated with mother. Therefore, what is the ideal image of 'mother' in your *Mother and Other Poems*? As this volume is a tribute to your mother, so what role does your mother play in your life?

PASHUPATI JHA: In Indian culture, mother always plays a vital role in the life of her children; she is still the only source of pure love. My mother was a simple, pious woman, devoted all the time to her six children. Major part of human compassion and values in my poems come from her. Her death in 1999 would remain the most shocking event in my life.



You cannot simply measure up her role; it defies all boundaries. That is why, many of my poems have her divine presence in them.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: How have you presented the contemporary complex problems in your *Cross and Creation*? Does this volume present you as an existentialist?

PASHUPATI JHA: Modern life is a complex phenomenon. Existential dilemma, therefore, is bound to creep into my poems too. In *Cross and Creation*, poems like “The Strange Disease of I,” “Seeking Life in Death,” “Eternal Circle,” “The Grammar of My Life,” “Hurts,” “He and She”, “Death I,” and “Death II” subtly depict that dilemma. Yet, none of my five collections deal with a single problem; they have multiple depiction of life guided by a sense of pervasive humanism.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: How have you shown the plight of Indian Women in your poetry collections? Your *Cross and Creation* shows your disgust over contemporary fragmented society and culture. So what kind of society do you want?

PASHUPATI JHA: As stated above, all my collections deal with multiple situations. Yet, being a woman-born, there are many poems in each of my volumes that deal with the miserable plight of women in society. It is paradoxical, especially in Indian society, where the presiding deities of power, wealth, and knowledge are all goddesses and not gods. I cherish a vision of society where everyone has a dignified life and no one is exploited, where ego, born of wealth and status, is replaced by humanitarian thought and matching action. These feelings are at the core of my poems, without overt political, religious or regional tone.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: What are the styles and techniques you have adopted while writing poetry? What are the issues and aspects you expect from your readers and research scholar to explore in your poetry?



PASHUPATI JHA: Every poet subconsciously selects his own style. His poems would not have smooth flow if he is conscious of style as such. Style develops after writing many poems. As regards the style of my own poems, I would like to quote Usha Bande: “Pashupati Jha has evolved a style of his own—uncomplicated, direct yet profound. One marvels at his accurate use of language and economy of idiom.” Dr. Bande has used a very significant word ‘evolved,’ this is what happens with most of the poets.

It is for the scholars and their supervisors to select topics from my poetry. Yet, I may advise topics like, ‘Variety of thematic concerns,’ ‘Pattern of love,’ ‘Poems on creative process,’ ‘Socio-political scenario,’ ‘Depiction of women,’ ‘Depiction and role of Nature’ and so on.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Your poems (like *He that is Down*) present mysticism. So kindly tell how far does your poetry mystical in nature? Not focusing on a capital theme why have you chosen various themes in your poetry collection *All in One*?

PASHUPATI JHA: My motto is to write simple poetry. I believe that difficult poets have killed poetry. There was a time in Middle Ages when people around Mithila and Mathura regions used to converse in fluent verse. So, I keep myself off from conscious mysticism. But a poet is not always his best critic. So, you are free to see mysticism there. A good poem should have the potential of many interpretations so that each generation may find its own meaning in it.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Do you really think history will not repeat? Do you think that your poetry exhibits your anger in the guise of confession and self-criticism?

PASHUPATI JHA: Poetry does not only speak of what is real, but it also indicates the possibility of the ideal. That poem on history is written with that hope. War and violence have been too much. I hope, people would be wiser by experience. In the past, tribes, clans,



states were almost always at war. That frequency is less now; though war, thanks to misuse of technology, has become much more devastating.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Do you really think love and hatred are necessary for the cosmic rhythm of cyclicity as expressed in your *Dilemma*? Your *Autobiography Short and Simple* from *All in One* describes your simple life. So like your favourite Sylvia Plath how far do you consider yourself as a confessional poet?

PASHUPATI JHA: It is part of the existential predicament that both love and hatred would co-exist. But one is life-affirming and the other is life-negating force. Creativity should be more inclined towards the first, because everything on earth is meant for life. Nihilism has no permanent place either in life or in literature.

I am not a confessional poet, though its strain may be present in a few of my poems. Don't mistake I in my poems for personal I. It may be used as a persona too. The movement in good poetry is always from personal to the universal.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: It is generally considered that a poet is a social reformer and poems have the power to reform society by averting evils. How far does your *Awaiting Eden Again* serve as the morality poem here? How have you projected Earth Mother and India in your poems?

PASHUPATI JHA: Part of the answer is already given in the previous question. But social reforms and morality are valid poetic themes only when they are presented symbolically and suggestively; otherwise poetry would become didactic and propagandist. Poetry does not advocate but persuade readers gently towards a harmonious life and mindset. Sordid facts are poetically depicted to generate feelings that automatically transform the mind and heart of the reader. For bare facts, prose is a better medium.



Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Where lies the spiritual aspect of your poems? Do you think that the time of incarnation of God has come and why?

PASHUPATI JHA: Yes, some of my poems are spiritual, but they are not religious as religion is wrongly depicted today. Love is at the base of all religions and all arts. Yes, as an Indian I feel that injustice has become very strong and widespread, and God, or God-like leader, should appear on earth to destroy the evil once for all.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Since your beginning as a poet have you changed your idea about poetry? How do you see the future of Indian English poetry?

PASHUPATI JHA: No, my idea about poetry is the same that it has power, like *mantra*, to transform peoples mind for the better. The focus in India, as elsewhere all over the globe, is on novels. Yet hundreds of people are writing poetry regularly in English in India. It is a welcome sign.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Since so many people are composing poems now so how will you make a difference between good poetry and bad one?

PASHUPATI JHA: It is a good sign that hundreds are writing poetry, even though only dozens of them would finally make a mark. It is difficult to differentiate between good and bad poetry. But I can point out that mere depiction of statement, presentation of facts, open didacticism, and mere rhyming are not poems. Poetry, as Wordsworth has already pointed out, should be spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. It should not be a mere mental exercise.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Are you a bilingual poet? Can you share with your readers about your future projects?



As I have been concentrating on and publishing only English poems, so I am not a bilingual poet. I am working on my sixth volume of poetry these days.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: How do you make a link between art and poetry? If you are to choose some of your favourite poems for an anthology then which ones do you choose?

PASHUPATI JHA: Art and poetry are always linked. Choosing favourite poems is very difficult. It is like asking a mother to choose her most favourite child. It all depends on the discerning reader/editor/critic to select such poems from my collections.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: How will you like to define yourself-- a poet or a professor, or a man raising voice for humanity? Poetry does not bring money but makes us human. Do you agree with it?

PASHUPATI JHA: Yes, good poetry makes people better than what they earlier were. So, I would be happy to become a good human being than anything else. My being a professor and a poet is part of the same grand scheme.

Q. GOUTAM KARMAKAR: What will be your advice for upcoming poets? And are there any messages from your part for the human being?

PASHUPATI JHA: I would suggest new poets to write poems only when they are really inspired by some object, person, situation, scene, or event. Uninspired poems become prosaic and do not create any deep feeling in the heart of the reader. Do not write to preach; write to move readers' heart by your words and rhythmic flow. In poetry, feeling should have upper hand not facts; emotion should be given preference over idea. Alternatively, ideas expressed in a poem should finally generate feelings. If ideas remain ideas, then prose is a better medium to express them.



I would like to request the general people to read and feel poetry. It would humanize them and make them aware of the agony of others, thus turning them away from cruelty and violence and transforming them into a better person. I.A. Richards in *The Principles of Literary Criticism* has spoken of ‘appetencies’ and ‘aversions’ that how after reading, understanding, and enjoying a poem. Aversions are largely replaced by appetencies. Even Milton has spoken of ‘A calm of mind all passion spent’, in *Samson Agonistes*. Aristotle has also mentioned the cathartic value of tragedy in *Poetics*. It should be noted that dialogue in drama earlier was mostly in verse. All great people realize the value of poetry. John F Kennedy has said: ‘While power corrupts, poetry cleanses’.

GOUTAM KARMAKAR: Sir I know that you have been thoroughly bogged down with your IIT duties and you have not much time to sit and relax. But in spite of the fact you have given time to me. So a big thanks to you sir for enlightening us with your thoughts and views.

PASHUPATI JHA: Thank you, too, Goutam.



Book Review of Mikhail Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows The Don*

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About the Book.

And Quiet Flows The Don is written by Mikhail Sholokhov. This book is originally written in Russian Language and translated by Stephen Garry. The genre of this book is novel but it is being considered as an epic novel. The publisher of this book is Alfred A. Knopf (Eng. Trans. US). The publication year is 1928 and 1940 (in serial) but the same volume published in book form in 1934.

About the Author.

Mikhail Sholokhov was born in 1905. He was born in the Don region, his family had been living there for many generations. He studied in Moscow. When he was about fifteen he came back to his native place and started working as a schoolteacher, a statistician, a food inspector and so on. At the age of eighteen he started writing. He is well known as the most famous novelist of Soviet Union. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1965. He died in February 21, 1984. His major works are as under,

- *Tales From the Don*, his first book, published in 1926.
- *And Quiet Flows The Don*, published in 1928, in the Soviet Union, and later it published in the United States in 1934, which won him the Nobel Prize for Literature.
- *Virgin Soil Uplifted* (1935), which won him the Lenin Prize.

Controversy About Sholokhov's Publication of *And Quiet Flows The Don*

Sholokhov was incriminated of plagiarizing *And Quiet Flows The Don*. His critics made a that it was written by Fyodor Krykov, a Cossack and Anti-Bolshevik. This claim would compel him to submit his manuscripts. Sholokhov's authorship was accepted by a special commission in 1929.

But in the year 1999 the Russian Academy of Science on the basis of his manuscript declared that *And Quiet Flows The Don* has been written by Mikhail Sholokhov himself.

***And Quiet Flows The Don* as an Epic Novel**

To prove *And Quiet Flows The Don* as an epic novel the researcher needs to refer common features of epic and novel which I found in this text which are as under;

- Invocation
- Community Values
- War and Combat
- Length
- Tragic Hero

The above mentioned common features as a reader I have found in this epic novel: *And Quiet Flows The Don*.

Invocation

Generally epic begins with invocation which means prayer. In epic poem the author praises to God or Goddess demanding courage and confidence to complete successfully the writing of his epic. Here in the text of Sholokhov we find **Old Cossack Songs**.

“Not with the plough is our dear glorious earth furrowed,

Our death is furrowed with the hoofs of horses,

And our dear glorious earth is sown with the heads of Cossacks;



Our gentle Don is adorned with youthful widows;
Our gentle father Don is blossomed with orphans;
The waves of the gentle Don are rich with fathers' and mothers' tears.
O thou, our father, gentle Don!
Oh, why dost thou, gentle Don, flow so troubledly?
“Ah, how should I, the gentle Don, not flow troubledly?
From my depths, the depths of the Don, the cold springs beat;
Amid me, the gentle Don, the white fish leap”.

— Old Cossack Songs

Generally in prayer we talk with the God. Here Sholokhov talks with the Don, whom he considers as his father and God. I feel that he has mentioned Cossack Songs which are on the river-Don in his work because the Don becomes the witness of every situation. And while remembering the Don he remembers every situation which would happen in the past.

Community Values

Most of the epics have been written in those times which were the times of community values. Since the authors of the epic poetry lived in the time of community values. So far as *And Quiet Flows The Don* is concerned Sholokhov has become the witness of all the situation which he has faced during his life span. Because through this novel he talks about the situation of the Don river. Cossacks during the time of War, Revolution and Civil War. And so we can say that he lives in the time of community values.

War and Combat

In this epic novel we have four parts in which two of them are War (Part-II) and Civil War (Part- IV). In these two parts Sholokhov talks about the war and the situation during it. Here we can find the war between the Russia and Germany.

Length

So far as length of this work is concerned it is very huge. This epic novel contains IV parts. And it accommodates 559 pages. This epic novel deals with the grand theme of the War and the Civil War. And so Sholokhov takes fourteen years to complete it.

Observing the above mentioned features we can say that it is an epic novel. Epic used to refer the past whereas here Sholokhov has also referred the past. Referring one website on epic history (britannica.com/art/epic) I come to know that, Epic, long narrative poem recounting heroic deeds, although the term has also been loosely used to describe novels, such as Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. And so we can say that *And Quiet Flows The Don* is an epic novel. This reveals that epic is a term which is now used to describe novel form.

Tragic Hero

Gregor Melekhov is the tragic hero of this epic novel. He has been suffering throughout his life in the novel. He is a tragic hero who is always in a dilemma to decide anything just like whether to join which army? Whether to join the war or not?

Critical Reading of the Text: *And Quiet Flows The Don*

And Quiet Flows The Don is a novel by Mikhail Sholokhov. It is considered to be his life work and he took fourteen years to complete it. The novel contains four parts. The first part *Peace* was published in 1928. The second part *War* was illuminated in 1929. The third part *Revolution* was enlightened in 1933. And the fourth part *Civil War* was published in 1940. He



received a Nobel Prize for this novel in 1965. The novel displays the events which would happen from 1912 to 1922. The main events are world war one, revolution in 1917 and the civil war.

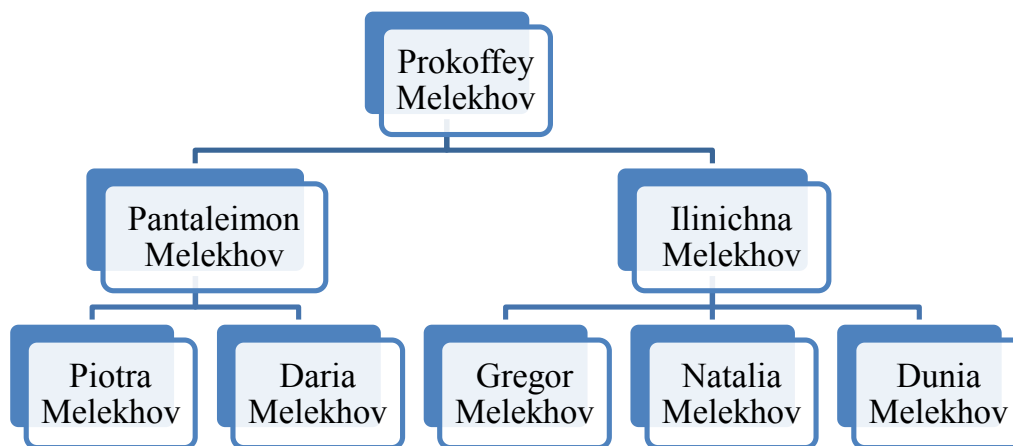
Part: I

Peace

The first part of this novel talks about the situation of the Don region before war, revolution and civil war. The first part of the novel contains thirteen chapters. The first part shows us the culture of the Don region and their style of living.

Part I begins with the Melekhov family. Melekhov family lives in Tatarsk village which is near by the Don River. The surface of the Don is a grey, broken edging of shingle, a pearly drift of mussel-shells. This suggests that the flow of the Don River is quiet likewise the life of the Cossacks is also quiet. Members of the Melekhov's family are as under.

Hierarchy of the Melekhovs



The Glimpse of the Major Characters of the Novel



In the present novel these three characters are very important. Because throughout the novel many things which would happen in their life. The entire novel is revolving around these three characters. But so far as hierarchy is concerned we have to look after the major characters of the text.

1) Prokoffey Melekhov

Prokoffey Melekhov is the father of Pantaleimon. In the beginning of the novel we come across this character. He gets married with a Turkish woman from whom he has a son whose name is Pantaleimon Melekhov.

2) Pantaleimon Melekhov

Prokoffey's blood is running in Pantaleimon's body who is a Cossack. But he does not look like Cossack. Pantaleimon's physical appearance is just like her mother. He gets married with Ilinichna. They have three children. Piotra is the first son of them. Gregor is the second one. They have one daughter also whose name is Dunia Melekhov.

3) Piotra Melekhov

Piotra Melekhov, Gregor's elder brother, who is in the army with him. When the revolutionary troops advance on Tatarsk, their home village, Piotra is named commander of the villagers, who are organized by a counterrevolutionary officer.

4) Gregor Melekhov

Gregor Melekhov, a native of the Don basin in Russia. He is married to one woman but openly goes about with another. His father whips him, and he leaves home. He joins the army and distinguishes himself in action. When the Soviet Socialist Republic is established and civil war breaks out, Gregor joins the Red Army and is made an officer.

5) Natalia Melekhov

Natalia Melekhov, Gregor's wife. When she has realized that Gregor does not love her, she tries to commit suicide. After Gregor discovers that his mistress (Aksinia) has been unfaithful to him, Natalia and Gregor are reconciled, and she bears him twins.

6) Aksinia Astakhov

Aksinia, Gregor's mistress, married to Stepan Astakhov, who mistreats her. Her affair with Gregor becomes a village scandal. She goes away with him, and they become servants to a wealthy land-owning family. When Gregor goes away to join the army, she is unfaithful to him with Eugene Listnitsky, the son of the family. The affair is broken off by Gregor, who whips her and goes home to his wife.

The novel begins something like this that, Prokoffey Melekhov would return to the village from the last war with Turkey. He brings one Turkish woman as a wife. The captive Turkish woman does not have good relations with Prokoffey Melekhov. He lives a secluded life in his solitary hut near by the Don River. There is one rumor regarding Prokoffey's wife that she is a witch. And so, all the villagers would like to kill her. Astakhov's daughter-in-law (the Astakhovs live in the hut next to Prokoffey's hut) tells to the villagers that once Prokoffey's wife milking the Astakhov's cow, and she would stop to give milk and would die soon after. They consider Prokoffey's wife as a curse of their village. The villagers would kill her.

After the death of Prokoffey's wife their child is breed by Prokoffey's mother. She has taken the charge of their child. The boy is looking just like Turkish because his mother was a Turkish woman. They carry him to Church and Christened him. Then they named him Pantaleimon after his grandfather. When we start reading the text we never come across the name of Prokoffey's father but the name giving incident asserts that his father's name was Pantaleimon.

Pantaleimon is growing up ungovernable. He looks like his mother and not like a Cossack. So Prokoffey has decided to marry him to the daughter of a Cossack neighbor. This is how Turkish blood would begin to mingle with the Cossacks. Pantaleimon gets married with Ilinichna (a Cossack). They have two sons and one daughter. The first one is Piotra who gets married with Daria. The second one is Gregor who is also known as Grishka. He looks like his father.

Stepan Astakhova is a neighbor of Pantaleimon. Aksinia is a wife of Stepan. Aksinia does not espouse Stepan as her husband. Aksinia gets married with Stepan at the age of seventeen. She belongs to Dubrovka village, from the sands on the other side of the Don. Aksinia is installed as young mistress of the Astakhov household.

Now, dear little daughter, we've taken you not for love, nor for you to lie abed. Go and milk the cows, and then get some food ready. I'm old and feeble. You must take over the household, it will all fall on you. (*And Quiet Flows The Don* p.31)

The above mentioned statement is spoken by Aksinia's mother-in-law. Her statement reveals Aksinia's position in the house of Stepan. John Stuart Mill in his book *The Subjection of Women* mentions that wives are treated as legal slaves and their status is nothing more than that of a mistress. For Aksinia this marriage is nothing but a sorrow.

At this juncture we come to know about the relationship between Aksinia and Gregor. Aksinia gets ready to elope with Gregor. But Gregor does not want to leave this village. Because he wants to make his career in the military service. Pantaleimon also comes to know about the relationship between Aksinia and Gregor. Pantaleimon goes to Aksinia's house to scold her. But Aksinia says,

There is nothing to wait for! Get back where you come from! And if I want your Grishaka, I'll eat him, bones and all! Chew that over! What does if Grishka love me? You'll punish him?... You'll write to my husband? Write to

the ataman if you like, but Grishka belongs to me! He's mine! Mine! I have him and I shall keep him... (*And Quiet Flows The Don* p.41)

The above mentioned statement displays Aksinia's madness to have Gregor in her life that she insults Gregor's Father, not only that she does not think about her husband.

Pantaleimon has decided to arrange a marriage of Gregor. He wants his son Gregor to get married with Natalia. Natalia belongs to a rich family. She is the daughter of Miron Gregorievich Korshunov. Gregor does not want to marry her. But his father tries to convince him saying that we are in a bad time and Korshunovs have the reputation of being the richest family in the village of Tatarsk. They have fourteen pairs of bullocks, horses, mares from stud farms, fifteen cows, innumerable other cattle, a flock of several hundred sheep. At this point we can say that for Pantaleimon marriage is a business and contract. He wants his son to get married with the daughter of Miron Gregorievich Korshunov because he has a good amount of property. Finally marriage takes place and Gregor gets married to Natalia. But still he loves Aksinia.

Now there is an elopement of Gregor and Aksinia. She is ready to lead her life in any situation. She is ready to do anything for Gregor as she says, "I'll sleep with the cattle to be with you, Grishka. Anything to be with you" (*And Quiet Flows The Don* p.123).

They go to Yagodnoe where they break all connection with the neighboring villages. In Yagodnoe they live in the house of Nikolai Listnitsky (a general and the hero of the Russo-Turkish war) who is the father of Listnitsky Eugene. Nikolai Listnitsky lives in Yagodnoe and Listnitsky Eugene has appointed Gregor as a coachman of the horses at his father's house. Aksinia is appointed as a cook in the house of Nikolai Listnitsky and also engaged in all other household duties. On the other hand being a lonely Natalia is neglected by the society. Because her husband (Gregor) has left her alone and has run away with Stepan's wife (Aksinia).



Gregor wants to take part in the army but to take part in the army a participant must have basic equipments just like coats, a saddle, trousers and a horse. Once the district administration at Vieshenska has summoned Gregor, there he has given one hundred rubles to buy a horse. Gregor is to be drafted into an ordinary regiment- the 12th regiment. And in the first part we come to know that Gregor's dream comes true.

Traditions and Culture of the Don Cossacks in the First Part of the Novel

Don Cossacks are skilled horsemen that we come to know through the character of Gregor. He is very much interested in riding the horse. The Don Cossacks have a tradition of choral singing. We come to know about this during the training camp of Sietrakov where Piotra has gone for his training. Here we see the choral songs attempted by Stepan, Tomilin, and Christonia. In the text we also find the complex ritual of the marriage in which a bridegroom arrives on horseback and takes his bride to the church, followed by a marriage train. After the wedding all invited guests would intermit to the house of bridegroom. There, the parents would bless the couple. The same ritual we have found during the marriage of Gregor and Natalia. Don Cossacks are interested in reading history. They are interested in playing cards. They used to take cabbage soup in supper and we come to know about this through the character of Pantaleimon. Cossacks are interested to take part in the war. They are true Christians. They have written prayer. And that prayer they read at the time of attack. That prayer is something like this,

Supreme ruler, Holy Mother of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Bless, Lord, thy slave of God entering battle, and my comrades who are with me. Wrap them in cloud, with Thy heavenly, stony hail protect them. Holy Dmitry Soslutsky, defend me, the slave of God, and my comrades on all four sides; permit not evil men to shoot, nor with spear to pierce, nor with pole-axe to strike, nor with butt end of axe to smite, nor with axe to hew down, nor with sword to cut down or pierce, not with knife to pierce or cut; neither any magic-



worker. All is before me now, the slave of God, orphaned and judged. In the sea, in the ocean, on the island of Buyan stands an iron post; on the post is an iron man resting on an iron staff, and he charms iron, steel, lead, zinc, and all weapons. "Go, iron, into your mother earth away from the slave of God and past my comrades and my horse. The arrow-shafts into the forest, and the feather to its mother bird, and the glue to the fish". Defend me, the slave of God, with a golden buckler from steel and from bullet, cannon-fire and ball, spear and knife. May my body be stronger than armour! Amen. (*And Quiet Flows The Don* pp.194-195)

This suggests that the Cossacks get their courage from the Holy Mother of God. To win the battle they pray the Holy Mother of God.

On the other hand they are superstitious too. The old men of the Cossacks would believe that if the owl screeching from the cemetery, then trouble is coming. And definitely trouble would come with the second part of the text. Because the second part talks about the War.

Part: II

War

The second part of the text accommodates thirteen chapters. We can take this part as a historical part.

In the beginning of this part we come to know something about Natalia. She has been left by her husband but she has done many things for the Melekhov family. Gregor leaves her alone but her feelings for his family remain the same. She gives her involvement in the farming and also in the household duties.



We can find mobilization against the emergency. At this juncture Gregor has been transferred to the town of Rovno in Volhynia to take part in maneuvers. Germany has declared the war. Shchegolkov says, “Look how the sunset is burning! It’s blowing up for wind” (*And Quiet Flows The Don* p.210).

The above mentioned statement we can take as the sign of war. The same burning is in Germans and Cossacks during the war. But Cossacks are at the good position in the war that we have realized while reading the cheap behavior of the Cossacks with the German officer. The Cossacks remove his boots, clothing, weapons. They capture the officer’s watch and would sell it on the spot to his troop sergeant. This also proves that they are known for the war.

Gregor is mobilized into the army. He feels ill from the killing and the blood. Gregor fails to recover his former tranquility of spirit. And at this juncture one of his copartners whose name is Alexei Uriupin who has been drafted into Gregor’s troop and also known as Tufty, he would encourage Gregor by saying that; “To kill your enemy in battle is a holy work” (*And Quiet Flows The Don* p.224).

He says God will wipe out one of your sins, just as he does for killing a serpent. In the meantime the Melekhov Family receives the inaccurate news of Gregor’s death. But he is alive. Gregor exploits a lot during the war and so the cross of St. George is given to him. This compels the researcher to think that, in the life one should struggle and suffer just to lead his/her life whereas in the war one should exploit himself for the victory.

Incident of Gregor’s Fever of the Insanity

The study of the second part shows that Gregor is serving his regular term in the army when war broke out. First there are rumors of Austrians massing troops on the border, then, one summer day, in a peaceful countryside, his company would cross the border. His detachment would send on ahead, stole through a deserted village, like a beast of prey, then

climbed a hillock. From the top they can see the enemy. They are many. “The rest were silent, all gripped in the fist of the selfsame feeling. Gregor listened to the rapid beating of his heart (as if some small creature, there, in the left side of his chest, were making time)...”(From *Gorky to Pasternak* p.312).

Ordered to report the discovery, Gregor gallops back to the commander:

The commander snatches his sword from the scabbard; its tip gives out a pale blue spark.

“Co-o-ompany!” The sword bends to the right, to the left, and falls forward, stopping in mid-air above the horse’s picked-up ears. “Scatter like lava and advance!” □ Gregor mentally translates the wordless command. “Lances ready, swords away, to the attack forward march!” □ the captain shouts the order, and gives his horse the rein.

Gregor presses the wooden end of the bayonet to his side, his hand sweating as if it has been rubbed in a slimy liquid. Bullets force him to bend his head close to his mount’s neck; his nostrils are filled with the acrid smell of horse sweat. As through misty field glasses, he sees a line of trenches and masses of running men. And within: there in the middle of Gregor’s chest, that which before the attack has hurriedly pumped blood seemed to have ossified. He feels nothing except the ringing in his ears and pain in the toe of his left foot. His thoughts are unraveled by fear, wound a tangled, heavy, freezing skein in his head.

Then, “as with a diamond on glass,” bits of what he sees are cut on his memory: the pink gums and bared rows of teeth of a fallen horse, the distorted mouth and protruding eyes of a man he does not hear but whose cry, he knows, has been inhumanly savage. A tall, blond-browed Austrian fires at him at close range, the bullet grazes his cheek, and Gregor drives his lance into the enemy with such force that half of it enters his body.

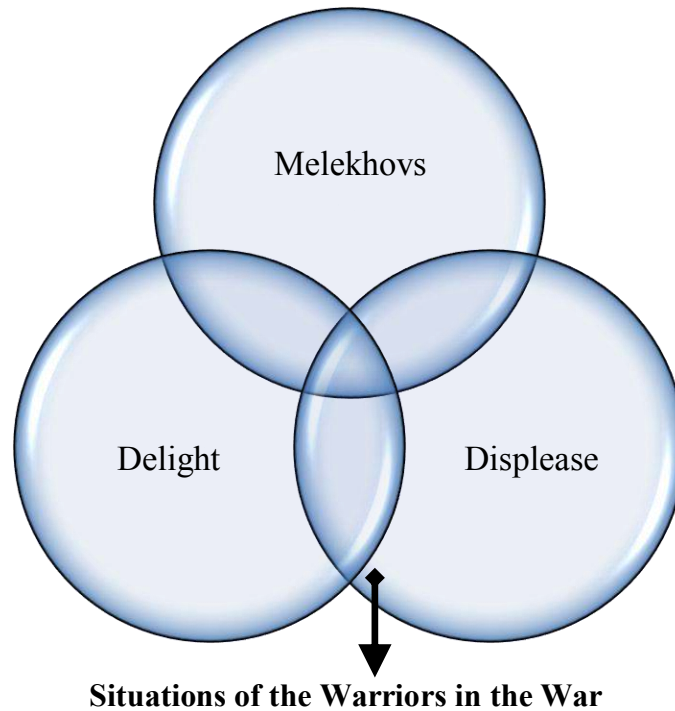
Gregor has no time after the blow to pull out the lance and is letting it fall under the weight of the sinking body, feeling through it the body’s fluttering and convulsions, seeing how the Austrian, bending far back only the sharp, unshaved point of his chin is visible.



Gregor lets go the lance, grasps his sword, turns his horse around, not knowing why, and, driven to a fever by the insanity about him, gallops after a fleeting, disarmed Austrian, who, beside himself with fear, swaying, runs along a garden fence, his cap clasped in his fist. Gregor can see the fleshy crease at the back of his neck and the wet line of his shirt collar, and although it is awkward for him to strike with his left hand, "he leans over in the saddle and holding his sword at an angle, lowers it on the Austrian's temple. The Austrian, without crying out, presses his palms to the wound and wheels about with his back to the railing." Gregor sees the look of terror in his eyes. Gregor sees the red streak of the leg band and the torn green blouse, beaten up into a ball above the head. And suddenly he is overcome by a great sense of heaviness. Gregor goes back to look at the man he has cut down. Gregor's experience is immediate and individual. It is the experience of shock and it is not involved in moralizing. The young Cossack has not known how to see with his own eyes. He looks through those of the author he admired.

Gregor and Aksinia's daughter Tania dies from diphtheria. Now Aksinia becomes alone and desperate in the absence of her daughter and her husband and in that condition the retired officer's son (Listnitsky Eugene) tries to seduce her. At this juncture the researcher thought that every relation is just like an apron which is needed only at the time of cooking. Aksinia has changed her priority with the passing time. No doubt that she is seduced by Eugene but her involvement would also remain. Gregor finds several changes in Aksinia and he says; "You don't look like a kitchen-maid, you're more like a house-keeper" (*And Quiet Flows The Don* p.276).

Gregor has decided to go back to the village. He also comes back to Natalia. Gregor and Aksinia they both change their priority with passing of time. Natalia gives birth to twins. The third year of the war goes on but Gregor is oppressed by the war and does not expect to live to see the end of it. Piotra also gives his involvement in the war.



Through this figure what the researcher wants to convey is that in the war warriors are facing two types of situation in their life. The first circle has mentioned Melekhovs which would reveal Piotra and Gregor. The war is delighted to Piotra. But the actual happiness of his life has gone. Because his wife (Daria) wants to seduce her husband's father in the absence of her husband. She has not seen her husband from last one year. And she is craving her husband's affection. Piotra wants to destroy his enemy. But by engaging himself in the war he is going to destroy his own family life. Here the researcher would like to give one reference of modern tragedy: *Mourning Becomes Electra* by Eugene O'Neil. In this play General Ezra Mannon who is always engaged in the war and in his absence his wife Christine makes an extramarital relationship with Captain Adam Brant. *Mourning Becomes Electra* is a retelling story of the *Oresteia* by Aeschylus. The characters are paralleled from the ancient Greek play. For example, Agamemnon from the *Oresteia* becomes General Ezra Mannon and Clytemnestra becomes Christine. On the other hand Gregor is displeased with the war. But in

this situation people address the warrior as a tragic hero or a failure. Apart from this we can find Gregor's fever regarding the war.

Thus in the second part we come to know about the news of the upcoming of Gregor at his home.

Part III

Revolution

Czar's families are circulating through the villages of the don. This event we can find in February and we come to know about this through the reading of the text on p.331. And in March, Sergei Platonovich has announced the news of the overthrow of the autocracy. Before the March revolution takes place. Revolution was against the supreme commander and the government. Cossacks wanted their own government. Now the government has passed into the hands of the Provisional Committee of the State Duma. This Committee would teach the Cossacks that, the duty of the Cossacks is to defend their native land from the attacks of external (Cossacks are attacked by Austria, Germany). This shows that the fate of the country is in the hand of the state of Duma. The Provisional Committee emphasizes that there must be no politics in the army.

Communist supporters start to appear in the village and they are fighting for equality. The army gets more and more tired and everyone believes that the war is over a civil war will be started.

The October Revolution (Socialist Revolution) begins and Gregory joins the Bolsheviks party led by Lenin. His honesty has a lot to do with it because he wants to fight off the inequality and injustice. Democratic centralism was the principle of the Bolsheviks, who considered themselves the leaders of the revolutionary working class of Russia. The Provisional Government remained weak and it continued to wage World War I and so October Revolution came into existence.



At this juncture Gregor has promoted to officer's rank in recognition of his distinguished services in the field and also appointed to the 2nd regiment as a troop commander. During this time he meets Yefim Izvarin's acquaintance many times. Because he wants a considerable change as the result of the events which are occurring around him. Izvarin is an educated person. He belongs to the 10th Don Cossack Regiment at the front. He has also received the Cross of St. George. Izvarin is a man of many abilities, highly talented, educated considerably above the level of the average Cossack officer and well acquainted with history. He is a typical Cossack with his average height, handsome figure, and broad shoulders. He wants the complete autonomy of the Don region and the establishment of the form of government which has excited before the enslavement of the Cossacks by Great Russia.

Gregor says Cossacks won't be able to live without Russia. And they get nothing from Russia except wheat. But Izvarin says he does not want completely isolated existence. He says we shall live together with the Kuban, the Terek, and the mountaineers of the Caucasus on the basis of federation because we can get everything from there. What he wants to convey is that we have to be in subjection to Russia.

Gregor meets many people because he does not want to face the consequences of the revolution. He won't be able to judge the Bolsheviks that whether are they right or not? Here we have noticed that Gregor is in the confused state of mind whether to support / continue with Bolsheviks or not. It might be happened that he is afraid of the war.

Thus the third part contains nine chapters. This part talks about the revolution. We can divide the revolution into three.

Revolutionary Events		
February Revolution	Date/ Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1917
	Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N A
	Consequences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Replacement of the government of Tsar Nicholas II with the Russian Provisional Government. Wage of World War I
	Losses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Disorder in industry. Difficulties in obtaining provisions. The country faced the threat of financial bankruptcy
October Revolution	Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 November 1917
	Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Petrograd, Russia
	Consequences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of Soviet Russia. End of Russia Provisional Government, Russian Republic and dual power. Start of the Russian Civil War. All Russian Congress of Soviets becomes supreme governing body.
	Losses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Few wounded Red Guard soldiers. All deserted.

November Revolution	Date/ Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 1917
	Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Petrograd
	Consequences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergence of the world's first communist government. 2. Creation of Lenin's slogans, "Peace, bread and land" and "All power to the soviets", which would invite the Civil War.
	Loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provisional government surrendered to the red guards.

The above mentioned table shows the revolutionary events. And these events are actually presented in this epic novel, which are depicted through fictional characters of the text. This table displays the consequences and losses of Russian Revolution.

Part IV

Civil War

Part IV is divided into ten chapters. This part talks about catastrophe in the life of Grgor. He is struck by the murder of two officers from the opposite side. They are killed by the leader of the revolutionary movement.

When he comes back at his home he has decided to fight against the Bolsheviks. But he is not happy either because murders are still going on in each sides of the civil war.

In the meantime the officer's son gets married and abandoned Aksinia. And so she comes back to her husband who is liberated from captivity. Natalia is pregnant again and the child is of Gregor. But she does not want to be pregnant. She tries to violently end the pregnancy and she has ended up dead. Gregor has demobilized and he comes back again to his home.

Gregor has joined a gang but soon he has abandoned it and he runs away with Aksinia again. They are ambushed and Aksinia gets killed. Gregor has broken down. While burning her



body he has realized that how sad and unfair life is. This conveys that life today is good and tomorrow would take care of itself. This kind of situation is just like a bird like situation.

At the end of the novel the Bolsheviks won the war. This part reveals what are Gregory's convictions in the end? To what state of mind and feeling have his thoughts and passions brought him? This is not clear, nor does it matter. The only matter is that what a man does and what happens to him is more interesting than what happens within him. Gregor thinks that communism is as bad as czarism; the Cossacks should have a government of their own. He also thinks that if governments are in the hands of workers then there would be no war. Dissatisfied with life, unable to answer any argument, much less evolve a theory of his own. Gregor feels lost among these doctrines as in "a snow storm on the steppe". "Life will make you see", he is told, "and will not only make you see, but will give you a shove to one side or the other" (*From Gorky to Pasternak* p.307). So indeed it turns out. He is thrown from side to side, he becomes more and more confused in thought the while he grows more skilled in combat.

Well, that little of which Gregor had dreamed through sleepless nights had come to pass. He stood at the gate of his own home, he held his son in his arms.

That was all he had left in life all that for the time being made him kin to the soil and to this whole vast world that lay shining beneath a chilly sun. (*From Gorky to Pasternak* p.304)

Gregor has had his last hollow dream. The gate before which he stands opens on a house that is no longer his; it has been taken over by his sister and her husband, Mishka Koshevoy, the honored Bolshevik. The son Gregor holds in his arms would not at first recognize his father in the disheveled man who would climb up the river bank to confront him, nor did he show much joy at his return: it was Uncle Misha to whom he is now devoted. Gregor knows that when he enters the house it will be to die. He wills it so, for he is through with life and, after a long struggle, has come "home" to give himself up.



Clearly Gregor is meant to be pitted as heroes are pitted for having fallen through errors as great as their natures. But it is Mishka Koshevoy whom we are invited to accept as the ideal required by a cruel age, Mishka who is at opposite poles from the proud and rebellious Gregor – an unpretentious fellow, from early boyhood dutifully supporting his widowed mother, reading Marx, fighting always on the side of the reds, and ending up as commissar of the local soviet, a calm and steady character who has a good and sufficient reason for everything he does. In the course of the civil war, he sets fire to the houses of the prosperous members of his district, leads forth its old inhabitants to imprisonment and execution, captures and shoots Gregor's older brother, and goes about all these activities with the same rationality and confidence with which he courts and marries Gregor's sister. Stoic harshness has replaced in him a native inclination to gentleness, and loyalty to the Party has channeled his private sentiments. Gregor, by contrast, is semiliterate, has not read Marx, and has no conception of the historic meaning of the events in which he is caught up. Ideas about communism drop on him as suddenly as war itself.

By contrast to Mishka, Gregor has grown with the years from a kind of careless and callow toughness to anguish and a nature capacity for tenderness. Once, before the end, Gregor has returned home, wanting, after years of war, only to live in peace, till the land, care for his orphaned children. Mishka has sent him packing. He could not trust the likes of him, he said; "I know all about your heroics. I've heard of them. You've ruined a lot of our fighters. That's why I can't bear to look at you. Things like that can't be forgotten." (*From Gorky to Pasternak* p.307)

You've got a long memory [Gregor replied]. You killed brother Peter, but somehow I don't remind you of it. If everything's to be remembered, we've got to live like wolves. (*From Gorky to Pasternak* pp.307, 308)



In this, as elsewhere, Mishka is supposed to be right. But he is a pale creature by the side of Gregor, whom Sholokhov has not perhaps, at first, intended to make quiet as attractive as he turned out to be.

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