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Textualizing Lived Lives: A Dalit Aesthetic And Philosophical Negotiation

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Abstract : Next to poetry and short story, the genre of autobiography is an effective means in the literary and philosophical representation of traumatic lived life and humiliating experiences of the marginalized sections in the caste-ridden societies. Vernacular is an equally effective tool for expression by the writers belonging to the marginalized communities. Most of the dalit writers have chosen their regional languages with their local dialects for their creative writing and philosophical expression against the established canonical writings. Personal narratives also represent the social and communal issues embedded with philosophic underpinnings and ideological leanings inherited from the social reformers like Jyothiba Phule and Dr. B.R Ambedkar in the formation of alternative secular, egalitarian and modern identity for dalits and other social margins. This article focuses on the evaluation of dalit aesthetic and philosophy that reflect in literature produced by various dalit writers. It discusses how the philosophy of Ambedkar serves as a base for dalit literature. It also argues in favour of deconstructing traditional literary canon.



Key Words: Religion, Social Revolution, Morality, Buddha Damma. Karma, Dalit Aesthetic.

Religious and Philosophical Evaluation

Caste system is an unwanted phenomenon in any civilized society, which is connected with the ancestral occupations of the so called untouchables whom we call dalits today. They still carry with them the invisible legacy of occupations of their ancestors. Though their present profession is entirely different, their caste legacy still dominates it. The deployment of untouchability is justified on the grounds of purity and pollution. Hindu orthodox elements linked pollution to occupation taken up by the lower castes and then to their birth. It infers that all low castes are branded as untouchables based on their birth. Goutama Buddha's humanistic gestures and his compassion for the poor and low castes, and his antagonism against caste system prompted orthodox Brahminical forces to negate Buddhist teachings and their philosophy. Dr.B.R. Ambedkar is drawn into this discussion for his philosophic thinking over the issues of dalits. In his attempt to explore rationality beyond religious terrain, he looked for a possibility in the Buddhist teachings which were handy to fulfill his expectations in addressing the issue of caste system. Buddhism being indigenous religion, no doubt to say, serves contrary to other religions in its basic tenets and approach towards the society. He straightaway accepted Buddhism not as a religion but as a way of life known as Buddha Dhamma.



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's views were radical. He wanted to follow Buddhism without 'karma' which Hinduism linked it to rebirth. The concept of the karma /rebirth is a metaphysical assumption with no scientific evidence. The karma theory is perfectly used by the Hindu believers to make others accept their social misery in the direction of caste system which is contradicted by the constitutional architect. He reinterprets karma referring to it as 'biological genetic inheritance but transmission of karmic causality is social and moral, not individual" (6).

Dalit social reformers are not the believers of the karma theory. In their alternative thinking and pursuance, they have replaced it with the concept of Dhamma which is profusely replete with morality and it has nothing to do with the concept of religion and God. In fact, morality and religion are different from each other. This point is already debated at length by the scholars. "Every religion preaches morality but morality is not the root of religion. It is casual and effective (Ahir 106). Sensing the religious repercussions, Hindu concept of karma, social reformers valued Dhamma not karma.

Buddhist philosophy served as a basis for Dr. B.R Ambedkar to launch his social movements against caste system. He preferred Buddhism for his social mission against caste system because Buddhism attracted Ambedkar much because of its being an indigenous religion and also of its egalitarian approach. "Buddhism was equalitarian, universalist and nationalist, many of its existing expressions made him very uncomfortable" (Omvedt 3). He also started magazine called *Muknayak* for the voiceless



when non-dalit publishers refused to publish dalit issues. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar used his philosophy to measure one's conduct towards the oppressed. He rejected the Hindu philosophy.

Negatively, I reject the Hindu social philosophy pronounced in the *Bhagavad Geeta* based as it is on the Triguna of the sankhya philosophy which is in my judgments a cruel perversion of the philosophy of Kapila, and which had made the caste system and system of graded inequality the law of Hindu social life (Keer 458-459).

He exposed caste system as being associated with Hindu religion and verna pattern. The Hindu scriptures are regarded as sacred and they are said to be ordained by the divinity, which are unquestionable by any individual. Buddhism with its ideals, which is different from Brahmanism in its socio-political aspects in terms of the relation between the society and the state. With regard to this significant dimension, B.R. Ambedkar points out that "while there have not been social revolutions in India is a question which has incessantly troubled me. There is only one answer which I can give and it is that the lower classes of Hindus have been completely disabled for direct action on account of this wretched system of chaturvarna (Omvedt 135).

Dr.B.R. Ambedkar further explored the viable means acceptable and convenient for the people to use religion as a revolution in the annihilation of caste. In contrary to Marxist view of religions as fostering contentment with exploitative social order, as the opium of the people, Dr.B.R. Ambedkar felt that Hinduism was the greatest barrier to the



progress of the dalits. He says, property is not only the source of power, religion and social status would generate power. He attributes religion as an essential generating factor for social revolution in any social history. He gives an account of historical reality in the past to sustain his argument over religious significance in the attainment of political power.

The political revolution led by Chandragupta was preceded by the religious and social revolution of Buddha. The political revolution led by Shivaji was preceded by the religious and social reform brought about the saints of Maharastra. The political revolution of the Sikhs was preceded by the religious and social revolution led by Gurunanak. (Omvedt 251)

The historical facts of religion convinces the Indian intellectuals that religious reformation would bring a social revolution and then to political change. His thinking is qualified and sustained by the Buddhist philosophic teachings. Dr.B.R. Ambedkar built strong anti- caste movements as being the democratic means of expression in Indian society with their revolutionary message against caste discrimination and caste-based exploitation.

Jotiba Phule's non-Brahmin movements inspired Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to fight the caste syndrome. My point is that in the context of religion, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar turned to Buddhism for emancipation of his people. His revolutionary ideology with its Hindu scriptural rejection evolved as anti-caste theory for dalit writers. It has its strong



reflections not only in the dalit militant organizations like dalit Panthers in Maharashtra. His protest ideology is reflected in Marathi dalit literature. Despite a split in the dalit Panthers Movement, Ambedkarism continued to inspire dalit writers to produce protest literature in all genres. Arjun Dangle's edited volume titled *Poisoned Bread* (2009, Modern Marathi Dalit Literature) was produced from the Marathi dalit culture. It is a voice of the voiceless and the oppressed. The revolutionary ideology of Dr. B .R. Ambedkar is paralleled by a strong wave of Marathi dalit writing that exploded in several genres in one volume.

Evaluation of Dalit Aesthetic

In the beginning, dalit literature does not emerge just as a prosaic writing. Behind it are the marathon social reformist movements who launched anti-caste movements. Dalit literature, characterized by fury, resistance and rebellion was written in the genre of poetry. If we look into the history of dalit literature, the first poem in Telugu titled *Malavandra Paata* (1909) written by Kusuma Dharmanna Kavi who expressed dissent against caste system. Another dalit poet, Gurram Jashua, produced timeless poetry that continued to inspire the younger generation to this day. In Maharashtra too, Namdev Dhasal produced a vibrant revolutionary poetry against not only caste misery but also poverty and oppressed life of the marginalized. Dhasal's first collection of poems in '*Golpitha*' took Marathi literary circles by storm and broke all the rules of traditional Marathi literature. The use of language was shocking to the traditionalists (Manoja 2).



Dalit poets of the second and third generation took rather a militant stand in their poetic expression. This phenomenon started in 1980s in Telugu Dalit poetry.

Dalit autobiographical writing is poised to subvert the philosophy of the hegemonic literature and reconstruct the cultural and social struggles in favour of liberty, equality, justice and identity. Autobiography has become a favourite genre chosen by dalits in 1980s onwards, whose lived experiences play a crucial role in shaping the text. Ambedkar's revolutionary ideas and social philosophy laid a base for literary production. His philosophy is directed against social discrimination and inequality. Sharankumar Limbale's dalit aesthetics counters the Hindu concept of beauty and reformulates an alternative discourse. He talks about the impact of Ambedkar's ideology in his own writing. Other dalit writers irrespective of the region and language too used Ambedkar's philosophy in their literary writings.

"I am an activist writer. I am committed to movement that was started by Dr. B.R.Ambedkar to emancipate India's dalits. This movement is an integral part of my being. Without the movement I can't write. The movement is an ink for me. My literature is the literature of protest because of my commitment and the inspiration of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's thoughts" (Limbale 2). Limbale's words substantiate the fact that by and large Ambedkar's philosophy inspired and impacted the dalit writing.

Discussion of the literary and cultural representations of the marginalized and disposed people, such as members of India's untouchable and aboriginal communities



has been based on the writings of upper caste writers, such as Mulk Raj Anand, Mahasweta Devi and Prem Chand (Mukherjee vi).

For Dalit writers, many of the privileged caste narratives which speak about the marginalized people are part of a 'discourse of pity'. They delineate dalit experience out of imagination.

There is a major debate on the aesthetic evaluation of dalit literature that Sharan kumar Limbale proposes that dalit aesthetics is meant for reading and evaluating dalit literature. His critical text, *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit literature* questions the Hindu triadic concept of satyam (the True), shivam (the sacred), and sundaram (the beautiful). He evolved a separate yardstick for literary evaluation of dalit literature while Savarna critics like P.S. Rege and Balakrishna Kawthekar oppose the demand for separate criterion for aesthetic evaluation of dalit literature as they feel that "universal values cannot be refuted and if the universal aesthetic principles are not being adhered to, then dalit literature will lose a proper frame work of evaluation" (Limbale 1). But dalit writers find this criterion obsolete and believe that "the traditional aesthetics based on Sanskrit or English literary theories cannot do justice to dalit literature" (Limbale 106). Fixed standards are hardly effective given the fact that 'literature changes with changing culture' and a change in criticism too.

Generally, tastes of persons keep changing with the time. On the idea of beauty which tends to revolve around the feeling of pleasure by viewing the object. There is another



thought-provoking debate on literary aesthetic value which claims that “every genre of literature is different from the other hence a mechanistic critical tradition cannot be applied to literature across the world” (Limbale 1).

The debate advocates the pluralistic nature of literature produced with the changing times and cultures across the globe. It is further emphasized in the context of dalit literature, given its uniqueness in its assertion for identity and social upliftment and also realistic portrayal of dalit experiences of suffering and anguish, as opposed to priority of beauty and pleasure being aesthetic values in mainstream literature, different artistic standards must be developed in the evaluation of dalit literature which calls for social liberation.

Dalit literature negates the pleasure giving sensation but prioritizes social consciousness and the suffering of the victim. Lived experience is another essential dimension in the portrayal of dalit life. Savarna’s claim for imagined experience to create dalit literature cannot fit into the lived experience of a dalit.

The experience of victimhood provides a negative vocabulary that tends to define the philosophical background condition for the emancipatory movement of those who have been the recipients of this experience (Guru 117).

Negative vocabulary used by dalit writers shows the world of their lived life with the Hindu society, which becomes a philosophical base for their social movements and



literary aesthetics. Dalit writers have shaped their autobiographies from the lived lives of their humiliating past. Apart from poetry and short story, autobiographies have been produced immensely by the dalit writers from Maharashtra in 1970s onwards. Caste discrimination is a common problem, but writers lived experiences as individuals and their engagement with the mainstream society appear to be pluralistic given their linguistic, cultural and territorial differences. N.S. Suryavanshi's *Things I Never Mind* (1975), Daya Pawar's *Baluta* (1978), Narendra Jadav's *Out Caste: A Memoir* (2003), Sharankumar Limbale's *Akharmashi* (2003), Baby Kamble's *Prisons We Broke* (2008), the first woman dalit autobiography in Marathi, Urmila Pawar's *The Weave of My Life* (2008), from Maharashtra, Bama's *Karukku* (1992), Guna Sekhar's *The Scar* from Tamil Nadu, Siddha Lingaiah's *Oorukeri*, Aravind Malagatti's *The Government Brahmana* (1994- the first dalit autobiography in Kannada) from Karnataka and Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* in Hindi, Y.B. Satyanarayana's *My Father Balaiah* (2004) from Telangana, are some of the powerful dalit autobiographies treasured with variety of thematic concerns of lived lives of the authors. The above dalit autobiographies evolved out dalit consciousness, an important seed for dalit writing that reflects revolutionary mentality of the dalits connected with struggle. Dalit literature is demarcated as unique because of this conscious (Limbale 32).



Conclusion

Textualization of the lived experiences of dalits is based on Ambedkar's philosophical thoughts which are associated with Buddhist teachings and religion. Philosophy of Ambedkar laid foundation for dalit movements against cast system in India. Dalit literature is produced in different genres among which autobiography is chosen by dalit writers as a potential means for natural literary expression of their lived lives. This social documentation serves as their history and movement.

Sharankumar Limbale, a Marathi writer, introduced dalit aesthetics as a separate genre for literary production with dalit consciousness which is unique from the mainstream writing. "Dalit literature creates a conflict between the author and the reader for it appears rude in its language and expression"(Limbale np).The standard of dalit writing subverts the Hindu (aesthetic) concept of satyam, shivam sundaram being selfish mechanism of the privileged caste Hindu society and reconstructs it as equality, liberty, justice and fraternity. For dalit literary writing, philosophy gives the base while (dalit) aesthetics serves as an art of expression.

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Translating Anil Gharai's Bangla Dalit Story "*Uttap*" into English

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Abstract: Translation is a skilful literary exercise where a translator reproduces both the meaning and style of the Source Text into the Target one remaining as close as possible to the ST. It is the fact that proper equivalents in some cases are not available due to the linguistic limitations and cultural pluralities. The problems of translating a dalit text and a non-dalit one are different. The texts come out from the different cultural backgrounds, and the different linguistic conventions. Translating the voices of the subalterns/dalits, the anger and protests, the humiliations and the exploitations, the ceremonies and the rituals, though challenging and problematic, is really an enriching experience too. This paper shares my own experience as a translator, in translating the Bangla Dalit stories of Anil Gharai with special reference to the story "*Uttap*".

Key Words: Translation, equivalents, dalit, subaltern.

Eugene Nida from his book *Towards A Science of Translating* (1964) defines translation as "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style" (83). Translation is an act of negotiation between the Source and Target Texts in substituting the linguistic and cultural equivalents. But the linguistic limitations and the cultural pluralities always make the task of the translator really problematic. It becomes more problematic in translating the Dalit Literature because the angers and protests of the dalits out of the life-long exploitations and deprivations are very much rooted in their words. The translation of Dalit Literature into English not only provides a space for the marginalized people in the mainstream society but also acts as a liberating tool for them. In translating a dalit/subaltern text, a translator serves



the role not only of a cultural mediator but also the cultural ambassador of the subaltern/dalit people in rendering the literature about the people who have been so long excluded from the mainstream society even before their birth. The present paper is an attempt to share my own experience as a translator, especially the challenges and the difficulties in translating the Bangla dalit stories of Anil Gharai with special reference to the story “Uttap”.

Anil Gharai (1957-2013) is perhaps the most prolific and versatile Dalit writer of the contemporary Bangla Literature. He was born on November 1, 1957, at Rukminipur, in the district of Purba Medinipur. He has produced many volumes of novels, short stories and poems over the last three decades. ‘Kak’ and ‘Noonbari’ are his first published collection of short story and novel respectively. *Megh Jiboner Trishna* (1996), *Banabashi* (1990), *Mukuler Gondho* (1993), *Boba Juddho* (1993), *Tarango Lata* (1993), *Kanone Kusum Koli* (1993), *Plaban* (1994) are his noteworthy novels. *Garbha Dao* (1993), *Germaner Maa* (1991), *Bharatborsho* (1992) are his notable stories. *Batasher Swarolipi* (2003), *Jaadu Orna* (2004), *Roudro Songshkaar* (2005), *Aaguner Padabali* (2009), *Ghaam Ashru O Aagun* (2009), *Pata Shorir* (2010), *Bhatful Bahtgondho* (2011), *Bonshai Bishaad* (2012) are the poetry collections. His works have been translated into English and a good number of Indian languages. In his literary world, the downtrodden and the caste-ridden people of the Indian society inhabit. His works deal with the hard realities of the marginalized, neglected and caste-ridden people of the Indian society. He graphically portrays the sorrows, sufferings, pains and angers of these neglected and exploited people of the society. Almost all of his characters are from the lower strata of the society. They have become life-like in the hands of Anil Gharai. For his outstanding contribution to literature Anil Gharai has received Bharat Excellency Award, Tarasankar Puraskar, Bankim Puraskar, Michael Madhusudan Award, Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule Sahitya Puraskar, Dalit Sahitya Akademi Puraskar etc. In portraying the sorrows and sufferings of the Dalit people, his writings have become the *Mahabharata* of Bangla Dalit life.



The present story “*Uttap*”, translated here as “Warmth” is taken from the collection “*Kak O Annyanya Golpa*” (Crow and Other Stories). Though the story is small in length and quite different from the other stories of Anil Gharai in depicting the dalit marginalizations, yet it is no less powerful in highlighting the humiliations and exploitations of the caste-ridden Indian society. The story is about the tragic life-story of a sweeper named Lakhai and his wife Yashoda. Setting against the backdrop of the hardships of Dalit life, the writer has portrayed some of the happiest moments in their lives. Poverty could not restrain their love to each other. Lakhai seems to be a born-sweeper. He has a passion for sweeping. As he was given the opportunity by the people of the market committee to sweep the village market twice a week, he readily accepted. Though he had to clean the filthy and dirty things of the market, yet he felt proud of his profession. He worshipped his sweeping broom as the goddess Lakshmi. He used to say his wife Yashoda, “The crow among the birds, and I among the humans, are the best. Do you know why? Crow cleans the garbage, and I too do the same” (translation mine). He was given potatoes, bringals, radishes, parwals, rices and pulses by the shop-keepers. Yashoda too accompanied him with the wicker basket. They used to gather the garbage and lit fire. The warmth of the fire gave them pleasure in the wintry evening. Thus they used to spend their days happily. But it comes to an end when on a Friday market day Lakhai became seriously ill while sweeping, and died. The whole world crushed on Yashoda. Ramlal, the clever man from the nearby slum, took the opportunity. He came to help her, but his intention was to grasp the duty of sweeping from her. The men from the market, even Yashoda’s own daughter Minu and the son-in-law, advised her to leave sweeping. But she was not willing to leave the broom. So many memories crowd in her mind. In one night, she began to think deeply. She could not decide. She felt helpless. At that moment she felt the need to lit garbage to get warmth. She embraced the broom to her breasts, and felt the warmth of her man Lakhai. Finally, she decided her mind not to sacrifice it to anybody. In the morning, Yashoda came out from the muddy hut with the broom in her hand.



In depicting the dalit sensibilities, Mr. Gharai is really impeccable within his limited canvas here. Translating Anil Gharai's works is always an enriching experience. His stories are written in the typical rustic language spoken by the people of the Dalit society which are really difficult to translate. However, it has made his stories more life-like. The present story is written in simple ordinary lucid Bangla prose. As a translator, my effort was to 'carry over' the sense, rhythm and tone of the Bangla Text into English to the possible extent. The words like '*haat*', '*tola*' '*ghugni muri*', '*dada*', '*boudi*' are retained in the Target Text within italics, and briefly explained in the footnotes. The proper equivalents of the words are not found in the Target Language that can reveal the rustic spirit of the Source Text. However, these footnotes could have been avoided, but somehow to make the readers acquainted with the Source culture these have been retained here. The act may be accused as a strategy of 'foreignization' in the words of Lawrence Venuti, but it would not stand on the way of understanding the Source Text. Finally, the problems of translation are here much less than Anil Gharai's story "*Germaner Ma*" (Anil Gharai: *Shresthya Golpa*) which is one of Gharai's difficult dalit texts to translate into English or any other language because of Gharai's use of dialects. Like sweeping, here Gharai is concerned with the profession of skinning dead animals, and *dhaigiri*, the practice of child-delivery from the womb of the rural women during child-birth. The central character Rambhadrhai, the mother of German, is named after her profession. The whole story centres around her life-long sufferings, the humiliations and exploitations by the upper-caste society. The story is mentioned here to highlight the difficulties in translating Anil Gharai's dalit texts.

Translation has a significant role in the multi-lingual and multi-cultural Indian literary scenario. Translating Dalit writings is the most challenging task for a translator. Translating the voices of the dalits or the subalterns from a regional language into English or from English into a regional language demands proper aesthetic treatment in articulating their long suppressed angers and protests. Dalit/subaltern lifestyle, ceremonies, rituals and rites that form the essence of their very existence should be transformed proper into the Target Text.



But sometimes it is found that the voices of the dalit/subaltern remain a 'far cry' in translational practices. The translators manipulate in order to suit the text to their political and ideological purposes. Instead of empowering the dalits or the subalterns through translation, sometimes the translators empower themselves. And here in lies the real 'problem' of translation which should be taken much care in the act of translation.

Warmth

- Anil Gharai

There is no furniture in this muddy hut except the broom of Lakhai. As a sweeper, he was an expert. Observing his well behavior and good nature, the people of the *haat*¹ committee gave him the duty of sweeping the *haat*. The condition was that he had to sweep the whole place twice a week. Those two days were monday and friday.

Sweeping the *haat* was almost a passion to him. Lakhai could feel an excitement to the core of his heart. In pride, he used to say Yashoda, "The crow among the birds, and I among the humans, are the best. Do you know why? Crow cleans the garbage, and I too do the same."

Yashoda could think that there was nothing spurious in the words of her man. The dirty things were enough in the big *haat*. Dust, straws, dried leaves, rejected papers, scales of fishes - everything was there. After sweeping the whole place, Lakhai used to gather those in a place, and then lighted fire. All the dirty things burst into a blaze. And the warmth of the hot waves used to touch Yashoda who remained standing there. During the winter days, Lakhai used to say jokingly, "you take the warmth here, I am leaving. I've to collect *tola*² from the shops."



Though collecting *tola* was a troublesome matter, but this was not a burden for Lakhai. Holding his wicker basket, as soon as he used to come in front of the shops, the shopkeepers gave him potatoes, bringals, radishes, parwals etc. In some cases, he also got rice and pulses too. Whatever he got from a *haat* day, was enough for the whole week. So, there was no such scarcity in the life of Lakhai. He used to say Yashoda in a bragging tone, “Minu’s mother, this broom is the goddess *Laksmi* to me. Even after my death, you would never give this broom to anybody”.

Perhaps these evil words were heard by the *Yamraj*, the King of Death. On the Friday *haat*, when Lakhai was sweeping, he felt dizzy and fell on the ground. The people of the *haat* committee admitted him to the nearby hospital. But only after a single day, Lakhai passed away without saying a word.

After his death, Yashoda saw everything dark in front of her. After hearing the news, the daughter and the son-in-law rushed to her. Ramlal from the nearby slum came to her help from the very beginning. He encouraged her and said, “*Boudi*, it’s true that *dada*³ is no more, but don’t worry. I’m beside you. Whenever you need my help, just call me. In the name of the Alimighty, I promise to stay always beside you”. Yashoda felt that what Ramlal did in her adversity is really unforgettable. Even her own brother would never do this. Her eyes got filled in tears in gratitude. She said to Ramlal, “I will not forget your help throughout my life”.

Ramlal twisted his palms. There was the clear reflection of knavery in his eyes. He said in mild voice, “*Boudi*, if you don’t mind, I’ll say one thing to you. You are a mere woman. You cannot do the duty of sweeping the *haat*. Rather, hand over me the duty. Whatever *tola* I would get, we both will share equally. Like you, I too a poor needy man. I will also be benefitted.”

Yashoda could not reply anything whether yes or no. Minu and the son-in-law said, “Mother, Ramlal uncle is right. You should agree. It would do good to you.” But Yashoda



could not decide. She asked for time to think. The people of the *haat* committee too came to her house. They also gave her the same proposal.

The daughter and the son-in-law had gone almost three days ago. Sitting alone on her muddy hut, Yashoda sobs. Her mind is crowded of Lakhai, and his words. In every *haat* day, she used to go with Lakhai with the big vermilion on her head. Gazing at her face, Lakhai sometimes said “Minu’s mother, today you look like a goddess. You are my deity.”

Sitting together in the tea-shop of the *haat*, they used to eat *ghugni muri*.⁴ Then they went together to collect *tola*. The wicker basket was in Yashoda’s hand. Lakhai sometimes said, “*Babu*, today I’m not alone. We are two! Today you must give *tola* for two persons.”

The shopkeepers used to give them *tola* in utmost generosity. They used to say, we feel jealous in seeing such happy union in both of you. We don’t have such conjugal affection in our own houses too.

So many memories crowd in Yashoda’s mind. There is only one broom of coconut leaves that peeps through the pupils of her eyes. Lakhai used to say, “This broom works so many things. The broom not only cleans, sometimes it works more than a stick in necessary moments. It is more effective in exorcise to make someone free from the evil.” Yashoda used to laugh and almost lie down on Lakhai’s bosom.

Night grows, yet Yashoda can’t sleep. The broom is placed in the corner of the hut. Lakhai used to put it there every day in the same position. In the noon time, he used to repair it in utmost attention. When Yashoda used to call him for meal, he felt sometimes disgusted, and used to say, “Don’t call me to eat while working. First work, and then filling the belly, do you understand!”

Yashoda thought throughout the night, but can’t come to any decision. The wintry air enters into the hut rapidly. She feels herself very desolate and helpless. Now it’s the time to light the garbage for warmth. No life can thrive without warmth. In her hands, Yashoda holds



the broom to her breasts in tight grasp. The warmth of Lakhai's body spreads in her body. She can never hand over this warmth to anybody. Before dawn, Yashoda comes out from the muddy hut with the broom in her hand.

Foot Notes:

1. *Haat* is a village market held twice or thrice on the fixed days of the week in the rural areas.
2. *Tola* is a rate in kind collected from the traders. The market committee or the owner of a market takes it from the traders for using the market.
3. The youngers address the elders as '*dada*', and their wives as '*boudi*'.
4. *Ghugni* is a kind of food prepared with pigeon-peas, potatoes, coconut kernel, spices etc. And *muri* is a kind of dry food made by parching rice on the hot sand.

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Cross Cultural Concerns in *Plain Tales from the Hills* by Rudyard Kipling and *A room on the Roof* by Ruskin Bond: A Post- Colonial Reading

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Abstract: Kaori Nagai has compares Rudyard Kipling to the two Sindbads- one, the sailor and two, the Landsman who brought together the two sides of Englishness, torn between Home and the colonies and how his writings brought India and the other colonies closer to Home and made them an integral part of the English national identity. Kipling also became a spokesperson of the Anglo- Indian community, often misunderstood and marginalized by the English at home. Till Kipling's arrival on the scene, not much was known about India to the British imagination. It was Kipling who brought the Anglo-Indian community and the native life, with its exoticism and barbarism very vividly to the British audience through his narratives. Kipling's portrayal of the Anglo-Indian community in his stories and poems is of an indeterminacy where he shows how the Anglo-Indians, including himself, inhabit an uneasy twilight zone- a land which they cannot truly make into a home. His Anglo-Indian characters live the typical British lives, moving to the hills during the sweltering summers where Shimla became notorious for its endless rounds of parties, social dos and frivolous entertainments. But this society had grown to have different mores and standards, which were quite incomprehensible to the English at home. But this society is also keen to protect its Englishness not because of their jingoistic feelings but because their Englishness differentiated them from the natives who they were meant to civilise as part of the 'White Man's Burden'. Despite the charge against Kipling as an Imperialist we find that he as a writer immersed himself in understanding the native life in all its aspect as is manifest in his novel Kim.

Ruskin Bond calls himself a man of dual inheritance and his autobiographical novel 'The Room on the Roof', a Bildungsroman, is a study of the hybridity that characterizes the life of Rusty, the protagonist, who from the narrow and sequestered confines of the British residential community, rejects the cold snobbishness of British superiority and transgresses into the forbidden realms of the bazaar where India began. Rusty's transformation from a boy of the Anglo-Indian community begins by his participation in the spring festival of Holi and ends with his personal autonomy and self-assertion, after a stage of moratorium and his Indian identity becomes complete in his borrowed Indian pyjamas.

In Post-Colonial readings of Kipling's writings we find that the native is always inferior, barbaric and as Edward Said says in his classic work 'Orientalism' as the 'Other'. Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* tries to explore the possibility of reading colonialist discourses as ambivalent, split and unstable. My paper would try to trace the two different voices of Kipling and Bond as inhabiting those areas where cross cultural concerns can be discerned from a point of view of Post-Colonial criticism.

Key words: Englishness, Anglo-Indian, White Man's burden, hybridity, moratorium, post-colonial.

‘Oh, East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet.’ Kipling.

On 8th April 1678, the Directors of the East India company addressed the Company's President in Madras thus; “The Marriage of our soldiers to the native women of fort St. George is a matter of such consequence to posterity that we shall be content to encourage it at some expense, and have been thinking for the future to appoint a pagoda to be paid to the mother of any child, that shall hereafter be born of any such future marriage, upon the day the child is christened, if you think this small encouragement will increase the number of such marriages.” The pagoda (A silver currency) was then equivalent to eight or nine shillings which was about five rupees. Thus a deliberate policy of promoting marriages between British men and local women was initiated.



This policy officially brought into existence the Anglo-Indian community. Usually the women were baptised and the marriage performed according to Christian rites. This period was known as the 'Brahminising' of English rule and it was felt that these marriages or alliances with the local people would attract the sympathy and support of the Indian population. Anglo-Indians were at least two groups of people: those with mixed Indian and British ancestry and people of British descent born or living in the Indian subcontinent.

The steady increase of the Anglo-Indian population in the 1750's gave the Company the much needed manpower to draw upon. This community played a pivotal role as commissioned officers, subalterns, and covenanted soldiers in the wars of the British with the French. But this Anglo-Indian Community as Kipling shows in 'Plain Tales from the Hills' inhabit a twilight zone- a land which they cannot truly make into a home. Oscar Wilde, highly impressed with Kipling's vivid descriptions of the Indian background, was amused to find that 'the jaded second-rate Anglo-Indians are in exquisite Incongruity with their surroundings' (Teasdale).

Kaori Nagai has compared Kipling to the two Sindbads-one, the sailor and two, The Landsman who brought the two sides of Englishness, torn between home and the colonies; and how his writings brought India and the other colonies closer to Home and made them an integral part of the English national identity. Kipling also became the spokesperson of the Anglo-Indian community, often misunderstood and marginalised by the English at Home. Till Kipling's arrival on the scene, says Nagai, not much was known about India to the British imagination. It was Kipling who brought the Anglo-Indian community and the native life, with its exoticism and 'barbarism' very vividly to the British audience through his narratives. Kipling's portrayal of the Anglo-Indian community in his stories and poems is of an indeterminacy where he shows how the Anglo-Indians feel what Salman Rushdie says in his 'Imaginary Homelands' about 'Diasporas'- 'having one feet here and a couple of toes there.'

His Anglo-Indian characters live the typical British lives, moving to the hills during the sweltering summers where Shimla becomes notorious for its endless round of parties, social

dos full of artificial mannerisms, and frivolous entertainments. As Kipling puts it, “There are garden-parties, and tennis –parties, and picnics, and luncheons at Annandale, and rifle-matches, and dinners and balls; besides rides and walks, which are matters of private arrangements.”(Nagai 227). To quote Nagai, “These Hill Stations, with their mild climate reminiscent of that of England, represented the quintessentially English space re-created in British India.”(xxv). From the height of these Hills the British surveyed and ruled India where the plains meant work and the hills, leisure. Mentions Nagai in his general Preface to ‘Plain Tales on the Hills’, “The Knowing young writer’s ironic stories and poems insisted on the frustration, danger and misunderstanding that formed the conditions of colonial life, where ‘two thousand pounds of education/ drops to a ten-rupee *jezail* and British soldiers in Barracks endured a monotonous life relieved by comradeship and the occasional prospect of action. Yet he was also fascinated by the unknowable strangeness of the ‘life of the people of the land, a life full of impossibilities and wonders as the Arabian Nights’, just as he loved the idea of the sea, whose uncontrollable turbulence and endless horizons can be challenged but never subdued by human courage and skill.”(xv). although they tried to replicate the life of the British in this strange land, this Anglo-Indian community has grown to have different mores and standards, which were quite incomprehensible to the English at home; but this society is also keen to protect its Englishness not because of their jingoistic feelings but because their Englishness differentiated them from the natives who they were meant to civilise as part of the ‘White Man’s burden’.

And this is where the question of the Post-colonial comes in. In his iconic book ‘Beginning post-Colonialism John Mc Leod mentions, “Colonialism perpetuated in part by justifying to those in the colonising nation the idea that it is right and proper to rule over other peoples, and by getting colonised people to accept their lower ranking in the order of things- a process we can call ‘colonising the mind’” (Mc Leod 18). Kipling’s treatment of the natives in ‘Plain Tales from the Hills’ is that of an imperialist- who projects the natives as the ‘Other’ in Edward Said’s term in his classic ‘Orientalism’. One example is from ‘the story of Lispeth’ a



young hill girl, who baptised a Christian after her parents convert to Christianity, is brought up the Anglo-Indian way and falls in love with an Englishman; says Kipling, “Being a savage by birth she took no trouble to hide her feelings, and the Englishman was amused.” (Nagai 7)... Forsaken by her lover and cheated she goes back to being a Hill girl- “.. she went out down the valley, and returned in the dress of a Hill girl- infamously dirty... the Chaplain’s wife finding her happier thought that she was getting over her barbarous and more indelicate folly” (8). And later her opinion is, “I believe that Lispeth was always at heart an infidel”(9). We can juxtapose Kipling’s treatment of ‘Love’ in this story to the many stories of such ‘Love’ in Plain Tales but the treatment of the same emotion in a native is ‘Barbarous’. This is manifest in what Mc Leod says, “Under colonialism, a colonised people are made subservient to ways of regarding the world which reflect and support colonialist values. A particular value system is taught as the best, truest world-view. The cultural values of the colonised people are deemed as lacking in value, or even as being ‘uncivilised’, from which they must be rescued”(Mc Leod 19). In the story ‘Thrown Away’ we find this description, “Now India is a place beyond all others where one must not take things seriously- the mid-day sun always excepted.” (15) or in the story ‘Bitters Neat’, “In India where life goes quicker than at Home, things are more obviously tangled, and therefore more pitiful to look at” (29); or in the story ‘Kidnapped’, “We are a high-caste and enlightened race, and infant marriage is very shocking and the consequences are sometimes peculiar..”(105). In the story ‘Beyond the Pale’ Kipling begins, “A man should, whatever happens, keep his own caste, race and breed. Let the White go to the White and the Black to the Black” (Nagai 134). But the protagonist, Trejago, a White falls for Bisesa, a fifteen year old Hindu widow, who lures him with her love songs; till their covert love and nightly rendezvous is marred by Trejago’s attentiveness to a lady of his own race. Bisesa is furious and her anger is described thus by Kipling,” Much that is written about Oriental passion and impulsiveness is exaggerated and compiled at second hand; but a little of it is true, and when an Englishman finds that little, it is quite as startling as any passion in his own proper life”(138). But Nagai is of the view that, “yet it is this narrative interdiction which incites the colonial desire to pass the forbidden border, to experience what is ‘sudden, alien [and]



unexpected.’ Trejago and Bisesa both break their societies’ laws to become lovers, but it is Bisesa, a young Hindu widow, and *not* the English Trejago, who becomes trapped in the scene of transgression and most cruelly punished for their liaison, leaving her a double victim of the Hindu law and the sexual exploitation by the colonizer” (xxviii). A few more examples like ‘When a native begins perjury he perjures himself thoroughly. He does not boggle over details.’(The Bronckhorst Divorce Case, p. 188), or He made inquiries, always bearing in mind the fact that the real native- not the hybrid, University-trained mule- is as timid as a colt,’(Tods’ Amendment p. 156). Even the inhabitants of the Borderline like Michele in the story’ His Chance in Life’ has his pride; “He would not be seen smoking a hookah for anything; and he looked down on natives as only a man with seven-eighths native blood in his veins can.”(Nagai 64) But Nagai also opines that, “The Eurasians, whom the narrator calls ‘the Borderline folk’, are an uncanny presence to be put under narrative control, as their mixed ancestry poses a serious threat to the premise of a Raj built on English racial superiority over natives (xxviii).

Kipling’s cross cultural concerns can be discerned in some of the stories from *Plain Tales*. For example the character of Strickland, the policeman in the story- Miss Youghal’s Sais’, He held the extraordinary theory that a policeman in India should try to know as much about the natives as the natives themselves... He was perpetually ‘going Fantee’ among natives, which of course, no man with any sense believes in. He was initiated into the Sat Bhai at Allahabad once, when he was on leave. He knew the Lizard-Song of the Sansis, and the Halli-Hukk dance, which is a religious can-can of a startling kind. When a man knows who dance the Halli-Hukk, and how, and when, and where, he knows something to be proud of. He has gone deeper than the skin. But Strickland was not proud, though he had helped once, at Jagadhri, at the painting of the Death Bull, which no Englishman must even look upon; had mastered the thieves’- patter of the changars; had taken a Yusufzai horse- thief alone near Attock; and had stood under the sounding-board of a Border mosque and conducted service in the manner of a Sunni Mullah” (23 -24). Another example is from the story, ‘Yoked with an Unbeliever’, in which a young Englishman, Phil Garron, with a beloved in Miss Agnes Laiter,



sails to India and gets working in Darjeeling on a plantation, succeeding quite well. Crossed in love Phil comes across a Hill girl, the daughter of a Rajput ex-Subedar Major in the native Army. Kipling describes thus, “The climate where he was stationed was good, and it really did not seem to him that there was any reason to return to England. He did what many planters have done before him- that is to say he made up his mind to marry a Hill-girl and settle down... So he married Dunmaya by the forms of the English Church, and some fellow-planters said he was a fool, and some said he was a wise man.... She managed him tenderly, and became, in less than a year, a very passable imitation of an English lady in dress and carriage. It is curious to think that a Hill-man after a lifetime’s education is a Hill-man still; but a Hill-woman can in six months master most of the ways of her English sisters” (Nagai 36-37). Another good example of such cross cultural concerns can be seen very vividly described by Kipling in the story ‘His Chance in Life’. Kipling here mentions the ‘Borderline’ where, “The Black and White mix very quaintly in their ways. Sometimes the White shows in spurts of fierce, childish pride- which is Pride of Race run crooked- and sometimes the Black in still fiercer abasement and humility, half-heathenish customs and strange, unaccountable impulses to crime” (63). Kipling’s use of the word half- heathenish is interesting here because it foregrounds what Edward Said states in ‘Orientalism’. Peter Barry’s book ‘Beginning Theory’ highlights this, “The Orient, he (Said) says, features in the Western mind ‘as a sort of surrogate and even underground self’. This means, in effect, that the East becomes the repository or projection of those aspects of themselves which Westerners do not choose to acknowledge (cruelty, sensuality, decadence, laziness, and so on). At the same time, and paradoxically, the East is seen as a fascinating realm of the exotic, the mystical and the seductive. It also tends to be seen as homogenous, the people there being anonymous masses rather than individuals, their actions determined by instinctive emotions (lust, terror, fury, etc.) rather than by conscious choices or decisions” (Barry 186-187).

Kipling’s story ‘To be filed for Reference’ Raises the questions of hybridity and cultural identity. It draws an analogy between Kipling and the Anglo-Indian protagonist Mc



Intosh Jellaludin, who lives in a caravan serai with his indigenous wife and raises the issue of Jellaludin's 'acculturation' in the light of being a migrant and the ambivalence of belonging when he no longer belongs in either of his homelands. Julie Teasdale in her article, 'The English Subaltern and the Indian Colonial: Cultural Hybridity in Kipling's 'To Be Filed For Reference' says," In the character of Jellaludin, Kipling frames the uncertain interaction of India's past and present: Jellaludin, once an Oxford scholar, now lives as a subaltern. And he does so by choice mocking the English narrator who now lives as he once did. Thus, in Jellaludin's character, one senses Kipling's own cultural uncertainty: like Jellaludin, Kipling exists in a liminal space between cultures... For though Kipling tries to penetrate the mysteries of the East, he believes that to do so is to suffer degradation, even death. Says Nagai, "Jellaludin represents the side of Kipling which he had to disown to become 'English'. He immerses himself in native life to know more than even Strickland ever hopes to know, and he has become part of the people: he has converted to Islam, married a native woman, and when drunk, 'raved in all tongues except his own.' It is as if, in exchange for knowledge he has expatriated himself completely, both from Anglo-Indian society and from England, and he suffers from an acute longing for his homeland. Jellaludin is a true Indian exile, unlike the Anglo-Indians who have physically left England but morally never have." (Nagai xxxiii) The ambiguity of attitudes and relationships in 'To Be Filed for Reference' supports the hypothesis that Kipling writes the character of Jellaludin from his own perspective, experiencing the same level of confused cultural plurality that his character does. Kipling and Jellaludin search for an ideal homeland, but they are irreversibly influenced by both England and India, and fully accepted by neither" (Teasdale). Jellaludin, though drunk and inebriated, exhibits his scholarship in his references to Ovid, Mesopotamia and Atlanta in Calydon but the narrator disdains his assimilation and blames the lure of India for his downfall, "when a man begins to sink in India, and is not sent Home by his friends as soon as may be, he falls very low from a respectable point of view" (Nagai 243-244). Jellaludin, as Teasdale says, cannot place himself in the cultural hierarchy of colonial biological determinism. He claims, in his acculturation to have killed his conscience and yet compares himself to a deity, saying, "On the Soul which I



have lost and the Conscience which I have killed I tell you that I cannot feel! I am as the Gods, knowing good and evil, but untouched by either,” (246). Jellaludin and the narrator embody two cultures; they represent colonial authority simply by their nationality, and yet they choose India even if that means marginalization. Homi Bhabha, the eminent Postcolonial literary theorist in ‘The Location of Culture’ writes,” If India is the metaphoric equivalence, authorizing the appropriation and naturalization of other cultures, then India is also the repetitive process of metonymy recognised only in its remnants that are at once the signs of disturbance and the supports of colonial authority.... India is the perpetual generation of a past-present which is the disturbing, uncertain time of the colonial intervention and the ambivalent truth of its enunciation” (Bhabha 124). Throughout the stories we find the assimilation of the native words. Termed in Post Modern parlance as ‘pastiche’ and ‘patois’, like –‘She jawabed him’; (30), The Hill woman was not a purdah-nashin’(36), Mallum his bat,(58), ye black limb, there’s a Sahib comin’ for this ekka. He wants to go jildi to the Padsahi Jhil.. to shoot snipe-chirria. You drive Jehannum ke marfik, mallum- like Hell! ‘tis no manner av use bukkin, bekaze he doesn’t samjao your talk. Av he bolos anything, just you choop andchel. Dekker? Go arsty for the first arder-mile fron cantonmints. Thin chel, shaitan ki marfik, an’ the chooper you choops an’ the jildier you chels the better khssshy will that Sahib be.. bote achee (The Three Musketeers 58-59), Buldoo the budmash, (60), Will the Sahib give me bukshish? (76), why everything is ultya-pulta in your room, the bhisti comes with me (79), this Devil thing will end in getting me budnamed (82) jadoo work (117), Asli nahin! Fareib!(120), a brace of chumars in gold-laced caps(129), the chotee bole of the women (152), But if the new bundobast says for fifteen years (155), Hutt, you old beast! (187), churton’s khitmutgar bought it (198), Mind you, it was apukka , respectable opium house, and not one of those stifling, sweltering chandoo-khanas that you can find all over the city (208).

What were Kipling’s views of the Empire and Imperialism. Critics have cited him as an arch priest for jingoism, racism and imperialism. Edmund Wilson saw him as a racist, George Orwell saw him as ‘the prophet of empire in its expansionist phase while Lionel trilling wrote



of his 'lower middle class snarl'. But Kipling's understanding of India as Manifest in 'Kim' his classic shows the ambiguity in placing his Imperialism into any neat stereotype.

Alan Sandison argues, "For Kipling, the empire in India is only a simulacrum – a shadowy likeness – of the human condition. For him Kipling's artistic vision is the bleak insight that man stands alone against the primitiveness of nature in the tropics."

The Room on the Roof by Ruskin Bond is a Bildungsroman novella- intensely personal in its narrative written in 1951 by a 17 year old Anglo-Indian youth in enforced exile, confused, facing an identity crisis, trying to establish his independence, hating the social mores of the Channel Islands in England, where circumstances force him to live, longing to return to the country he loved. England to Ruskin Bond, like Rusty, was never 'home' –his only ties to that country are his atavistic colour and his parentage. Like Bond, Rusty is an Anglo-Indian boy of British parents. Having lost his beloved father and bereft of the loving and nurturing care of his mother who remarries, Rusty goes to live with his grandmother. Before they can sail for England his grandmother passes away and Rusty is entrusted to the care of Mr John Harrison by one of his aunts. The opening scene of the novel shows Rusty walking home 'with his hands in his pocket and his head down' in the light spring rain. 'Home' is the British quarters in Dehra- a narrow, confined, small, diminishing European residential community on the outskirts of the town. The community consisted mostly of elderly people, the others had left soon after independence. These few stayed because they were too old to start life again in 'another' country; others stayed because of the material comforts so easily available to the erstwhile 'sahibs'. It was an artificial Eurocentric world which was neither rooted in the soil of India nor had any affinity to it. Describes Bond thus," Mr John Harrison's house and the other houses were all built in an English style, with neat front gardens and name plates on the gates. The surroundings on the whole were so English that the people found it difficult to believe that they did live at the foothills of the Himalayas surrounded by India's thickest jungles. India started a mile away, where the bazaar began" (Bond 544). But these people were so steeped in the dogmatic superiority of their race that they did not speak of such places, they chose not to



think about them. An insensitive and violent man, Mr Harrison's efforts to inculcate a sense of British superiority and exclusivity in Rusty only result in the already lonely and reticent boy, withdrawing into himself all the more. The cold snobbishness and artificial mannerisms of his community stifle him. He does not strut his expensive British school education at Bishop's Cotton in Shimla and the values given there. Although Rusty is indebted to his guardian because he keeps him, feeds him and pays for his expensive boarding school...Rusty is scared of his guardian and of his supple Malacca cane that he uses to castigate Rusty. The only other boy in the European community apart from Rusty is the sweeper boy and communication with him is forbidden because of the discriminatory sahib- servant relationship. So for Rusty, in the foreclosure stage of identity formation, the bazaar becomes a mysterious, fascinating place, glimpses of which on occasional car journeys excite his imagination; 'but it was a forbidden place- full of thieves and germs'. A bicycle ride offered to him by a Sikh teenager when Rusty is once rambling desultorily on the outskirts of Dehra marks a turning point in his life. The boy's Indian inquisitiveness to him seems 'too familiar' but the warmth and genial camaraderie of Ranbir, Suri and Somi gradually start making a dent in Rusty's reserve. We find at this stage the beginnings of his preparations to break away from the British sphere. Would he transgress into forbidden realms? Will he have the courage to cross over the threshold into the unknown but always tempting territory? Rusty decides to make the most of Mr Harrison's absence for a few days and distrustful of the smart and sophisticated westernized shopping centre comes to the Clock Tower. "On the other side of the Clock Tower lay the bazaar, and in the bazaar lay India. On the otherside of the Clock Tower began life itself. And all three- bazaar and India and life itself were forbidden" (Bond 555). With a beating heart Rusty defies the law of his guardian and of his community... and "The bazaar and India and life itself all began with a rush of noise and confusion" (556). Rusty is now at a stage where he evaluates his long held values and beliefs in order to 'acquire the freedom and responsibility of adulthood.' Rusty now enters a timeless India- there is no clock in the clock tower to mark the passage of time – and the connection with his world of dreams and fantasies is instantaneous. Ruskin Bond has beautifully juxtaposed the sordid squalor of small town India with the neat British houses and



colonies. Rusty, knocked over into a gutter inadvertently by Somi on his bicycle, is overpowered by the odour of bad vegetables and kitchen water of the gutter, accustomed as he is to the 'delicate scents of the missionary's wife's sweet peas and the occasional smell of the bathroom disinfectant.' An argument follows ending in a friendship and Somi bundles him into the smoky 'chaat shop' and the hot but savory, tasty chaat is Rusty's introduction to the Indian culinary taste and another tikki establishes a profound bond between the two. The warmth of this unknown Indian boy acts as an initiation rite for Rusty whose intense sense of isolation is juxtaposed in glaring contrast to the uninhibited show of cordiality and geniality on Somi's part. His new made friends pity him for his Englishness and its associated snobbishness. Mr Harrison beats him mercilessly with the Malacca cane when he returns and discovers Rusty's transgression into filthy India. Pained and angered at the barbaric and shameful orgy that the wild, ragged and ungrateful wretch has indulged in, Mr Harrison scorns and jeers at Rusty contemptuously hurling invectives at him, calling him no better than a mongrel. Rusty retaliates telling Mr Harrison it is a lie and he retorts thus, 'It's the truth. I've tried to bring you up as an Englishman, as your father would have wished to. But as you won't have it our way, I am telling you that he was about the only thing English about you. You are no better than the sweeper boy' (571). The pain and the injustice of this all builds up a sense of helplessness and rage in him and he retaliates by hitting out at Mr Harrison. The moral code has started asserting itself and Rusty's transformation is complete with his participation in the Holi festival- to him a pagan, primitive pastime earlier- but now a symbol of fraternity wiping away all barriers of social discrimination against people. This festival also symbolises the theory of the 'Carnavalesque' which in Michael Bakhtin's definition is a reversal of social hierarchies. Bond says, "The steady incessant dhum-dhum of the drums proves irresistible because the sound conveyed something to Rusty, something wild and emotional, something that belonged to his dream world, and on a sudden impulse he sprang out of bed" (564). Rusty feels the exhilaration of spring, his new found freedom and friendship and exults in it. Accepted as an equal by his Indian friends he paints the town in rich, emotional rainbow colours. Holi marks a turning point in his life; he experiences the cathartic release of his pent-up emotions in the wild beatings of



the drums, reckless colour throwing and the abandonment of social propriety. 'At the end of it all he was exhausted but he was happy.' The clash of his two worlds- British and Indian- is typical of the moratorium stage in the on- going identity crisis, which is marked by guilt and ambivalence and frequent conflicts with authority. But the colonial myth of a person's identity being established by racial and national ancestry has been challenged and shattered and Rusty is now at a stage where he can experience the diversity of a multi-layered, multi-cultural society and formulate his personal ideals. He has unfettered himself from the confined and strangling English world to find a place in the vast pulsating life of India. His Indian identity is complete in his borrowed pyjamas from Somi and after bathing at the water tank in the open, as a sort of an ablution, an unprecedented peace descends on him. As Ruskin Bond himself says, "I am as Indian as the dust of the plains or the grass of a mountain meadow." Bond's oeuvre gives the true flavour of the Indian soil which T. D. Burton calls 'national quintessence'. Bond feels proud of being a man of double identities, "Being a child of changing times, I had grown up with divided loyalties; but at the end of the journey I had come to realize that I was blessed with double inheritance. And I was determined to make the most of it" (Bond 2).

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Returning to the Ethico-Spiritual Roots: A Study from Head to Heart in Sundar Sarukkai's *What is Science?*

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Abstract: In today's world we are misusing scientific and technological knowledge indiscreetly and greedily for material benefits. With the help of this highly developed science and technology, we exploit natural resources for material benefits which cause imbalances that make it difficult to maintain natural harmony. No doubt we have developed a rational and intelligent being within us but the problem is how to convert this intelligent being into spiritual being. The excessive exploitation of nature and unethical shape of development indicating environmental hazard immediately demand ethical and spiritual restraints. If we have a quest of creating peace and harmony on this globe, we will have to seek accord between spirituality and science. The new age mentality of the West and the westernized Orientals in the present day world also have a desire to move towards the harmonized and unified vision of science and spirituality for the sustainability of the mother earth. The relationship between spirituality and science is of paramount importance in this world in which the most inspired age of science is attempting to get power and dominance over nature. The world may take us to dross if our spiritual eye remains closed. Consequently a holistic view of knowledge must be created which is essential for sustainable development and happy survival of mankind in the lap of the Mother Earth. The proper understanding and blending of science and spirituality can provide solution to this problem as Sundar Sarukkai's indepth insight in his seminal work *What is Science* has reflected upon it.

Key Words: Culture, Epistemology, Ethics, Science, Spirituality, Technology.

Sundar Sarukkai, a physicist and philosopher, is well versed in Indian and Western philosophical traditions. With deep ecological insight he regards science as a charitable



activity, therefore, scientists should act as guardian against misappropriation of science. Inextricably intertwined relationship between science and spirituality is centuries old. Before the beginning of the modern science, scientists had to look to religion for validation but now the situation is reverse as religion has to seek legitimacy from science to exhibit its soundness. Both science and literature reveal truth through their different ways of story-telling as Sarukkai in *What is Science* states that “Stories are a particular way of describing truth-scientific stories describe certain kind of truth in a particular manner and literature often describes other kinds of truth in a different manner” (21-22).

The spiritual understanding demands a serious kind of concentration in the form of meditation both in the field of social and applied sciences as Albert Einstein remarks that “Cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest motive for scientific researches” and further highlighting the contribution of science to spiritualization, he asserts that “Science not only purifies the religious impulse of the dross of its anthropomorphism but also contributes to a religious spiritualization of our understanding” (Einstein 39-49).

Science is not only confined to creating and using knowledge, but on account of its multi-facetedness, it has inherently social and political character as its technology passes into the hands of politicians/ government from where it seeks financial assistance. Moreover, with the sophisticated and highly developed instruments and technology, perception of the unobservables like DNA, stem cells, genes, electrons etc. are being examined through indirect perception-instrumentation. Thus science shows important distinction between appearance and reality as Sarukkai remarks “There is always something underlying everything that we see and our perception is only the surface impression of the world”(112). Over centuries, science is attempting “to appropriate the notions of reality, truth and knowledge within its domain and activities.” Literature is also striving for reality “with fiction, myth and imagination”(117). Novitz (1987) also argues that literature is an important source of knowledge about the real world. Moreover, literature provides knowledge which is ‘richer and more varied’ than the empirical science.



Sarukkai says that “Science understands the world in order to intervene in it, to ‘reform’ the world to suit our needs and desires” (177). Thus science moves from the ‘pure’ to ‘applied’ domain through technology which may be used for either good or evil purpose. From biological point of view, our impulses as biological imperatives related to biological traits and processes make morality natural through culture, hence ethics becomes a product of long ‘evolutionary process’. This moral knowledge justified in the scientific sense will lead to wiser decisions. This will lead to an intrinsic connection between non- violence and ethics which we find in the Buddhist, the Jainas as well as in Gandhiji’s idea of non-violence. But the ideas prevailing at the time regarding science and ethics are completely localized to a specific Western mindset which is contrary to ideal scientific methods. Therefore, in science the stress should be on virtue- epistemology and curiosity should not be coupled with pride and lust because knowledge acquired through vice and vanity becomes contaminated. Thus curiosity should be taken as positive virtue for positive end. Linguistically curiosity sprouts from ‘care’ and ‘cure’, hence it should be caring and curing towards non-humans and other cultures. Therefore, the richest life is one that combines the religious and secular notions of curiosity leading to positive virtue. So in Science there should be a self- regulative and self-restraint process with ethics of general pragmatic and empirical view as we find in Indian classical traditions as Bhattacharya (1958) shows how in Indian philosophy ‘ethics and metaphysics are inextricably connected’. It shows, as Sarukkai thinks, that “ethics is fundamentally ingrained into any activity since the normative is essential to every kind of physical, intellectual or spiritual act” (201).

The dominant intellectual culture of the modern world is scientific in spirit. There is also a trend to move towards religion in societies having scientific and technological character simultaneously expressing a deepening sense of unease among people about the benefits of modern science divorced from spirituality. In this way the scientific world is taking us to some hazards, therefore, some other ways of living are being sought for. Since religion has not been vanished from the consciousness of the people in any culture, therefore,



by removing the divorce between religion and science from the soul of the individual, the scientific and spiritual vision of divine culture is essentially required.

Science and technology should also be used to promote Pan-humanism which is inextricably linked to spiritualism, therefore, a close relation between science and spirituality is essentially required as Einstein in “Science, Philosophy and Religion: A Symposium” (1941) emphatically stated that “I am not conceived of a genuine scientist without that profound faith. The situation may be expressed by an image: science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind.” (Einstein, 46) Thus a proper understanding and harmonious relationship between the two will reflect an ideal culture in the modern techno-science world.

Modern science, being discursive of other different kinds of knowledge system, is dominantly Eurocentric in character. It arrogantly dismisses Indian logic as well as the notion of spirituality; therefore it is paternalistic and patriarchal embodying a male view of the world and knowledge. It is not inclusive as it does not consider philosophy seriously particularly issues related to truth and reality. Unbridled freedom cannot be regarded as innocent nor can freedom be unbridled as it is associated with responsibilities. Science being felicitator of society also has social responsibility of idealizing the world through all kinds of change.

Of course, modern societies feel deeply indebted to modern science for its growth and sustenance as these societies are predominantly scientific and technological in character. The political strength and economic systems are basically dependent on scientific and technological development. But human beings caught within the eddies of contemporary science in the name of specialization are moving away from the holistic notion of the knowledge and the world as a whole as they are distancing themselves from spirituality.

Technological culture is about speed, efficiency and control as we see in computer and mobile phones technology. Change is at great speed and no doubt, evolution of society fundamentally lies in change which rests on the growth of science and technology. There is something leading to natural progressions of humanity but something is also unnatural coming out of modern science and technology including many kinds of forces ranging from



market economy to waging war. But it does not mean that we should wish science and technology let away which will be against the pragmatic path of progressive thinking. Therefore, the solution is to humanize science and technology by combining it to literature, arts and music so that the mysterious experience of the spiritual world may be validated in the light of science as the eminent scientist, Albert Einstein in *Ideas and Opinions* asserts; “The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science. Whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel, is as good as dead, and his eyes are dimmed” (11).

Thus the integrated vision of spirituality and science projects holistic view of knowledge for the betterment and welfare of the world as a whole and this article is also an attempt to contribute in this sublime goal.

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The Untold Story Of Divorce Told By Manju Kapur's *Custody*

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Abstract: *Custody* is a novel of women's distresses, sufferings and their happiness, and also the way in which they conquer their wishes and aspirations. Nowadays women are fond of freedom and they break the walls for their breathing of fresh free air and they are constructing a world of their own. Manju Kapur's novels illustrate new women who are struggling for their identity. In this paper, Shagun and Ishita are the protagonists portrayed as different image and controversial views as a modern sculpture. They fight for the old tradition and culture and they want to expose their freedom as their wish.

Key words: *sufferings, infertility, infidelity, identity, new woman.*

Manju Kapur's novels attain a momentous new sense when read at the point of view of traverse beliefs of traditional critical thinking. Her novels endow instances of a whole collection of outlook towards the importation of belief. However, she appears awake to the actual fact that women of India have achieved their success in sixty years of Independence. However if there's to be a real feminine independence, an excessive amount of remains are yet to be done. The conflict for self-sufficiency and distinct identity remain as an incomplete combat. In the past, women underneath the patriarchal burden and management were, subjected to an excessive amount of burns and convivial reclusion. They were segregated and were unfair in lien of their gender.



Custody, is the story of marital life, divorce and the custody. The novel is a familiar portrayal of marriage and family. After the separation of Raman and Shagun, they claim the custody of their children, Arjun and Roohi. It reveals the tough reality of divorce, particularly when children are labyrinthine. The course of the novel is full of anger and clash. Shagun and Ishita are portrayed as middle-class protagonists. They are so bold enough to take decisions and lead their life as they wish. Kapur illustrates the characters of Shagun and Ishita with sorrows and sufferings and they put their efforts with a tireless task to lead their life with happiness. Most of the working women face a lot of problems in their family and mostly they are created by their spouse.

Raman, who is working as a corporate advertiser, is intelligent and Shagun is gorgeous where this is a typical arranged marriage decided by their parents. Even though Shagun's marriage is an arranged one, she is not feeling comfortable. Shagun's daring personality makes her select hedonistic lifestyle in order to find out her own space in the society, without bothering anyone. She is a freed non-traditional woman. She wants to live for her own desire. Though she is an urban middle-class woman, she is fond of luxurious life. She gets bored with her daily routine normal life and is attracted by the modern life. Raman and Shagun have many contrary opinions among themselves regarding the tenure of their children and her way of life as modern Indian woman searching for freedom. She is having two children a toddler daughter and eight years older boy, but "she practices thinking badly of her spouse. The dissatisfaction that accurses in most marriages was not allowed dissipation; instead, she clung to reasons to justify her unfaithfulness"(C 2).

Shagun, just doesn't want a moderate life with two children, she gets into an affair with her husband's boss Ashok Kanna who is luxurious and modern. Ashok is portrayed as a despotic boss who wants to establish his trade market. Ashok also tried to seduce Shagun. They both just want to lead a happy life independently. She leaves her children and lives with him without bothering her husband and the family. She does not bother her patriarchal society. Raman is ashamed of his untrustworthy wife and he is totally collapsed. The innocent children are the real sufferers of the disastrous marriage of their parents. The

children Arjun and Roohi feel devastated of their parent's deportation. The beautiful family is fully malformed by her lustful activity. Shagun kidnaps her children from her husband. Raman's parents decide to meet an advocate Mr.Nandan to handle this case.

The children's routine work totally gets disturbed. Arjun's concentration on his studies gets deviated and Roohi's anxiety increases because of their parent's partition. Arjun feels depressed and he could not concentrate on his studies. Arjun starts fussing over school and his performance becomes very worst in the test and he feels disgusted to go to the school. Meanwhile Arjun's leg is hurt and he couldn't get up. So Shagun takes him to the doctor. He said that Arjun is physically good but mentally he is upset and thinking of something and that's why his leg is injured. Shagun asked, "Is something bothering you, beta? The doctor thought you might be upset and that is why you have a slight discomfort in your leg. Mind and body are one, you know" (C 162). Shagun wants to make a better life for her son Arjun.

Accordingly she entreats him to join a boarding school so that he can study well and make his life much better. But Arjun refuses to go to school, he is not mentally good, he wants to live together with his parents, which gives pleasure to him in all his actions. She easily makes up his son's mind with her mesmerizing words and keeps him by her side giving costly gifts and arranging trips in summer holidays. After some years she wants to meet her daughter. Roohi also feels timid. Ishita, the second wife of Raman prevents Roohi to meet her mother. She feels her acquaintance with her mother may cause deportation of her with Raman. So she barred the girl to meet her mother. Shagun also bans the boy to meet his father. The battle between the parents cause ruin to the life of the children. Kapur articulates in her Random Reads interview that "rather than focus on the divorce, infidelity etc., I look at the consequences of these actions, which I find more interesting. Not what propels a divorce, but what the long term consequences of this are for everybody concerned".

Mrs. Sabharwal belongs to the old traditional culture of women who considers the pleasure of others. She is always worried about her daughter Shagun's life, her children and her son-in-law. She is aware of the society and she bothers about the people. She believes that the home is the ideal place for women who are fully built with joy, care, affection and



love. She realises marriage is the holy unity of man and woman and divorce is an evil curse to the woman. But Shagun is a modern woman and thinks divorce is not an evil thing. She wants to live her life without any perception of others. She ponders her mother as an orthodox woman. Shruti Ravindran illustrates, “Kapur’s dissection of South and East Delhi manners will continue to be of relevance as long as there are mothers so anxious to ‘settle’ their daughters, they pay keener attention to their body clocks than their selves”. Mrs.Sabharwal called Shagun and her grandchildren to stay with her for few days. But Shagun refuses to come and she calls her mother to her home. She says that she is going for a two day trip to her friend’s home but Sahharwal thought that she didn’t know about her friend for past 30 years. She thinks that there is some change in her daughter’s character. She neglects to share her views, ideas, opinions, problems and difficulties in her life with her mother. Without the knowledge of her family she leaves her house and lives with Ashok. “She had to say goodbye, in a way that wouldn’t hurt him, then go to her life with Raman, that joyless, dismal, uninteresting life” (C 106).

Mrs.Rajora is a librarian at Arts faculty at Delhi University. She has one child, a daughter Ishita. She is young and beautiful. At her childhood, she was affected by TB. For nine months the child was on TB drugs. Mrs.Rajora says, “A low-class disease, thought the panic-stricken mother, as in a fit of anger she fired the help- these people- you never knew with these people” (C 49). Eventually, the caring paid off and Ishita grows stronger. She has pursued B.A. and the family decides that she should do B.Ed. If she gets a government job, she will have security in her life. Ishita begins to apply for teaching jobs, and a good offer comes. But her family is traditional and they decide to arrange the marriage to their daughter with Surya Kanta a 25 year old man, who is well educated, handsome and well settled.

After many discussions, Ishita marries Surya Kanta. She is very happy in her life for one year. Their family informs to Ishita that there is no need to go for a job. Surya’s salary is much enough for them. But they insist for a grandchild. There was a little point in distressing a child, and there was no sign of pregnancy. Rajora worries about her daughter. So she and Ishita meet a doctor for infertility problem. The boy’s family begins to make the great fuzz.



“They are beginning to ask, why haven’t you conceived?”(C 53). She does fasting and special prayers with the compulsion of her in laws. After few days Ishita consults the fertility expert Dr.Suhashini Guha, American trained doctor. The Doctor listens to her story and then diagnosis her fallopian tubes. Then Ishita is suggested to get an HSG treatment. At that situation, Ishita comes to know that she was affected by TB disease in her childhood. Hence this is the major problem for her. After knowing that she gets much worried and she says “I don’t keep secrets from him” (C 58) and conveys the message to her - in law’s and her husband.

The parents suggested Ishita go for a second treatment. But she is not ready. As days passed there is no sign of pregnancy. Her husband starts to avoid her. Mrs.Rajora drags her daughter to an astrologer. He looks at her palm and said that she will have a child only if she wears a white pearl ring. Even after, that there is no sign of pregnancy. Her husband doesn’t speak to her. She sees her husband only at the dining table. She stays alone in her room. Surya’s family asks divorce from her. They ask her “You must have known you couldn’t have a child. You will never get a paisa from us. How long do you think you can go on eating our salt?” (C 70).

Mr.Rajora and Mr. Kaushik are in the same apartment. One evening they both talk about their children’s life. Mr. & Mrs. Rajora are worried about the pathetic condition of Ishita. One fine day Mrs. Hingorani, the neighbour of Ishita, asks her if she is interested to serve as a volunteer for slum back students and for their studies, she will also accompany her. Ishita also wants a change and she accepts the offer. Every morning she wakes up with cheer and joy. “The sight of all children was detestable, but those from the slums were a different breed, not the adorable creatures that fate had robbed her of, but urchins who were visible everywhere with their running noses and sharp ways” (C 126). Her parents get surprised to see their daughter going for a job, but they thought that this is not suitable for her, as she wanted to go for a corporate job. Ishita also tries at many schools for jobs but she doesn’t get any.

Mrs.Hingorani suggests Ishita adopt a baby so that she will have some inspiration and meaning to live. Her parents will not come along with her whole life and after them she has to take care of herself. When she has a baby, she will have a meaningful life. So Ishita decides to adopt a baby. But her parents refuse to accept the idea of adopting a child, they want Ishita to marry someone and settle her life. But Ishita convinces her parents and three of them get ready for adoption. It is just three days of the process to adopt a girl child. But the process failed.

The custody case comes to court, Raman and Shagun arrive at the court, where Shagun files for divorce and Raman files for custody. Though Shagun has already trained Arjun about how to react in court for the questions asked by the judge and she expresses “Arjun is old enough. I can explain things to him-but Roohi? What can a two –year-old understand?” (C 94). After the hearing, the court ordered the custody of the boy with his mom but he can meet his father and spend time with him in the weekend. Shagun feels infidelity, his rationality is too cold and to think that she has not told him about the efforts. Arjun made to contact his father. She prays for Arjun that her only son is to be with her and also a divorce. One day Shagun goes to meet Mrs. Sabharwal and tells her that Ashok is offered a US job, and they are shifting to the US. Mrs. Sabharwal gets shocked and worried about the children’s future but Shagun convinces.

Shagun hopes that Ashok doesn’t discriminate them and he continues to be involved in her children’s life very eagerly and she had absolute faith in Ashok. Shagun slowly tells Roohi, that she is going away for a while, so she could go and live with her father. But Roohi refuses to go instead, she prefers to be with her, she doesn’t want to live away from her, then Shagun instantly regretted all she had said and tells her daughter that, “You are still my baby girl. Remember that I love you. Always, always” (C 244). A week later, Raman and Shagun are divorced. Raman thinks that “she wanted nothing from him- nothing except her freedom. Not a shred, not a pin, not a rupee would she keep of their former life” (C 246).

Mrs. Rajora worries about her daughter’s life. She wants to settle her daughter’s life. Though Mrs.Rajora and Ishita have invited by Mrs.Kaushik to meet her son, Ishita has heard



these pre-directions often. Her mother only wants her to get married so that she could have an old companionship. Ishita gets ready and goes to Mrs. Kaushik home with her mother. She talks to Raman and spends some time with Roohi. Then Raman asks about her NGO. Ishita feels happy in spending time with Raman and Roohi.

Mrs. Kaushik and Mrs. Rajora wish that their children get married. Mrs. Kaushik thought that Ishita is a girl with heart, a homemaker and entertains his child. They believe her definitely that she'll take care of their son. Raman thought of Ishita, that "he had his children, no one could take them away from him, and they were blood of his own blood, flesh of his flesh. This girl- woman -had nothing" (C 256). But they both don't want to push them in another; they want to devote their lonely life Ishita's hands sparkles with true love. She showers her love and affection to Roohi without any intention. When she is with Roohi, she loves her with unconditional mother's love. Then Ishita has said to her parents about her love for Raman. Mrs. Rajora's eyes are filled with tears and she thinks that it is a miracle that her daughter has got this fortuitous of repaying to statue so offensively snatched from her.

Roohi is well attached with Ishita and she starts to lay along with her every night. Roohi has just turned four. Shagun neglects her responsibilities to be a good mother to her child. But Ishita who is not the biological mother takes care of Roohi with full love and affection. One day Raman tells Ishita that he had applied for a marriage license. They get married in the court. They would tell their parents after it is all over. Then Raman and Ishita convey about the marriage to their parents. Initially, they get shocked. Then they gladly accept their marriage. They decide to tell Roohi about this and she also accepts the marriage for him that was ultimately the most important thing. Now Arjun is left.

Ishita starts her life with Raman and Roohi, morphing suddenly into a wife. Ishita takes care of Roohi well. She takes her for dance class, piano class. In the weekend, they go to the zoo. Roohi walked between her parents. All things considered, they are happy. Raman wishes his wife is not so keen on his daughter's education. Once home he deserves the glow on Ishita's face that came from successful family living.



In olden days, women suffered a lot. They adjusted and compromised everything for the arranged marriage. They never had guts to approach for divorce and separation. They hindered with sorrows and they led the miserable life. Now, the modern women have clear cut ideas of their own. Their contrary views are clarified by them and they travel in their own path. Shagun and Ishita are two modern women, sustained their life favourably by their own decision making and never bothered about the society. They got the divorce and they made their life as their wish by marrying their own companion.

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Anita's green protagonists Nanda and Raka in *Fire on the Mountain*

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Abstract: This Paper focuses on Anita's green protagonist Nanda and Raka's close association with nature. These women are adjacent with nature and they create bondage between nature and themselves in the counterpart of their life. On the other hand, their childhood memories have handy relevance with nature and they incorporate their positive response to the environment is accessible. Anita validates women understand nature more than man. It illustrates her skilful painting of the landscape with beautiful scenery and never leaving any minute picture for depiction. All the human problems are to be set right only when we get back to nature and surrender ourselves in the hands of it.

Key Words: Green, bondage, memories, landscape, nature.

Anita divided her novel into three parts. The first part Nanda Kaul at Carignano, the second part Raka comes to Carignano and the third part Ila Das leaves Carignano. In all three parts Carignano plays a vigorous role amid two protagonists. In first part Nanda's attitude towards nature expressed clearly. In second Raka's closeness with the nature expelled and in third part Ila's acquaintance with nature is revealed magnificently.

Nanda Kaul was dreary, tall and skinny old lady embracing with her traditional silk sari. She had deception to unite with the pine tree and desires to be reflected as a tree. She assumed the desolateness is the primary feature of this domicile. The decor from her home is tremendous from the polar side of Kasauli bursting with mountains and in the south had



steppes with rocks and pines and with its comprehensive view. Intermittently eagle whirled this abode for its pure dainty and air. In her fledgling phase as a soul mate of Vice chancellor and mother of seven children's accustomed with desires, assurances, enquiries and plentiful needs but now she was nurtured with everything and she urged to devote her time with nature to be alone with cicadas and pines. She esteemed to bestow her time tranquilly in the mount ridge at Carignano. She sensed inordinate chilliness and blossoming of assistance after she settles down there.

The first part Nanda Kaul at Carignano pacts her intimacy with nature intruded by the mail man who pass the information on her great granddaughter's arrival. Her house is in such a way she could visualize the blue waves of Himalayas flowing in the line of ice and the snow sketched upon the sky. The apricot trees are very close to her home. Sometimes she stoops to pick some bright apricot from the dry grass but the bright hoopoe flow from far off and limp it with its beak. It had its nest outside her bedroom. She sometimes saw, it feeds her nestling. It filled her heart with pleasure and the nestling's screams were shrill and it would madden anyone who hears it.

The yellow rose slept for eleven months and its magnificence came out in the month of April like a sleeping beauty reborn from her sighing. The sweet angelic frilling infant flounces its beautiful flowers all over Kausali. Before opening itself Nanda identified the handwriting of her daughter. Asha the beautiful daughter of hers wanted her granddaughter to spend some time with her mother. Raka who was recently recovered from typhoid and she was suffering from heat and humidity of Mumbai. Everyone advised her to recuperate herself by going to hillside. Asha decided to send Raka to Nanda Kaul for her summer vacation and spend her holidays in Kasauli. Nanda Kaul felt excessive assurance of aggressiveness and aplomb in the letter of her daughter. Her eyes then turned to the side of apricot trees. The cloudy hydrangeas and pines are scattered and created the hissing sound of the breeze. Nanda Kaul felt the letter is like an insect on her lap. She was meddling with her impending arrival of her great granddaughter. She longed to continue with the stillness and calmness which she enjoyed earlier.



Nanda then slowly get back to life by looking at the bloomed yellow rose creeper. It finished its blooming in the previous month. It gashed with summer heat. She felt as flower that finished its blooming already she had also done everything to her family. After finishing all her duties she finally settled down in Kasauli. She remembers her past life in Punjab as a wife of Vice Chancellor. Her house was always over crowded with visitors. She sat on her cane chair by mending the clothes. She managed her hubbub life and everyone is praising her as a queen by doing duties to her husband and her children. She saw them as crawling grey buys who would try to fascinate her by their appreciation.

Mr. Kaul always wanted Nanda should be in the silk saree to invite her guests. She cooked for all and taking care of her children's mischief as falling from the swing, stung by the wasp, slapped by the fourth and created huge cry by breaking their teeth. She felt fully freed from these nuisances. But this letter reminded the whole incidents of her past. She wanted her life must fill with sounds of cicadas and the pines. She wants to sit near the silver plain. She saw the eagle swept around the place by gliding thousand feet below. She hears the Cuckoo's soft melody in her garden with the domestic tone. Then she went to kitchen and informed about the arrival of her great granddaughter to Ram Lal.

The bright sunlight spread over the tiles like a lacquer. She suddenly hears the crackling and hissing phone call from her friend Ila Das. Her voice was shrill and strident. Her hideous voice confuses the hearers like a long nail scratching at the glass plane. While speaking Nanda's concentration diverted to hen which drags the worm inch by inch from the ground. She found herself in the position of warm. She never wants any one to disturb her either her friend Ila nor her great granddaughter Raka. Ila's tone tuned anxious by hearing the arrival of Raka. She was pleading to visit her and her great granddaughter. Nanda prolonged her desire by saying she will inform after Raka settled down in that place. Ila observed Nanda's indifference in her voice.

The sunlight was thickened and the flies were too lazy to fly and it is buzzed languorously and voluptuously by the midday webbing. The flies are making their euphonious music esoteric and the cicadas made their music in open-air. Everything in nature



was strangely rasping by the humming, shrilling, and buzzing of the birds. She was in frustration simply laid down in her bed as a lizard on the stone wall. She saw the abrupt quarrel between the parrots. They screamed and scolded and shot off from the place like a rocket.

It was the spring the evening seemed very dark. The phlox bloomed in the border of the lawn. It appears fresh white in the moonlight. The crisp grass of the lawn spread out with its fragrance. That night she was like a haunted fearful bird with distracted and disturbing mood. Through the window she watched the flushed ravine. The plains are mounted with soft tawny light. The sun floats like a balloon and the pine needles have glistened like a silk. She reads the pillow book of Sei Shonagon. *When a woman lives alone*, she loved to read the book repeatedly. The sun light slowly melted with blue and violets. She wants to preserve the moment of the Kasauli's view by painting. She called English artist to make this scene immemorial.

The guests crowded the place under the eucalyptus and bougainvillea. She has to carry too many cups of tea to her husband, mother in law and their guests. She lacked privacy in her olden days and she now longed for that. She felt her life was like the heavy difficult book. She read that book earlier and she never wants to re-read it. She wanted to discharge all the duties. The caring of others mislaid her character. After her husband's death, she settled down at Kasauli. Her children engaged her for few days and distributed their belongings. All evaded away from her house within a short period. She concentrated on her garden and stated with elegant perfection.

She already lost her heart to her own children. At last, they all abandon her and now she used to the life of isolation. She never wants anyone to disturb her from the closeness with nature. She saw the perfect settings of pergola roses. Ram Lal suggested potato chips with tomato ketchup. Nanda filled the vase with some flowers. The pale of flush turned round like rainbow in her heart. At first the blue than the violet and it turned to the green and after faded as yellow. Then again it reached its pearl colour. She could not differentiate Raka from the other children in her home. She then recalls she has to take concern of her granddaughter



if she comes to her place. Then she felt Raka's arrival would surely make a lot of changes in her present routine life.

The wind ruffled and the sunlight glistened the cuckoo sang in the chestnut tree down the road. In a modern satiric manner, the pine trees doubly bend and welcomed Raka. Nanda thought her disparate behavior was an utter misnomer. Anita considered Raka as the moon. But she never perceived any quality of it. Her face is not round and she was not calm and radiant. Nanda thought her as a dark cricket and she frights like a mosquito with thin legs and she has a resemblance to an insect. Raka lived in busy Mumbai her entire atmosphere felt different to her. That's the first time "she heard the voice of silence" (Desai 44)

Nanda and Raka hugged in a formal way. Their bones are colliding and they felt unaccommodating and angular in nature. Raka felt everything as a darted of the tree. She considers Nanda as a pine tree, her grey sari as a rock and all other components as bareness and stillness surround the Carignano garden. "To Nanda Kaul, she was still an intruder, an outsider, a mosquito flown up from the plains to tease and worry. With a blatant lack of warmth, she sighed, 'Well, better come in'," (44) Nanda was completely detached with her great granddaughter.

Raka walked around the room with a bare foot. She was like a newly caged and wildly tamed. She had no interest in flowers. She discarded herself with snail's shell. She sensed the yellow summer dust in the room. Raka while bending from the window looked the man-made damage over nature. The factory smoke emitted through chimneys. The black smoke carves fused in the milky blue afternoon sky. She recollected the stories told by their parents about the beauties of Himalayas and not devastating factories. She never expects this in that attractive village.

Raka leaned against the crusted bark of the tree and noticed the large green rooftop, low building, bright geraniums baskets, white muslin curtains, giant deodar tree, and fresh swept market tennis court. She felt everything is sleeping except the cicadas fiddling. She surveyed the place by resting on the spine trunk. Raka enquired about the factory to Ram Lal. It is a Pasteur Institute which makes serum for the injections for the bite of mad dog. She



enquired about the smoke and he said they preparing serum for the whole country so it is boiling all over the day. Ram Lal informed about the howling of the jackals and the ghost story of the village.

Nanda enquired about the plan of Raka. She seethed silently like a black mosquito humming over conglomerate. Raka had a gift of disappearing silently without anyone's notice. She vanished around the stony hill side. Wandering slowly down the lane, Stripping some thorny bush and take berries and she examined the insect under the leaf. While appearing back her legs were brown. Nettles stung her fingers; she had thoughtful eyes by visiting the strange fantastic improbable land. Though Nanda wanted to get away from her, Raka's dusty make her to get ready with hot water for her bath. The child's behavior was disquieting. Like a magic rabbit she vanishes and enjoys the mountain cliff.

Raka was doing the brave flaw experiment and she was entirely different from her own daughters and grandchildren. She was freak and never makes any demand. She never even wants her great grandmother know her secret. She was burrowing around the sandy loam and hill side pine needles. Raka was recluse by nature and she had an instinct of rejection and sacrifice. Nanda after discerning the child spontaneously generated the veneration over her rise and stir.

Raka leapt down the ravine. It was hotter and the red dust struck on her toes and the sand ragged on her sandals. She billowed herself with the wide open mountain and she concentrated on agaves. The central dagger was guarded by the curved spike ring. It was contorted by the charred pine trunks and paralyzed by the attitudes of rocks. The splotches of blood, yellow stains in paper, ashes of bones, tins of tulip ham and Kissan jam, rubber tyre, burnt kettles and bent wheels are dumped there. She saw yellow snake sunned on the peak of the flat rock. She keenly observed the slithering shade of the tails of the snake. She did not saw that creature earlier in her life. The sweat ran to the roots of her hair in the dusty storms of the plain.

Raka scrambled on the uphill. She went through the soil and gravel and stared the avalanches of clanking pebbles of empty tins. Her appearance disturbs the cricket and they



chorally raised their voice. She was with full of joy and began to sing with some different language. It's not Geneva, Sanskrit or the Greek. It was incessant and shrill which make the buzz to come out. She was in the cliff's lip. She came to the garden of Carignano and visualized the green roofed building which was isolated. Ram Lal waiting for her with the hot water. She slides herself down from the top. She saw the bird fall from the nest, the nest from the tree, the grass stuck the hair and the thorns stuck her sandals.

Raka's trip to Carignano was very adventurous. The setting of the sun is like orange haze dropping towards the westwards. She narrated the picture of yellow cobra sleeping and was from far off place. Ram Lal advised her not to go that much far; it would create some harm to her. She expressed her willingness to meet jackal. He informed her that it bites means others have to take her to Pasteur Institute and they will give fourteen injections on her stomach. He advised her to meet babas in the evening. He said other children are play in the garden with their parents and they have lemonade and Vimto.

Ram Lal's narration of hill station club created the fascination on her. The life associated with club she observed in Delhi, Manila and Madrid she behaved as an outsider. She maintained distance over that life. He advised instead of roaming around the hillside and getting hurt and ugly scar better to go to hill station club. While taking with him dust storm came. It gashed across the place and he tightly holds his hat. Raka observed it from the stone the densely yellow hazed gathered and hurled across the plain. It scattered the mango groves and sweep the mountain foot. The cliff was flounced over the engulfed Kasauli.

Ram Lal protected Raka in the kitchen by closing the doors. She observed from the window a white hen was lifted and toasted in the air. It's beaks snatched and traumatized like the glass. The yellow clouds created bonfire in the heart and the great conflagration bobbed across the dusty clouds. She asked him whether the fire they made for boiling water would spread to forest and cause forest fire. He was ignorant of the situation and he narrated every summer there was water scarcity in Kasauli. Once they had forest fire in the village they don't have water to put off. It destroyed the whole house and the two buffaloes died in it in the previous year.



She remembered the burnt hut on the upper mall. The lady in the cottage got fire in order to save the cat. Her hair and eye lashes half burnt through the fire. She got mad and admitted in the asylum. Some created rumour that there in the night they hear the sound of the cat howling. Ram Lal looked out the storm dashed the brass vessel in the tin roofs and stone walls. The raucous poltergeists of dusty storm may have a chance to set the forest fire. He was worried that he was old to fetch water to stop the fire. Raka instantly said she would get the water and stop the fire. But the wind blows heavily and it dusted the whole area without visualizing anything.

The air reminds cool and chill. The sun's heat appears as an angry crab ready to fight. The dizzy parrots spurted away from the pines. Phosphorescent flock treated the birds to fly from their nest. Without causing any harm the wind gets back normal and Ram Lal took the brass bucket for the girl to the bath. The Cuckoo's identical note given them the gay relief and she spread her legs like the pair of scissors. Nanda's silk folds slapped bumbled like the flies in the air like a buzzing alarm.

Nanda after having tea informed to Raka she is also accompanying her for a walk. The child felt hungry after having tea. It made to ramble and forge for her food in the hills. She urged for the berries and pine nuts to growl her flat belly. She ate a little at the time of a meal. At tea time she was shy to ask for the biscuit. She felt hungry at dinner. She searched for ripe berries and sour oxalis leaves would satisfy her hunger. She was despondently tassel ling the purple bell about her great grandmother's idea of the walk. Nanda appeared with walking stick and grey gym shoe. She offered to go to Monkey point.

Raka felt her pair with Nanda is awkward. Walking in the hills at afternoon dull summer dust fused everywhere. The pine needles are glistened and riffled. Nanda's walking stick waved around the pebbles and she was narrating the story which happened in her city earlier. She also told the same story of Ram Lal that the house was burnt in the forest fire there was no drop of water to put off it. The old lady was burnt and admitted in an asylum. But nature's magnificence spread widely by one spray of rain it would produce hundreds of flowers and the whole place would fill with lilies, dahlias like a heaven.



Nanda informed the pleasant cottage was taken by the doctor of Pasteur Institute. The beautiful tennis court is now not used by anyone and it was the place for the chicken run. Across the road, there was the beautiful garden situated in Kasauli. It is now used as Army billet. Nature's grandeur was slowly destroyed by the scientific monstrosity and atomic reactor. In early days children's spend their time happily with nature and they had more glorious moments in their lives. But now kids are confined to sit in their home with video games and watching TV. It spoils their health and eating habit. The natural way of eating the vegetables and playing with nature in a harmonious way would maintain fitness and comfortable to lead their healthy life.

On the way, they saw the succulent blades attract the tourists. They write their names in the incongruous barbed wire. The fine quite place was spoiled by the arrival of army and tourists. The Kasauli is the place of heaven is now disturbed by everyone. While Nanda first came to this place it was apt to the poem of Gerard Manley Hopkins

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow.
And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea. (Desai 63)

Though this poem was written on some other's place it's suitably fit for it earlier. Then with loud voice, Nanda showed the chestnut tree to the child. The branches are swinging, leaping, and crushing the leaves, showering like the horse by the Langurs. Raka too laughed at the old langur which sits on the top of the tree. It showed its teeth with jumping and gibbering anger and derision.

Both of them got attracted by the mother langur which deliberately cradling the infant with its elegant arm. The infant's face was filled with tears and worries. It looked aged than



its normal. Others play happily like the clown as the Tarzan in the tree. It fascinated everyone's attraction by clapping hands, hallooing like the wild cinema heroes, in a bunch all leaped to the half ruined tin roof. Children and servants banged with bombardment and all shouted and vanished.

Nanda and Raka quite refreshed with the laughing in the downhill. Nanda said the old house was turned into summer holiday home. The children's from Delhi happily spent their time and walk around the place as a picnic with the matron. Then she enquired she has the interest to go to school in Kasauli. With numb, she nodded her head. She was dejected by the "thoughts of school, of hostel, of discipline, order and obedience"(65). Then she abruptly ran down and waited in the bottom of the hill. She was more familiar of the forest then Nada Kaul.

They reached the flowerless twisted monkey park. Under the trees some benches, concrete shelters and bus stands was built by the municipal corporation. The radiance lucidly passed in the evening sky. Nanda with trembling voice said to her she would watch from there itself and she could enjoy on her own. Raka happily popping up and springing down and she flew like the bird and she enjoyed the whole situation. She reached the top of the hill within the fraction of seconds and blends herself with nature. She already had the plan to visit this park alone without anyone's notice. She felt secrecy is the essence of relishes'.

Raka had the instinct of an explorer and discoverer. She never wants anyone to observe her. But now she was nervous by the intently watching by her great grandmother. She was totally relieved from all kinds of stress by merging herself with the exhilarated evening light, the blade of the grass and the pleasant blowing wind swung her as to throw away. She hears the whip of her dress, and she collected some rose and flew from the top to the bottom of the hill and as escort Eagles slowly circled around her.

Raka felt she was higher than eagles, Kasauli, Sanawar and even all other hills. The climate was cool and the summer sun never scorches her. The golden moss was softly found on the below. The northern side hills flowed with waved colours as gold, blue, violet, indigo like the sea. The winds rushing sound from the pine would appear as the sea. She began to



consider herself on the sea the clouds appeared as the waves and the wind sound appeared as the sound from the sea. She shouted and played as she was ship wrecked and clung to a rock on the boat. She sang merrily.

Her ear drum tuned to the roaring waves, wind and the darkness approaching the hill. Then she remembered her granny on the bench and she reluctantly moving down the hill. Nanda scold the girl with agitation and got back her nerves. They silently walked back to their home. They heard the invisible music from the far off bird in that defied night. The village was filled with lights and Ram Lal eagerly waiting for them and opened the gate.

Their Monkey point walk was not successful so Nanda did not suggest another. She silently took her book and began to read. After Raka get back to her place Nanda stand near the window and observed children with their parents as Rani, Rolo and perambulated sedately. Raka rarely visits the upper and lower mall. She loved to be roam around the mountain and hill and quite close with nature. She visited the village valleys, wheat thrashed mechanically by the cattle, Corn and pumpkins dried on the roof top. The village people saw her but she never spoke to none. While seeing any foxes red fur she immediately wants to come to the home on time without the hindrance of fox on the way to her home. Raka had the gift of avoiding the dispensable.

Nanda asked to visit the nearby club but it made her recollect the boarding school at Sanawar. Nanda enquired about her parents had taken to clubs and parties. She shook her head and remembered her father tried hard to make her come out from the nutshell and her mother too try to arrange tea party to friends at her birthday. She considered it as painful occasions. Her illness and weakness made her less socialize. She was bed ridden for a month. Her hair was shorn to scalp. She was in secret thoughts by hearing the sepulchral reading of her mother under the hot revolving electric fan. Her mind filled with the sounds of cicadas and the wind from the pine trees.

Raka asked Nandi that she was also never visited the club. Nanda had a little jerk and she gives a snort of laughter. She bends down to reach her face to touch the nose of the child and said "You are exactly like me" (71). Raka was pell-mell by the blatant advance of Nanda.



Her small face was pinched her lips together. Then Nanda regained her authority, composure, and distance for her age. They both averted their face. In the modern age though we have appreciation we maintain in distance to express it. Artificiality upholds everywhere.

The whirling and whistling sound of the nestling made Raka survey the hoopoe's nest and Nanda Kaul stared at the Woollen hills. The bird strived to snap the dragon flies and moths in its beaks to share for their nestling. Hoopoe was jealous of Raka because she came out with a bare foot to take the ripest and sweetest apricots in the morning. The remaining apricots were taken by Ram Lal and he made delicious jam and kept it the glass jar. The bird had to catch the moth and drag out from the earth for its survival. Sometimes they have to fight with the other bulbuls, yellow-bibbed and bottomed outrageously cheeky birds. The hoopoes disconsolately waiting in the apricot tree in a distressed and baffled mood. Raka broke out from her silence and said they are waiting to feed their babies. Nanda with suspicion and disdainful heart asked to Raka that she wanted to go to evening walk.

Now Raka has divulged herself from all constraints. She felt she was no longer the daughter of the grasshopper and she should never be like an insect. She wanted to wander like a ravine. Nanda keenly observing the child from the window and saw the mysterious behavior of the child she was walking backward to the tree by recalling the past. Raka then hides somewhere and she did not appear on the top of the cliff. She knew the other route to escape from her granny. Nanda worried about the girl's fascination and bothered about her reaction after seeing the Pasteur's Institute. Raka skipped her evening tea and came late to the home by chanting the mantra inaudibly "don't care - I don't care - I don't care for anything!" (80)

Raka's hair was dusty and her knees were scratched and feared about her great grandmother may be enquired about these. She simply showed the leathery flowers that grow around the brown edges. They say ponies carrying small children to the hotel. Nanda asked Raka she was interested in pony ride. But she simply rejected the offer. She jumped with happiness by showing the Cinereous twilight with the copper glow of the full moon. Nanda was uncertain about the full moon. The darkened sky reddened the glow.



Raka was shivered by the fire and she never saw that before in her life. The fire was far away they could never smell the burning of pine trees and they never heard the crackling and hissing sound. It was like the fire in the dream. The fire sparks run around the hill side. Raka is the only person who understood the special value and the real importance of Carignano. Thus, Nanda wanted to hand over this property to Raka and she had full trust on her that she would safeguard the place by knowing the virtue of it.

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Negotiating Death-Rebirth Archetype In R.K.Narayan's *The Guide*

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Abstract: This diligent enquiry has been attempted to show how Raju, the hero of the novel, *The Guide* by R.K.Narayan becomes an archetypal hero with special reference to the death rebirth myth. An archetypal hero is the ideal masculine type who sets in his life with a journey, goes through initiation and finally sacrifices himself to save the land and people. The transformation in the hero's life causes the rebirth or resurrection of the hero. And this paper again focuses on how Northrop Frye's archetypal schema of the seasons aligned with a literary genre such as summer, autumn, winter and spring can be found in the character of Raju.

Keywords Archetype, initiation, resurrection, transformation, quest.

An archetypal hero is one who begins his life with his quest, goes through initiation that is separation, transformation and finally returns and sacrifices himself to save his land and people from plague and famine. In the initiation stage that very transformation causes the death and rebirth of the hero. This paper has been attempted to show Raju the guide in *The Guide* by R. K. Narayan as an archetypal hero specially focusing on Raju's quest for identity, Raju's separation from his near and dear ones, Raju's transformation from a fraud to Saint, Raju's return to the locality and finally Raju's sacrifice for the sake of the villagers in Mangal. In short, how Raju becomes an archetypal hero is the center of this paper.



Archetypal literary criticism focuses on recurring myths and archetype in the characters, images, symbols in the literary work. Etymologically the term archetype is derived from the Greek word "arche" that means "beginning" and "typos" that means "imprint". Beginning denotes the character of an early stage in the evolutionary or historical development of something; imprint literary denotes a mark or outline on a surface. Hence, archetype connotes something imprinted from the primitive stage. The works of Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye contributes a lot for popularizing archetypal literary criticism in the 1940s and 1950s. Two other academic disciplines of archetypal literary criticism are social anthropology and psychoanalysis. The Scottish anthropologist Sir James George Frazer's work deals with mythology and archetypes focusing particularly on material terms, while the Swiss-born founder of analytical psychology Carl Gustav Jung's work is immaterial in focus.

The Scottish anthropologist Frazer's seminal text on myth *The Golden Bough* focuses mainly on the practices and mythological beliefs shared consistently from primitive religions to modern religions. According to Frazer the death rebirth myth is present in almost in all cultural mythologies and this myth is associated with the growing seasons and vegetation. Frazer cites the death rebirth of the Greek mythology Persephone. According to Greek mythology Persephone once was taken to the Underworld by Hades. Her mother, Demeter was the goddess of the harvest. Being sad Demeter struck the world with fall and winter. In the underworld Persephone ate six of the twelve pomegranate seeds which were given to her by Hades and in consequence of it she was forced to spend half the year in the underworld rest of the year Persephone was allowed to be with Demeter and enjoyed the spring and summer or the rebirth in the death-rebirth myth.

For Northrop Frye, in the death-rebirth myth is not ritualistic as Frazer sees in agriculture and harvest, rather this myth is involuntary and therefore it must be done. In this archetypal schema Frye uses the seasons aligned with a literary genre such as comedy with spring, romance with summer, tragedy with autumn and satire with winter. Summer season in the seasonal calendar is the culmination of life and the romance genre culminates with some



sort of triumph, usually a marriage. Therefore summer or romance indicates the fall or demise of the protagonist. Hence, autumn or tragedy shows the movement towards the defeat of the hero. Winter is bitter and dark and it is known for its darkness, dissolution, the return of chaos and the defeat of the heroic figure. The hero remains absent in this stage. Spring season or comedy is characterized by the birth of the hero, his revival and his resurrection.

An archetypal hero possesses some special traits or characteristics such as (a) the hero leaves family and lives with others (b) hero's traumatic event leads to his quest and the hero's life is changed, (c) the hero has a special weapon, (d) the hero proves himself on his quest, (e) the hero takes a journey and unhealed wound, and finally (f) the hero is rewarded spirituality at the end of his life. According to Joseph Campbell the heroic journey follows ten steps such as - the call, allies, the preparation, guardian of the threshold, crossing the threshold, road of trials, the saving experience, the transformation, the return, sharing the gift. Let Raju guide, the hero of the novel *The Guide* be studied in terms of these characteristics. The hero's quest is known as the call and this call may be a deliberate decision or the hero may have no choice for this call. In the novel *The Guide* Raju sets in a journey with Rosie willingly. Allies are no other than the individuals who assist the hero during his journey. Here Rosie accompanies Raju. Preparation refers to the mental preparation before launching the journey. Raju also becomes psychologically disturbed before initiating his journey as he has to leave his mother. Guardian(s) of the threshold is the obstacle that prevents the hero's journey at the very beginning. These obstacles may be physical barrier or psychological such as fears and doubts. Crossing the threshold refers to the hero's winning over the obstacles. Raju here ultimately overcomes the obstacles and finds a new and unfamiliar world. Road of trials indicates the series of difficult experiences and the hero encounters them with intelligence and determination. Raju here faces bitter experiences and suffers much. The saving experience refers to the special person with whom the hero meets and his life turns. In the novel that very person is Velan. The transformation of the hero may be physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Here transformation is the major theme. The return refers to the rebirth of the hero. Raju comes back and sees the life differently. Finally, sharing the gift is

the gift of experience, knowledge and wisdom that are shared by the hero with the broader community. In *The Guide* Raju sacrifices himself for the sake of the broader community.

In the novel *The Guide* Raju can be studied from an archetypal perspectives following certain characteristics such as quest, initiation and sacrifice.

Quest

... The quest was for new society but later on, it became a Quest for a new life in the full form to a journey from the Aesthetic, through the ethical, to the religious state. Since The quest motif is well established in literature, its operation Has a well recognised modality. The usual pattern is that The quest begins with a departure from the ordinary, The common and the accepted order. What follows next is a Long and deep retreat inwards, deep into the psyche leading To a chaotic series of encounters. These encounters may be Terrifying to begin with, but lead to a new harmonizing Personality with new courage. In a nutshell, the three fold Myth pattern is separation, initiation and then return. (Bhatia 121)

Quest is simply a journey or an effort in pursuit of a mission. The journey may be physical or psychological. Quest like heroic character is present in the character of Raju, the center character of the novel, *The Guide*. Now, what kind of quest is it? Is it a physical journey or mental journey? What kind of special weapon does he possess during his quest?

In the novel, *The Guide*, the quest motif is studied And interpreted through Raju, who is a central Character. The novel begins and ends with him and the Entire story is mostly a playback of Raju's past life, Raju does not seem to have any specific quest till he is Forced to fast for twelve days, when he comes to realize That his fasting is enormously important to thousands of



Drought-stricken villagers, he resolves to fast in earnest.

It is for the first time in his life that he transcends his

Petty self and begins to think about the lives of others. (Bhatia 121)

The weapon that he possesses during his quest is not a material one rather his gift of gab by dint of which he wins over the obstacles. Another perilous journey and the preliminary adventures can be found in Raju's life:

Raju- Rosie relationship also highlights realization of Raju's quest. It is a stage of "perilous journey" and "the Preliminary adventures". Narayan has used flashback Technique in this novel to highlight Raju-Rosie relationship In different phases. His meeting with Rosie, the artistically Inclined wife of Macro, gives a new turn to his life. Raju Finds in Rosie "a potential bride". From here a sea change Takes place in his life, and we hardly find a connection Between his previous life and life here onwards."(122)

Initiation

The three fold myth pattern is separation, transformation and return. Separation is very important for a hero's quest or journey. In the novel Raju guide becomes separated from his near and dear ones for several times; each and every separation molds his character.

Separation

These three fold myth pattern correlates each other. Separation causes transformation and return is the consequence of transformation. Raju leaves his mother and lives with his beloved Rosie, a married woman. And thus separation leads him to face a perilous journey and the preliminary adventures. He becomes separated from Rosie and this alienation leads him to imprisonment. Being physically and specially emotionally detached from Rosie, Raju feels insecure and commits a serious blunder that results his punishment. And finally he separates from all his near and dear ones during his prison- life.



Transformation

Transformation is the major theme in the novel, *The Guide*. Raju guide is a dynamic character. Raju starts his journey of life as a shopkeeper. Then he becomes Railway Raju. By dint of his efficiency in speech he acts as Raju guide for the travelers. At the arrival of Rosie the heroine of the novel Raju acts as guide particularly for this couple Rosie and her husband. As time passes Rosie gets separated from her husband and Raju and Rosie live together. Then Raju becomes the guide of Rosie's dancing. As a tour guide and lover, Raju is quite impulsive, unprincipled. When Raju commits forgery he becomes imprisoned. After getting released from imprisonment Raju lives in a village named Mangal. There as a holy man, Raju is careful, thoughtful, and self-disciplined. Raju fails to avoid the unshakeable faith of the villagers and he realizes:

He felt that he had worked himself into a
Position from which he could not get out.
He could not betray his surprise. He felt
That after all the time had come for him
To be serious - to attach value to his own words. (Narayan 109)

Naturally he feels inclined to fast for their survival. Finally he sacrifices his life for the sake of the villages.

At the very end of the novel Raju utters these words,
"Velan, it's raining in the hills." This utterance can be
Interpreted in two ways: it may be the obsession of a
Half conscious mind, or it may suggest some sort of
Clairvoyance. It is clear that Raju towards the end
Of the novel is a transformed person, although the
Nature of this transformation is not very clear". (Bhatia 121)

Return

In the archetypal three fold pattern return simply doesn't mean come back, rather it has a connotations of resurrection or rebirth. Like an archetypal hero Raju reappears with a



new identity. Traditionally it is taken for granted that the country people suffer for the sake of the King's blunder. Here the same thing happens with a different manner. Raju commits a blunder and the people of the village suffer but the difference lies in the correlation between Raju and the village. Raju is not the king of the village or native of the village, but unknowingly Raju takes shelter in the village. The archetypal myth occurs when Raju sacrifices himself like the traditional hero in order to save the people. Raju's new life and new identity is no doubt a rebirth or resurrection. Raju is no more a rogue; rather he is a saint.

This resolution gave him a peculiar strength. He
Developed on those lines: 'If by avoiding food I
Should help the trees bloom, and the grass grow,
Why not do it thoroughly? For the first time in his
Life he was making an earnest effort; for the first time
He was learning the thrill of full application, outside
Money and love; for the first time he was doing a thing
In which he was not personally interested. He felt
Suddenly so enthusiastic that it gave him a new
Strength to go through with the ordeal. (Narayan 237)

Sacrifice

The word sacrifice is a loaded word. Even during the fasting Raju is not ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of the people. He tries his best to escape but he fails to do so. As it is found:

Each role is assumed as a direct result of Raju's
Inability to disappoint other people's expectations.
For example, he becomes a tourist guide as a result
Of people's constantly asking him for direction; he
Becomes Rosie's lover almost because of her husband's
Neglect, and then her business agent when he realizes
The seriousness of her ambitions ... Velan expects



Guidance of the "holy man" he meets near the
Shrine and Raju cannot disappoint him. "(Driesen 167)

However, finally he accepts the fact as he confesses "I am only doing what I have to do; that is all. My likes and dislikes do not count". (Narayan, 243). He earnestly tries to save the villagers. Like a saint he is even ready to die. As a "Saviour" he is expected

...to stand in knee deep water to look the
Skies, and utter the prayer lines for two weeks,
Completely fasting during the period - and lo
The rains would come down, provided the man
Who performed it was a pure soul, was a great soul. (Narayan 109)

Let Raju's archetypal hero like character be studied in terms of Northrop Frye's archetypal schema on season - summer, autumn, winter and spring. Raju's early life is full of summer and romance. Raju is the center of attractions for his parents, friends, travellers and specially for his beloved Rosie. Autumn or the season of fall happens in Raju's life when Raju commits blunder and becomes prisoner. This part in Raju's life is called tragedy. After that winter comes and traditionally in archetypal pattern during this period the hero remains absence. During his imprisonment the hero Raju is not present in the locality. Finally spring comes and Raju returns with new identity. It is Raju's new birth or rebirth. Raju the hero again becomes the center of attractions

King Oedipus, the king of Thebe, possesses the characteristics of the archetypal hero and he can be considered as an archetypal hero. As it is found: "Oedipus ... is a hero who starts his quest, goes through initiation to gain knowledge and at last sacrifices himself to save his land and people from plague and famine" (Anbaran 7). Being a king he can deny punishment, blinding and banishing himself; again he can hold his dynasty but for him his people and fertility of land are much more important than any other thing. In the novel Raju also sacrifices himself for the sake of the villagers as it is said: "... For the first time he was doing a thing in which he was not personally interested" (Narayan 238).



Therefore, Raju, the ideal masculine type and the hero of the novel can be considered as an archetypal hero with special reference to the death rebirth myth of the three fold pattern archetype, Joseph Campbell's heroic journey and Northrop Frye's archetypal schema of the seasons aligned with a literary genre such as summer, autumn, winter and spring. Raju's resurrection and spiritual gain is highly archetypal. Though the villagers do not suffer for the sake of Raju's blunder, Raju earnestly tries to save the people. Thus, Raju proves himself to be an archetypal hero with his heroic sacrifice.

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Is Fiction a Fact or Fact a Fiction?

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Abstract: The study draws an analogy between certain gender specific problems which are perceived by a writer many decades ago through her skillful narration and a research paper that practically confirmed the same issues related to the health of rural women of Rajasthan. It presents how women's suffering is attributed not only to the geographical and economic conditions they are living in, but also to the traditional roles and the social stigma attached to them. It states that gender perspective can no longer be ignored and measures must be taken from female point of view since health issues crippled the girls and women more than men. The study affirms that literature is nothing but reflection of life by comparing fact and fiction.

Key words: fiction, reality, health issues, gender perspective.

Introduction: The study attempts to demonstrate women's suffering and their health problems in a particular geographical condition that have been described in fiction which are recently realized by governments and social workers in India. The paper draws an analogy between certain gender specific problems which are perceived by a writer many decades ago through her skillful narration and a research paper that practically studied the same issues related to the health of rural women of Rajasthan. Here, the 'fiction' is illustrated with reference to an Asomiya short story *Desert Nymph*, translated into English in 1999 and the 'fact' is a research study entitled "Water and Sanitation- A Gender Perspective" by the scholars of Amity University which was published in the International Journal of Innovative Research and Development (IJIRD) in July 2015. Interestingly, the translated story *Desert Nymph* is originally published in Asomiya as "Morubhumit Menaka" almost two decades



ago. Though its year of publication is not found, it must have been published before 1999, its year of translation.

The writers were frequently criticized for lies, false and ‘cooked up’ imaginative stories. Apparently, the word ‘fiction’ means literature in the form of prose, novels and stories that describes imaginary events and people, and is synonymous with words like fabrication, lies, fibs, concoction, untruth, falsehood etc. Whether the stories and the novels are accurate or false is a constant topic of argument for certain people and these disputes often influence the readers consciously or unconsciously. Some readers claim that several writings are nonsensical, absurd and untruthful and can be harmful and that is how some writings are getting banned. However, this study does not have any relevance for such discussion, but it only points out a unique resemblance between a story and reality. Despite the criticism, most of the writers prove that literature is reflection of life. In fact, real life is more complex than fiction.

In this context, Mark Twain’s saying “Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't” (*Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World-1897*) is worth mentioning. Considering the possibilities, fiction writers do lie, since they have to present the crude reality in a most sophisticated form as a part of their presentation. Though imaginative, they convey a curious truth, which can only be expressed in a veiled and concealed manner. Thus, it is sometimes charged that fiction is nothing but a juggling of words, a gibberish fantasy and a gratuitous fabrication. On the contrary, this study asserts that the life’s fiction is emanated from reality. And, it refers to a certain real, social, geographical and economic problem by juxtaposing fact and fiction. The short story analyzed here, is not only a reflection of the society but also serves as a corrective mirror where people can look at themselves and find the need for positive change. Often, it is important to take a close look at some works of literature, in order to understand how literature actually reflects the society. Moreover, the short stories are often considered as time-pass fiction, bed time stories and grandma tales. To be blunt, the story “Desert Nymph” referred to here is neither a



dessert to pass on sweet time nor a Nymph (beautiful maiden) to sing lullabies to make readers fall asleep. In fact, it is a bitter pill to swallow and certainly readers find themselves in shock and awake for some time. And, no grandma can imagine this kind of a story even in her wildest fantasy. Before getting into the fiction, the fact is presented first.

The Fact: In July 2015, a research study entitled “Water and Sanitation- A Gender Perspective” is published in the International Journal of Innovative Research and Development (IJIRD) by Dr. Sangeeta Poswal and Thushara Roy of Amity University of Rajasthan, Rajasthan, India. Their study throws light on sanitation crisis in Thar Desert of Rajasthan. It states that the absence of proper hygiene and sanitation is the chief cause of reproductive tract infections (RTI) in females where the former is primarily associated with the unavailability of water. Their study showcases the gravity of the situation by examining the functionality of various government programs in Rajasthan related to water availability and sanitation and considers a few case studies by interviewing people in a village called Lakshmangarh, in Sikar district of Rajasthan.

The paper asserts, “In every household, the women shoulder the responsibility of maintaining the hygiene, sanitation and fetching water for the family. Many of the rural households lack proper awareness on adequate sanitation. Moreover, culture and beliefs, along with female illiteracy, make them unaware of the health hazards that they have to deal with on a daily basis. Women suffer from inflammation, itching, soreness and odorous discharge. Lack of hygiene plays a big part in transmission-sharing bathrooms or toilets of poor hygienic condition. A case study on Dausa district of Rajasthan (2012) supports this as it was found out that around 70-80 percent of rural females suffer from the above illnesses. An interview with health service providers and other health agencies threw light on the serious sanitation issues that has crippled the female health. Rural girls suffer from poor menstrual hygiene.”

Their study also suggests all public and private institutions along with people work jointly to mitigate the problem on development goals like water and sanitation and



recommends focusing on the close link between water management, sanitation systems, waste management and health education. It quotes Craig Mokhiber (Chief of the Human Rights Office Development and Economic and Social Issues Branch) who says that the stigma around menstrual hygiene is the violation of human rights and it demands attention, not just of the human rights community, but of health professionals, governments, activists, economists and broader society at large. Finally, the study concludes hoping for a better quality of life for human sustenance.

The Fiction: Arupa Patangia Kalita's short story, *Desert Nymph* primarily depicts the suffering of women having different life styles i.e. urban rich, middle class and poor desert women. Dr.Emily, from an aristocratic family, gets a shock of her life at the sight of the extreme living conditions of the desert women in Rajasthan.

The protagonist, Emily, is very sensitive, tender hearted and committed gynecologist. As a part of her duty, Emily has to attend a medical relief camp along with her chief Dr. Kapoor and a medical group for fifteen days at Kishangarh village in the desert of Rajasthan. She realizes the value of water and tries to cope with the situation by not taking bath. For the first time in her life she experiences the scarcity of water in the desert. During the day, there is no single woman who comes to their medical camp. Later, the doctors are told by the village headman that the womenfolk will not be coming for check up. Though, the doctors argue at their best to convince the village headman there is no use. Therefore, Emily and her chief decide to go to see the women in villages. This narration reminds readers of the fact in Craig Mokhiber words: "stigma around menstrual hygiene is the violation of human rights and it demands attention ...".

Emily is dumbstruck with terror when she sees the desert women who are like a heap of dirty rags. They are like bedraggled ghost-like creatures. As Emily starts medical checkups, she is stupefied to see cuts and bruises on their hands and feet and their skin, shriveled up like burnt potato jackets and their teeth as black as any animal and hair never

touched by water or oil. A horrible foul smell emanates from the women's bodies. Emily is awestruck at the pitiable and miserable conditions of those desert women.

Despite the doctors' gentle treatment and efforts, the desert women are very uncooperative for gynecological examinations. When the doctors beginning to enquire about their gynecological issues, some women remain mute and some run away. The women's genitals are infested with blood, puss filled boils and wounds. The women's private parts are rotten with infections. Emily's heart breaks when she comes to know that these women are aged between twenty four and thirty. Most of them are terribly anemic and have miscarriages. Emily is aghast to see the women walk five to fifteen miles every day with their boiled, infested bodies in search of water. She learns that the women's wounds are caused by unhygienic conditions which are aggravated by water scarcity.

Emily examines a thirteen year old girl, who suffers from night blindness due to vitamin deficiency which is further aggravated by prolonged hours of stitching. The girl objects to having her genitals tested, but emulating her chief, Emily calms her down and finds the skin of her vagina peeled off. She finds something stuck there. She took it out with a pair of forceps; it was a blood-soaked piece of earth! (Kalita 30).

She cannot digest the fact that poverty and water scarcity can force women to use pieces of earth as sanitary napkins. She is unable to believe that sanitary napkins are an unimaginable luxury for them. The next day, Emily cuts all her cotton dresses to give to the women so that they can use them as sanitary napkins. But she is reminded by her chief: When people don't have water to drink, washing clothes is out of the question. When they don't have clothes to wear, they can't throw them away (31).

Later in the evening, Emily is surprised to see all these women singing and dancing. Finding Emily speechless, Dr. Kapoor exclaims of course, they are alive, and they are living! (31). Emily finds that the cotton rags she has given them are transformed into new beautifully designed dresses.



However, Emily's earlier perception of 'vision of the desert' like desert belle, beautiful embroidered Banjaran dresses etc. is crushed and shattered into pieces with the harsh experiences of reality. Her ophthalmologist boy friend, who is also in the medical camp, buys a dress for her from a famous shop, where foreign tourists and fashion houses buy the richly embroidered dresses made by the desert women. She is unable to wear them as she is stirred badly by the terrible conditions of the women who are behind those beautiful designs. During the end of their camp, Emily is presented ornately embroidered dresses made by the desert women. She is still unable to admire the beautiful work as she sees blood and pus in every thread of the dress. She is haunted by the thoughts of that ghost like creatures with severe gynecological problems and lack of basic needs. She is troubled with sleeplessness and nightmares with many unanswerable questions like, "for how many years have these women been living like this and how long would it take for desert women to start "living?"

Thus, the desert women's suffering is described elaborately by the writer Arupa Patangia Kalita. She depicts their lives amidst the extreme hostile circumstances, hardships and the most unhygienic conditions, which are confirmed by the research. All the points established in the research found a faithful representation in the story much earlier. It is also significant that though the drought condition is very common in the desert, but its effects are more in women than men.

The village Lakshmangarh in the fact has become Kishangarh in the fiction of the same state. May be it is a sweet lie that the story describes that some women are blissfully unaware of the fact that they are enduring such a miserable existence. It is hard to digest the fact that poverty and water scarcity can force women to use pieces of earth as sanitary napkins; it is hard to digest the fact that sanitary napkins are an unimaginable luxury for those desert women. Though Emily gives all her cotton dresses to use them as sanitary napkins, the desert women transform them into some new dresses, but not as the sanitary napkins. The

story ends with a note that like Cacti, they possess the inner strength to face hardships, and to live their life as it comes despite their miseries.

Another character in the story *Desert Nymph* is Shobha, who is a classic case of many show-biz models who suffer from 'Bulimia nervosa' in real life. Shobha, a close friend of Dr. Emily, chooses to follow risky methods to maintain her desired measurements by keeping her health at stake. In order to be a super model and rich, she tortures her body to maintain 36-24-36 measurements. With a view to enhance her physical beauty by augmenting her breasts she injects hormones though she is aware of the side effects- sores on the face, messed up periods and breast cancer. She believes that her vital statistics are more important than her blood pressure levels and hemoglobin counts. She chooses the deadliest method to keep slim - gorging of food and throwing it up, just to maintain a voluptuous body. Her character and life represents another bitter truth, which is real and most common in today's world of glamour.

Conclusion: The desert women's suffering seems to spring from the fact that they are women. The story examined here bears testimony to this fact. The desert women suffer primarily by virtue of being women. The extent of suffering in women is such that 'woman' has become synonymous with suffering. For women, the main causes of suffering may be attributed not only to the geographical and economic conditions they are living in, but also to the traditional views and the social stigma attached to them. Even the researchers prove that the health issues crippled the females more than men and many rural girls and women suffer from poor menstrual hygiene and Reproductive Tract Infections. It is also confirmed that the gender perspective can no longer be ignored and measures must be taken from the female point of view. It may be argued that the geographical conditions and drought do not have any discrimination between men and women, but its effects are doubled and intensified in the case of women. However, the situation persists not only in India, as many nations also suffer from the issues related to the lack of water and poor sanitization. A society cannot claim a civilized society unless it considers health and hygiene as a primary right for all its members.



Therefore, the juxtaposition of Fact and Fiction (literature) confirms that “literature is a mirror of life”. Literature indeed reflects the society, its good values and its ills. Literature faithfully mirrors the evils of the society with a view to making the society realize its mistakes and make amends. None can deny its constructive role as it projects the virtues or good values in the society for people to emulate. It is apt to quote the famous Chinese writer Gao Xingjian’s words spoken while delivering his Nobel Lecture in the year 2000. He says, “To subvert is not the aim of literature, its value lies in discovering and revealing what is rarely known, little known, thought to be known but in fact not very well known of the truth of the human world. It would seem that truth is the unassailable and most basic quality of literature”. Thus, literature is not only a reflection of the society but also that which serves as an imitation of human action, and often presents a picture of what people think, say and do in the society. It functions as a corrective mirror where individuals can look at themselves and make amendments for a healthy and civilized society.

- Notes on the writer and the translator:

Arupa Patangia Kalita writes short stories, Novellas and novels for adults as well as for children. She has won a number of awards including the Katha Award for Creative Fiction, the Sarlesh Chandra Das Gupta Sahitya Setu Award and the Baratiya Bhasha Parishad Award. Besides writing features for Asomiya Journals, she also edits a little magazine called Damol. She teaches English Literature at Tangla College, Darrang, Assam.

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Objects of Enchantment: Mind and Matter Correlation in the Fictional Writings of Ben Okri and Salman Rushdie

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Abstract Among the prominent literary voices in the postcolonial arena, Ben Okri and Salman Rushdie have carved a niche for themselves in terms of a search for anti-colonial sentiment. The language of the two writers is bestowed with a range of significations that exalt the common everyday objects to a higher level of sublime enchantment. The magical prose and delusionary writings of the two writers describe objects not merely as mundane items, but as constituents of a material realm, which is surreal, sublime, and bewildering at once. The paper seeks to understand the significance of object-metaphors in the fictions of the two writers. The material worlds described by these writers exert a delusionary influence on their protagonists. Thus, one could ascertain a curious mind-matter correlation, in that; minds get affected almost in an insane and surrealist manner by the objects surrounding them. The questions the paper seeks to ask are – how do objects determine sanity in the postcolonial space? Is it possible to distinguish the everyday objects from the exalted materiality in the postcolonial world? More importantly, how do the two writers bring about a subversion of the mind/matter dichotomy by populating their writings with material objects?

Keywords: Thing theory, postcolonial studies, mind/matter dichotomy, magic-realism, objects of enchantment.

In Asian and European antiquity [...] man did, like the African, exist within a cosmic totality, did possess a consciousness in which his own earth being, his gravity-bound apprehension of self, was inseparable from the entire cosmic phenomenon. (Soyinka 1976)



1. **Thing Theory: How objects constitute the human subject**

One of the significant critical formulations that have occurred in the contemporary times is the “thing theory”. Historically, one could observe the manner in which ‘things’ have been relegated to the backdrop in an attempt to foreground the human. The human mind, language and culture have received a higher degree of prominence in the critical literatures that have emerged since the enlightenment. There has been a constant obsession with ‘human-being’ as the subject of discursive analysis; so much so that, even the other of the human is always another human from a different race, class, gender or ethnic identity. The human interaction with the object, the mind and matter correlation, and the beingness of the objects, have not been considered as significant ideations for theoretical deliberations. Bill Brown in his article on “Thing Theory” questions this lack of insightful understanding of objects and draws our attention towards conceptualizing the thingness of objects. As he writes, “If thing theory sounds like an oxymoron, then, it may not be because things reside in some balmy elsewhere beyond theory but because they lie both at hand and somewhere outside the theoretical field” (Brown 2001: 5).

Things are considered as entities located “somewhere outside the theoretical field”, and therefore, cannot form a part of critical understanding that concerns itself with issues such as human rationality, progress, and history. Objects/things are merely mentioned in philosophical deliberations, but they are not recognized as epistemological devices that have contributed towards knowledge construction and rationalistic accomplishments. Thing theory ushers in a radically new way of comprehending objects by asking certain pertinent questions such as, how do objects constitute the human subject? How does the inanimate attribute an identity to the animate? How do two inanimate objects connect and correlate with each other in an attempt to construct the materiality of the human subject? In its theoretical investigation to answer such questions, the thing theory resorts to Locke’s formulation concerning the human subject as the “thinking thing” (qtd. in Brown 7). Thus, the ontology of things and their material affectations have acquired significance in the formulations of Brown. The grandeur of the human subject is ruptured by ‘thing theory’, which has



concerned itself with the manner and methods of alienation of things. As Brown writes, “Things lie beyond the grid of intelligibility the way mere things lie outside the grid of museal exhibition, outside the order of objects” (Brown 2001: 5).

Following Brown’s formulations in “thing theory” several attempts have been undertaken by critics and researchers to inquire into the ontology of things in literary texts. Brown provides us with the example of A S Byatt’s *The Biographer’s Tale* (2001) where a departure from ‘ideas’ to the ‘things that generate the ideas’ could be observed. In the text, Wolf-Man, a doctoral student, while writing his thesis peeps out of the window. Obviously, strained of the intellectual heaviness from the theories of Lacan and Derrida, Wolf-Man seeks solace in the tangible objects. The abstract abstruseness of ideas appears to negate his very being. He thinks, “I must have *things*” (Byatt 2). For Brown, this act of relinquishing things acquires significance as it exemplifies an inclination towards materiality and tangibility. Encountering the world of objects specifies a metaphoric necessity involving a new understanding of human subject as not constituted solely by the mind, but by objects around her/him. Having demonstrated the postulates of ‘thing theory’ and its relevance to literature, let us now locate the correlation of objects with the human self in the narratives of Salman Rushdie and Ben Okri.

2. **Materiality in the Narratives of Okri and Rushdie:**

Booker Prize winners Ben Okri and Salman Rushdie have carved a niche for themselves, in terms of their search for an anti-colonial sentiment through their fictional writings which depict magic, mystery and mayhem. The notion of ‘unconventional hero’, which is common to both the writers’ work, arises out of a reaction to the colonial experience. The linguistic creativity of these two writers presents us a range of significations that ennoble the common everyday objects to a higher level of sublime conjuration. Ben Okri and Salman Rushdie’s hybridic writing style combines the postcolonial voices, settings and objects with the magical reality that is depicted in their novels.



The 'common' objects and materials that feature in their writings often depict deeper realities of life and society. For example, Okri's novels have a repetition of everyday objects such as candles, moon, pictures/photographs, eggs, masks, feathers- eagle's, chicken's, blue coloured, rainbow, moon etc., which elevate the tone of the novel to a more exalted state. These objects in the novel illustrate the socio-political metamorphosis of Nigeria, the collapse and merger of boundaries between human and super-human space, the cycle of birth-death-rebirth and the dynamics of postcolonial magic realistic elements. Similarly, in the writings of Salman Rushdie, one observes deployment of multiple masked realities, which create a chaotic space in the novel. He utilizes objects such as curtains, rooms, planets, moon, pictures, letters to present variegated issues of identity crisis, violence and trauma, human subjugation, cultural otherness, hyperbolizations and masked realities. The magical prose, the quasi-poetic narration and the delusionary writings of the two writers describe objects not merely as mundane items but as constituents of a material realm which is surreal, sublime and bewildering.

Ben Okri's Novels *The Famished Road* (1991) and *Songs of Enchantments* (1993) present a narrative epistemology, which is constructed by protagonist Azaro's unearthly mysterious consciousness. The rupturing of reality to introduce the supernatural elements and devices (which play an important role in the novels) through the medium of simple everyday objects is presented in a lyrical manner. The various uses and aspects of magic realistic elements/objects, their effectations and affectations place the novels in the arena of postcolonial studies. As Gareth Griffiths observes that Okri's fiction (especially the latter ones) "It rejects the subaltern status of African modes of knowledge and reinstates an African ontology and epistemology in place of the dominant Euro-American frame" (Griffiths 326).

The 'narrative schema' adopted by the writer blurs the boundaries between the living (human) and the spirit (supernatural) world and where, Azaro trespasses to the other world create an illusionary effect throughout the novels. Azaro seems to afloat in a hybridized space where he visualizes both worlds by eluding the cycle of birth-death-rebirth of an abiku (spirit child). These magical and mysterious visions occur through different objects and many a

times create mayhem and destruction around Azaro. This beautiful poetic narrative flows smoothly like a river with occasional disturbances and tremors, which are catapulted by enchanted objects.

Shalimar the Clown (2005) is not just a journey from innocence to betrayal, but also a gradual creation of trust on the resilience and endurance of the human spirit. The narrative is a portrayal of a cyclical life cycle that foregrounds 'death-in-life' and 'life-in-death' - a perpetual cycle of birth, destruction and regeneration. Through this novel, Rushdie presents multiple dimensions of the postcolonial space. Ambivalence of identity in the realm of multiple truths leads to ruptured identities. Stephen Morton argues that,

Shalimar the Clown sees Rushdie attempting to find a literary form appropriate to describe the transnational social and political relations that underpin globalization.

(Morton 131)

The mundane objects and gifts of Ophulus Max for Boonyi create chaos in the paradise of Shalimar (Noman) and Boonyi. The so-called 'exotic things' bring about tumult and wreak havoc in the pristine valley of Kashmir represented by the village Pachigam.

3. Okri's 'Mask': Agent of Revelation and Enchantment

Ben Okri locates Azaro in a liminal zone where Azaro transcends the real and the imaginary, the human world and the underworld of spirits, and vice-versa. An abiku narrator-protagonist is presented as a 'hero' (an unconventional one) who survives the torture directed towards him from his fellow companions from the other (spirit) world. The novel is replete with objects and images, which are magical, spiritual and irreal. One of the most prominent magical objects, which recur in the novel, is "mask". Be it the grotesque figures of the masquerade, which brings chaos and disturbances in the lives of the ghetto people or the enchanted mask, which Azaro chances upon in a mystical forest ground - both of them present to us an alternative reality seen through the medium of masks. As is described in the novel *The Famished Road*,

What had fallen on me? I looked around. Beams of light converged on me. [...] Like a skull sliced in half and blacked with tar, was a mask that looked frightening from the side but which was contorted as an ecstatic laughter at the front. (Okri 2003: 284)

Azaro tries to find parallel between the mask and the 'paradoxical spirits that move amongst men and trees [...]' the enchanted mask creates an illusion/ alternative visualization of the real world when azaro wears it over its face. The mask serves as an agent of transcendence into another world. The bright sunny forest turns into night. As Okri presents,

When I looked out through the mask, I saw a different world. There were beings everywhere in the darkness and beings were each of them a sun. They radiated a brilliant copper illumination. I saw a tiger with silver wings and teeth of a bull. I saw dogs with tails of snake and bronze paws. (285)

A simple object like 'mask' creates a dreamy land of enigma and apparition. The existing grotesque and strangely mysterious visions of Azaro are elevated to more enigmatic visuals through the 'mask'.

Okri frequently describes about the 'bejeweled eyes' of the spirits around Azaro. His frequent reference to various moonstones, precious and semi-precious stones create an aura of magicality and mystery. The references and correlation of human beings to Earthly metals and stones bridges the gap between the living and the non- living entity. The objectification of living entities in the narrative of Okri exhumes the importance of simple objects/things that are described in the novel.

4. **Rushdie's 'Curtain': Frontier between the Earthly and the Metaphysical World**

In *Shalimar, The Clown* (2005) the recurrent image of a curtain distinguishes the existence of two juxtaposed worlds - the innocent and the pristine charm of Kashmir from the violent and terror-stricken land of riots. Shalimar/Noman joins the extremists pretending to believe in their ideologies and cause. But his ultimate goal of his life remains to kill Maximilian Ophuls. His first step towards avenging Boonyi's betrayal is conceived while listening to the Iron Mullah, "By crossing the mountains they had passed through a curtain and stood now on the threshold of the world of truth, which was invisible to most men". [266] The curtain serves as an important object-metaphor, which conceals as well as separates two worlds or cultures. A symbol used as a metaphor for Trans-culturalism, it is a boundary that separates the innocent, magnificently beautiful, multicultural and hybrid world of old Kashmir from the violent, betrayed and divided world of the new terror-stricken Kashmir valley. It divides the actual truth from the illusion of misguided ideology.

The 'curtain' serves as a means of metamorphosis of Boonyi's husband from the innocent, young village artist to a ruthless killing 'apparatus'. The humanly qualities again seem to be objectified through this transformation. By crossing over to the other side, Shalimar takes his first step to avenge the betrayal of his wife. The passage through a curtain brings out a journey from the earthly to the metaphysical. The narrative utilizes such recurrent object-metaphors to create a meditative prose on the state of human existence.

5. **Pictures/photographs: An Alternative Reality**

Pictures/photographs in *The Famished Road* play a pivotal role in introducing and familiarizing Azaro with an alternative reality as viewed through the lens of a camera. The camera and an engagement with what it does, is not merely a reproduction of reality but a chanced glance into the alternate world of realities. Michael Taussig argues that it is the



“scienticity” assumed of the medium (its function primarily to record reality, to be in Okri’s world the “concretizer”) that enables the camera to be easily assimilated and become almost transparent (199). To quote from the novel,

When I looked closer at the pictures we all seemed strange [...] Mum was blurred in both eyes, the children were like squirrels, and I resembled a rabbit. We all looked like celebrating refugees. (Okri 108)

Here, the camera and its product – that is, the photograph convincingly passes into Okri’s syncretic world. The subsequent logic operating in Okri’s fiction and the vacillation between recording and reflection that initiates his child protagonists into action give the camera a privileged status. Azaro is presented with an alternative reality about himself through this medium of ‘camera’. The photographer is, furthermore, in Okri’s words: “representative of the changing consciousness of the people”. Okri, deals with the dichotomy between the two forms of the visual and what they reveal about each other rather than being interested in making commentary on the obsolescence of one, or danger of the other. Thus, he also describes the photographer as the “counterpart to Azaro’s consciousness,” the one who facilitates a “dialogue between technology and tradition”. The photographer is shown as the alter ego of Azaro.

In a similar vein, In *Shalimar, the Clown* the iron mullah Bulbul Fakh denounces and demolishes the picture that an infidel draws in her/his mind. The picture that the extremist and the non-extremists have with them is completely different and thus they reside in two different worlds. The picture distinguishes the two worlds and exemplifies how the picture of the infidel is a complete farce. To quote from the text, “We know that the universe is an illusion and that truth lies beyond the illusion, where the infidel cannot see” (Rushdie 267).

6. Letters: Weapons to Avenge Death

To avenge the death of her mother and father, Kashmira targets Shalimar not with arrows or knives but with her letters that were her “arrows of hate” (374). She slowly kills Shalimar’s ego, which is the real cause of her parents’ death. Yet his hurt ego fails to find satisfaction in their death because his efforts to obliterate their presence are negated by Kashmira, a living reminder of both Boonyi and Max. Her letters transport the characters to the enchanting world of Arabian nights. Letters undertake an attempt to magically transform the self into Scheherezade and Shahryar both of who remind us of endless tales of enchantments.

My letters are curses they will shrivel your soul. [...] My letters are poisoned arrows. [...] I am your black Sheherezade, she wrote. [...] Or I am Prince Shahryr and you are my helpless virgin bride. [...] Every night I tell the story of your death. (Rushdie 374)

Kashmira’s words transport us to an enigmatic and revengeful enchantment where the story of avenging her parents’ death gets interlinked with the events of Prince Shahryr and Sheherzade. Letters serve as objects of enchantments, which eliminate Shalimar’s ego gradually and provide Kashmira with a kind of soulful satisfaction.

7. Conclusion:

Material objects are shown to be means of prosperity on a superficial level. Western objects come with certain alien love which native women cannot but simply appreciate the objects as museum pieces. Ophuls Maximilian’s seduction of Boonyi, and their relationship – during which he pampers her with expensive and exotic gifts before abandoning her – suggests a clear allegory of America’s foreign policy in South Asia. America’s power seduces, its affections imprison, its commodities corrupt, and it abandons once it has achieved its objective. Boonyi, is thus a product of America’s love for the world, and when she speaks, she speaks in the voice of Kashmir. She tells Ophuls:



I am your handiwork made flesh. You took beauty and created hideousness ... Look at me. I am the meaning of your deeds. I am the meaning of your so-called love, your destructive, selfish, wanton love. Look at me. Your love looks just like hatred. ... I was honest and you turned me into your lie. This is not me. This is not I. This is you. (Rushdie 205)

Boonyi is incapable of internalizing these ‘westernized’ objects and utilizing them in her native habitat. Western objects with colonial imprints cannot buy native love nor can they acclimatize to the cultural specificities of the geo-political condition of Kashmir. In an Achebean manner Colonial objects disrupt nativity to create a situation where ‘things fall apart’. The material worlds described by these writers exert a delusionary influence on their protagonists. Thus, one could ascertain a curious mind-matter correlation, in that; minds get affected almost in an insane and surrealist manner by the objects surrounding them.

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High/Low Dichotomy: Comparing the protagonists of *Karukku* and *Mother of 1084*

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Abstract: Sexism and Casteism as tools of oppression have made deep impacts on the lives of women. Stereotypically, women are the focus of oppression, whatever be their social, political and economic situation they are bound to get oppressed. It is further because in our society this has become the norms and hence goes unquestionable and un-interrupted. Women, all over the world, are dominated by the patriarchal system but the intensity worsens when it comes to Third World countries. Furthermore, it becomes inhuman towards the Dalit women in Indian context.

This paper engages in the narratives of oppression of two subaltern figures Sujata from Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084* and the narrator-protagonist of Bama's *Karukku*. Through an in depth analysis of various accounts and situation it shows how, both subaltern, creates a difference by attitude and determination. It questions on the role of cast as the only agent of oppression and focuses on various other agents of oppression.

The two stories set on entirely different backdrop marks the course of two women figures of their trouble, protest and rebellion. It further aims at showing the incapability of the protagonist of *Mother of 1084* to unshackle herself from social agents of oppression which Bama's protagonist was able to do.

Key words: Sexism, casteism, high/low dichotomy, *Karukku*, *Mother of 1084*.

Introduction

Our social structure and hierarchy places women in a position to be eternally suppressed. Indifferent to her class and status she is the victim of oppression everywhere.



However, in Indian context if it a Dalit woman the case worsens as she is oppressed by gender, class and caste. A Dalit woman resembles Alice Walker definition of Afro-American women: “The mule of the World” in her much acclaimed essay *In Search of Our Mother’s Garden*; who is doubly oppressed by the society. She is dominated by hierarchical power as well as gender power. She is exploited by upper caste (men-women) and lower caste i.e. men of her own community.

Oppression can be both forced and willing. Though no one likes getting oppressed yet people are oppressed in the name of caste, creed, sex, nationality, religion etc. as Michael Foucault rightly observes in his *Power/Knowledge* that “Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organisation . . . Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application”(Foucault 98). Every individual in this society tries to exercise control over other beings in spite of his/her own hierarchical status. This explains why and how a Dalit woman is oppressed by even men and women of her own community. Furthermore, women from their childhood are programmed to get oppressed by various forces, from elders, more powerful or influential. The phrase used by Simone de Beauvoir in 1950s ‘one is not born, but rather becomes a woman’ finds utter relevance here. These oppressions of feminine sex are a socially constructed and reinforced idea which has taken the shape of a prevalent norm. As was heard Nietzsche saying ‘God’s second mistake’. The notion of biological superiority endows male with a birth right of dominating the other sexes.

The sense of oppression is implanted in our minds, what in Jungian term is our Collective Unconsciousness hence oppression has been naturalized. Generation wise girl children are taught to be submissive, sacrificing, kind and passive generally by the elder female members. So, it needs a lot of courage, strength and confidence to question the normative order prevalent through ages. As the saying goes ‘He jests at scars who never felt a wound’, women have emerged into the literary sphere to mark their presence in the canvas emphatically voicing the concerns with the plight of women.



Background

In women's psychology the reactions to these oppressions are much more complex and vary greatly depending on person, situation, society and various other factors. In this paper some of those factors will be discussed in detail. Both Bama and Mahasweta Devi are renowned Subaltern writers, who have emphatically voiced their concern for the plight of Dalit women. In this paper the two texts chosen are *Karukku* (1992) by Bama and *Mother of 1084* (1974) by Mahasweta Devi, are written by female authors and are centred on a woman protagonist. However, there is a striking difference between their caste, community, social standard, upbringing etc. where Bama's text entirely deals with Tamil Dalit life, society and protagonist, Mahasweta Devi's does not. *Mother of 1084* deals with an upper class Bengali Brahmin family and its female protagonist Sujata is an educated, working woman. Yet, they both are dominated by the family and society in their turn. The use of these two novels multiplies the dimensions to be discussed in this paper.

Aim

This paper focuses particularly on the struggle of narrator-protagonist of *Karukku* and Sujata throughout their lives and studies the marked contrast in their attitude towards life. Since, subjugation and revolt forms the basis of the respective characters it becomes important to explain them in details. It, at a depth, shows that strong will and desire to move forward can defeat all opposition. Bama's zeal to fight for the cause that birth is not in our hand and inequality in terms of birth is vague, takes her long way. Though hardships embrace her at every turn yet she never gives up and reaches her goals.

Coming out of the grips of Dalit and subaltern this paper with example has shown how individual will play an important role in shaping up one's life. It is Bama's struggle and firmness, her zeal of questioning the standards, defying the unspoken laws. The shift from nothingness to being able is beautifully rendered in *Karukku*.



Dalit Identity And Bama

Bama belongs to the Tamil Catholic Dalit, Paraya community; a community oppressed up to the core. The use of so many adjectives opens arena of discourses as each is somehow responsible for the oppression of her community, which shall be unveiled as the story progresses. She is one of the first Dalit woman writer, her *Karukku* translated into English by Lakshmi Homstrom reflects her perceptual transformations imparting a sense of self-esteem and consciousness among her community members and articulates her experiences. According to her Dalit literature is 'Liberation literature like Black Literature, Feminist literature and Communist-Socialist Literature.'

'The word *Karukku*, in English means palmyra leaves, which look like double edged sword with their jagged edges on either side'(Bama *Karukku* xv) This word *Karukku* is a pertinent pun used by the author as in Tamil it also means freshness, vibrancy. In her foreword, Bama draws attention to the symbol, and refers to the words in Hebrews (New Testament).

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edge sword piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:10)" (Bama *Karukku* xiv).

Being a Dalit writer she narrates her personal experiences of hardship and the consequences of low birth. As Nayar argues to call it a testimonio it describes the Dalit system of Indian Society. Caste, borrowing Padma Velaskar's words, may be described as a '...specific type of feudal organization and castes are economic and political groupings with the distinguishing essence of being status groups founded on distinctions of purity'. Without analysing the role of caste as an agent of oppression it is impossible to comprehend the true character and composition of subalternity in the Indian context. Partha Chatterjee in his thought-provoking article "Caste and Subaltern Consciousness" aptly remarks; "Subaltern Consciousness in the specific cultural context of India cannot but contain caste as a central element in its constitution" (Chatterjee 169).



Chatterjee urges upon the readers to ‘*look at caste... as the level of social reality*’ (Chatterjee 181) supposedly because even affluence and gender equality cannot redeem the marginality that one inherits by the ill-luck of being born in a so called ‘lower’ caste.

Dalit women in South Asia are the worst victims of the system not only because they are poor and women but also because they are Dalits. The words of Paatti, in *Sangati* which throw ample light on the precarious *Dalit* state are worth quoting here; “Women should never come on their own to these parts. If upper-caste fellows clap eyes on you, you’re finished. They’ll drag you off and rape you, that’s for sure...” (Bama *Sangati* 1994).

It is autobiographical in nature, depicting the hardships she went through, the discrimination she faced, the cruel social odds prevailing within our society. It shows how caste and sex becomes obstruction in the progression of an individual being. From the beginning of the story readers can see how her community has been rejected by the upper caste. At one place she claims her community people as nothing more than human labour. As except the strength of their body all other human instincts are denied to them, treating them as mere crawling insects. Furthermore, on progressing with the story incidents of oppression of the women by the Paraya community males unfold. The men-women issues are more dealt in more details in her next novel *Sangati* (1994). Where *Karruku* describes the obstacles faced by her because of her being a Dalit, *Sangati* throws light on the hurdles crossed because of being woman.

In the process of this auto biographical novel the protagonist cum narrator unfolds the tale of her journey from innocence to wisdom. In the beginning at a point her elder brother advises her to get educated as education is the only source of freedom from this life of humiliation

Because we are born into the Paraya jati, we are never given any honour or dignity or respect. We are stripped of all that. But if we study and make progress we can throw away these indignities. Sp study with care, learn all you can. If you are always ahead in your lessons, people will come to you of their own accord and attach themselves to you. Work hard and learn. (Bama *Karukku* 17)



She continued with this faith that education will erase inequality. The continuous opposition on her Patti (grandmother) she continued her studies to finally join a nunnery, completing her graduation. To her surprise there also she faced utter discrimination owing to her caste and community 'Most of the nuns there were Telegu people. They didn't care for Dalits like us.' (Bama, *Karukku* 23). From such a crude repelling environment, the author- protagonist, Bama steps into a self dependent life. The journey wasn't smooth at any point neither it was after she secured a job and a livelihood because in this society it is difficult for a girl to be free and it becomes even more difficult if she is a Dalit. This is also echoed by the narrator-author 'Being a Dalit creates a problem. On top of that, being a Dalit woman makes it more difficult'. (Bama *Sangati* 120)

One thing that is undeniable is her insurmountable mental strength and will to defeat her low birth and rise above it. From their very birth in the Paraya community they are reduced to a mere thing, an object of use by the upper class and men of their own class. They are denied any voice. Another important aspect that Bama and her narrator-protagonist articulate is the fact that the people of Paraya community are converted Christians and not Hindus. This denied them the benefits of reservation and excluded them from the government upliftment initiatives of any kind. While describing *Karukku* Bama says:

The story told in *Karukku* was not my story alone. It was the depiction of a collective trauma – of my community – whose length cannot be measured in time. I just tried to freeze it forever in one book so that there will be something physical to remind people of the atrocities committed on a section of the society for ages.

Devi's Cornered Sujata

On the contrary the other novel under consideration *Mother of 1084*, an English translation of Mahasweta Devi's novella *Hazaar Chaurashir Maa*, translated by Samik



Bandyopadhyay(1997) and inspired by Maxim Gorky's famous novel *Mother* (1907), is set in an entirely different background. The novel documents the Nazalite Movement of 70s' West Bengal. Sujata, the protagonist belongs to an upper middle class Bengali family. She is the wife of Dibyanath Chatterjee, though she is self dependent, works in the bank, she is unable to create an identity of her own. She is always constrained by the roles she is playing of mother, wife, Daughter-in-law, mother-in-law etc. quite interestingly at this point the Socialist Feminist view is laid bare as money here is unable to bring freedom. She is still chained by the social norms and family relations. Again quite interestingly as Bell Hooks has said in the Preface to First Edition of her *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984) 'To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body'. In right temperament of this argument Sujata though being a part of the family, is an outsider. She can never take the role of her mother-in-law or daughters who are more adjusted in the family.

The novel has a political backdrop of the infamous Naxalite movement of 70s Calcutta. A period when the whole generations aged between 15 years to 30 years were wiped out. They just vaporised echoing the fate of rebels in Orwell's *1984*- a Utopian novel where anyone who goes against the regime of State ceased to exist. The movement has its roots in the peasant revolution of Naxalbari. From there it attracted the young university minds of Bengal who were losing hope on the social system and were fascinated by the theories of Marx. The growing inequality between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat further instigated the movement. Sujata's family is the microcosm of the whole movement where the hypocrite indifferent upper class is symbolized by Dibyanath, Neepa, Tuli etc, Sujata describes the naive common mass who have simple living and mostly unaware about the realities outside. While Brati Chatterjee, Sujata's youngest son, is the rebel, the staunch critic of upper class morality and an extremist who has no place in this world of lie and duplicity and hence, perishes.



The Social Environment

Sujata is not the centre of her family even, she has been marginalised there, initially by her mother-in-law and then by her daughter Tuli. Hence, she belongs to the periphery of the system, where her voice is eternally subdued. She paternally belonged to a affluent house hold, had higher education than was the custom of that age and society, and never faced caste discrimination. However, with all these she could earn was a job and nothing else. So the character of Sujata raises a question on the limits of subaltern discourse. A character like Devi's Sujata, educated-high born but marginalised, both is and is not subaltern. She is not Dalit being born in a Brahmin family. Again going by the meaning of the term she is not even subaltern- she is a bank employ. So her just being a woman is enough reason for her oppressed state.

On contrasting with the author-protagonist Bama, Sujata's life was smooth with adequacy of all sorts of comfort. Where Bama strived for the bare minimum Sujata had everything in plenty. This is in turn realised by Sujata when she visits Somu's (Brati's comrade) house. The class distinction is vividly portrayed here by the author. Sujata by her family, their class consciousness, social image has been taken far away from normal human expressions. She has become indifferent to oppression as even in her young age she could not rebel against the standard norms.

Hegemony plays a great role is this oppression as the oppressed also plays an active role in oppression. For Bama it's a continuous fight to rise above, in spite of oppression of her community in the name of caste, and they have started believing it that being of lower caste they are bound to be treated like animals. But the other female members consider it to be the rule and their fate to be dominated by the males. Sujata also falls on the same category who considers it to be the rule to be within the family boundaries suppressed by husband, mother-in-law and others. Her education could not elevate her state.



Birth, Status And Power

In the beginning, Bama at certain points exclaims her helplessness and growing frustration at being a Dalit. When innocent she is repeatedly accused by various authorities at various times just in the name of her low birth; “You have shown your true nature as Paraya, he said. ‘You climbed the coconut tree yesterday after everybody else had gone home, and you stole a coconut’...‘After all, you are from the Cheri. You might have done it. You must have done it” (*Karukku* 19).

In school for coconut, in high school for food, in bus for seat, in nunnery for receiving order i.e., in every plane it was a fierce battle of existence as a proper and equal human being. However, all these incidents instead of weakening her, seemed to have strengthened her spirit opening her eyes towards the prevailing odds and inequalities of the society. On the contrary, Sujata never had such experiences of inequality nor was she ever dominated by the outer society as she belonged to Brahmin house hold both before and after her marriage. Her understanding of society came only after losing her beloved youngest son Brati, when on his 22nd birth and 2nd death anniversary she met Somu’s mother, again and learns various truths. Though being educated she was confined within her family and class and could not penetrate into the surrounding. This very fact took her away from Brati while he was living, because Brati could come out of his class consciousness and be one with that society which consists of proletariats. Even Nandini could reach to this truth but Sujata remained naive about it. The way her indifference and silence made her insignificant in her family, with her husband and children going away from her; her ignorance and naivety also took her permanently away from Brati. Had Sujata, had been vocal she might have stopped this catastrophe from occurring; she could have saved and retained Brati. Devi’s at this point also adds how state machineries discriminate between rich and poor. As a matter of fact Brati’s name was never published because of his family reputation, and his body was only referred as number 1084 whereas Somu and other names were published. Even Somu’s Sister will never get a job just for being his sister. ‘Didi, my daughter tells me she’ll never get a job because she’s Somu’s

sister. Can it be true?’ (Devi 59), says Somu’s mother to Sujata whereas Sujata’s i.e., Brati’s family members are all well settled. Similarly, in Bama in an episode describes how the Chaaliyar community invites the police, feeds them and use them against the Parayas . Paatti asks: ‘here we are, struggling just for this watery gruel. So how will the police or the government be on our side?’ (Bama *Karukku* 31). The law is also discriminatory.

Interestingly, where Bama’s attitude towards her low birth changes from that of embarrassment to pride; “And on that day I wasn’t embarrassed to singled out as Harijan child who has gained the best marks. I was even pleased” (21). Sujata could not achieve any such realisation regarding her existence. What she acquires is a keen knowledge of the surrounding, knowledge about Brati and his comrades’ visions, the pitiable conditions of Partha’s mother, the poverty of Samiran’s family, the helplessness of Somu’s family, the truth of the society where Somu’s sister is still taunted by the murderers of Somu, Brati and others

They tell my daughter, Hey, why didn’t you have last rites for your brother? It would have been a great feast for us. They’re fiends, Didi....

It had never struck her that they (Brati’s killers) could move about freely, could taunt Somu’s sister so mercilessly. (Devi 63)

Sujata, in a vain attempt, goes to Somu’s mother because she knows that Somu’s mother is capable of human emotions which Sujata’s clan is incapable of. Somu death is a loss to his family but Brati’s is a shame on Sujata’s family. However, she because of social and economic class barrier is unable to feel at a par with Somu’s mother. The difference exists on her mind- the class difference.

Sujata learns how close Brati has been to Somu’s mother and Nandani while living and discovers her utter failure. Sujata has been a prey of patriarchal hegemony that is educated and groomed to serve the patriarches, and she could defy it unlike Bama. Sujata’s limits of ‘permissibility’ are drawn by a social censorship. A voice that can subvert the very



foundations of this fraudulent traditional social order has to be curtailed. This curtailment is done as a part of institutionalization and disciplined of female agencies, in the paternalistic society. As a result it can be seen Sujata could never win over her mother –in- law and husband; yielding up to their wishes. Sujata has been made invisible by the hierarchical division of characters and their domain of activities, for the sanctity of the order to prevail.

Furthermore, Bama's difficulties become visible from the fact that the male member of the community who boast on their strengths and masculinity before their wife and other female members are treated with equal indignity by the upper caste dwellers, they feel castrated before both upper class men and women. Though existing on a patriarchal society the Dalit men are not shielded, they lay bare for exploitation.

"The elder went straight upto the Naicker, bowed low and extended the packet towards him, cupping his hand that he held the string with his other hand" (Bama Karukku 15).

In an influential article of S. Anandhi, entitled *Work, Caste and Competing Masculinities: Notes from a Tamil Village* portrays how in the village the upper caste young Mudaliar women call the aged Adi- Dravida by their name and makes sexual advances towards the lower-caste men:

...the sexual encounters between Mudaliar women and Dalit men were a terrain of more complex negotiations with serious consequences for the masculinity of dalit man (Anandhi)

Sujata, however, is seen dwelling in a more complex predicament. She belongs to the upper strata of the family both socially (being a Brahmin) and economically. Where her family members have influential and powerful contacts and can manipulate a lot of things e.g. the news of Brati's encounter, which they checked from getting published in newspaper. On the contrary Brati is seen sought after the state labelling himself as the denied and out of the

system. Sujata, is even unable to remember her beloved son, as not only the society but the family had also denied his existence.

Education

The treatment of education in the novels is equally diverse. This polarity exists as Bama and Sujata hailed from different sections and cultural communities of the society. Bama is painfully reminded of her caste through untouchability everywhere throughout her student life. She faced objection at every step which started from her family members where *patti* (grandmother) remarks; “As soon as she gets periods, you stop her from studying, hand her over to some fellow or the other and be at peace” (Bama *Sangati* 9).

At this her mother replies that her father wants her to study more, furious at this Patti replies back; “Have you any idea what that will mean? How are you going to keep a virgin girl at home and not get her married” (Bama *Sangati* 9). The outer world was even harsher. Bama opines that the government granted financial aids for the Harijans are more of humiliation than help as they singled them out according to their caste identity. And, once the identity is disclosed Bama faces “Among the other students, a sudden rustling; a titter of contempt” (Bama, *Karukku* 19). She, further, narrates a similar inequality faced by her in college hostels. Once she pleaded to the warden for leave to attend her brother Raj Gautaman’s communion. Though her request was rejected, the warden granted leave to the upper caste students without any form of query. At this, the educated girl Bama voiced against the authority “...there cannot be different rules for different castes, only the same rules for everyone” (19). Her courage paid off, and she went home with the granted leave. Quite surprisingly, her label of Dalit- Christian showed her discriminations in Christianity as well. With immense strong will she completed her nun-training after facing multiple obstacles yet, at the end of the training a nun-sister commented “...in certain orders they would not accept Harijan women as prospective Nuns and that there was even a separate order for them somewhere” (22).



On the contrary Sujata belongs to a society where girls graduating, that too from Loreto College is common enough. The prevalence of education among women and its normativity among women of that social section is wittily summarised by Devi in just a single line. "For there were lots of women looking for a job, with a BA from Loreto College" (Devi 9). The casual tone of the sentence refers to the common practice of imparting high education among women of high class in Bengal.

So it can be assumed that, unlike Bama, her education was not demurred at every step. Yet, Bama could learn certain truth about her own self and the world which Sujata could not. As already stated they both are prey of social hegemonic rules- Sujata being more tightly bound under it and more affected by it.

Moral Strength

Just being from upper class doesn't protect women's life, being a woman she is still vulnerable to the social odds. This is well portrayed in Devi's another novella *The Breast Giver* where Jasodha, the protagonist towards the end of the story, is thrown off by Kangalicharan, her husband as well as by her own children:

His mind had already rejected Jashoda....His sons are his sons. Their mother had become a distant person for a long time. Mother meant hair in a huge topknot, blindingly white clothes, a strong personality. The person lying in the hospital is someone else, not Mother. (Devi *Breast* 72)

Thus, though belonging to upper-caste Brahmin, Jashoda is economically impecunious as well as gender-marginalized in patriarchy and Sujata marginalized only because of her gender hence are examples that only caste cannot improve one's situation in life. Spivak aptly formulates; "This ... identity is a cover for the brutalizing of the Brahmin when the elite in caste is subaltern in class." (Spivak 114)



Contrasting against Bama's strong will Sujata's feeble cry to be her own self, which also she is not been able to put up and though disheartened finally joins Tuli's engagement party, further confirms Bama's firm is determination and will.

Sujata yearned to tell Brati- I can't bear to go down the stairs today, Brati. She longed to say- You would always tell me how difficult it was to be oneself. Brati, if only I could be myself today, and act as my heart dictated! (*Devi Mother* 106)

Conclusion

In conclusion this paper celebrates the moral strength of a 'low birth', her power to protest and question the prevailing odds of the society and finally to reject that society for something better whereas Brahmin Sujata, highly educated remains strangled within the house hold chores. Furthermore, where Bama is proud of her understanding Sujata shrinks within away from her inability to understand Brati which Somu's mother and Nandini could. The two Subaltern characters are equal at one place but the difference is made through one's determination and ideology. Bama flies high with her determination and struggle whereas for Sujata every kind of education that she received becomes futile. She is never able to hold the reign of her own life.

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Capturing the Chaotic Canvas: A study of Post-millennial entropic Urban India through Aravind Adiga's *Last Man in Tower*

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Abstract: The paper tries to critically analyze the changing scenario of the Indian society in contemporary time and how the field of literature is being influenced by the current situation. Post-millennial Indian English writings clearly indicates that a plethora of new forms, genres and contents have emerged where everyday life, changing lifestyle, multiple opportunities, urbanization, complex relationships, conflicting ideologies etc. forms the core subject. The paper investigates the chaotic state of urban India, evils of real estate, ambiguities and complexities of the ambitious middle class, their conflicting ideologies, aspirations, consumption habits and sense of belonging in the twenty first century consumer India through a critical study of Aravind Adiga's *Last Man in Tower*.

Keywords: Urbanization, post-millennial, chaos, ambition, conflict.

Rapid changing socio-political scenario and the storm of global economics, that has hit India of late, has affected the dynamics of India significantly and the field of literature is not deprived of its touch as it is reflected in the contemporary Indian writing in English. Although the growth of Indian economy has been at snail's pace in the last decade of the previous century after the Indian economy was liberalized, it has taken full flight in the new millennium and it has influenced the day-to-life of Indian citizen. The employment opportunity has been on the up ever since the communication innovation has made information readily available and gave greater access to International contacts. The mushrooming of multinational companies and the rapid growth of electronic media has also played its part in the formation of huge potential for the employment which led to the mass migration from rural to urban places. The result is very much apparent in the way the Indian middle class is growing with greater ambition of consumption, and the consumer culture of



the age is ready to provide them with alluring lifestyle and glamorous leisure sites which put dreams and desires in the eyes of the consumer and 'generate direct bodily excitement and aesthetic pleasures' (Featherstone 13). Globalized Indian middle class of the twenty first century is far removed from the Indian middle class of the last century; 'globalised capitalism, in particular since the new millennium, has produced a large and heterogeneous middle class that is distinctly different from the "old" middle class' (Brosius 2). Economic progress, technological boom and fast changing socio-political scenario has inevitably influenced the Indian English literature in the forms of the rise of new form, content and genre. Aspiring young generation of the globalized India considers English as a ladder for 'global opportunities' (Sen and Roy 13) and that is why English readership has been skyrocketed in the contemporary time. The new millennium has been exciting for Indian English literature for it 'demonstrates new departures in writing in English, often in genre, form and voice...' (Varughese 15). Everyday life, changing lifestyle, multiple opportunities, urbanization, complex relationship, conflicting ideologies etc. forms the core subject of the contemporary writings. Indian English literature has carved a niche by establishing an identity in the world literature and moved forward from the postcolonial writing which dominated the Indian English writing in the 1980s and 1990s. India is "writing anew" in place of "writing back" (Sen and Roy 14) in the twenty first century. Aravind Adiga's *Last Man in Tower* is one such piece of literature which talks about the chaotic state of urban India, evils of real estate, ambiguities and complexities of the ambitious middle class, their conflicting ideologies, aspirations, consumption habits and sense of belonging in the twenty first century consumer India.

Adiga in *Last Man in Tower* portrays a true picture of multiculturalism in urban India whose sprawling suburbs are spreading like wild fire in all directions because of the heavy inflow of population migrating into the city from all parts of the country. The novel sets in the twenty first century Mumbai and the storyline revolves around Vishram society's Tower A in Vakola which is situated in Santa Cruz (east). The residents of the society are from



different parts of India, some from east, some from south India, and they found themselves together in the society for their occupation. Adiga beautifully penned down how the residents, who migrated from other places, pride themselves with a sense of belonging in the city by pointing others who are moving into it in the present situation. Mrs. Puri, a resident of the society, is promptly reminded by Mrs Rego, another resident of the society, that she herself was from Delhi; “And did you drop to Bombay from heaven, Mrs Puri? Isn’t your family from Delhi?” (Adiga 39). when Mrs Puri tried to question the new migrated people; “Too many people come into the city, it’s a fact” (39). Mrs Rego speaks out a truth about the city in urban India like sage shares wisdom “Without migrants, this city would be dust” (39). The residents bear the testimony of being cosmopolitan by residing and mixing together without any hullabaloo regarding their race and religion. The door of the Flat 3B reveals how it has been used as an altar over the ages by the residents of different religion without removing the traces of other deities. Adiga mentions at the beginning of the novel that

...the building was originally meant for Roman Catholics. Hindus were admitted in the late 1960s and in the 1980s the better kind of Muslim- Bohra, Ismaili, college-educated. Vishram is now entirely ‘cosmopolitan’. (Adiga 5)

Nuclear family system is in the process of dilution in the globalized urban India of twenty first century. People are career oriented and so busy with their occupation that they don’t think twice before moving out of their ancestral or parental house to make their life easier. Masterji’s son Gaurav does not live with his parents even if he works in Mumbai. Since he has been offered accommodation by his employer he has “migrated to the golden citadel of inner-city Bombay” (30). Another resident of the society Mr. Hiranandani has also moved into Khar West which is considered to be ‘a better neighborhood’ (22) since he has been prospering in his business and could afford a better accommodation.

India in the new millennium has made a rapid progress in economy and technology. An Indian is to be found well placed and leading many big companies in all parts of the



world. India's current generation is utterly swayed by the western influence, and their ideological stance and lifestyle is always at loggerhead with the old generation which has always eyed the foreign influence on India on a negative note. Old Generation is still in the mode of nostalgia and any deviation from their ideology meets with scathing criticism. In the novel the librarian is to be seen lamenting in front of Masterji; 'Remember when we were young. We had to walk to school every morning. Study by candlelight during exam-time. Now the computers do their work for them' (Adiga 23). Later in the market Masterji bemoans 'Boys were hard-working in the old days. I wonder where those days have gone....' (125), In the age of globalization and consumer culture India's middle class also is growing at breakneck speed, and their ambition to go higher up in the hierarchy and consumption habit is changing their taste and lifestyle. Radhakrishnan very beautifully points out stark difference between the old middle class and new of contemporary India;

In the earlier Nehruvian model of Indian nation building, the "old" middle class was made up of government workers who served the nation by working for it. In a globalized model of the Indian nation, the middle class engages in a global economy of work and consumption, serving the nation by, ironically enough, directing itself away from it. (Radhakrishnan 42)

Radhakrishnan's observation is aptly reflected by Adiga in the novel when he describes the type of residents that occupies the two towers of the Vishram society; 'Tower B is modern. Finance, high-tech, computers. Tower A is old. Teachers, accountants, brokers' (Adiga 57). The close analysis of the novel reveals the changing attitude of the women too. All the women characters in tower B are housewives except the resident of 3B which is occupied by Ms Meenakshi who is twenty five years old which clearly makes her belong to the new generation, and works as a journalist. Since the housewives do not have to go out for work, basically they are bored doing the same work every day. They are always interested what is going on in others' lives and their eyes and ears made sure 'there was no privacy in the building' (21). Adiga did not leave any stones unturned to make the status of middle class



apparent of the building and its residents. He goes on to describe the building and its occupants in a hilarious manner:

Vishram is a building like the old people living in it, middle class to its core. Improvement or failure, it is incapable of either extremity. The men have modest paunches, wear checked polyester shirts over white *baniyans*, and keep their hair oiled and short. The older women wear saris, salwar cameez, or skirts, and the younger ones wear jeans. (Adiga 9)

The difference of lifestyle and complicated mindset among the residents is also taken up for discussion by Adiga since the social dynamics of India is changing fast in post millennium India. Young single woman Ms Meenakshi is a hot topic of discussion in the society because she works at various times of day and night, she comes back late at night and her boyfriend visits her at times. Having noticed that the lights are off in Meenakshi's flat Mrs Puri has only staunch criticism to offer, 'young people of that lifestyle are never home before ten' (26), and she gets very excited while sharing the information of 'what had been found in her rubbish by the early-morning cat' (26), and she lays even harsher criticism on them 'Those people are known for their number two activities' (26). Consumer culture plays a big role in shaping the lifestyle and perception of modern India. The new generation is highly influenced by western way of living. Their habits and tastes, their approach to the daily life, attitude towards relationships, choice of partners, holiday destinations, and cars pose a threat to the long held ideologies of the old generation. Young Meenakshi's modern lifestyle and the visit of her boyfriend do not go well with traditional Mrs Puri, and a heavy lambaste is thundered upon the new generation;

Among young people today, it is a common thing for boy and girl to live without marriage. At the end, one says to the other, you go your way, I go my way. There is no shame in the modern way of life... (Adiga 22)



Masterji advises Mrs Puri to be flexible in her thought because he understands that the mindset of modern India is also in the process of transformation along with the social landscape, and reminded Mrs Puri that she would not have been allowed to reside in the Vishram society in the first place had the society not been flexible enough having started its journey as a resident of the Roman Catholics;

When this building first came up, there were no Hindus allowed here. It is a fact. Then there were meant to be no Muslims, it is a fact. All proved to be good people when give a chance. Now, young people, unmarried girls, they should also be given a chance. (Adiga 26)

The growing middle class in globalized urban India and their ambition to go up the ladder in hierarchy, their ambiguities and complexities has been dealt with finesse in this novel. The ambition of the Residents of the Vishram society and the ambition of the real estate builder Dharmen Shah forms the crux of the novel. When the rehabilitation offer was made almost all the residents were preoccupied with the thought of big dreams and they considered the offer to be a miracle. Most of them desire to move to a better place from the old fashioned building. The first reaction of the secretary Kothari in Ajwani's office 'All your dreams are about to come true, Ajwani' (73), Mrs Puri dreams of spending sixty-five lakhs for a flat and rest of the money he is planning to save for Ramu's future. Mrs Saldana aspires to send her daughter Radhika to Syracuse University in New York to study Journalism with the money whereas Masterji's son Gaurav and daughter-in-law Sonal started planning several things even before Masterji made his mind. All of their ambitions and aspirations depended on the decision taken by Masterji. So, when Masterji thought of otherwise, they could not let their dreams slip off for one person. The drive for their ambition and bribe offered by the Dharmen Shah turned people against each other. Ajwani, Mrs Puri, Ibrahim Kudwa and several others started conspiring against Masterji where many tricks and politics are seen to be played in the Vishram society even though at the beginning of the novel Masterji is seen to be garnering utmost respect from the residents for years of his good work. In the present



situation everyone's anger towards him prompts him to think 'they treat me like they would treat an untouchable in the old days' (217). At the end even Masterji's son turned his back against him. Masterji ended up losing his life by the hands of greed and ambition of the middle class. Dharmen Shah's bloodthirsty ambition and deadly competition with J. J. Chacko reveals the bitter truth about what goes on in the real estate business in the metropolitan cities and how corruption and crime reigns supreme at the heart of the city while the common man receives inhuman treatment. Dharmen Shah utterly refuses doctor's advice of taking rest against aggravating his health because his competitor Chacko was expanding real estate business in his territory, 'how can I take holiday when J.J. Chacko doesn't? Does his doctor tell him to slow down?' (54). He is ready to go to any extreme to come out on top in this dangerous game. He bribes policeman, he bribes Kothari, Ajwani and Mrs Rego in the process of acquiring the possession of the Vishram society. He plays all kinds of dirty politics to quench his thirst of greed and fulfill his aspiration of coming out on top of his business.

The meteoric advancement of technology and better communication system has led to the rise of media houses in plentitude in post millennium India. Although they are doing commendable job they have a propensity to sensationalize the matter and even alleged to have created fake story or make the incidents fabricated most of the times for cheap publicity. Masterji 'wrote three letters to English-language newspapers and two to Hindi newspapers' (Adiga 246) including one of his student Noronha who works in Times newspaper but to no avail as no one thought it to be bringing any extra mileage to the big media houses like them. The hopelessness and frustrations are utterly visible in masterji's tone when he asks for Gaurav's help, 'My last hope is Noronha. At the Times. I've written letter after letter, and he won't write back. If there's some way to reach him, son...' (286). The intention of the big media houses is pretty clear that they are not interested in any stories; they are more interested whether the story at hand can satisfy their ambition by bringing more reputation and doing publicity of the company, whereas the tabloids are interested in any stories to publish by fabricating to sensationalize the matter for cheap publicity to come to the fore in



their line of business. Meenakshi's boyfriend, who works for a tabloid, gets excited and lets out a loud shout at the knowledge of what is going on in the Vishram society and Meenakshi advises Masterji at her boyfriend's insistence to sell the story to the tabloid, 'go to the papers. Tell them your story' (Adiga 312). Upon learning the information that masterji has already approached Noronha at Times she plays her part of trickery;

'Not the *pucca* papers. A tabloid. My boyfriend works for the Sun, Masterji- the one you....' She smiled. 'I told him what is happening here, and he said at once: "It's a story!" He'll interview you. The paper will run your photo. You'll become famous. People will follow you on Facebook'. (312)

Masterji is bewildered and astonished at the fabricated news of the story which has been published without his permission and knowledge at the tabloid. The same treatment is meted out by the Law firm Parekh and Sons towards masterji. Having approached by Masterji the Law firm did everything they could do to increase their credibility. The conversation between the guards of the society reveals that the fact if Masterji is a good man or bad is decided by the baksheesh the Masterji gives to them; "But is this Masterji of yours a good man or a bad one? Another guard asked. 'Does he give good baksheesh?'" (313)

Adiga has captured the chaotic state of the postmillennial urban India in the pages of *Last Man in Tower* like a painter pictures his work on a canvas. From the survival of the lower middle class in the age of rat race to the inner struggle of the growing middle class to rise above their present state of being, the novel is a fitting testament that the ambition to achieve desired goal by hook or by crook to maintain the prestige has been the major driving force behind the utter disillusionment and great pandemonium in the Modern India. Greed, envy, intolerance, compassion, lack of flexibility in thought, treachery, betrayal all these vices have replaced the traditional value system, and contemporary metro cities are turning into factories of corruption. There is no such place for good human beings like Masterji who wish to live a peaceful life by holding on to his nostalgia and sweet memories. In the present



scenario if one has survive he must have to resort to malpractices as Ajwani, Kudwa, Mrs Puri etc. did or have to compromise before evil forces as Mrs. Rego did in front of Dharmen Shah. Rapid urbanization, construction of skyscrapers, foreign lifestyle, emerging consumer culture is making People more individualistic and self- oriented. People's hearts are becoming concretes like the jungle of concrete we live in where there is no soft spot, no compassion, and no place for harmony. A big void of emotional crisis is pervading the society and the chaos is making everyone restless and sleepless. Relationships are falling apart, Insanity germinates, crime and corruption reigns; our society in the new millennium is staring down on a gaping hole.

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Down Memory Lane: An Eco-critical Approach to Bibhutibhushan's *Aranyak-of the Forest*

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Abstract: Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay was a leading Bengali novelist whose nature writings have an enduring appeal. Most of his novels have an autobiographical touch and it is his memory which is the key to his literary thought. The novelist has a personal experience of forest life which he put for a long time in the golden frame of memory. When the hurly burly of so-called civilized city life gets upon his heat oppressed brain, environmental imagination revives down his memory lane. The present paper seeks to analyze critically the role of memory used in creating a classic beauty *Aranyak-of the Forest* a memoir which is stuffed in recollection of the forest land of *Labtulia* and *Nara Baihar* where the novelist stayed for a period of time as an estate manager. Ecocriticism is a recent literary theory which is meant for scholarly appreciation of nature literature. *Aranyak-of the Forest* is the best example of ecocritical writing as it represents several ecological issues as well as human and nature relationship written in flashback technique. His personal feelings which he penned down in his diary, gets a universal appeal as he brings into light the eternal saga of human life living in close proximity with nature.

Keywords: Memory, Literature, Ecocriticism, and Environment.



Introduction

Memory is the recollection or recognition of previous experiences. Though memory comes from historical past, it is different from history. History is the storehouse of community's past narrative resource; on the other hand, memory is related to consciousness, time and individual identity which is stored in the form of diary, travelogue, and autobiography etc. Ecocriticism is the rethinking of nature in literary study. It is a contemporary theory which has gained huge popularity during the last three decades. This critical theory is a scholarly approach to nature writing in which a critic tries to find out ecological implications in a literary text. It's a green approach which has got its momentum in view of the global environmental crisis. The present world is suffering from so many ecological disasters like drought, flood, acid rain, thunderbolt, tsunami, frequent earthquake, landslide, cyclone, depletion of ozone layer and the like. There are some natural disasters for which man has a role; but there certainly are some disasters which are manmade. Human nature is essentially anthropocentric for he considers himself superior to many other organisms in our environment. Being the only literary animal, he likes to exploit nature for his own interest. The rainforest destruction, the unplanned construction in the hilly regions, the environmental pollution, the rise of atomic energy, deliberate use of natural resources etc., are essentially a by-product of human culture. But these are not favourable to keep up the ecological balance. According to Barry Commoner's first law of ecology "Everything is connected to everything else". So every organism has its role to play to keep up ecological balance. Nothing is superior or inferior to others and so there needs a symbiotic living of all organisms of the universe. When all other fields of human activity are striving hard to find out a solution to the global environmental crisis, literary studies took a rather late initiative to bring into focus the ecological issues in literature.

Ecocriticism: Rethinking Nature

Ecocriticism has developed as 'a worldwide emergent movement' during the last three decades. The scholars are still engaged in developing its nature and scope. The word



ecocriticism was first coined by William Rueckert in his book *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism* (1978). The part of the word 'eco' comes from the Greek root word 'oikos' which etymologically means household or earth and 'logy' from 'logos' means logical discourse. Together they mean criticism of the house-the environment as represented in literature. According to Rueckert, ecocriticism applies ecology or ecological principles into the study of literature. And in his book *The Environmental Imagination* Lawrence Buell defines ecocriticism "as a study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist's praxis" (Buell 1996: 430). Further ecocriticism does not simply mean nature study; it has distinguished itself from conventional nature writing, first by its ethical stand and commitment to the natural world and then by making the connection between the human and the non-human world. But 'Ecocriticism' was popularized by Cheryll Glotfelty who gave a clarion call to the movement which started its journey from America. The book which is known as the *Bible* of ecocriticism is *The Ecocriticism Reader* edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm where we find a comprehensive definition of ecocriticism:

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

Now it is considered to be any scholarly approach to nature writing from an environmentalist's viewpoint. In short, it is a rethinking of nature in an age of environmental crisis.

Aranyak-of the Forest: A Memoir

The very prologue of *Aranyak* suggests that the novel is going to be based on memory. The narrator was sitting on the *Maidan*, close by the side of the Fort after a whole day's backbreaking work in the office. Near him was an almond tree; it seemed to be evening and



he was sitting by the waters of *Saraswatikundi* on the northern borders of *Lobtulia*. The sound of a car horn shattered his delusion. It seemed it was a matter of yesterday, although it was a tale of events long ago. The narrator writes:

But these memories do not give me pleasure; they are filled with sorrow. By my hands was destroyed an unfettered playground of nature. I know too, that for this act the forest gods will never forgive me. I have heard that to confess a crime in one's own words lightens somewhat the burden of the crime. Therefore, the story. (Bandyopadhyay & Bhattacharya 2002: 3)

Keeping in tune with the environmental praxis, *Aranyak* exhales in both celebration and exploitation of nature revived in a dream by the narrator. The initial chapters are related to the celebration of nature while the later chapters deal with how nature is being exploited by human beings. Satyacharan, a spokesperson of Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay recollects the wilder as well as the fiercer aspects of nature in this classic prose narrative. At first, his urban lifestyle revolted against the lonely forest life for which he had no love. He could not imagine a life without the company of friends, reading books in libraries, watching theaters and films and listening to music. Having newly arrived, he could not even understand the speech of the foresters. He only considered them as good as barbarians. He even felt the job to be useless and it was better for him to stay half starved in Calcutta rather than stifling to death in the forest. He found the jungle suffocating and longed to fly back to the city. The loneliness of the forest sat upon his breast like a heavy stone. He felt that he was all alone in the world. But after a few days, the jungle really got inside him. He got enthralled by the deep green serpentine forests, the rocky masses, flocks of wild parrots, herds of *Neelgai*, the sunshine, the exquisite moonlight, the open land etc. The rude and barbaric nature gave him so much freedom and liberation that he could not reconcile himself to perch in the bird cage of a city. He now understands:

What nature gives to her own devotees is invaluable. However, it is a gift not to be received until one has served her for long.....if you lie immersed in her, the greatest gifts of nature- beauty and exquisite peace- will be showered on you so abundantly



that they will drive you to ecstasy.....drawing you closer to immortality.

(Bandyopadhyay & Bhattacharya 2002: 95)

So we observe a gradual change Satyacharan's attitude to nature. The votary of urban life has transformed into a devoted lover of nature in her pristine beauty. He enjoyed horse ride in the forest on a moonlit night; he even sent Jugalprasad with enough money to the impenetrable forests of Jayanti Hills to bring saplings of 'dudhia' flower for beautification of Saraswati Kundi where variety of amazing birds like magpies, pheasant crows, wild parrots, sparrows, *chathares*, *ghughus*, *hariales*, *shyamas* and *hareets* flocked to take refuge after a huge part of the forest becomes a victim of deforestation. He enjoyed wondrous solitude in the unbroken quiet of Saraswatikundi which serves as a heaven to him with its honeybee creepers, wild *sheuli*, and its supernatural surroundings. A clear change in his attitude to nature is evident in his recollection here in these lines:

This was a different sort of life, I mused, as I rode through the moonlit forest. This was a life for the eccentric wanderer- one who did not care to remain confined within the four walls of his house, did not have housekeeping and domesticity in his blood. When I had left Calcutta and came to this terrible loneliness, to an utterly natural sort of lifestyle, how intolerable the uncivilized life here had seemed: but now, I feel this is the better life of the two. Nature- rude and barbaric here- had initiated me into the mysteries of freedom and liberation; would I ever be able to reconcile myself to a perch in the bird-cage city? (62)

The protagonist here would never like to exchange this happiness for all the wealth in the world. Satya's dream got enriched when he met with a strange fellow named Raju Panrey in the *jungalmahal*. He is poor but happy with the Chinese grass and salt and *makai* as his food. Satya offered him a few *bighas* of land to deforest it but Raju had no greed for the wealth. His philosophic bent of mind revels in his contemplation of the forest land.

The forest you see here is very beautiful. The flowers have been blooming for a long time and the birds sing, each with their own call: the gods themselves have merged with the wind and have left their mark on the earth. But wherever there is money or



transactions of cash, loan, and receipts, the air becomes polluted. Then the gods choose not to stay on any longer. So, whenever I pick up the cutter and the axe, the gods come and snatch away my tools. They whisper such thoughts into my ears that all thoughts of land and property are driven away from my mind. (Bandyopadhyay & Bhattacharya 2002: 76)

Although Satya returned to the city, Raju stayed in the forest for his eternal love for nature. Satyacharan's dream got a jerk on his vanity of urban life when he understood that he (a city man) was instrumental in conducting an ecocide. He was assigned to do so as a part of his profession. The jungle land of Nara-baihar and Labtulia had been leased out. There remained hardly any forests like those of former times. All the shady groves and creeper entwined trees and the secluded paths composed by nature for so many years were lopped off by the ruthless hands of the labourers. What had taken thousands of years to come up was destroyed in a matter of few days for setting up human habitation. There remained no mysterious green where enchanting fairies might descend on moonlit nights or thick jungle where benign *Tarbaro*, god of the wild buffaloes put up his hand to save the herd of wild creatures. But he had to lease out the land to the new settlers for the benefit of his employer.

Thus Satya memorizes; "One day I climbed up a tree and made myself comfortable on a branch: an indescribable joy filled me.....It is almost as if one can match the heartbeat of every plant and tree with one's own" (104). A clear change in Satya's attitude to nature is seen when he criticizes the city people who having the lack of imagination exploits forest as a mere picnic spot. "The women were a motley collection, completely devoid of imagination. They ran about gathering twigs for the fire on the edges of the forest and chattered endlessly, but not one of them were around to see where they were.....Did they know that only a dozen yards from where they sat, the forest spirits danced in the moonlight?" (189)

Meanwhile, Satyacharan has become a nature lover who was instrumental in the ecocide. He himself admits, "I had come here to settle new tenants in these forests. Having come to destroy the forestland, I have instead fallen in love with the beautiful forest maid" (114). He even did not let out the exquisite bit of forest by the side of Saraswatikundi. He



realizes that nothing would stand in the way of destroying such exquisite grove before human greed. According to him, the settlers did not care much for the majestic trees; they did not have the eyes to see the grandeur of the land; their only concern was to fill their stomach and to survive. He also laments, "If it were any other country, they would have had laws to keep the forests intact and preserve them for nature lovers, as they have done with the Yosemite Park in California, the Kruger National Park in South Africa or the National Albert in Belgian Congo. My distant employers do not care for the landscape: all they understand are taxes and revenue money.....the *Salami*, the *Irshal* and the *Hustabood*" (Bandyopadhyay & Bhattacharya 2002: 213) He also suspects, "I have sought to preserve the forest around Saraswati kundi....But for how long?" (213)

Ecocriticism strives hard to protect the rights of the marginal. *Aranyak* tells recollects the indigenous people of India like the *Gangotas*, the *Santhals*, the vagrant dwellers etc. whom the *Jamindar* is not willing to give a settlement. Thirty years ago, the land was swallowed into the womb of the river, surfacing again as char land twenty years later. But those who found their ancestral land broken up by the Ganga, thronged to reclaim them. The landlord deprived them of their right to forest land for earning higher revenue from the new *rayots*. Satya finds himself to be the representative of the Arians who after invading India deprived the just claim of those marginals. They were very poor, yet they were happy with their limited needs of life. Satya although a descendant of the *Arians*, had a close understanding of those people who were no barbarians but humans. Kunta, Manchi, Bhanumati, Gagru, Debru Panna, Raju Panre are the representatives of those class. They added to the beauty of the forest as a child looks beautiful in its mother's lap. The state has not taken their responsibility, nor has taken the so-called civilized society. When Satya asked Bhanmoti the princess of the *Santhal* Royal family, which direction is India, she looks astonishingly. Those primitive people have become a victim of the Arians ruling over them. So, Satyacharan holds himself responsible for the destruction of pristine wilderness, because it happened under his governance. Even his deep love for Bhanumati could not stop him from leaving Baihar, which mesmerized him with its profound majesty. Satyacharan could not

anymore stand the ruination of the forest and decides to leave Fulkia-Baihar. His concluding thoughts are clearly ecological:

Perhaps a time would come when men would no more be able to see forests: all they would see would be fields of crops, or the chimneys of jute and cotton mills. They would come then to this secluded forest land, as though on a pilgrimage. For those people, yet to come, let the forest stay pristine, undisturbed. (Bandyopadhyay & Bhattacharya 248)

As the forest of Lobtulia was disappearing fast, the charm for Satyacharan began to wane. The writer makes a final decision to leave Baihar. He begins his tale of nature seeking forgiveness, and due to the intolerable pangs of his mind, ends it beseeching forgiveness from the devastated Goddess, i.e. Fulkia-Baihar: "You the primordial deity of wilderness forgive me! Adieu!" Satyacharan is now a nature priest who cannot reconcile himself to the fact that he himself was responsible for abolishing the primordial forest. He is the voice of the novelist who denounces the third world style of development where development is meant for only a few and most people are forced to live in the filthy environment. His sense of guilt ever haunts him as his hands are smeared with the blood of forest plants. His condition is much like Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth who having felt a prick of conscience utters-"Out, damned spot! Out, I say!" (Shakespeare 1553)

So nature is not a silent spectator who will remain inactive despite human atrocities against her. To live in peace and quiet of forest will ever remain a dream for Satyacharan. To ride a horse through the vast expanse of the forest will ever elude his grasp. To build up a forest hut to live with Bhanumati will never be fulfilled in noisy city life. He will now recollect and repent for ever:

What do human beings really want: progress or happiness? Was it of any use making progress if no happiness came with it? I knew so many people who had certainly progressed in life but had lost happiness. Excessive indulgence had blunted the edges of their desires, now there was nothing that brought them joy.....If I could have lived here... married Bhanmati..... in the moonlit verandah of this very mud house,



the innocent forest maid would tell me her childish tales as she cooked, and I would hear the hural cry in the forest, the hyena laugh, and wild elephants go stomping by Bhanmati was dark, but in all of Bengal, you would not find such a healthy lissome slip of a girl or such a vibrant innocent being. She was compassionate, kind and affectionate- how many times had I proof of it...Even thinking about it gave me pleasure. A beautiful vision! What was the point in progress? Let Balbhadra make his way to Sengat and improve his situation. Let Rashbehari Sing improve his.” (Bandyopadhyay & Bhattacharya 251-252)

Conclusion

So *Aranyak-Of the Forest* is a story of memorization and understanding of the ecosphere of a forest land. It is as though a reverie that revives man's lost relationship with nature. With the advancement of civilization, the primeval beauty of nature is being destroyed in the name of progress. But in each brick of modernization is attached the impression of disappearing nature and the eternal struggle of primitive human society. The thirty thousand *bighas* of forest land is not a mere setting of the novel; it has become a living entity in the elevated thought of the protagonist Satyacharan who could discover the intrinsic value of nature. The novel has a message that we should live in close harmony with nature and any violation of it would lead to disastrous consequences. As the forest lost its charm, Manchi gets lost; Dhaturia, the forest lad is found dead upon the railway track, and Bhanmati is seen ferrying a basket of coal in the wasteland instead of living a peaceful life in the forest. As the so called civilized world exploits nature as a commodity, the marginal people whose ecological vision is merged with nature get to suffer. Such kind of a recollection by Satyacharan brings about his ecological literacy which is essential for a better care of our environment. The novelist here pleads for the environmental protection. Every time we read the novel, our heart is filled up with repentance for the loss of green. Herein lays the ecocritical significance of this memory based novel.



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Characterization of Human Longing and Wishes: the Unconscious Desire for Social Privilege of Women in *A Mercy*

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Abstract: Toni Morrison's novel *A Mercy* portrays inequality of gender and social position, economic depravity and material imbalance, emotional complications and dependence, this paper aims at uncovering these issues pertaining to the women's desire for a social privilege. It is fate, and foremost the material that brings the different characters together and binds them together in the hope of a better social position. But Morrison throughout the novel emphasizes the fact that women are at the mercy of men, the women are not economically dependent but their emotional dependence has crippled them hence a perpetual vulnerability has been bestowed to them in societies throughout the history. Women characters in this novel have demonstrated a desire for a better life and social stability. This paper attempts to demonstrate how the desire for a suitable life and social acceptance has been the central force in the novel *A Mercy*.

Key Words: inequality, gender, mercy, vulnerability, social acceptance.

Man and nature has always been in confrontation to each other and man has always strived to conquer the nature and "bring nature under his control" (Morrison 49). But the power of man constantly fell short to have any control over the nature. It is nature that has always won the battle between man and nature. Man has always surrendered before the infinite power of the nature which is always indomitable. Different stages approach in the life of a human, he or she has to face many turns in his or her life; several times due to nature. The natural calamity sometimes changes one's life entirely, happiness is turned into sorrow, a garden is turned into a barren land, and a family is left with a single family member. This is the case with Vaark family in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy* (2008).

What Morrison ventured to demonstrate in *A Mercy* she says in her own words:



Certain kinds of trauma visited on people are so deep, so cruel, that unlike money, unlike vengeance, even unlike justice, or rights, or the good will of others, only writers can translate such trauma and turn sorrow into meaning, sharpening the moral imagination. (qtd. in Flood 2009)

It is evident that Toni Morrison believes that writers best understand every tragic and traumatic experience of people and can vividly place it before audience. In *A Mercy*, she has chosen a “less popular aspect” of American history and she has given it a shape of family to position it before the readers. *A Mercy*, it is not a novel that foregrounds the plight of only the Black people but Black slaves are only a part of her narrative.

Toni Morrison’s novel *A Mercy* at cursory level wholly seems to be a novel about slavery but there is much more in the novel, it is set in 1690’s. Black slaves are not the only characters of the novel, besides Black slaves like Florens, there are indentured labors like Willy and Scully, and also natives like Lina. “Each character adds a piece to a communal quilt, and the novel’s narrative structure privileges no one voice over another” (Babb 149). The novel is an amalgamation of bad situation faced by everyone Black slaves, Natives and Whites like Jacob Vaark and his family. On the one hand, the novel throws light on the plight of Black slaves, and on the other hand Toni Morrison demonstrates that the White master Jacob Vaark is not a prosperous family head. His wife bares four children but none of them survive. Only his daughter reaches the age of five, she is hit by a horse, and she dies of a broken crown.

The novel opens with a description of Jacob Vaark’s journey to his debtor D’Ortega. Jacob Vaark is offered slaves instead of money that D’Ortega owes him. At the first place, Mr. Vaark seems less interested in the slaves and refuses to take any slave to close the debt. His intentions are more humane than money-making. His reply to D’Ortega is that “flesh was not his commodity” but goods (Morrison 120). After some argument, Jacob Vaark agrees to take Florens from D’Ortega. Likewise, Lina had already landed and Sorrow later lands at Jacob Vaark’s farmhouse.



Toni Morrison gathers all the important characters and “eager to explore the thoughts of almost every person on Jacob’s farm” (Romano 2008). From there we are given the details of the life of every character and “access to their thought and fears” (Rokosz-Piejko 82). Family emerges as a lack in the life of every character. These characters seem to be alienated and isolated in the society and life pretends to be peaceful at Vaark’s farmhouse, even Willy and Scully feels some contention there. The relation between these slaves and their master is not the relation of suppression and repression as it is expected. Rather, there is a harmony in their relation up to a point when Jacob Vaark’s farmhouse is hit by smallpox. Jacob Vaark dies and leaves behind only a community of women. This situation resemble to Bill Cosey’s death in *Love* (2003), when he also leaves behind only women.

The characters we meet in the novel like Florens, Lina, Sorrow etc. suffer from a desire for family. Jacob Vaark Succeeds in marrying and having a family, but the Nature perhaps was not happy with his prosperity and all his children die, and eventually himself die of smallpox. The longing for family, the desire to belong to someone is at foreground in the novel. Lina wants to belong to Florens, Florens wants to belong to blacksmith, blacksmith to the foundling boy Malaik, and Sorrow wants to belong to her baby girl. This “desire to belong” is the distorted form of “the desire for family”.

Lina was the first one who reached Jacob’s farmhouse, her village was hit by smallpox and all the village people died. Wolves devoured the corpus of the dead until the soldiers come. They killed the wolves and set the village ablaze. Lina with two other boys stayed up on a tree, contemplating to stay there or get down and get shot by soldiers. The boys jump down and they are caught in arms by the soldiers. These soldiers are not scared of being infected. Lina does not know where the two other boys were taken, “but she was taken to live among kindly Presbyterians” (Morrison 45). The fall of the Black Death on the Lina’s tribe is connected directly with the immorality of the people. Morrison says that these natives “owned nothing, certainly not the land they slept on” (45). Yet they indulged in hunting and fishing like the degenerated gentry. Lina, at Presbyterians, “acknowledges her status as heathen” (45), “afraid of once more losing the shelter” and “terrified of being alone in the



world without family” (45). So, Lina conforms to every social custom and ritual of Presbyterians. She was not in position to lose at least shelter. Presbyterians could not have been family for her yet she belonged to it.

To make Presbyterians her own family, Lina started to adopt everything that belonged to them. She abandoned her own identity, “burned the deer skin dress, they clipped the beads from her arms and scissored inches from her hair” (Morrison 46). But at the core she remains alien in Presbyterians. Lina imitated them in the way of dressing but she was not permitted to join “the Sunday Services”. She failed to secure a place in them later she was abandoned.

Even at Vaark’s farmhouse Lina was not feeling at home although she was at good terms with her master. The relation was more harmonious than the strained. Lina managed every work of the farmhouse even she taught Sir to do different works of farming still she recurrently felt “I am exile here” (57). The sense of family life was a desire, Lina knew the reality of her life that after all she is bought by Sir. Farmhouse could not be a home for her since it was home for Rebekka. It was she after all who was not bought but married. Lina’s sense of exile is a perpetual sense of being away from home and family.

Lina’s sense of being alone was one reason that she took Florens under her care immediately after she arrived at farmhouse. Florens could not be a family for Lina but she had “devotion” for Florens. The narrator comments that “her (Lina’s) own barrenness sharpened her devotion” towards Florens (58). Lina being childless developed a desire for Florens and it is not evident in the novel that she was interested in any male. Still, the enthusiasm she has for Florens, it seems she wanted someone her own, especially from her own womb. Undoubtedly, Lina was the loneliest one at farm. She “had hovered over Patrician, competing with Mistress for the little girl’s affection” (59). Lina had yearning for children and consequently for family, it was first depicted from her attitude towards Patrician. Lina endeavoured to share the affection of a child from someone else’s womb but here the chances to have the share in affection were less. When Florens arrived Lina thought that she “could be, would be, her own” (57). Lina wanted to avoid her loneliness and isolation by the presence of Florens who embodied a chance to belong to someone.



Lina's trauma comes to surface with the sight of the shoes that she had once made for Florens. Now, Florens nowhere near, went to fetch Blacksmith, shoes prove to be nostalgic for Lina. Her attachment to Florens is not simply of a companion at farmhouse but the hunger that Lina has, "to be one or have one" (Morrison 61), a desire to build up a family of her own to which she can belong. Lina has no one to whom she could have really made an emotional attachment and the only option before her was Florens.

Lina is more worried about Florens when she has gone to fetch blacksmith. "And without her pet, Lina, the silent workhorse, seemed to have lost interest in everything, including feeding herself" (130). When blacksmith arrives, Lina asks him whereabouts of Florens. When initially Florens was attracted to blacksmith, Lina "was determined to be the wall between Florens and blacksmith" (58), but she did not succeed and "Lina, however, became really ugly in her efforts to keep Florens away" from blacksmith (125). The main reason that Lina was against any relation between Florens and blacksmith was that she herself wanted to be near to her. She claimed to have rights on Florens that she wanted to maintain. Lina was scared of the condition that she would be left alone. Instead of being a sort of in-charge of the farmhouse, Lina was alienated and isolated, and Florens was her only hope.

Florens' Longing for Belonging

Florens' journey of loneliness starts from the house of D'Ortega when she is sold to Jacob Vaark at the age of eight. This was the time when Florens was separated from Minha mea, her mother. She is brought to Vaark's farmhouse, she starts helping in the farm work there. Mr. Vaark bought her with the intention that she will replace the dead daughter, Patrician. Florens initially came much closer to Lina, they slept together, Florens listened to the stories that Lina told her. Florens' attachment to Lina was a sort of "mother hunger" (61). Florens was given preference on her baby brother when her mother held the feet of Jacob Vaark to take her daughter that proved to be an act of mercy in the novel.



Florens was hurt by her mother's endeavour to send her away who wanted to stay near her mother and baby brother. Her life at the farm was of a slave bought to close the debt; even Jacob had no interest in taking a child instead of money to close the debt. Later at farm, Florens is attracted to blacksmith; it was a chance to make her own family. Florens wanted to belong to blacksmith not only because she loved him but blacksmith was the only source to whom she could belong.

The desire that Florens has for blacksmith is really intense, while she is traveling towards him, she has forgotten the real purpose of her journey. She has only one thing in her mind that she will be united with blacksmith, the hope of family for her and the relief of her trauma. She travels alone without any care for any threat not because she had to save the life of her Mistress but just save her own life by being reunited to blacksmith and taste the "sugar" of his shoulders. Morrison has not tried to exaggerate the situation by intensifying the desire for blacksmith in Florens' heart but Morrison has given it a human touch.

Florens came under the trauma of losing blacksmith when he finished the work at Vaark's farmhouse and went to his own place. Florens from that day planned to go there, her desire is not a desire of a slave for freedom but the desire of a common individual who does not belong to any one, who does not belong to any family. Yet she desperately yearns for family life, Florens thinks that her desire could be fulfilled only by blacksmith. Even Florens was given much affection by Lina but she was herself a lonely woman who could not provide Florens family security, Florens' thoughts always flew towards blacksmith.

Florens' journey to blacksmith was possible only when Jacob Vaark died and Rebekka was also infected by smallpox. Florens is sent to fetch the blacksmith. She got a chance to reach blacksmith. She thought that her dream of making family would be fulfilled this time, she makes her mind not to come back. She bares all the hard ships of the journey to reach there. She knew that her errand will save the life of Rebekka but she was not ready to sacrifice her own life by coming back and remain always at farmhouse away from blacksmith, and keep her dreams of family unfulfilled. Blacksmith becomes ultimate goal of her life to have him, to belong to him.



But it seems that Florens is subject to abandonment. She was abandoned by her mother at the age of eight and now she is abandoned by blacksmith. Florens is not accepted by blacksmith and is instructed to go back with the excuse that Florens belongs to Mistress Vaark as a slave. So the condition of Florens becomes worse, all her hopes prove to be illusions. Family life has become indifferent and impossible for her. She could not control her anger when blacksmith tells her that she has to go away. She is called “wild”. She picks up a hammer and attempts to attack blacksmith, a “form of resistance to oppressive power” (Putnam 2011). This type of behavior is seen for the first time from Florens. Certainly, it was all result of broken hopes and promises.

Florens from her childhood was fond of wearing shoes. She was given Sir’s shoes for the journey to blacksmith. But now when she walks back, she is bare feet. The hardships of her life have transformed her soft soles in something hardest. It symbolizes that the coming life for Florens would be tougher but she has consolidated her courage like the soles of her feet. Florens is completely transformed by her “hard-won endeavour and experience” (Sandy 37) after she was sent back by blacksmith. It was the death of her dreams related to a family life with blacksmith. All that she had planned vanished, blacksmith preferred a foundling boy Malaik on Florens; the affection that was due to Florens, a little boy claimed it.

Sorrow Homed and Homeless

Sorrow, Morison’s great portrayal (in the novel) of real sorrow, was the only one to be saved in looted ship. She herself claimed that she was “dragged ashore by whales” (Morrison 48). She was living on an abandoned ship and two young sawyers discovered her. “They thought she was a boy” (49). The sawyer’s wife named her “Sorrow” because she was a silent “strange melancholy girl” (49). She did not tell anything pertaining to her name or the family she belonged to. She only said “ship”, she belonged to ship and has lived whole her life at ship, she further added. When the sawyer’s two sons paid too much attention to Sorrow,



sawyer's wife got worried and wanted to get rid of the girl. So, Sorrow landed at the farmhouse of Jacob Vaark.

Sorrow for a little time stayed with sawyers. In this time she remained as a pet to sawyers two young sons, still she was safe there to some extent. She failed to recall anything about her previous life, she had no memories of her past life which "seemed as stolen as its (ship's) cargo" (Morrison 115). When sawyer's wife interviewed Sorrow she refused to unfold any information about herself or related to her family. A reader wonders what the case with Sorrow is, is it deliberate that she hides her identity and she does not want to disclose her family? Is her family life so miserable that she does not want to go back? But Sorrows attitude is that she is disillusioned from everything.

At Vaark's farmhouse Sorrow is informed by Lina that she is pregnant, hearing that she is both surprised and happy. "She flashed with the pleasure at the thought of a real person, a person of her own growing inside her" (121). Morrison demonstrates that with the instinct of a baby growing inside Sorrow develops a social sense, she had a hope that there is going to be someone "her own". Sorrow had lived all her life among strangers, as she never remembered any of her family members, family was like a word written on the sand which could be disfigured by a slightest touch of the tide. Now, everything was about to be changed, someone from her own womb will be in this world that will give her a social validity, and the sense of disintegrated self will be vanished away. But all her hopes were destroyed when her baby could not survive and Sorrow was trapped in a traumatic situation due to her loneliness and unfulfilled dream of having someone her own.

But the dream of family seemed to become a reality for Sorrow as she was pregnant for the second time. Toni Morrison does not mention any thing about the father of the babies; neither seems Sorrow interested in any man. Even Morrison has not said how she became pregnant. Sorrow seems to be interested in having a baby so that she can belong to someone. Her own parents remain unknown throughout the novel. So she does not enjoy any relational-connection. Longing for family remains only limited to desire and does not take a materiel



shape, Sorrow's relation with an abandoned ship and then sawyer's family and later at Vaark farmhouse, every time she was herself subject to abandonment.

With the safe birth of her baby with the help of Scully and Willy, Sorrow changes her name to Complete. How did she become complete with the birth of a child? Morrison does not mention anything though Sorrow knew that this child will become a social tie between her and the society. She hoped that this baby will bridge the gap between her and the outer world which was alien to her up to then. Sorrow by birth was not a slave but she has become one. From the narrative it does not seem that Sorrow is interested in any man, like Florens was in blacksmith. Rather she seems to be much obsessed with having someone produced by her own womb.

The difference between desire for family among Sorrow and Florens is that the former sees it as a production from her own existence and the later sees it as being dependent on someone else's existence. Sorrow has a great devotion for her baby and Florens has a great love for blacksmith. In both the cases isolation and loneliness has taken the shape of desire. A human could not live without social relational ties and same is the case with these two. Vaark's farm provided them with a friendly environment but not the comforting touch of home and family.

Rebekka and Animosity of Nature

When Rebekka, the mistress of the Vaark farm, first arrived Lina was already present there and "hostility between them was instant" (Morrison 50). What was the reason that these two young women grow hostile to each other? Their presence to each other presented a constant threat, real or supposed, of being thrown away. The farm was the only place they belonged to, and Jacob was the only man to protect them. These two together were to form the family for both Lina and Rebekka. The threat of elimination from the farmhouse that they presented to each other proves useless. They knew the world outside the farmhouse will not provide the sense of protection and the mutual fear brought the peace.



The case of Mr. Vaark and Rebekka is fateful, Morrison seems to suggest, Rebekka gave birth to four healthy babies but none of them survived. Only Patrician reached the age of five but died of a broken crown when she was hit by a horse, author knew that for an ambience of compassion, Vaark house has to remain childless even after having four kids. Toni Morrison makes Jacob Vaark a victim of nature who could not save any of his kids and later himself succumbs to smallpox, besides his wife also get infected. As a result, one time happy family of Jacob Vaark is transformed into a curse ridden state, drained by natural calamity.

Toni Morrison seems deliberately endeavour to isolate individuals. Morrison makes her characters to belong to no one; even if they belong to someone there is always an immediate threat of being isolated. Rebekka had a happy home at one stage, her husband took pride in her cooking and she extracted happiness in feeding him. But now no one around, her husband and children dead, Rebekka recalls her father's home and the way she reached this side of Atlantic. She realizes that she was always a vulnerable subject, among father and brothers, among ship mates and also at Jacob Vaark's farmhouse. This isolation is not new for Rebekka, her father and brothers always considered her a burden. She never seemed to be a part of that family where father and brothers always suppressed her. They were eager to get rid of her, Rebekka's relation with her father and brothers was a patriarchic domination. An obvious reason that she was given to a man who booked a seat for her in the ship and was ready to bare the expenses of her journey; it was a kind of "sale" (Morrison 72).

Rebekka remembers when she was boarded on ship, a new world unfolded itself before her. Her journey mates are cutpurse and prostitutes who are given the punishment of exile. These women have no prospect of better life. Rebekka had expected nothing better than this for herself also because she knew the care she was given by her parents can only make her a servant or a prostitute. But she herself preferred to become a wife, some affection was guaranteed there. At first, everything went correct for Rebekka but nature had something else in store, her four children died due to one sickness or the other followed by her husband Jacob Vaark, and Rebekka was left alone. As she was herself sick, she kept thinking about her dead children. Probably, she was contemplating on the blasphemy on their part through

the big house that Jacob Vaark built became a reason for the curse. The few people, her servants, who were around Rebekka when she herself was almost dying, could not take the place of family remembers.

Toni Morrison's strong concern for women and conviction of male dominated society has been demonstrated through the incidents in the novels that Rebekka's children followed one another and died. She develops a doubt in the mercy of God, a mercy from which women has always been deprived. Rebekka heartbrokenly tells Lina "I don't think God knows who we are" (Morrison 78), her expectations from God were enormous, she expected happiness as she had married a good man and had given birth to four children. "Their community further disintegrates when Rebekka retreats into religion, losing the benevolence she once possessed. Her newfound religiosity is enslaving but no more so than Florens' desire to be owned by smithy or Sorrow's belief that her newborn daughter completes her" (Jennings 647).

Toni Morrison has adopted different perspectives. Since women are being suppressed in family or the society, Morrison presents divers reasons for it. In the case of Florens it is individual man, here in the shape of blacksmith, who suppress Florens and in the case of Rebekka's journey mates who are forced to choose either imprisonment or the exile, it is law that suppress the women. In both the cases they are deprived of family care and are set on the perpetual journey of desire for a peaceful family life. "Female characters within Toni Morrison's novels are scarred—physically and/or emotionally—by the oppressive environments around them. Racially exploited, sexually violated, and often emotionally humiliated for years or decades, these women often learn to coexist with their visible and invisible scars by making choices that are not easily understood" (Putnam 2011).

Conclusion

The most significant characters in *A Mercy* are women; Toni Morrison has concentrated only on plight of the women characters. Morrison has also positioned women at the center of the novel may it be Lina, Sorrow, Florens or Rebekka or the women that Rebekka met on the ship. They live a life excluded from society and they do not have any



significance in their society. So, Morrison has drawn a portrait in which women are the most wretched being in the society. Toni Morrison's view seems that all the calamities and disasters that hit a society women are the worst affected.

The family embodies a main vacuum in the life of every character in *A Mercy*. Florens thinks that she was abandoned by her mother and rejected by the blacksmith. Lina was thrown out by Presbyterians and Sorrow was sent away by sawyers. The result in all these cases was loneliness and isolation. Every character wanted to make her life stable through one means or the other. Only Rebekka succeed in having a husband and children but she became the victim of natural calamity. Like all other characters, she was also left alone in the later part of her life when no one among her kin was near her.

Toni Morrison in this novel has also demonstrated the need of the stable family life for an individual. The physical and spiritual wellbeing of an individual depends to a great extent on family peace and social life in modern days is disturbed only because family life is disturbed. Morrison exhibits that the life of these characters is very hard not due to race, colour and ethnicity but some other forces are at work. A human, individually on his own, could not solve the problems, manmade or natural, that he or she faces. One individual, either male or female, need the support of others to survive in life's up and down situations. Florens foremost wants her mother, Lina does not have anyone but wants to possess Florens, Sorrow lost all human connections as she lost connection with looted ship. Sorrow's last hope is her baby. Rebekka had four children and husband but lost everyone. So, having no family puts one in hard times and causes his or her tragedy.

The way Toni Morrison has designed the narrative of *A Mercy*, she places family at the center of every individuals life irrespective of race, colour or ethnicity. Individuals are happy as long as they are in the knot of relations. Jacob Vaark's farmhouse seems very serene and peaceful as long as he is present there and others are also around even blacksmiths temporary presence makes a difference. Everything functions smoothly but once Jacob died the masterless women could not control their mental isolation. They seem to fell in seclusion, no one to facilitate their connection with the rest of the world. Naihao Lee has rightly argued



that “*A Mercy* is a story about order and disorder, organization and disorganization” of “religion, family and individual identities” and one is convinced with this observation.

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A Study of the Nationalist Sentiments in *Ghore Baire* in the light of Camus' *The Rebel*

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Abstract: In my paper titled, "A Study of the Nationalist Sentiments in *Ghore Baire* in the light of Camus' *The Rebel*", I have attempted to explore the philosophical/ideological underpinnings behind nationalist movements (as portrayed in Tagore's novel) in comparison to Camus' idea of rebellion. The novel though rooted in the country's freedom struggles from the British Raj remains especially relevant for our times. The fatalism involved in rebellions that necessitate violence has been put to question and examined through *The Rebel's* discourses round 'crimes of passion' and 'crimes of logic'. The simultaneous 'becoming' and undoing of many through the course of the movement, egged by narrow patriotism, has also been traced. The choice of selecting an European text (published in 1951) to analyze motives of rebellions in the Eastern context owes to Tagore's statements in his essay, "Nationalism in India" that India tries to appropriate the models of the West when it comes to political movements when it should rather aim at building a 'samaj' or society.

Keywords: Nationalism, Woman, Absurd, Violence.

Sandeep: "I only seek the result", said I, "which belongs to today."

"The result I seek", said Nikhil, "belongs to all time." (Tagore)

The dialogic exchange of ideas between Sandeep and Nikhil in Tagore's *The Home and the World* appears from the perspective of Sandeep, whose analyses of Nikhil's idealism as impractical gains the greater focus. The urgency of the immediate driving rebellions and the farsightedness involved in contemplating a reformed future which forms the crux of the personality and vision of the two nationalists in the novel can be seen in the framework of



Camus' demarcation in *The Rebel*. In my view, the novel develops through an implicit critique of the rhetoric of affect and mechanized production of images to drive the masses towards an illusory freedom, where the origin ('utpatti') and the realization ('upolobdhi') of nationalist sentiments are gulfed, without discarding or merely using as foil Sandeep whose very agenda is critiqued. What Sandeep's character embodies, apart from implicating the malaise at the heart of the Swadeshi Movement, maybe defined in Camus' words as "the rebellion cannot exist without a strange form of love" and that "real generosity towards the future lies in giving all to the present" (Camus 3).

"My beloved, it was worthy of you that you never expected worship from me. But if you had accepted it, you would have done me a real service" (Tagore Web). Worshipping as characteristically typical of women, inherited from her mother had assimilated into the daily gestures in Bimala towards her husband like touching his feet as he slept each morning and offering blossoms of devotion to his framed portrait. This stance is interpreted by Nikhil as a self-delusional practice by Bimala occupied with a false ideal of her husband that can only arouse in him humiliation and envy. The disservice rendered, thus, by removing himself from the pedestal of worship, seems to have redirected Bimala's worshipping impulses towards the nation vis-a-vis Sandeep. What Nikhilesh suspects Bimala of is however not far from the myth making he engages in resulting in an erasure of Bimala as a real woman (Chaudhuri 228). False idealism extends to the trope of conceiving the nation as motherhood through the body of the woman by nationalists like Gora (in the figure of Sucharita) and Sandeep (Bimala) informing the ideology of the rebellions. The "stupendous joy in (this) unquestioning surrender" (Tagore) that extended from the iconic Bimala to a nation of patriots engaging in an imitation of Western nationalism where conflict and conquest results in a "political and commercial aggressiveness" (Tagore 64) has been critiqued by Tagore. The stigmatization of the 'other' contrary to the inclusive spirit of India is reflected in the aggressive vocabulary of the extremists and contributes to the formation of a 'vigorous' national hero (Ray 192). The national hero, who inspires that "unquestioning



surrender” to the reclaiming of an oppressed nation, stands in opposition to the spirit of ‘sublimation’ of others within the self embodied by Nikhil (Chaudhuri 228) can be discussed in light of Camus’ *The Rebel*. Through becoming the erotic interest, ‘Queen Bee’ of Sandeep and her elevation to the status of the nation-mother, Bimala too attains a heroic status of national dimension.

Camus describes the rebel as a personage who can simultaneously say ‘yes’ and ‘no’- ‘no’ to the infringement of rights and ‘yes’ to the conviction of absolute right within him (10). In Sandeep, Tagore’s advocacy for the necessity of anti-colonial revolution and the distrust of its self-covetousness combines. Driven by the sense of ‘absolute right’, a response to the call of the hour gets distorted by ‘forceful desire’ (Tagore) - a distortion that is underlined in his monologue that establishes that “every man has a natural right” to possess and the country should be possessed by force. In his rapacious rhetoric appropriated when addressing Bimala or the concerns of the nation, his motives are deeply suspected because even if the rebellion itself may not essentially be egotistic, once the cause of rebelling is taken up one can rebel equally well against lies as against oppression (Camus 12). The very ambition of seizing one’s own nation forcefully implicates an interchangeable motives of colonialism and nationalism. “Indians complained of colonial arrogance, and yet they treated their own people so badly”- in the words of Ramachandra Guha (xiv). “At first I suspected nothing, I feared nothing” (Tagore). Bimala’s embracing of the nationalist cause can be relegated to that moment of awareness, the “sudden, dazzling perception” (Camus 11) when complete identification with other men and the absolute good. The rebel aspires to embrace ‘All’ or ‘Nothing’ and resolved to resist the rebellion even at the cost of death, as can be traced in the “supreme bliss” (Tagore) of impending self-annihilation that Bimala becomes addicted to.

Bimala’s initiation into nationalist devotion beginning with an impulse to worship and surrender soon degenerated into inebriation which she describes as a “cataclysmic desire”, “a making havoc of myself” (Tagore). The passions which seethed in Sandeep only to



overwhelm Bimala and a nation of compatriots even when the former had ceased to respect him as an individual beyond his wizardry of speech can be consigned only to the negative aspect of rebellion. Whether it is in Sandeep's preaching of the theory of Injustice to pursue the nation's work or in Bimala's attachment to the cause of nationalism even after her recognition of Sandeep, resentment is discernible which is expressed by Scheler as an "autointoxication—the evil secretion, in a sealed vessel, of prolonged impotence" (Camus 12). The simultaneous resentment and fascination towards her own nightmarish state which is a far more intoxicating than the drunkard Munu is in alignment with Scheler's association of it with women who are prone to desires and passions. Resentment transforms into either "unscrupulous ambition" or "bitterness" (Camus 13) in accordance with its inculcation in an individual but in each case, it results in a refashioning of identity- a becoming. While "unscrupulous ambition" affects Sandeep, Bimala is finally shattered by the bitterness of a dawning realization of the corruption at the heart of the Swadeshi practisers. The ethical non-divide that emerges between Bimala and Nikhil leading to the eventual degeneration of the conjugal bond revolves round Nikhil's denouncing of the collective coarseness which mass mobilisations in movements often deviated into. From the incitement of 'ojoswita' (declamation) and 'uddipana' (excitement) through poems for pro-nation people like "Progress of the Country" to the renunciation of the folk tunes in *Baul* (1905), Tagore's delinking from mainstream politics by promoting narrow patriotic sentiments becomes apparent (Ray 200). The autointoxication or spirit of hatred and resentment implicit in the rhetoric of 'ojoswita' and 'uddipana' curbed Nikhil, often the mouthpiece of Tagore, from partaking in a self-covetous Swadeshi which ran on mutual instigation through the 'Bandematarm' mantra. In Tagore's words which closely links the vices of the nationalist movements in India with the rebellions of the West, it is the hypnotic spell on the people who is unaware of its moral perversion but become dangerously resentful when pointed out. (Ganguly XIV) Sandeep and his followers can be ascribed to that community of rebels whose rebellion feeds on social injustice and is a "pillar of power" whose agenda of attacking the tyrants and the power of the rules than the rules themselves make revolution an impossibility,



according to Sartre (Paz 168). Tagore's eschewing of the political in preference of the social, as apparent in his *Nationalism* essays was in keeping with the enlightenment project of moral and spiritual upliftment of the people to approach a revolutionary order.

While the rebel figure can run risks to the extent of self-sacrificing for the cause of his/her rebellion, whether killing can be justified and any question of value is invoked by a rebellion informs *The Rebel*. Violence enters into the narrative of the nationalist movement in *The Home and the World* in the disconcerting incident where Sandeep challenges his followers at a picnic to cut off one leg of a grazing goat to encounter a lack of volunteers. He proves his mettle at being above human weakness by perpetrating the task himself evoking a fascinated reverence from his followers. The drive to murder and willingness towards self-destruction is simultaneously included in the narrative of nationalist struggles. Camus takes up the argument regarding the justification of "crimes of passion" and "crimes of logic" in *The Rebel*. Camus moves from the negation of the self involved in the trend of suicide thirty years ago to the denial of others through ideology that justifies killing in rebellions. In the process of revolution attempting to find a logic within itself, the rightness or the wrongness of the murderer becomes less crucial as movements are not driven by demarcation between the just and the unjust but between the master and the slave. Awareness of the absurd removes scruples as a determining factor in the legitimacy of killing inciting the proliferation of crimes but even though ideology logically validates these crimes perpetrated in the name of movements, the right to kill another human still remains open to debates. Camus' concerns about the rights to violence and murder is addressed by Tagore's assertion of the importance of the individual in the larger scheme of things. While Sandeep could easily lead his nationalist troops to commit crimes of passion and logic, Nikhil would starkly renounce the sacrifice of life and one's scruples to achieve one's ends as is underlined by statements by the two proponents of nationalism. Nikhil refuses to acknowledge success won at the cost of the human soul because he finds it more valuable than success, while bloodlust is implicated in that of Sandeep's statement-"I want the western military style to prevail, not the Indian. We shall then not be ashamed of the flag of our passion, which mother Nature has sent with us as



our standard into the battlefield of life” (Tagore)

Amulya, one among the many young patriots who left their education, homes and jobs to partake of the nationalist movement, incites the second awareness in Bimala- this time of horror at the utter lack in aesthetics in the drives of the romanticized rebellions. In an exchange, where Bimala asks Amulya if he can arrange for fifty thousand rupees for utilisation in the work of nation-making as Sandeep had demanded of her, he answers with an afflicted “why not?” that fails to convince Bimala of the ethicality of the means he contrives to adopt. He first proposes looting the market to bribe the watchman who guards the treasury but realizing the impracticality of the venture, arrives at the conclusion of shooting him. The sight of the pistol in the boy’s hand and ready utterances from the *Gita*, stupefies Bimala regarding the allure of an imagined freedom from oppression she had been besotted to and which in her becoming, had also been her undoing as of many misguided young nationalists like Amulya. The misguiding romanticization of the nationalist movement extends from the ‘egotistic’ and ‘romantic’ hero, explored in Sandeep since the inception of the novel, who in the singleness of his purpose, disavows innocence and embraces human injustice and deliberate violence (Camus 28). Camus mentions that a suitable crime committed in a frenzied state reveals the whole life of the individual- Amulya’s contemplation of the heinous crime with relative ease reveals the sham of the nationalist rebel life Bimala had engaged in. From the suggestion of dismissal of Ms. Gilby to the attack of her on the road by an young nationalist, Bimala had failed to dissociate herself from the aggressiveness of nationalist pride that is stripped of compassion and pity. Much like Amulya understands pity as the height of cowardice that refrains from hurting one’s own tender instincts (Tagore). Amulya’s decision of murder confuses the boundary between ‘fatalistic’ and ‘calculated’ murder (Camus 11) because while the former is preconditioned by the feeling of the absurd, the latter cannot be accorded to the same. While the consciousness of the absurd has been initiated into Amulya at a premature age wherein ‘evil’ and ‘virtue’ have become caprices, Sandeep and other patriots who believe in calculated murder for the freedom of the nation would ensure interpellation by the same. The incident signifies at once a return for Bimala and the



awakening of the true Mother in her-a mother that longs to protect the humaneness of the child from misappropriation breaks away from the eroticized symbol of motherhood created by the gaze of a national patriarch that only provides illusory strength to the masses. Tagore's repeated appeals to the ideals of the 'Universal Human' (Banerji 70) implicated in his suspicion of nationalism led to his fashioning of a cosmopolitanism, according to Asish Nandy, through the cultural revival by a national ideology he found lacking. (Banerji 70) In assuming a social responsibility towards the likes of Amulya, Bimala momentarily subsumes herself into Tagore's philosophy of placing the people before the nation- what her husband had meant in his convictions that he could not be oppressive to the nation even if for the sake of the nation.

The extent to which the patriotism based on false idealism can break havoc in that dedication is transformed into intoxication can be realized in the final act of stealing from her husband's treasury for Sandeep's project of nation-building even though she is conscious of committing a greater disservice to the nation rather than justice in her act. Even though she thoroughly recognizes the opportunism in Sandeep's person and realizes her mistake in being ideologically opposed to Nikhil's sensible and sensitive form of nationalism, Sandeep's personality still incites her into believing in what she knows she cannot believe in. Nikhil could perceive with clarity that Bimala's words were contoured by the shadows of Sandeep's ideas and not by her own realizations so her words could easily be rendered fickle. He refrained from dismissing Sandeep on similar grounds in spite of his conflicts with him in the nation-building vision, because his opposed ideals were rooted in authenticity, that is in Sandeep, the origin of the cause and its realization were not divorced. Camus in *The Rebel*, establishes the necessity of a rebellion's transition into a revolution since, "the rebel is nothing if not a revolutionary" (Camus 124). Revolution presupposes the "absolute malleability of the human nature" (124) which can be reduced to historical forces while rebellion aims to surpass the limits of history. Tagore's ardent support of the Swadeshi movement in its earliest stage by publication of poems and songs to contribute to the frenzy



of the time was auto-critiqued in his essays in *Prabasi* as pointed out by Swapan Chakravorty (Guha XV). The evolution in his identity as a nationalist and social thinker, summed up in his own words-“I took a few steps down the road, then stopped”- contributed to the variety of incomprehension he faced all his life. According to Guha, he had been in turn accused of being anti-Western, colonial agent, as an extreme patriot by the foreigner and not as patriotic enough by the Indian (ix). This echoes Nikhil’s contingent position in *The Home and the World* where his refusal to be swayed by the extremism of mass politics in spite of his truer dedication to the cause of the nation evoked public criticism, slanderous reports, caricatures and lampoons in the newspapers burning of effigies. If Nikhil appears to be more of an ideal reformist than a revolutionary in Camus’ terminology throughout the novel, Sandeep too stops short at being a rebel, hence, the transition from the rebellion to the revolution is barely played out though Nikhil turns out to be the more revolutionary in that he is futuristic.

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Social, Cultural and Political Context of Language: *English Vinglish*

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Abstract: With the advancement in technology and globalisation the vogue of English language has risen to great heights. It has become a status symbol, mainly for middle and upper middle class families. English language now has the power to create power differentials not only in the political or social spheres but also in the family. A language like English determines power equations in the family. It is gradually playing an important role in shaping oneself. It is moving inwards now, moving into one's kitchen and hearth. The language has the power to demarcate between intelligent and less intelligent, important and less important, respectable and less respectable members in the family, and this is mainly decided by the youngsters, especially the children. This state of affairs has far reaching affect on the mother, as it seriously challenges her identity of motherhood, her self-esteem, because the mother being a woman is most susceptible and becomes the victim of this politics of language. Even in post modern times, motherhood is still considered one of the central tenets of a woman's identity, thus forcing her to always make an effort to think and act towards proving herself to be a good mother. Nowadays motherhood is not only about being a good caring mother, but also a smart English knowing mother, a mother whom the children could showcase proudly. Not being proficient in English can have dire consequences for the mother and motherhood. This paper, with the help of the film *English Vinglish* tries to reflect upon the same.

Key Words: feminism colonization globalization multiculturalism motherhood.



Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the pioneers of liberal feminism, in her most influential work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* focuses on the need of education for women so that “they must only bow to the authority of reason, instead of being the modest slaves of opinion”(51). She also insists on the need of education so that they could become “affectionate wives and rational mother”(7). Along with this, education would help them to become a good companion of men.

In today's times it would not be unreasonable if along with education a woman would focus upon her knowledge of English language to become a good wife and affectionate mother. Again only knowledge of English will not suffice, the need is to be fluent in the language. This is so because in spite of decades of decolonization English is still considered the language of rationality, reason and dignity. In fact people, and especially the youngsters, take English to be the mark of intelligence and respectability in the society as well in the family itself. With the advancement in technology, and globalisation leading to multiculturalism the vogue of English language has risen to great heights, and has become a status symbol mainly for middle and upper middle class families. English language now has the power to create power differentials not only in the political or social spheres but also in the family. A language like English determines power equations in the family. English now is not only the language of the elites or an official language of the inside and the outside world, but is also the language of the common people. It is gradually playing an important role in shaping oneself. It is moving inwards now, moving into one's kitchen and hearth. The language has the power to demarcate between intelligent and less intelligent, important and less important, respectable and less respectable members in the family, and this is mainly decided by the youngsters in the family, especially the children. This state of affairs has far reaching affect on the mother, as it seriously challenges her identity of motherhood, her self-esteem, because the mother being a woman is most susceptible and becomes the victim of this politics of language. Even in post modern times, motherhood is still considered one of the central tenets of a woman's identity, thus forcing her to always make an effort to think



and act towards proving herself to be a good mother. Nowadays motherhood is not only about being a good caring mother but also a smart English knowing mother, a mother who the children could showcase proudly. Not being proficient in English can have dire consequences for the mother and motherhood. Howsoever devoted she may be towards her family and familial duties, lack of English language can make her under confident, hopeless and unworthy of being a mother. The humiliation can destroy her self esteem for she always looks upon her family for recognition. However, knowing or being proficient in English or so called being modern does not change her traditional duties of looking after the daily domestic chores which are considered to be of no value socially or economically. But still knowing a language, and, not knowing a language like English can make a great difference, for language has the power of emancipation, the potential of empowerment, making one realize her worth not only for the family but also for the society.

A powerful language like English has a great potential to create binary oppositions in the family. A mother not knowing English or even not able to pronounce the English words is treated as ignorant, a simpleton and not worthy of deserving to be taking part in conversations taking place among the English knowing and so considered intelligent people in the family. Language has the power to bind and also to divide, as it can displace other differences of place, religion or ethnicity. Language is not only a medium of self expression and constructing ideas but also of ideologies-of one's values, beliefs and social and cultural practices.

All these aspects of language, here English language, can be discerned in the Bollywood movie *English Vinglish* by Gauri Shinde. The film focuses upon the real life conditions of women in the society, their domestic and social position as wives and mothers especially, through the protagonist, a woman named Shashi who is a dedicated wife and a mother of two kids, a teenager daughter and a younger son. She is not only a very efficient homemaker but also is an excellent cook who takes care of each ones tastes and choices in the family. From the beginning only we witness her performing all domestic chores adeptly

without getting even a single minute to think for herself. Apart from all her domestic chores Shashi manages to run a small business of laddoo making and thus able to save her own money. Soon after we know that in spite of being a very good wife and mother, Shashi is mocked at by her teenage daughter and husband for not knowing English and its pronunciations. She is highly embarrassed and feels humiliated, and later on tries to pronounce that word repeatedly so as to improve herself. She tries to make her young son happy by doing Michael Jackson's dance. Later on again we see that she is again humiliated by her daughter by her sarcastic remark, "*Tum padaogi mujhe English Literature?*" (Will you teach me English Literature?), when her mother suggests her to study at home and not go to her friends place to study. This is highly embarrassing for her for she never gets a word of appreciation from any of her family members. Her husband likes to have laddoos even though he does not appreciate her job of making laddoos. Shashi, a woman who tries to be an ideal wife as well as a mother is not recognised in the family and belittled persistently by her daughter and husband for not knowing English. Her daughter does not even think of telling her about the PTA meeting in her school. She does not consider her worthy enough to even tell her of the meeting leave alone attending it as her parent. She is again ready with her sarcastic remark, "*PTA ka matlab janti ho?*" (Do you know the meaning of PTA?) She is irritated and feels highly insulted when her mother Shashi is not able to talk to her friend's mother and the principal in English and also becomes too frank and unofficial with him. Shashi is heartbroken and depressed at the rude behaviour of her daughter and feels that it is she who has failed in the examination. She in despair laments that whatsoever she does is not able to make anyone happy.

Shashi, the protagonist of the film is the typical example of an Indian woman, a dedicated and selfless woman for whom her family is everything, and who sacredly performs all her duties. For her, motherhood is the most important thing for a woman, and she at any cost must try to satisfy others, for her satisfaction depends upon the happiness of her family. Shashi even after doing her level best to become a good mother and wife looks at her



husband and others for recognition. All her efforts of becoming a good mother are futile just for one reason, and that is that Shashi is not fluent in English. This is the hindrance to everything she aspires to become—a good mother and wife. Her identity as a wife and mother largely depends upon being skilled in English language. She realizes the lack of it and knows that knowing English only can bring her respect and make her a successful mother.

The turning point comes in her life when she has to go to the U.S.A. to her sister's place for assisting her in her daughter's marriage before a month of her own family. She is highly under confident about her journey. Fortunately she meets a gentleman in the plane who boosts up her courage by his dialogue, "Nobody can help you better than you." And his statement that one should love oneself stands well not only for Shashi then but for all the women around the world who look at others and especially men for recognition, and for whom their existence is merely for serving others. This meeting and later on seeing her own sister who has been a widow since long and is running her own business and has brought up her daughters well all alone by herself makes her hopeful. Her sister though mentions that it was because of her husband's support that she could carry on with her life. This statement of her sister forces us to go back to Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* where she urges that men should try to understand women and never consider them less in intelligence. She should always be considered a companion by men and encouraged to adorn herself not with artificial things to enhance her beauty but reason and intelligence to support the family. And this liberal attitude of understanding is emphasised in the movie. 'Where there is a will there is a Way', they say, and the same thing happens here. Shashi's strong feeling and desire to learn English leads her to join English speaking classes where she meets people of different nationalities and ethnicities who too have joined it to learn English. During the introduction of each of the members by the English teacher, Shashi comes to know that the little business and her hobby of making laddoos is entrepreneurial and she is an entrepreneur. She is overjoyed, feels proud and keeps murmuring this term to herself. The language can make a difference in creating self-esteem. The way the teacher and others look



up at her hobby and gives it a respectable name 'entrepreneur' boosts her morale that her hobby and business of making laddoos which is accepted so reluctantly by her husband is respectable and important enough. She is also encouraged by a Frenchman in the group who too is a cook, and supports her in developing self confidence. She realizes with him for the first time that making food is an art and love, and that she is a beautiful and intelligent woman. Another aspect of Shashi's personality is reinforced in the film when one day their English teacher is heartbroken because he has broken up with his boyfriend. This aspect of Shashi shows herself to be a free thinking, broad minded, liberal and very understanding woman. Earlier in the film we witness this character of her when her little son tries to poke her mother with his complaints about his sister that she had gone out to have coffee instead of studying, and she was wearing a small skirt, and also that boys too were there in the group. This complaint of his goes a waste as Shashi never forces her daughter in any kind of boundation or restriction. More than this her liberal and broadmindedness is reflected when crossing all the boundaries of nationalities or communities or ethnicities, she shows herself to be a human being with understanding and tolerance for all and everyone's feelings. This becomes apparent when there is a gossip in the English class that their teacher is heartbroken as he has broken with his boy friend. Others consider it to be a taboo and start making fun of him, but Shashi is the one who like a citizen of the world and liberal human being, at once defends him. She asks them not to make fun of the teacher. Her dialogue, "We all are different. David sir is not normal for you, you might not be normal for David sir. Pain is pain whatsoever." clearly shows her to be a very tolerant human being. Dealing with a complex issue like homosexuality in a group with people from various nationalities, ethnicities and attitudes makes already a broad minded, liberal, tolerant and intelligent family woman Shashi a more universal figure. English language provides her with an opportunity to express herself to a broader audience. A language has the power to bind, and English is such a language. She earns love and respect from all her colleagues for her understanding and tolerance.



Shashi is a simple, under-confident self-sacrificing wife and a mother, the one who values family the most. Her attitude towards life, her philosophy remains the same even after she goes to the U.S.A. and learns English. Learning English imparts her opportunity to meet different people of different kinds, and gives her a chance to express her ideas on a bigger platform, to motivate and change peoples attitude also towards things around. She also gets to know herself and the importance of loving and helping oneself to become a good wife, mother and a woman. At last we witness her to be the same Shashi but more confident after learning English, to express herself to a wedding gathering. Now she knows how to express and is well aware that she is being heard carefully by everyone, even her colleagues and the teacher. She is declared pass with distinction by the teacher and she is elated. Her speech to the newlyweds emphasises upon the role of a domestic woman. She focuses upon the equality of husband and wife, man and woman in a family. She says that family is never judgemental and a woman should never feel inferior, rather should help herself. Altogether she is still a domestic woman who thinks of the same traditional roles for a woman without any radical transformation. The film focuses upon what Mary Wollstonecraft had demanded years ago, education for woman so as to make her a responsible wife and a caring mother and a good and intelligent human being, and the film also reflects the same, for English speaking Shashi is worth a good mother and a wife and is readily accepted by her husband as well as the daughter at last. Nothing as such changes, the patriarchal ideologies are not challenged, the traditional role of a woman remains the same, but Shashi, by learning a language like English makes herself important and acceptable in her family.

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Exploring the Diverse Roles of Imagery in Select Poems of Kamala Das

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Abstract: Kamala Das, one of the leading Indian English Poets, is renowned for her confessional poetry which reveals her frustration in married life, her futile search for love, her extra-marital affairs, her protest against the injustice done to the women by the patriarchal society, and so on. Her poetry is characterised by a frank treatment of love, sex and the body. She, however, disapproves of the all-pervasive nature of lust and longs for a relationship based on genuine love, true affection and mutual trust. It goes without saying that her poetry teems with various images which widen the significance of her ideas and reveal the intensity of her varied feelings. However, the present paper seeks to examine some of Kamala Das's important poems to explore the diverse roles played by imagery in her poetry. In other words, the paper is to exhibit how the images serve manifold functions in the poems of Kamala Das.

Keywords: Imagery, confessional poetry, love, lust, frankness.

Introduction

Imagery refers to a mental picture dawn with the help of words. It may refer to a phrase or passage which makes the alert reader visualise something. However, it “includes not only the visual sense qualities, but also qualities that are auditory, tactile (touch), thermal (heat and cold), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), and kinaesthetic (sensations of movement)” (Abrams and Harpham 169).

Kamala Das is one of the most important Indian poets in English. She is a bilingual author writing in both her mother tongue Malayalam and English. Her poetry is confessional



in nature, since it reveals her private life, her unhappy conjugal life, her extra-marital affairs and the like. Her poetry is marked by an “uninhibited frankness with which she talks about sex” (Naik 218). In her poems, Kamala Das has voiced her protest against the subjugation and exploitation of women by men in a patriarchal society. She has also exhibited her feelings of loneliness, alienation, deprivation and despair. Her poetry shows her endless search for true love even in the arms of other men. M. k. Naik observes:

The result is confessional poetry obsessively mulling over love, sex and the body’s wisdom. Several faces of Eve are exhibited here – woman as sweetheart, flirt, wife, woman of the world, mother, middle aged matron – and above all, woman as an untiring seeker of the nature of the psychological processes behind both femininity and masculinity. (Naik 219)

In some of her poems, Das recollects her happiest days of childhood spent in her ancestral home in Kerala. However, “the total impression Kamala Das’s poetry produces is one of a bold, ruthless honesty tearing passionately at conventional attitudes to reveal the quintessential woman within” (Naik 219). Again, it is interesting to note that her poetry is dominated by a wide range of powerful images. Indeed, each and every poem by Das teems with images which are both suggestive and connotative. Her images not only foreground her myriad feelings but also enhance the implication and significance of her poetic works. In addition to that, her images serve to create a serious and tragic atmosphere in most of her poems. In the essay entitled “Poetry after Independence”, Rajeev S. Patke has beautifully pointed out:

Her [Kamala Das’s] poems struggle to develop a sense of self which is alternatively sustained and thwarted by her own sexuality, defined and disfigured as that is, in its turn, by being trapped in the rut of social institutions. Her poems count the cost suffered by freedom and honesty, in the relation between emotional and sexual needs, in marriage and outside. (Patke 284)



However, a close examination of Kamala Das's Poetry will reveal how images play a large number of roles in her individual poems.

In her celebrated poem "The Freaks", Kamala Das presents the pangs of a woman who fails to find emotional fulfilment or love in her married life. The poem dramatizes a situation where the husband is making love to the wife. The poet laments that her husband does not care for love or her emotional needs. Rather, he is obsessed with her body and his carnal desires. She here expresses her feelings of disgust and hatred towards her selfish and lustful husband. However, Das makes use of a large number of powerful images which expose her feelings of repulsion, boredom, loneliness, emptiness, despair and unbearable pain. For instance, the image of 'sun-stained cheek' brings to the fore the repulsive nature of the ugly face of the poet's husband. Again, the image of a 'dark cavern' used to describe his mouth points to his ugliness and hollowness. That he lacks the tender feeling of love and affection has been highlighted by the image of the dark cave. The speaker of the poem further uses the image 'stalactites' to portray the ugly and repulsive nature of her husband's teeth. His right hand is on her knee: it suggests the act of love making. While the woman longs for love and emotional fulfilment, the husband is absorbed only in the act of physical intercourse. The poet uses the image of 'puddle' to describe lust which has enslaved her husband. This image, no doubt, points to the fact that the husband's carnal desires are a hindrance to the achievement of true love. The unfortunate woman, i.e. the poet laments that she has been waiting for love for a long time but in vain. The image of an 'empty cistern' used to describe her heart is suggestive of her pathetic plight caused by the indifference and selfishness of her husband. Moreover, the image of 'coiling snakes' is indicative of the monotony and repulsion that are the inevitable consequences of a disastrous marriage. The poet, however, confesses that she pretends to feel the urge of lust to save her face:

I am

A freak. It is only to save my face



I flaunt at times, a grand, flamboyant lust. (Kamala Das: Selected Poems 76)

“The Grand Mother’s House” is another important poem by Kamala Das, which registers her feelings of nostalgia for her happy days of childhood spent at her grandmother’s house. Her unhappy and loveless conjugal life makes her reminisce about the genuine love that she received from her grandmother. The poem also sheds ample light on the state of stagnation and dead silence that began to reign supreme in the grandmother’s house after her sad demise. However, the poet uses the image of silence when she says that “the house withdrew into silence” after the death of her grandmother. The image unquestionably suggests the feelings of bereavement and emptiness occasioned by the grandmother’s death. Again, the image of snakes in the expression “snakes moved/among books” foregrounds the young poet’s feelings of fear and disgust. The moon is another powerful image used in the poem to emphasise the poet’s sense of dread and despair. Two other images occur in the following lines:

How often I think of going there,

To peer through the blind eyes of windows or

Just listen to the frozen air. (Kamala Das: Selected Poems 87)

There is no denying the fact that the image of ‘blind eyes’ not only indicates the eternal darkness of the grandmother’s house after the death of its owner but also connotes the poet’s feelings of loneliness and alienation. Moreover, the image of ‘frozen air’ serves to accentuate the state of stagnation in the house as well as the feelings of coldness and despair caused by the grandmother’s death. The other two images which are equally powerful and connotative are found in the concluding lines of the poem:

I who have lost

My way and beg now at strangers’ doors



To receive love, at least in small change? (Kamala Das: Selected Poems 87)

The image of losing way suggests the poet's deviation from the conventional notion that a woman must cling to her husband for ever, no matter whether he is good or wicked. The image of begging at the doors of strangers is indicative of her efforts to find true love in the embrace of other men. These two images indubitably help strengthen the confessional mood of the poet.

"The Looking Glass" exhibits Kamala Das's liberal and unconventional attitude towards love making or sex. She makes it clear that a woman should surrender completely to her lover by standing naked to him in front of the looking glass on the floor of the bathroom. She should expose each and every delicate part of her body to arouse and heighten her lover's sexual passions. In this way, consummation of love can turn into a reality. The poet, however, lays bare the pangs of a woman who has been deserted by her lover. However, the image of the lover and the beloved standing 'nude' in front of the looking glass brings to the fore the view that love making has nothing obscene or objectionable about it. The poet advises a woman to admire the perfection of her lover's limbs so that he may feel motivated to satisfy her "endless female hungers". The readers also come across the image of reddened eyes, which throws a good deal of light on the intensity of sexual passions felt by the lover. The image of jerky urinating also highlights the lover's excitement and wild passions. The poet proceeds to make use of a number of images suggestive of feminine charms, youthful passions and erotic feelings. These images include 'long hair', fragrance between the breasts and 'menstrual blood'. While focusing on the plight of a deserted woman, Das uses the image of 'burnished brass' to drive home the fact that her body once gleamed with passions and delight when it received the lover's passionate touch. She laments that her body is now 'drab' and 'destitute'.

"A Hot Noon in Malabar" is another personal poem in which Kamala Das reveals her intense longing for her ancestral house in Malabar. The poem teems with the feelings of



nostalgia and sheds much light on the contrast between city life and rural life. The poet here reminisces about the scene in Malabar during a hot noon. She lets us know that fortune tellers, bangle sellers and strangers came to Malabar to earn their livelihood. They sometimes refreshed themselves at the well. Again, Das lays bare her feelings of alienation, boredom and agony as she is now tied to a dull life in a remote city, far away from her parental house in Malabar. However, the images of “beggars with whining voices”, men with caged parrots and fortune cards, Kurave girls with old eyes and bangle sellers serve to portray the colourful scene in Malabar. The image of parrots in a cage may symbolise the pitiable plight of the poet herself who has been subjected to confinement, suffocation and deep anguish in a patriarchal society. The image of the feet devouring ‘rough miles’ emphasises the hardships and sufferings of the poor people who reach Malabar after a long journey on foot for their survival. Again, the poet uses the image of hot eyes “brimming with sun” to accentuate the scorching heat felt by the strangers at Malabar. The image of ‘jungle voices’ points to the unrefined and strange nature of the strangers. Another powerful image is found in the phrase “my/ home in Malabar” which is suggestive of homely comfort, true love and individual freedom.

In “The Old Playhouse”, Kamala Das has portrayed the consequences of unhappy conjugal life, such as her sense of confinement, helplessness, loneliness, physical and mental torment, her loss of freedom and self-identity, her mental and emotional inertia and her desire to get rid of her painful existence through death. At the very beginning, the poet reveals her helplessness and anguish through the image of a swallow which has been tamed and imprisoned. This image brings to the fore her feelings of confinement, agony, boredom, alienation and suffocation caused by the selfishness, indifference and egotism of her husband. This image also accentuates the fact that her husband has robbed her of her freedom and individuality, and turned her into an object of sexual gratification. The image of “bitter sweet juices” points the mixed feelings of pleasure and pain experienced by the unhappy wife during love making. Again, the poet uses the image of “braking saccharine into your tea” to



emphasise the stereotyped domestic duties which are imposed on a woman by the patriarchal society. Another important image used in the poem is that of a dwarf which is suggestive of the fact that the 'monstrous ego' of the selfish husband has reduced the poet to an insignificant level. The image, therefore, connotes her loss of identity, individuality and freedom. Kamala Das demonstrates the end of her happy days through the image of summer that "begins to pall". Moreover, the image of artificial lights illuminating her husband's room is indicative of his lack of feelings and spontaneity while the image of windows "always shut" highlights the poet's forced alienation from the rest of the world. We also come across the image of "cut flowers" which may suggest the poet's pangs of rootlessness and desolation. Interestingly enough, the central image of the poem is the old playhouse where all lights have been put out. This image is used to describe the poet's mind. It indubitably foregrounds her mental and emotional stagnation, her passivity and her feelings of loneliness, emptiness and despair. Like the old playhouse, the poet has been subjected to desolation and neglect. Apart from that, the image of Narcissus haunted by his own lonely face intensifies the feelings of isolation and disappointment which keep on plaguing the poet. However, the poem ends with the poet's desire to rid herself of her painful existence through death.

"The Sunshine Cat" is an outstanding confessional poem that lays bare Kamala Das's frustration in both marital and extra marital relationships. The poet here talks about her loneliness, helplessness and subjugation at the hands of her self-centred and lustful husband. She confesses that neither her husband nor her lovers have succeeded in providing her with love and emotional satisfaction. All of them have exploited her body to satisfy their carnal desires. However, the images of chests with new hair and the great-winged moths suggest the poet's feelings of disgust and repulsion towards her husband. The image of a "bed made soft with tears" brings out her pathetic predicament resulting from her anguish, disappointment and torment. The same feelings of helplessness are revealed in the image of "walls with tears". Again, "a streak of sunlight" is another image suggesting the illusory nature of



happiness and contentment. However, the central image of the 'sunshine cat' points to her despair and dehumanisation caused by the cruelty and selfishness of her unfeeling husband.

In "The Wild Bougainvillea", Kamala Das relates one of her experiences during her stay in Kolkata. One summer day, she felt gloomy, dejected and restless. She was eagerly waiting for a man from "another town". However, she came out and started walking through the city to get rid of her sufferings and gloom. She came across various signs of moral depravity on the beach and streets, and finally felt the onslaughts of time on the tombstones. She, however, found the signs of life in some flowers blooming beside the tombs. She, therefore, regained her faith in life, forgot that particular man and enjoyed a peaceful sleep at night. In a word, the poem shows her reaffirmation of life as well as her robust optimism. Like other poems of Kamala Das, this poem also teems with a number of suggestive images. For instance, the image of "mourners behind a bier" foregrounds her feelings of gloom, grief and despair. The image of "troubled sea" serves to reveal her anxiety, restlessness and mental torment. The images of "underside rotting", rotting of garbage and dead fish bring to the fore the moral degradation of the city of Kolkata. These images also point to the fact that the past glory of the city is on the wane. Moreover, the poet makes use of the images of "obtrusive breasts" and "sickly smile" to emphasise the moral degradation of Kolkata. It goes without saying that the image of tombstones indubitably represents death, decay and despair. The images of marigold and red bougainvillea, on the other hand, connote life and hope. These flowers thus serve to restore hope and meaning to the life the poet.

In the poem "In Love", Kamala Das has once again expressed her feelings of disgust and repulsion towards her lustful husband. The burning sun reminds her of her husband's repulsive mouth. She has to lie with him and satisfy his lust despite the fact that her emotional needs remain unfulfilled. The poet makes it abundantly clear that he is bereft of love, affection and such tender feelings. However, a number of images figure in this poem. At the very outset, the image of "the burning mouth/ Of sun" is used to emphasise the repulsive mouth of her husband. Moreover, the poet has used the image of "pale and/



Carnivorous plants” to drive home her husband’s lack of tender emotions and his obsession with lust. His embrace is as painful and tortuous as a “finished jigsaw”. This image, no doubt, suggests the fact that his embrace is not at all welcome to her. It brings to the fore her feelings of agony, anguish and repulsion. There is also the image of “the corpse bearers” crying “Bol Hari Bol”, which reveals the poet’s mood of gloom and despair. Again, the image of “moonless night” serves to accentuate her feelings of deprivation, emptiness and disappointment. The poem ends with her refusal to regard her husband’s lust as an expression of love:

This skin communicated

Thing that I dare not yet in

His presence call our love. (The Golden Treasury of Indo-Anglian Poetry 272)

In “The Dance of The Eunuchs”, Kamala Das has presented the pitiful plight of the eunuchs who are leading a death-in-life existence. She here relates how the eunuchs came and started dancing in the scorching sun. Their cheeks had green tattoos on them while their hair was decorated with jasmines. Their voices were harsh and their songs were melancholy. However, the image of their skirts which keep on going round them may suggest their monotony and boredom. The image contained in the expression “till they bled” points to the eunuchs’ physical and mental sufferings. Again, the poet has used the image of “sorry breasts” to foreground their barrenness as well as their pangs stemming from disappointment and mockery. Moreover, the image of “half-burnt logs from funeral pyres” not only emphasises their wretched sufferings but also connotes that they are on the verge of death. Kamala Das goes on to use the images of ‘drought’ and ‘rotteness’ to accentuate the eunuchs’ sense of emptiness, infertility and emotional decay. However, it may not be out of context to point out that the eunuchs and their predicament seem to objectify the poet’s own sufferings, anguish and despair.



“An Introduction” is a confessional poem where Kamala Das introduces herself to the readers by talking about her birth-place, nationality, language, and, of course, her frustration in her conjugal life. She begins by confessing that she does not know politics though she can name the politicians. She defends her use of English as medium of writing poetry. She uses the images of cawing of crows and roaring of lions to drive home the point that English comes to her naturally and spontaneously. She proceeds to make use of the images of “trees in storm”, “monsoon clouds”, “rain”, and the “incoherent mutterings of the blazing/ Funeral pyre” to assert that her language is not deaf or blind like those things. Again, she reveals her sufferings at the hands of her husband and voices her concerns about the oppression of women by men in a patriarchal society. She uses the image of “the hungry haste/ Of rivers” to highlight the fact that her husband only cared for sex and he always made haste to satisfy his carnal desires by exploiting her body. The image of “the ocean’s tireless/ Waiting” brings to the fore her fruitless waiting for real love and her disappointment. Another powerful image is found in the expression “sword in its sheath” which represents the husband’s narrow-mindedness, egotism and rigidity.

Conclusion

Thus, Kamala Das’s poetry abounds with powerful images which serve a large number of functions. Most of her images are instrumental in foregrounding her feelings of discontent, isolation, loneliness, deprivation, boredom, anguish and emptiness. The images also lay emphasis on her pangs arising out of her loss of self-identity, individuality and freedom. There are some other images which help enhance the frankness and honesty of her confessions. Her images also enable her to voice her protest against the tyranny of patriarchy more effectively. Apart from that, her images accentuate the far-reaching consequences of a disastrous marriage. Again, the images serve to reveal her hatred towards her selfish, repulsive and lustful husband who does not bother about her emotional needs. Hence, one must conclude by saying that the numerous images of Kamala Das not only enhance the



aesthetic beauty and literary importance of her poetry but also perform a number other functions.

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English Hub: A Wondrous Tool for Language Teachers and Learners

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Abstract: In the Era of globalization, English language most often gives a successful platform for business, politics, organizations, media and society. English is learned around the world in particular of professional students to face the huge competition in the field. It is crystal clear that language teacher needs to be creative and innovative to teach English as a Secondary Language with new strategies. “English Hub” is an effective centre of an activity to widen the language skills particularly in the teaching – learning process. It is an innovative and pre requisite tool to teach thought provokingly even for the rural students like in India. This paper is mainly focused on how to make students comfortable to learn English effectively and enhance the communicative ability with which students can easily polish their inner skills of knowledge. The paper proposes that how a teacher can develop activities for English Hub in an innovative and creative way which makes the learner easy to involve and participate. Obviously, it helps not only for the rural or mother tongue influenced students but also English medium students to improve their effectiveness in the LSRW Skills. Finally, this paper proposes innovative activities for grammar practice and presentations.

Key words: Global language, Facilitator, Motivator, Active learner, Activities, LSRW.

1. Introduction



“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.” (Einstein Brainy Quote) In this statement great scientist Albert Einstein was opined magnificently on “Teacher”, whose role is to create joy and interest among the students in the process of knowledge acquisition. In the Era of globalization, English language most often gives a successful platform for business, politics, organizations, media and society. English is learnt around the world in particular of professional students to face the huge competition in their field. “Teaching English as a second Language to non-native students, coming from different strata of society in mixed ability large classes is in totality a herculean task.” (Somwasnshi 2011) It is crystal clear that language teacher is needed to be challenging and innovative to teach English as a Secondary Language with new strategies. Being a facilitator, the teacher can create an amicable environment with which he/she can grab the attention of the students easily. In the present scenario, Language Teacher plays a prominent role in molding the student’s personality with Communication and Soft skills.

The main motive to implement language hub in the activity based teaching is to enhance the communicative ability with which the candidate will be polished inner skills of knowledge. It is essential to introduce the language hub in particular of graduate level of professional students to acquire LSRW Skills, Presentation skills, Conversational Skills, Team Building Skills and Interview skills and other because it is difficult to imagine success in the global competitive world without language competency. Students with mother tongue influenced and rural background learners are being stressed and unable to present their ideas or thoughts at the Interview Panel. So, acquisition of language is part and parcel for the learner to face the global platform of competition in the multinational companies. Obviously, activity at English Hub is a unique learning environment and it makes the learner active and confident to participate in the interactive sessions with their open relaxed mind. Thought provoking concepts on vocabulary topics like phrasal verbs, proverbs, antonyms, synonyms, inflections of suffixes and prefixes, etc will be added color to task based teaching-learning.



Besides, group discussions and personal interviews, Just-a-minute (JAM) session, which is a form of presentation lasting only for a minute or so, has emerged as an important recruitment tool in today's professional world. (Kumar and Lata 283)

1. 1. Teacher: Facilitator

It is need of the hour to adopt new strategies for language teacher to compete the world of opportunities. Though the students are motivated to involve but internal obstacles like fear, nervousness, lack of confidence, unawareness have been made great barriers for the most of them. "Nervousness is a common problem that prevents many people from making presentations and many presenters from doing a good job." (Monippally 124) To conquer the fear of nervousness, the teacher is needed to act as a facilitator for generating ideas in a group or in the individual. The teacher plays a crucial role to create an amicable environment and make the student comfortable to listen, speak, read and write in the activity based classroom.

If the teacher can frame with the following assumptions on group activities like G.D, Debate, Just A Minute Session, Ice Breakers, Reading Exercises, Retelling Stories, Vocabulary Puzzles, PPT presentations on august personalities, Audio & Video Collections and Visual - Aids will be useful for both the teacher and the learner.

The success of the activity lies in teacher's clarity and well designed activities. The teacher has to divide the class into groups and motivate the students to speak one by one on any topic. The teacher is usually found difficulty at this juncture because some are interested and enthusiastic but some are not ready to participate. With the firm grounding of preparation and optimistic approach, the teacher focuses on bringing the student into a comfortable zone because learning equally from success and mistakes is a skill that transfers the person into personal and professional. To solve this problem, facilitator is suggested to make the class into groups of five. Identify the students with their standards and train them according to their levels. No student is found poor for a conscientious teacher.

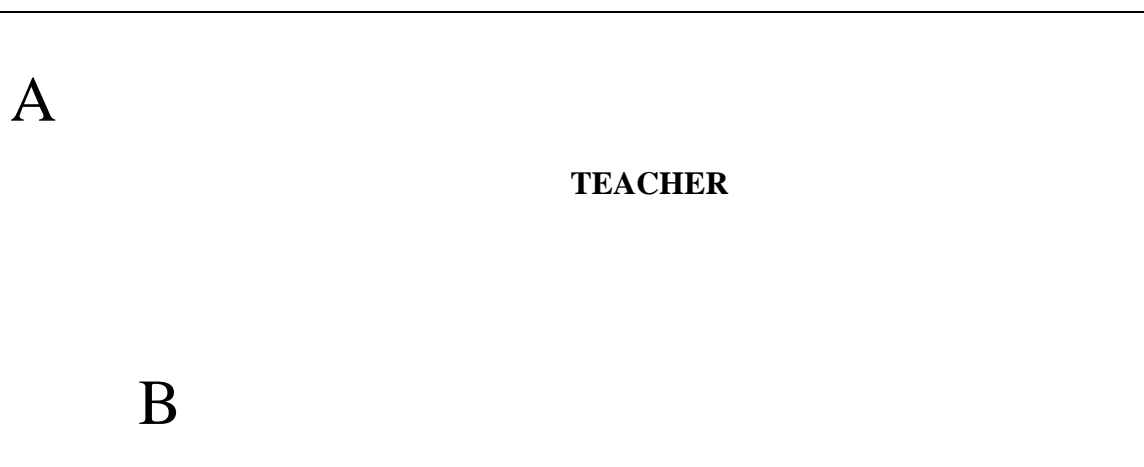


For example each group must consist of 3 level of students of **A** (good at language), **B** (average at language) and **C** (below average at language). It is essential to make a group with **A**, **B**, and **C** and train them to involve or participate regularly in the activities like reading short stories, current news topics, and comprehension passages at English Hub. Sometimes “A” group students are good at LSRW Skills but they may not be interested to present in front of others or get rid of stage. Whereas below average students may not come forward to present their inner ideas due to inner and external barriers. Average students are industrious and ready to grab the skills from “A” and “C” groups. Obviously, students can exchange the knowledge from one another in the interactive sessions and teacher acts like a bridge among the groups with rational feedback and suggestions. By inculcating activity based strategies at regular practice, the expected outcome is to be appreciable for team spirit.

A -- Good at LSRW but not enthusiastic.

B -- Average at LSRW but industrious.

C -- Below average at LSRW but interested.



C

$A=B=C$

FECILITATOR

1.2 Teacher: Motivator

Teacher is not only meant for teaching but also one of the prominent motivators in molding the student's personality with an extrinsic motivation. A teacher usually attracts the attention of the students by creating friendly environment to inculcate the confidence among the students to participate in the active learning process. As a mentor, the teacher provides innovative teaching methods like tasks or activities, which allow students to learn actively. Using visual aids or pictorial descriptions grab the attention of the learner to accomplish the task and enhance the understanding levels. Positive and amicable environment at English Hub will help the learner to involve actively in the activities. An enthusiastic teacher strives for the excellence in teaching process with new strategies and creates comfortable zone for learners.

2. Activities At English Hub: A Unique Learning Environment

2.1 Activity on Pronouns: I-III Person Narration

Learning Parts of Speech is so fundamental part in basics of grammar but it is pitiable to know that even graduate level of students may not be confident at identification of parts of speech and Subject, Verb agreement in written round of Campus Placements and Competitive Exams. Proper knowledge on Grammar and Sentence Formation will pave the path of success in writing and speaking skills. The following exercise of activity based teaching on Pronouns will help the average and below average learners in a better way.

Person	Singular	Plural
I Person	I	We
II Person	You	You
III Person	<u>He, She, It</u>	They

have, do

has, does

- Clear explanation must be given to the students on Pronouns and its usage.
- Make students into groups of five.
- The five members of each group have to present their self introduction in the first round. (I Person Narration/ Self introduction/ Speaking skills)
- Attentive listening plays an important role for the rest of students.(Listening Skills)
- Each student must go for second round with self introduction and about other student's description spontaneously. (I and III Person Narration)
- Finally, all five members together make a conversation as a role-play.(Team Building Skills)
- Internal and external motivation is possible at an amicable environment.
- Encourage the student to speak first and not to focus on the correction at the spot. Regular practice will help the learner to be competent at Speaking Skills.
- A suggestible Feedback and Summative assessment will be given at the end by the teacher as well as students but it must not discourage the person, otherwise it may disturb the flow of thought.



- Activities like self introduction, friend's description and role play are covered. Moreover, student will be confident and benefitted.

2.2 Activity: Reading and Retelling the Story

Reading skills play pivotal role in acquisition of LSRW skills but majority of the students are being neglected in the course of study. "Reading is one of the most important academic tasks faced by students; it is equally important in the commercial working world". (Raman 259) It is suggestible to add "Magazine Wing" for English Hub by enrolling memberships in Language Oriented Monthly Magazines, Research Journals, and English News Papers. Interpretation among group members will enrich the understanding levels because reading the same book or passage perceptions may vary from one person to other person. It is fact that great personalities like Mahatma Gandhi and A.P.J Kalam had been motivated by great writings in their life-time.

In "Learning How to fly" Abdul Kalam opines that book wipes away the tears:

Whenever there is a problem, the book wipes away the tears based on the experience of great minds. When happiness overwhelms, the book again softly touches the mind and brings about a balanced thinking.(112)

In order to enhance the maximum benefits of reading, SQ3R technique enable the reader to get an idea about the structure and organization of the text or passage. SQ3R is a reading technique, (survey, question, read, recite, review) which gives how to proceed and understand the text in an easy way. Besides, the teacher has to educate the types of reading skills: Scanning, Skimming, Intensive and Extensive in an elaborate way.

2.2 .1 SQ3R –Technique

While reading the story of a book or any passage, it is needed to follow some tips for an easy understanding.



Survey:

- Reading the title, content, headings and subheading will give primary knowledge on the book.
- Reading the Chapter summaries and illustration enhance the knowledge.
- Reading the introduction and Conclusion may give an idea on the book.

Question:

- Self-questioning enable the reader to get a clear picture on the book.
- Questioning enhances levels of grasping on the gist.

Read and Recite/ Recall

- Focusing on main points
- Making notes
- Recalling the main and supporting points
- Rewrite the story with the exploration of new ideas

Review:

- Covering the main points and recheck the content
- Discussing the main points with the peer
- Reviewing the text and its salient points.

2.2.2 Types of Reading Skills

In addition to that Inspirational books of biographies, autobiographies, dramatic and historical novels are added more elegance to the English Hub because books are great motivators for the readers in sharpening the attitude and personality.

The author says that ‘story telling’ is an amazing activity:



Story telling is one of the amazing and interesting activities a classroom can have. It will not only improve the student's language skills but also his/her creativity. This activity will also improve the student's presence of mind as they have to carry the story over from the previous person. (Jose 2017)

- It is a team work exercise.
- Collection of story must be inspirational.
- While reading two or three rounds of story, difficult words are found.
- Intensive exercise has to be done with Dictionary and Rewrite (Writing Skills).
- Retell the story with the exploration of new ideas.
- Exchange of ideas will help the students to be elevated.

3. Worksheets On Famous Quotes : Enriching Thinking and Technical Presentation Skills

In this round, the teacher's role plays an important in the preparation of work sheets on inspirational quotes. Motivate the students to collect quotes on success and failure because life is mixture of both with which they will develop thinking skills like Positive Thinking Skills and Problem solving skills etc. Besides, the following task will enhance writing as well as Presentation Skills.

- Prepare worksheet papers on the best famous quotes.
- Give a worksheet paper to an individual or a group.
- Ask the learners to write a paragraph on the given quote.
- Ask the learners to justify the quote in a given time.



1. Activity: Preparation of Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____

Bravery is believing in yourself, and that is something no one can teach you.

Write about what you think this famous quote means.
Can you think of an example of how you can or already do apply this in your own life?

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(Images, Worksheets on Quotes)

2. Activity: Explication with Words

Ask the students to identify the positive and negative words from the written paragraph of worksheet and facilitate the learners to prepare a table.

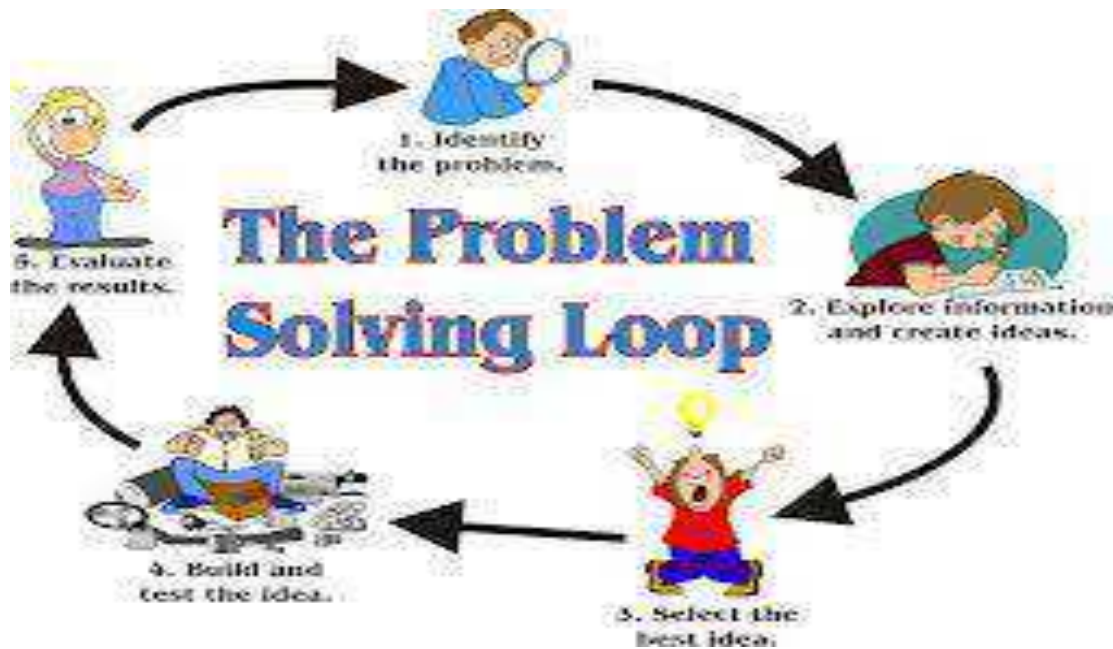
Cheerful	goal	Gloomy					
Confident	talent	Belief	joy	disbelief	challenge	angry	aim
				dedication			
Diffident	irritation	strong	desire	optimistic			
Delight		Depression	Industrious	happy	indolent	jealousy	
Experience		Adaptability		Disappoint	Flexible		
Please	Blame	Pessimistic	Responsibility	relax			
Excite	smile	overconfident	Frustration	involvement			
Active		Dull					

Positive words	Negative Words
Belief, Industrious	Indolent, blame
Adaptability, Responsibility, Flexible	Angry, dull
Delight, Cheerful, joy, smile, happy	Disbelief
Challenge, aim, strong desire, goal	Gloomy, jealousy, irritation
Confident, Please, relax	Overconfident, Diffident
Involvement, dedication	Depression
Experience, talent, optimistic	Frustration, pessimistic

The teacher is needed to focus on the following words for discussion; it brings knowledge on Soft Skills.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Optimistic | - Positive Thinking Skills |
| 2. Flexible | - Adaptability |
| 3. Confident, Please | - Communication Skills |
| 4. Responsibility, involvement | - Team Building Skills |
| 5. Relax, Cheerful, Challenge | - Body Language |
| | (Open Relaxed, Power Body Language) etc |

3. Problem Solving Skills: No Problems - No Skills



"Problem-solving skills are not impossible, but they do require persistence".

(Problem Solving Skills Paper Masters)

The teacher has to mobilize the students from pessimistic approach to optimistic approach with the above list of words. If any problem comes usually people find fault with others and they will be disappointed easily, where all doors would be closed and not allow the person to identify the problem. Thinking skills play pivotal role in achieving one's success because everyone must learn to be flexible at all the situations with optimistic approaches like self-belief, confidence, cheerful, positive attitude, strong determination, amicable communication with others etc. Sometimes it is a well known fact that hasty mind leads to wrong decisions and implies the negative attitude in the personal and the professional life. If a person allows any problem with strong mind, he would develop skills like Inter and Intra Communication skills, Positive Thinking Skills, Problem Solving Skills, Team Building Skills (Leadership



and Adaptability Skills) and Time Management etc., which are part and parcel of Soft Skills. Writing and thinking abilities will be covered with this worksheet activity. Identification of the problem, search for solutions and facing the problem with confidence are best remedies for any problem which is elaborated in the next P.P.T activity.

4. Power Point Presentation on Quotes:

In addition to this, the teacher has to enhance the knowledge on Technical Presentation with the same quotes because PPT presentation is eye-catching and impressive one. Of course, it is need of the era to use technology as a medium of effective communication in world wide. The author states that implementation of advanced technology in teaching develops the enthusiasm among the language learners:

The implementation of technology in the field of education simplified the procedures of teaching to such massive strengths by providing alternative opportunities to the learners. With the help of these technologies, self-taught techniques have been developed. The benefits that the technologies offer are witnessed in the enthusiasm that the learners are showing to pursue the language skills with ease. (Kamini 2017)

The facilitator has to bring awareness on Individual Presentations, Group Presentations and Technical Presentations in particular. The success of Power Point Presentation lies in proper planning, preparation, structuring, delivery, use of language and time, voice, rehearsals with team. A good presenter maintains confident eye-contact with open relaxed body language and grabs the attention of audience with clarity of tone. This activity is focused to inculcate cognitive thinking levels by the inspirational personalities.

2.4.1 Preparation paves the way to success:

- Initiation and Coordination play an important role here to work together.



- Leader will be emerged, who will co-ordinate one another with his/her communicative ability and selects the best quotes out of it; team members inculcate the team spirit.
- Each team is needed to share their knowledge and organize the concept with collaborative mind.
- Students must discuss the topic and divided the content into three: Beginning, Middle and Conclusion.
- Dress code and eye-contact will enhance the impression on the team and moreover the practiced content will pave the success for the presentation.
- One of the important points of preparation relates to the planning of Power Point slides that the speaker intends his or her audience to view.
- Team ought to reach the place much before the audience and arrange the technical equipment in advance which will avoid the external barriers in the presentation.
- Slides preparation must be captive and innovative to the audience so, it is essential to minimize the number of slides to the time and use bullet form.
- A good presenter needed to maintain eye contact and not to show his or her back to audience which represents lack of preparation.
- It is advised to close the presentation within a time and leave the place with confidence.
- Problem Solving Skills model is illustrated with the above mentioned Positive list of words.

4.2 Preparation of Slides on Problem Solving Skills

By doing one activity on quotes with innovative steps, the teaching and learning process will be active and creative in the English Language Hub.



3. Conclusion

It is concluded that the above mentioned interactive sessions like Group Discussions, Ice Breakers, Role-plays, Power Point Presentations etc., allow the students to learn from one another with friendly environment. English is become global and universal language, so it is helpful for all communications. To accomplish the task based teaching, the teacher turn to be facilitator and must be dynamic with the advanced technologies like using Internet sources and computer assisted methods of illustration in the language sessions. It is great opportunity for the teacher to give formative assessment for the learners which will be useful for the students to become error free in LSRW. While observing the others, sizeable development is seen among the students which will inculcate positive attitude and formal etiquette with their own perception. Self-Assessment, Summative Assessment and Feed Back Process are suggestible to make diffident personality. Thus, students are given an opportunity to plan, organize and direct their own learning at the English Hub and are more productive. Students' owner ship and determination are reflected in the process by giving free time and space to think.

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The Role of Linguistics in Language Teaching

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Abstract: Linguistics is the scientific study of languages, based on some rational or systematic study. It is not only the study of a particular language but language as a whole. It is not essential for a linguist to know or analyse all the languages of the world. So we see that linguistics is not language specific. The linguistics discusses all the different parts of language and how they work. Linguistics is the study of all the mechanisms in language. It is based on two theories: Behaviouristic theory and Cognitive theory. The human behaviour, faculties and capabilities are scientifically analysed in linguistics. It is a study in which language works. The role of linguistics in language teaching is not to tell the teacher, how to teach the language. The teacher of language is as much a specialist in his field as the linguist is, with different preoccupations. The linguist deals with the structure of language and its description with the nature of cognitive process, while the language teacher deals with the practical task of creating the conditions in which performance ability in a language may be learnt. Thus, the teacher does not teach linguistics, but he teaches something which is the object of the study of linguistics, and is described by linguistic method. Linguists want to figure out how language works and never in the business of making value judgements about people's language. Language is a cultural phenomenon and we all have deep-seated, cultural ideas about what it is and how we ought to use it. Sociolinguistics is applied for the survey on policy level. It tries to find out the language needs of a region and justify them while making the policy. Sociolinguistics probes about the attitudes of certain region towards languages. Sociolinguistics and linguistics together compare the variety of language in the region evaluating the specific purposes of teaching language. Psycholinguist helps on the planning level, studies the process of language learning with the linguistics, the complexities, and



contrasts of two languages and explains how a language is learnt and what types of problems arise while learning L2. The relevance of linguistics to language teaching should be considered in two-ways: its relevance to the classroom teacher and to those who prepare the teaching materials. The linguistic theory increases the understanding of language by enabling statements that are accurate, consistent and powerful. The descriptions of language relate both the internal formal patterns of language and its contextual patterns. The dual relationship between linguistics and language teaching is important for language pedagogy. The continuing developments in linguistic theory and in language teaching theory as well as the constant changes in the language itself demand the permanent study of language and the relations between linguistic theory and language teaching or language pedagogy.

Key words: Linguistics, Language Teaching, Psycholinguist, Role of teacher, Sociolinguistics.

Introduction

Linguistics is a subject of special interest to the language teachers. Needless to say the application of linguistic rules in the teaching of language is quite crucial. Linguists can address to the practical problems of language teaching and can provide the teacher with appropriate solution to make the teaching a worthwhile experience. In this paper I have tried to show the role of linguistics in language teaching by relating various parts of linguistics with the different aspects of language teaching. To achieve this goal the entire paper is divided into mainly two sections. The first section of this paper is concerned with linguistics and different levels of linguistic branches and different level of analysis and the rest of the paper is concerned with language teaching and the relationship of linguistics with language teaching. First, let us take a look at linguistics. The general meaning of linguistics is that it is the scientific study of languages. It is called a scientific study based on some rational or systematic study. It is not only the study of a particular language but language as a whole. It is not essential for a linguist to know or analyse all the languages of the world. So we see that linguistics is not language specific. To know how to drive a car and to know all the



mechanisms of a car and their functions are two totally different things. Just like the linguistics discusses all the different parts of language and how they work. Therefore, linguistics is the study of all the mechanisms in language. According to Robins (1985) "Linguistics is concerned with human language as a universal or recognizable part of human behaviour and of human faculties. Perhaps one of the most essential to human life as we know it and one of the most far reaching human capabilities in relation to the whole span of mankind's achievement." The above definition is considered a complete definition of language, linguistics is the scientific study of language and language learning is based on two theories. They are: Behaviouristic Theory and Cognitive Theory. Robin's definition of language covers the Behaviouristic Theory. Behaviour is the mechanical habit formation process. We have to remember the human behaviour about language is that, if there is a stimulus there is an excitement. The excitement is the internal excitement of the organs. So if there is stimulus there is a response and if the response is proper there will be reinforcement. And this human behaviour, faculties and capabilities will be scientifically analysed in linguistics. A single phoneme can develop into a discourse and linguistics analyse the entire process. The entire process of developing a single sound or phoneme into a discourse is depicted below. Linguistics is a study of the way in which language works. The role of linguistics in language teaching is not to tell the teacher, how to teach the language? The teacher of language is as much a specialist in his field as the linguist in his field. They both have different preoccupations. The linguist deals with the structure of language and its description with the nature of cognitive process, while the language teacher deals with the practical task of creating the conditions in which a performance ability in a language may be learnt. Thus the teacher does not teach linguistics, but he teaches something which is the object of the study of linguistics, and is described by linguistic method.

Teacher's Knowledge

Students studying linguistics and other language for the first time often have misconceptions about what they are about and what they can offer them. They may think that linguists are authorities on what is correct and what is incorrect in a given language.



However, linguistics is a science of language; it treats language and the ways people use it as phenomena to be studied. Linguists want to figure out how language works. They are no more in the business of making value judgements about people's language. Language is a cultural phenomenon and we all have deep-seated, cultural ideas about what it is and how we ought to use it, so knowing where to begin in studying it scientifically is not a trivial matter at all. Before we dive into the study of language, we will need to examine some of the biases that we all have concerning language and to set some ground rules for how we are going to proceed. Because there is more than one way to begin, it will also be useful to establish a basic stance to guide us. Finally, because human language is an enormously complex subject. In any teaching the teacher should have the knowledge of his subject but in the case of a language teachers knowledge is an ambiguous term. According to Chomsky the language teacher must possess an internalised grammar of the language. As language teaching a practical task its teacher must possess. Linguist S. Pit. Cordersays, "Any native speaker of a language can teach it as well as a qualified language teacher." Here lies the relevance of language teaching in linguistics. There should be a theory which is entirely dependent on the linguists, teachers and educators. Chomsky insists that it is the language teacher who must validate or refute any specific proposals for the application of linguistics. For this purpose also the teacher must have a knowledge of linguistics.

Planning Level

Most linguistics texts draw their examples from an unconstrained set of languages. This has the disadvantage that students are left with little sense of how the different aspects of each language fit together. It also invites the kind of errors that may crop up when linguists rely on examples from a wide variety of other linguists. Linguists examples from languages other than English usually include a representation of the words and the meanings of the words. The meaning usually appears in the form of a gloss, that is, a word or brief phrase in English designed to give a general sense of what the expression means. Undeniably communities of people do tend to differ. To take an obvious example, food preparation is more important in some cultures than others; some cultures are famous the world over. For



language, the differences are again obvious to anyone. It's not just that languages sound different. Some languages make distinctions—in sounds, in words, in grammar – that others don't; in fact most of this book is about just this topic. And people learning a second language often have trouble making the distinctions that aren't part of their first language. What we naturally notice, as speakers of a particular language, is what is 'missing' in other languages and what kind of mistakes second-language learners make in trying to speak English language. This may lead us, consciously or unconsciously, to think there is something deficient about the other language or even about the speakers of the other language. It is very difficult for us to see it from the other perspective, to see that we also fail to make distinctions that matter in the other language and have trouble making them when we try to learn that language.

Sociolinguistics is applied for the survey on policy level. It tries to find out the language needs of a region and justify them while making the policy. Sociolinguistics also probes about the attitudes of certain region towards languages. Sociolinguistics and linguistics together compare the variety of language in the region. It also evaluates the specific purposes of teaching language. It compares and studies different registers.

Psycholinguist also helps on the planning level. It studies the process of language learning. It studies the process of language learning. It also studies along with the linguistics, the complexities and contrasts of two languages. It explains as how a language is learnt, what problems arise while learning L2. It describes the process of language learning. With all the study, finally curriculum is prepared. Principles of selection and gradation are also has the base of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and linguistics and pedagogic principles of these. From theory conclusions are drawn which help in preparing syllabus, teaching material, training manuals, which in turn help the teacher to teach to present language data in such a manner that learners learning is facilitated.

The role of the Teacher, Textbook and Mediator

Language teaching is not a face-to-face interaction between a single teacher and the learners. Teaching requires text, which are mostly supplied from the outside the

classroom. The teacher may supply some of these but in most cases it is the mediator between the data or so called textbooks and the learners. Therefore, the relevance of linguistics to language teaching should be considered in two-ways its relevance to the classroom teacher and to those who prepare the teaching materials.

According to Chomsky, Linguistics helps language teaching in these four stages:

- i.To creative aspect of language use,
- ii.The abstractness of linguistics representation,
- iii.The universality of underlying linguistic structure, and,
- iv.The role of intrinsic organization in cognitive process.

The linguistic theory increases our understanding of language of language by enabling us to make statements that are accurate, consistent and powerful. The descriptions of language relate both the internal formal patterns of language and its contextual patterns. All statements about language are statements of meaning, and the task of linguist is to work out from observations of language in action, theories of how language works which will enable him to make such statements.

Linguistics today inherits the great works of the ancient linguists of Greece, Rome and above all of India. Of course, the modern theories are more powerful. We are profited by the general advances in scientific theory and method also by the synthesis of divergent view on language through the ages.

Thus,an initial picture of the normal language teaching situation is that, it is an interaction between the classroom teacher, the author of the teaching materials and the learner. The principal value of linguistics lies in its application to the preparation of teaching material, the making of pedagogic grammar.Cordarsays that no teacher can use these materials adequately without some knowledge of linguistics, a language for taking about language (Meta-language).

Conclusion

The dual relationship between linguistics and language teaching is important for language pedagogy. The continuing developments in linguistic theory and in language



teaching theory as well as the constant changes in the language itself demand the permanent study of language and the relations between linguistic theory and language teaching or language pedagogy.

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From *Hamlet* To *Hemlat*: Rewriting Shakespeare In Bengal

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Abstract: Production of Shakespeare's plays in India, particularly Bengal, has an extensive history which dates back to the mid 18th century. Theatre was a tool employed by the British to expose the elites of the Indian society to Western culture and values. Shakespeare was one of the most popular dramatists to be produced in colonial India for concrete reasons. During the latter half of the nineteenth century the productions of Shakespearean plays were marked by a tendency for indigenization thus adding colour colours to them. The latest adaptations of Shakespeare into Bangla are instances of real bold steps taken by the playwrights since these adaptations implant the master text in a completely different politico-cultural milieu, thus subverting the source text in the process. This paper would try to analyse such a process of rewriting Shakespeare in Bangla with special emphasis on Bratya Basu's *Hemlat*, *The Prince of Garanata* which is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Key Words: Theatre, Performance, Adaptation, Indigenization, Cross-Culture.

Production of Shakespeare's plays in India, particularly Bengal, has an extensive and rich history which dates back to the mid 18th century. Initially the target audience of these plays was British officials settled here during the colonial days. Gradually the number of theatres increased and performances became regular. The Calcutta Theatre was the first modern theatre to be set up in India in 1775 (Trivedi, Bartholomeusz 13). However, researchers like Sushil Kumar Mukherjee differ from the earlier fact and point out that The Playhouse was the first theatre which was established in 1753 (2). Unfortunately it had to be shut down within three years due to the attack of Siraj-ud-aula on Calcutta in 1756. After a long span of nineteen years The Calcutta Theatre was built in 1775 and continued to run for



the next thirty-three years. Different other theatre houses were also established during this period some of which are Mrs. Bristow's Private Theatre (1789-90), Wheeler Place Theatre (1797-98), The Chowringhee Theatre (1813-39) and Sans Souci Theatre (1839-49).

The emergence of so many theatres clearly focuses on the interest of the British regarding the theatre performances. Shakespeare was one of the most popular dramatists to be produced in colonial India, primarily in Calcutta and Bombay. The reason for the import of Shakespeare to India has been poignantly analysed by Singh: "... the Victorian colonists in India, while apishly promoting Shakespeare's works in colonial Calcutta, were, in effect, reproducing the metropolitan culture as a part of the "civilizing mission" of the British Raj (122). Though initially the theatrical productions were only meant for British viewers, coverages, reviews and notices of the performances at the Chowringhee Theatre were published in dailies like *Calcutta Gazette*, *Bengal Hurkara*, *Bengal Courier* and *Asiatic Journal*. These provided an indirect access to the Indian elites to the British theatres of the times. Gradually the Indian elites became a part of the audience of these British theatres. This inclusion was largely prompted by the dawning of the realization by the British that segregation is not the successful strategy for exercising control. Rather the 'natives' should be provided with an exposure to Western culture so that Macaulay's objective of creating "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, opinions, in morals, and in intellect" could be actualized (Clive and Macaulay 249).

Thus theatre was a tool employed by the British to expose the elites of the Indian society to Western culture and values. The influence was so strong that gradually there was an urge on the part of the educated Indian class to set up their own theatre. This urge was largely prompted by the motive to "set them on a par with their European overlords" (Chatterjee 20). Moreover, exuberant theatrical preoccupations on the part of the British were crucial and motivating factors for the establishment of modern Indian theatre. A committee comprising Krishna Chandra Dutt, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Tarakchand Chakravorty, Ganganarayan Sen, Srikrishna Sinha, Madhab Chandra Mullick and Hara Chandra Ghosh



was formed to set up a theatre which would be based on the English model. Consequently Hindu Theatre was established in 1831. Though this was meant to cater to the Bengali audience, the plays that were selected for performance were mostly in English while some were the English translations of Sanskrit plays. For instance, the inaugural performances were based on Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (Act V) and English translation of Bhavbhuti's *Uttarramcharit* (Act I). Thus all the early theatrical productions during the 1850s were stupendously influenced by Western theatre tradition, particularly Shakespeare.

Macaulay's emphasis on the need of English education to "form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern" (Clive and Macaulay 249) was a major reason to promote Shakespeare among the Indians. Literature was a means to inculcate British culture and values amongst the 'natives'. Thus there was no better choice than Shakespeare to accomplish this mission as he was the master dramatist and his plays were universal. The Great Bard was utilized to realize the civilizing mission of the British. The travelling companies which made visits to India also preferred to perform Shakespeare's works. Another crucial reason for his popularity was teachers like Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, the oracle of Young Bengal, who would teach Shakespeare to his young enthusiastic students. Derozio being so popular amongst the Indian youth, his teaching of Shakespeare had a huge influence upon the student population.

However, a change occurred after the 1850s when there was a desperate craving for Bengali plays. As a result there was a flood of Bengali social drama in the next twenty years. A few examples are Ram Narayan Tarkaratna's *Kulin Kulasarvasa* in 1867, Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Sarmistha* in 1859 and Dinabandhu Mitra's *Nildarpan* in 1860. The ushering in of so many Bengali plays led to a steady decline in Shakespearean productions. It was only during the latter half of the nineteenth century that the plays of Shakespeare were again brought back to the theatre. However, these productions were marked by a palpable difference as there was a tendency for indigenization of the plays of the Bard. The need for this indigenization has been quite lucidly explained by one of the adaptors: "I have tried to



present the story of the play of Shakespeare and the essential features of the characters in a native mould to suit the taste of the readers of my country. I cannot say how successful I have been. But I believe that without adopting such a method no foreign play will ever find a place in Bengali literature, which will be denied nourishment and advancement.” (Das 58). This indigenization is in progress even today and results in several interesting adaptations of Shakespeare. Some examples of this process are Asit Basu’s *Kolkatar Hamlet* (1989), Bratya Basu’s *Hemlat, The Prince of Garanhata* (2006) and Suman Mukhopadhyay’s *Raja Lear* (2011), the first two being adaptations of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and the last being that of *King Lear*.

It is adaptation which infuses local colour in a literary work and thus familiarizes it to the target language audience. The latest adaptations of Shakespeare into Bangla are instances of real bold steps taken by the playwrights since these adaptations uproot, as it were, the master text from its socio-cultural context and implants it in a completely different politico-cultural milieu, thus subverting the source text in the process. The adaptor/ translator has his or her own intentions in pursuing this activity. Sometimes it is a mark of protest against his or her contemporary society or at times it is to voice own principles and ideologies. A brilliant example of this is Utpal Dutt’s Bangla translation of *Macbeth* in 1975 which was a protest against the emergency thrust upon India during the tenure of 1975 and 1977. A similar case in point is Ingmar Bergman’s adaptation of the same play which he employed as his protest against the Fascist regime during the 1940s.

Thus adaptation is a cross-cultural exercise through which one culture tries to understand and accommodate another culture. It is a process through which a fresh lease of life is invested into a work of art through assimilations, rejections and modifications during cross-cultural interactions. “... every culture consciously or unconsciously regards translation (and, thus, adaptation) as an agent which brings home both power and knowledge... that would benefit the receiving culture” (Shankar 15-16).



Shakespeare being the most oft-adapted playwright in Bangla, his plays have been relocated and reinterpreted into contemporary Bangla socio-politico-cultural dynamics. *Hemlat, The Prince of Garanhata* is a play written in Bangla and first published in 2006. It is written and directed by one of the eminent contemporary Bangla playwrights, Bratya Basu. As it can be easily made out from the title the play is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, relocated in a completely different time frame and locale. One of the most important instruments employed by Basu to adapt the master-text in contemporary socio-cultural context is to tone down the grandeur of Shakespeare's work. This toning down is quite strategically done by changing the setting and names of the dramatis personae of the original text. The employment of this method becomes stark in the change of setting of the adaptation. The political and public conflict between two rival powers as represented by Hamlet and Claudius struggling over the future of Denmark boils down here to the dirty fight of the promoters over the crumbling old parental house of Hemlat and their frantic eagerness to raise a high-rise in its place. Thus the grandeur of the Danish state and Elsinore are narrowed down in Basu's play for which the nasty rivalry regarding possession of the house is a means to showcase the corruption rampant in the contemporary society. The filth of the Red-light area of Kolkata, the squalor and greed prevalent at every quarter of the society are captured by Basu in his play. Garanhata, teeming with illegal immigrants and trespassers inhabiting the slums, the opportunist politicians, the dishonest businessmen, the frustrated unemployed youth, the pimps and prostitutes, the alcoholic and drug-addict population- all are ironic commentary on the hapless picture of Bengal in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. While Shakespeare writes that "Something's rotten in the state of Denmark" (Shakespeare Act I Sc iv), it is the same rottenness that is portrayed by Basu in his own way through the projection of a decadent Garanhata.

The Bangla names have an impact of downscaling which is an effective tool of the dramatist here. Hamlet being turned into Hemlat is a complete subversion, the latter having no association with the royalty of Shakespeare's Prince. He is not "The courtier's, soldier's



eye, tongue, sword,/ The glass of fashion and the mould of form,/ The observed of all observers” (Shakespeare Act III Sc i). Rather he is a struggling, unemployed young man in his thirties who hails from a decadent middle class Bengali family. He intends to divulge the reality about the death of his father Sadhan whom he considers to be the “original King of Garnahata” (Basu Scene 5). He is desperate to avenge his father’s death and save his ancestral home which is almost in a state of ruin from the clutches of the promoter appointed by his mean and mercenary uncle Kodu. But all his intentions and endeavours to fight against these personal odds and corruptions around him are futile and feeble. Thus Hemlat is far diminished in stature in comparison to the aura of the prince of Denmark. However, he shares the experiences of Shakespeare’s hero in that his father has also been murdered by his uncle who enjoys an illicit relationship with his mother. Thus he considers himself as an incarnation of Denmark’s Prince and calls himself the “Prince of Garanhata” (Basu Scene 5). The moral degeneration in the character of Kodu is brilliantly pointed out by his transformation from the wicked King Claudius to Hemlat’s corrupt uncle Kodukaka. The word ‘Kodu’ has essential similarities with ‘kada’ as has been pointed out by the translators of the book. ‘Kada’ refers to mud, filth and squalor and subtly hints at the mental filth of Kodukaka. The diminishment in the nomenclature continues as Polonius turns into an intoxicated over-talkative ‘Polda’ who is too protective about his daughters. Laertes gets the name of ‘Lacchhu’ who is hand-in-glove with Kodu but somehow possesses an attitude of indulgence towards Hemlat. Horatio gets the name of ‘Harish’, an employee in a Travel and Tour Operator’s Office and a dear friend cum confidante of Hemlat. Ophelia receives an interesting handling by the creative impulse of Basu. The timid, tortured and submissive Ophelia is split into two characters in the Bangla adaptation- namely, Shefali and Mantali. Basu’s Shefali is far away from the passive and suppressed Ophelia. She has all the positivity and courage in her to confront her father’s tyranny with confidence. Thus the other characters refer to Shefali: “Just wait and see how Shefali gives it to Paulda. He’s all swagger on the outside, but before his daughters just a mouse” (Basu Scene 4). Shefali is strong enough to play the roles of Hemlat’s childhood buddy, beloved, wife and surrogate mother. At the end

of the play she raises Hemlat's children (not only his own but also the future generation) and decides to be the mid-wife to the revolution that will promise brighter days ahead. The name Shefali "emits resonances of immorality as Miss Shefali was a night-club stripper who danced on the Bengali stage in Calcutta during the 1960s-1980s" (Basu 30). The association invariably draws a parallelism with Ophelia's flower dance in a fit of insanity, having unmistakable sexual intonations in Act IV of *Hamlet* after the murder of Polonius. Gertrude is presented as 'Monorama' who despite her caring nature for her eccentric husband Sahan fails to resist the charm of her lustful brother-in-law Kodu. However, her motherly love and concern for her son are genuine and get reflected in her worry and desperation to know about Hemlat's illness from the doctor: "Is he going mad, Doctor-Babu? But he speaks a few words to me occasionally. Normal words. Doesn't appear insane then... what will happen, Doctor Babu?" (Basu Scene 10). Thus all the dramatis personae present in the master text have their counterparts in the Bangla play, but obviously they are scaled down and differentiated both through their nomenclatures and their actions.

However, though there is diminishment at multiple layers certain basic similarities remain there between the two protagonists, the Danish Prince and his Bangla counterpart. Though Hamlet has apathy for bloodshed and the instrument related to it, that is, gun, he gets entangled in murder and killing during the action of the play, particularly in the last scene. He has to put in loads of efforts to come to terms with his murdered father's command to avenge his death. But he is both happy and contented with the aesthetic revenge when Claudius' punishment is revealed in the Murder of Gonzago play-within-the-play scene of the "Mousetrap". He exhorts: "The play's the thing/ Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king" (Shakespeare Act II Sc ii). Basu's Hemlat also plans the play-within-the-play sequence by resorting to Bidhubhushan Vidya Vinode's *Hamlet* translation. Hemlat employs this performance for a neighbourhood theatre group for its production during the time of Holi. The effect of this scene is much the same as of that of the master text. But when Kodu regretting his wrong deeds implores: "Forgive me... Just for some money... just for a few



pieces of silver... oh, forgive me” (Basu Scene 9), Hemlat knows no stopping. Giving vent to all his anguish he continues: “Bring me to the test and see. I am not mad. What I’ve said before and what I am saying now, I’ll knit and weave them together into one harmony. Only confess everything to God. Repent all your sins committed in the past...” (Basu Scene 9). At the end of his speech he even refers to the source of his speech stating that it is taken from “Hamlet. Third Act. Fourth Scene” (Basu Scene 9). This reference intertwines both the texts integrally though the Bangla speech is marked by its own variations. Hemlat does not possess the spirit of revenge of Hamlet and thus takes recourse to sleeping pills and chooses to commit suicide. At the final scene he comes back to speak to the audience and confess his failure to act: “I could not do it. My sword is broken. You cannot kill Time with it... But this I know, that our failure will not be seen as important on another day. Those failures will be superseded and transcended by many, many successes. The successes of my children” (Basu Scene 11). The play comes to an end with three generations frozen together, Sadhan blessing Hemlat keeping his hand on his head and Hemlat, on his turn, blessing his son in the same posture. Thus the play ends in an optimistic note where there is a promise and assurance of the birth of another Hamlet to eradicate all sorts of corruption from the surface of the earth, to purge the world of all its sins and malice and to purify it. Though for Shakespeare’s Hamlet “the rest is silence” (Shakespeare Act V Sc ii), Basu’s Hemlat provides a ray of hope that the future generation will be potent enough to carry on the unfinished task of cleansing the society of all dirt, filth and mire.

Thus Bratya Basu’s *Hemlat* is a rewriting of Shakespeare’s play, like many other contemporary adaptations which are marked by the process of indigenization, thus making the plays socially relevant and turning them much more appealing and meaningful in the present socio-cultural context. It is a novel way of paying homage to the master dramatist retaining the local colour and showcasing the talent and calibre of contemporary writers.



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Surekha in Confusion

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I long them only to realize at the end fleecy as cloud.
Throughout the course we will study the universe,
not in its entirety, that is absolute
that never exists in the text and class, it is infinite,
but like 'close reading' in structures,
but structures will not make the reading and meaning complete
because its narrative, its discourse is unfixed.
What meaning can you elicit from it, then?
You need to deconstruct the constructed in order to reconstruct the meaning of the whole.
But where is the centering agency or stable meaning to be deconstructed?
The universe is a big gas, it can offer nothing, said the deconstructionist.
Structuralism and post structuralism are like two leaves of different size.
If the meaning is not in universe,
somewhere 'Reader's Response' would sound better if not bitter,
but all that is the course inside of you, Hermeneutics.
But that is uncertain
How can reader's consciousness be measured?
We can but apply New Historicism
But where is the history of the universe?
A flickering beyond the body and mind would do.
Let me tell, all these noisy theories try to rewrite the silent universe.



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So, what shall we do with the course?
Plunge deep into it and become one with it
That is Yoga.



There Stands a Tree in the Fields

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There stands a tree in the fields
looming large as a helium balloon
nearby my house that I have built recently.
There are many trees around
but this tree has lured me so much
that I can hardly resist its temptation.
The tree has a story, the villagers told.
Three generations have passed,
yet it stands like a warrior in the ruins.
Once the village was flooded, they reminisced
yet it stood like an unspoilt saint.
Mystery surrounds, folk worshipped with incense and coconuts
Some on Fridays, some on Tuesdays, yet a few on all days.
It must have changed leaves million times, I mused,
dropping the old and faded without pain and complaint.
O God teach me its wisdom as to how to die in every moment.



My Love!

Chandrashekhar Pal

If I never loved you before I loved your now
Reminiscing of playmates and playground boughts
How I never forget your loving smile
My friend my friend never leave me now
I resist all the others growing through the years
Yes my heart ached and my tears stood still
To see you to see you again
Bring back memories and bring them back again
Tell me tell me how you still feel the same
My heart felt so lonely sometime I would go in a rage
Mysteries and subjects to unfinished plays
I was so confused and how I could this day
Bring my love my love oh how I had to pay
At night I fold like a child without its clay
But now I am standing still as a flower change seasons
My love my love give me a reason
To hold your hand and walk across the park
Were it all went down one summer what a spark
Trust me I will never leave I will never let you go
I will kiss your for head and message your toes
Tell me love are you ready for an everlasting romance?
Sand castles and evening glasses can you give a chance
Are you ready for someone now you can trust?



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Who stopped everything and got on a bus
I learned my lesson and I miss you at my side
I miss you my love my love let's take this ride
Across the seas and oceans to respond as waves
My ship is ready to sail with you this day
How your hair it blows with the wind
And how now I shall not be bent
On every one else and what they have to say
My playground my love I have found today
I can breathe and move on like life it never stopped
My heart beats so fast it was going to pop
So I stopped and took another glance
I am ready I am ready for romance
Let's dance my lovely tulip petal
Let's take this flight upon this iron metal
And fly away and be at still
My love my love this is the day, THIS IS FOR REAL!



The True Essence of being a Woman

Radhika Mendiratta

How beautifully you doze off in your cradle, under the shelter of perfect harmony, breathing in perfect rhythm with the tuneful sound of a lullaby, which is sung melodiously by the musical stars and the crescent moon, hung above your bed.

Your eyes and the eyelashes are in perfect curvature, once the eyelids unfold and open up, the thin watery surface, seems like the calm stream of water, so composed and quiet, so unimaginably peaceful, flowing yet appears stagnant. Your nose, so slender and sharp, like the tip of the mountain, exhibits the lofty ideas, the high principles, the greatness that is so deep-rooted within you. Your lovely lips, so pink with a tinge of deep red of the rosy red, so flowery like petals, absorbing every bit of the beauty and fragrance of meadowsweet. Your cheeks, blushing with the heat and colour of the rising sun - so eye-catching, sheerly mesmerizing. The dimples are so deep like a valley, holding the innocence and delicacy of the curve that sets everything else straight.

Oh! Girl you are the most beautiful creature made by the almighty god, so incredibly exquisite, so special yet unique in your own way. God took a rose, dipped it in dew, kissed it, buzzed it and created your heart. He has made you, but when he graces you with a glance, does he realize what a magnificent creation he has created!! What an artistic mind and skillful art.....

You are rare, however your virtues are even rarer. Nobody knew this, nobody was acquainted with the future this little sleeping beauty. Nobody knew that this lovely girl child who was sleeping so cosily in a rocking cradle would awaken to rule the world...with her heartbeat, with the powerful capability to infuse life, create, nurture, develop and bear.....

She gave to the world the most precious gift, everlasting, an enduring miracle- a turning point that the cosmos ever saw-Life



Almighty! Be not proud-You have created a kite with a string infinite. Now she will herself young and bloom , flutter temptingly , and flourish in the sky.

Is it not magical? The art of creating life from a single cell. This skill is exceptional to a woman. She can grow, day by day, moment by moment, feel it develop in anatomy. She has the potential to shape its psychology. She can sense the movements, it is through her that the child understands, responds, behaves and revives the spirit of love that increases manifold within the heart of the mother as she finally brings it to the world.

This is a blessing in disguise in which the creator also undergoes the process of rebirth when she becomes a mother....

She is the creator and preserver of her own product. It is in her lap that one opens eyes to see this colourful world and experience the new life and it is in Mother Earth's lap in which one closes eyes to explore the dreary world of darkness and death.

Oh! Woman you are a deity in human form...We the human race owe to you the origin of life and we wish that you receive more than what you have given to the world .

Your golden glimpse draws its hue from the rising sun, which cracks the darkness and rises beyond all horizons giving a million species a new hope for life, just as you give an indispensable hope to mankind in times of adversity and unfavourable circumstances and teach us to appreciate the favourable ones.

You are like a kaleidoscope which forms a framework of colourful glass pieces in the form of different traits bonded in perfect proportions.You are true beauty and pure love personified!! Your presence is power, your passion is purity, your patience is your prized possession, your compassion is your component , your sincerity is your strength , your humanity so very humane ,your shyness your sensuality, your frills and fancy is your femininity , your faith is your foundation , your softness is sensitivity, your sentimentality your sacrifice, your simplicity is your sweetness, you are naïve you are natural , your warmth your wisdom , your intelligence your inspiration , you are glamorous you are graceful , your hug so humble so healing ,you are mysterious you are matchless , your



spirituality your substance , your flexibility your fluency, your dedication is divine , your vision your victory , your essence is life.....

Oh woman!! You are truly worth it ... Indeed you are phenomenally phenomenal
I am young girl and I care for the human race. I cannot do everything, but I can do something,
I will not refuse to do that something that I can do.....

I am the stars, the sun, the moon, the limitless infinite of the sky

I am the sea , the ocean , the endless depths of the ocean

I am the West Wind, dauntless, untameable, daring

I am the rising sun of the east , bright and glary

I am the ice of the north and the coast of the south

I am a woman, I am "she"

I dedicate this poem to all the lovely ladies who are yet to enter womanhood.
Greet womanhood wholeheartedly , celebrate its birthday , adore it ,congratulate it for
being the very essence of life

So watch out well!!!! Here she comes, here comes the charisma.....revered and
cherished.....

God Bless and Peace



The Little Boy, Bhargav

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The little boy, Bhargav came running across the lonely road that I have taken for an evening walk. He was all in smiles. His brown face glowed like the green fields against the slanting sun in the west.

“What is the matter? Why are you so cheerful and gasping?” I asked not holding back my curiosity. Such a gleeful face I have never seen so far.

Holding the one hundred rupee note between the fingers of his right hand, Bhargav said, “Uncle, I found it on the road.” He held it to the slanting sunlight to make sure that it was a real currency note and not a fake one.

I knew this boy, hardly nine, from a village abutting my house that I built a couple of years ago. Several little boys and girls of his age from this village had acquainted with me as I was a regular walker, taking the road passing through the village.

“How will you spend it, Bhargav, my little friend?” I asked him swinging the broken branch of a neem tree that I picked up two months ago to keep away the stray dogs, notorious for their attack.

“I will buy a new pair of chappals for me.” The little boy ejaculated. His joy knew no bounds.

“Then.”

“I will buy a frock for my little sister.”



“Then.”

“I will buy new books for me and my sister. You know, uncle, we have stopped going to school because our teacher insisted on books. Now with new books, we will resume our going to school.”

“Then”

“I will take my father, my mother and my little sister for an outing. We will dine in a big hotel in the city.”

“Then.”

“I will buy some sweets for you.” I felt so touched by his last wish.

I stopped asking him further what he would do with one hundred rupee in suspicion that he would go on adding item after item of his unfulfilled desires to the list.

Poor boy, slim boy, smart boy, good-looking village boy. His little sister was pretty. His father, a farmer, was a rather self-effacing man. His mother was a strong hard woman, I knew for quite some time. I had watched her cutting grass in the fields. She had muscular hands, solid feet; but she was handsome brown woman. They lived in a hut at the end of the village.

Nothing on the earth could stop Bhargav. No one would be dare enough to snatch away his joy. No sooner had he given me the manner in which he would spend the found one hundred rupee note than he darted jumping, hopping, singing, clutching the note tightly fearing it might fall. As I stood watching him running bright in the sun, he soon entered the village and disappeared into the lanes like a bird.

Just then as I moved off taking the branched road, I noticed a flouncing middle aged man looking around and intently searching the ground by scratching it with his feet,



removing the stones and the fallen leaves. Notwithstanding my curiosity, I asked him, “What are you searching for?”

“For my one hundred rupee note I might have lost here around.”

“How sure are you?”

“While removing a sheaf of papers from my pocket of my drawers, it must have fallen, I suppose.”

I understood that the one hundred rupee he had lost was the same that was found by the little boy, Bhargav. I did not reveal this truth to him since it would deprive the little boy of the joy of having found the note with which he had decided to fulfil his several desires.

“When did you lose it? Can you recollect the time?”

“An hour ago.”

“Do you think it would remain at the same spot? Either someone must have noticed it and picked it up or the wind must have carried it off. Your search is a futile exercise.”

Looking at me and sensing the truth in what I had said, he nodded his head as if in approval and disappointment.

“What is lost is lost forever. Forget about it.” At which he said nothing and moved off. I resumed my long walk.

Two days after I found the little boy sitting on a mound, he looked forlorn. Approaching him, I spurted missiles of questions, “Why are you sad? Are you all right, Bhargav? What has happened? Have you fulfilled all your desires with one hundred rupee note?”

Turning to me with tears in his eyes, he said, “Uncle I lost that one hundred rupee note.”

“Oh, it’s sad to hear this. How did you lose it?”



“I kept it under my pillow and slept, morning I found it missing.”

“Did you tell your parents about how you found the note?”

“No, I didn’t. I maintained as a closed guarded secret. I wanted to surprise my parents and my sister with gifts. But to my shock I lost it. Now how can I fulfill my desires?”

“Don’t worry over what has been lost. That which does not belong to us will not stay with us. It will go on its own. Don’t trouble yourself too much. After all you are a little boy. You have many years to live in this world. God will give you something big for you. Stop crying. I will provide you books which you wanted and you and your sister can resume attending the school from tomorrow.”

Holding his brown right hand I pulled him up and we headed towards the village trudging along the green trees and fields.



My Friends: A Satire

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Finding true friends have become so hard now days but in my case I'm so lucky that all my friends stay with me all the time. Where ever I go they go with me without making faces. I don't need to waste my time to convince them to accompany me. They are ready middle of the night, early in the morning even in hot days of summer afternoon. If I lost somewhere or find myself amid of any crisis these friend are always ready to help me out. All I need to do is just ask for a help, and here they are... ever ready with one or other solution.

Ohhh ! now I don't need advice of all those close minded neighbour. I have become so confident and bold that I can challenge my maths and English teacher and I am sure they feel scare to see me in the classroom ready with the flood of questions. Now I just don't don't want to waste my precious time in playing with those stupid and unintelligent friends of my locality. I still remember last time that idiot Rajat was driving his brother's car and when I requested him to let me drive the car he allowed me just one round of ground. I really wanted to drive more. Alas! I wished I had a car. But my new friend has fulfilled all my wishes. Now I drive car whenever I want as it remains with me all the time in my pocket.

Everything is going well but I just don't understand why do we need to go to college regularly. Why do we have colleges in every corner. God ! kindly tell all these so called politicians to not to waste much money in colleges. I stay back at home or sometime when my nagging and complaining Mom insists me to go to college I just go with my friend and sit in the park. This friend of mine is a good entertainer also. He never bores me with unnecessary stupid gossips about the locality. He is every time ready to sing songs, to play, to roam around without complains.



Today he said he is going to introduce me to some of his friends. I am every excited! I am sure friends of this friend of mine will definitely be very interesting. So finally my best buddy, his five friends and I have met . Each of them had a distinct enchanting qualities and I was literally impressed with them and just wanted to listen to them and just be with them. One of those friends whose name was I don't remember exactly.... I think it was Facebook ..or something like that.. name was bit backward but the fellow was very interesting. He asked me very interesting and bit personal questions about me with a promise to keep it secret if i don't want to share those with anyone...

He also suggested me the names of some of my classmates when I told him about my school name, locality and place.

When he asked me if I know Akshita, I was so amazed how come this fellow knows about Akshita? Actually I had a crush on Akshita so I blushed uncomfortably.

Do you want to make her friend again? Asked facebook. Butttt... yeah...how is it possible? I don't know where is she ? how she looks like etc..

You don't worry...muttered Facebook while busy in searching for something.

My Goodness this amazing fellow showed me her picture and also her whereabouts...

"She is looking so beautiful. How has she transformed herself so drastically? She was very bulky, dark complexion, not very tall and yes what about her pimples. Her face was all covered with pimples" I was so wondered to see her in new avatar.

Catering all my curiosity regarding her transformation facebook said this transformation is nothing as such to be surprised. My business partner's wife has an expertise in making anybody unimaginable beautiful and now days everybody is taking her consultation. It seems as if there is some magic in her hands to transform dark person into



while, many fatty people get curves, she also has capacity to increase heights instantly without any side effect.

With the virtue of this generous lady many people met their life partners got married and some are in the process of meeting someone special by following them and presenting their hearts to them said Instagram the other friend.

I was so amazed to know about that kind hearted lady who has changed the god given skin tone and stature and make people feel happy about themselves. Who is she and What is her name? I asked.

Her name is Beauty Plus. I will introduce you to her because very soon you will be needed her kind help because you are now our friend” said Tinder the third friend.

Ok listen to me Instagram said , Akshita lives close to my place and ill help you to follow her. I will inform you about her so that you will make plans to get connected again.

I was very happy. Finally I will also going to have a girl friend. I said ok deal happily.

“Hey listen wherever you see her just inform him so that he will present his heart to her” instructed facebook to Instagram and Instagram nodded.

Next he said “Watsapp when so ever he will get her number time to time show him her status to know about her mood.” Watsapp said ok.

Now they all got ready to accomplish the mission. Other friends Tinder and skype they also ensured me their help wherever possible.

The moment I reached back to my home Facebook informed me that Akshita has not forgotten me and she is keen to know about me. She also has accepted my proposal to be friends.. Facebook suggested me to compliment her I did so. Trust me she also seemed interested and was talking lots of past things and also my whereabouts etc. I was so busy in



talking to her that I couldn't realize it was already midnight. I don't know when did I sleep last night. When I woke up it was noon. I was about to get ready to go out suddenly this Instagram came there and said

“ Hey do you know Akshita wants to follow you.. Ohh Good! Now you can know her closely and present her heart shape balloon she will be happy. I thought this is such good news. I dropped going out sat for good two hours looking Akshita's pictures.

My Goodness she was looking like princess in all her photos. I presented my heart on every picture of hers with the intention to prompt her what is there in my heart. I feel so thankful to all my new friends Facebook, Instagram and now Watsapp for making my life so colourful. I feel so fortunate to have such friends who were helping me every possible way and standing all by my side every time giving me information about her. My love story also seems to reach its apex.

Now Akshita, my three loyal friends Facebook, Instagram, Watsapp and I started spending so much time together. They are so understanding they don't disturb me next day even if they have some news to say. They wait for me to wake up only than they tell me about the news. One day while looking the pictures of Akshita I noticed a beautiful girl standing with her in the group photo . She was looking more beautiful. On asking about her Facebook told me her name is Priya studies in my college only. I send her friend request through facebook and she accepted. Now I was very busy with all these my friends Facebook, Instagram, Watsapp , Akshita and Priya. Now I stopped going college, study and even I was not particular about my meals but who cares I was happy with them. But yes I was going through bit financial problems. They were helping me out day and night I also needed to give them feast to show my regard because they deserve the best food without buffering to eat. I was not sure this 3G food was sufficient for them or not but what to do this was best and healthiest food I Could afford for my helping friends.



Somebody has rightly said” If you want to feed someone by all your heart God shows you the helping path as a prize for your sincerity. Reliance Jio came in my town which was the best and healthiest food, cheap and pocket friendly. I started treating them with that food and trust me it made my life so easier. Now not even Priya and Akshita I had many friends in my life. I never missed my parents my place my stupid friends. My life was going so well that I did not feel like to go to college even. One day while busy with all my new friends somebody rang the doorbell. It was tinder standing at my door.

What a great surprise!

Can I come ib? Asked Tinder.

Yes, yes off course. I said. You all seem forgotten me... Facebook said “no no, not really. We were bit busy in helping our friend in his search for true love and good friends from throughout the world. And guess what?? Dude has already found four love and he is in the process of finding another one.”

Hey common! How long you will just keep on talking to these girls. You should do some real thing. You know what I have a good option for you...

I was bit surprised! What option you are talking about?

OKKK. You can choose any girl with whom your choices would match and go on a date.

I couldn't believe it. Is that possible? I asked. Tinder said yes. I can help you out.

Tinder took my choices and preferences and luckily it matched with a beautiful girl called Neha. We talked to each other day and night for four days. I mocked those people who believe it takes too much time to know about each other. Look at us just four days and we know about each other. I feel as if we have been together from the past seven births. We couldn't stay without meeting each other after such a long time of four days and finally we decided to meet.



It was my first date so I was bit nervous. I was getting ready and suddenly my mummy called me up to wish me good luck for my exam. Crab! it was 26th july my exam date.

Ohhh no... How could I forget this.

I was very confused but wattsapp said “Neha send you her location and she wants you to reach as soon as possible. Confused I decided to go to meet Neha because Tinder arranged me such a wonderful date with such a beautiful girl.

Sharp at 6:00 pm I reached the venue and sat in sofa of hotel room and suddenly one girl came in wearing mini skirt high heels with long straighten hair. Her face looks very familiar. Who was she?? Ohh god ! She came close to me with beautiful smile on her face. But face looks very familiar as if I know her very well.

Oh goodddd! She was Sharma aunty’s daughter Sneha. Sharma aunty was my mom’s fast friend and lives in the third house from my house. Sneha I guess I saw her last time when she was in her 6th standard.

Ohh no! ohh no! What should I do now?

Shucks! This Tinder idiot trapped me. I am going to kill him but first of all i should just get out of this place” I thought.

The girl came near to me saying hello. I stood up as if I got some electric shock and rushing towards the door I screamed ‘ I got to go ... I got to go’.. She was so amazed with my behaviour and was shouting listen what happened?? wait...

I just ran away from the place and reached on the road and auto wala “auto please come”...s before I could sit in the auto something very heavy hit me and I don’t remember anything. Now I am in a hospital all my bones are fractured. My legs , neck and arms are plastered and I can’t move. Doctors are asking me the number of anyone I know ,my friends,



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relatives parents but what should I say? I never made any friends because I was busy with those friends who can't be seen anywhere.



A Critical Review of “On Case Grammar” by John M. Anderson

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The review is structured by obtaining the points sequentially —

1. PREVIEWING
2. ANNOTATING
3. SUMMARIZING
4. ANALYZING
5. RE-READING and RESPONDING
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY.

1. PREVIEWING

To review the book first point is previewing. This section contains following points —

- a. Purpose or reading;
- b. About cataloguing like information;
- c. Structure of the book from title page to index.

Purpose of reading of the selected book: In the history of case grammar, this book is a milestone after a paper by Fillmore’s “The Case for Case” in the generative syntacticism. This book is essential to study any case oriented research activity as a primer. I want to discover a role and relationship in the analysis of “GRAMMAR OF CONVERSATION: A CASE STUDY OF BANGLA”. To see or discover, the situation, if there is any role beyond the area



of case in syntax. I want to identify the impact of case in BANGLA CONVERSATION into the level of discourse. I want to identify how much responsibility of case and case elements to run a communicative successful conversation and the ratio of usage of case marker/ identifier/ recognizer in the BANGLA CONVERSATION monolingual or bilingual even multilingual environment among Bengali Speakers.

- Name: “ON CASE GRAMMAR: PROLEGOMENA TO A THEORY OF GRAMMATICAL RELATIONS”
- Author: JOHN M. ANDERSON
- Publisher: CROOM HELM LONDON HUMANITIES PRESS
- Publication Year: 1977
- Total Page: 317

Information about this book is coded as following manner:

© 1977 John M. Anderson

Croom Helm Ltd, 2-10 St John's Road, London SW11

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Anderson, John M

On case grammar.

1. Case grammar

I. Title

415 P163

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The content page is organized by following manner:

CONTENTS

Preface

1. Grammars of Case	9
2. Localist Case Grammar	81
3. On the Nature of Grammatical Relations	188
Notes	281
Bibliography	284
Index	303

2. ANNOTATING

The second point is Annotating. Here the main point is to find out the author's purpose of writing of this selected book. And also many peripheral points to find out the supporting materials which gives the nutrition to grow up the fulfilment of research or research perfection. For this how many TERMINOLOGIES are used by author to analyse his view(s). Among them may have some unfamiliar words or may not or may have new role and function of old TERM(S). I need to find out these one by one. Now the main point I will go to discuss in this section is author's purpose(s).

2.1 Author's purposes of writing: Mark the Thesis and Main Points of the Piece

Author discussed his ambition of this research into his book under the PREFACE section without marked any number before the numbering chapter started named "1. GRAMMARS OF CASE" as per modern Doctoral Thesis Design.



2.2 Information about the Sources mentioned by Author: Author, Anderson mentioned or added “BIBLIOGRAPHY” after discussing the main views. Point to be mentioned is need that after numbered chapter author added a chapter without number named by “NOTES”. In this section, 49 notes are added between page no. 281 to 283.

In Bibliography, two things is available, these are — (1) Abbreviation; (2) Included book name.

2.2.1 Abbreviation: In abbreviation section, 32 abbreviated forms are encoded.

2.2.2 Book name encoding style: To refer the bibliographic information of books is made by the style of APA. The book is added following manner —

2.2.2.1 BOOK (SINGLE AUTHOR): The single author book is encoded as —

Anderson, John M. (1971b), *The Grammar of Case: Towards a Localistic Theory*, London & New York, Cambridge University Press

2.2.2.2 BOOK (CO- AUTHOR): Co- author book is encoded as —

Lees, Robert B. & Edward S. Klima (1963) ‘Rules for pronominalization’, Lg. 39, 17-28

2.2.2.3 EDITED BOOK: The edited book is encoded as —

Zwicky, Arnold M. (1968), 'Naturalness arguments in syntax', CLS 4, 92-102—Peter H. Salus, Robert I. Binnick & Anthony L. Vanek (eds.) (1971), *Studies out in Left Field: Defamatory Essays presented to James D. McCawley on the occasion of his 33rd or 34th Birthday*, Edmonton & Champaign, Linguistic Research Inc.

2.2.3 Journal Article: Journal Article is referred as

Anderson, John M. (1968a), 'Ergative and nominative in English', J L 4, 1-32

2.2.4 Bibliographic Style Specificity



But one point is that here is not followed the completed APA style. Because in APA, surname is full and first and middle name is short like —

Anderson, J. M. (1977). *On Case Grammar*. Great Britain: Croom Helm London Humanities Press.

3. SUMMARIZING

Now let summarize the book's subject-matter followed by chapter name and obtaining contents. It is said about how many chapters were there in the previous section under "PREVIEWING". Those three chapters are summarized below following into 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.

1. Grammars of Case: This chapter contains to notify the development of case grammar —
"In the preceding I have tried to sketch out some of the motivations underlying the development of case grammar and to indicate in a preliminary fashion some of its properties."[Anderson: 1977:63]. This chapter deals the following topics —

- a. A traditional notion of case
- b. Case notions and the aspects theory
- c. Fillmorean case grammar
- d. Some problems for case grammar 1: Multiple case relations per noun phrase
- e. Some problems for case grammar 2: Multiple case tokens per proposition
- f. Some problems for case grammar 3: Coordinating cases
- g. Some problems for case grammar 4: Preposition marking
- h. Some problems for case grammar 5: The spray paint cases
- i. Some problems for subject- object grammar
- j. Postscripts
- k. PPs on Serialisation.

Here the chapter name is very specific, “Grammars...”. This word ‘grammars’ implies that there exist multiple model to analyze the CASE notion of grammar. The basic some prepositions are reliable to mark the CASE RELATION, these are “to”, “in”, and “on”.

2. Localist Case Grammar: This chapter contains following topics —

- a. Predicate subcategorization and multiple CRs
- b. Dependency case grammars
- c. On Ablatives
- d. Localist case grammar 1: A brief history
- e. Localist case grammar 2: A Proposal
- f. The Localist hypothesis and the complementarity criterion
- g. On the derivative status of Indirect Object 1: Case relation
- h. On the derivative status of Indirect Object 2: Decomposition.

3.3. On the Nature of Grammatical Relations: This chapter contains following topics —

- a. Introduction
- b. Case relations and grammatical relations 1: Reflectivisation
- c. Reflectivisation, Passives and Equi
- d. Case relations and grammatical relations 2: Equi.

Among them which obtain the main focuses of this book are analyze in the analyzing part in this article, section “4. ANALYZING”.

4. ANALYZING

- This book is mainly depends on the language of English. But the author one or two places consider the other language word order typological notions. To consider this notion he refers the Greenberg’s UNIVERSALS RULES which contain (1) preposition and (2) postposition marking languages. These are SVO type and SOV type.
- **MULTIPLE CASE RELATION:** Let consider following sentences —



- a. The stone moved [abs]
- b. John moved [abs, erg]/ [abs]
- c. John moved the stone [abs] [erg]

Here is clear one thing that, the ABSOLUTE CASE is basic and compulsory case feature of the verb “MOVE”. [Anderson: 1977: 82].

- About the DEPENDENCY CASE GRAMMAR, the rule is —

$$[_Y [_\alpha [_V^a] V [_W^b] W] [_\alpha [_X^c] X [_\beta [_Y^d] Y [_Z^e] Z]]_Y$$

- Any verb may contain many CASE FEATURES and CASE RELATIONS [Anderson: 1977: 100] —

$$V \rightarrow [\quad]$$

- The markers of loc and allatives are frequently identical: “in” and “on” in English.
- Following sentences are considerable as per CASE RELATION COMPLEXITY —

1. a. Mary gave John an apple
b. Mary gave an apple to John [Anderson: 1977: 146-147]
2. a. Mary taught John linguistics
b. Mary taught linguistics to John [Anderson: 1977: 147]
3. a. Bill gave a book to Mary
b. Bill gave Mary a book [Anderson: 1977: 153]

Here the considerable thing is that the ordering position of NP and PP followed by verb. [+Human] Object is always takes a PREPOSITION if it follows the NP which follows the verb. This position changing is reason for the changing of CASE RELATION as well as THETA ROLE.

- IMPORTANCE in BANGLA CONVERSATION: Let consider the examples in Bangla which are available in our everyday conversation pattern.

4. A: □□□□□□-□□□□□□ □□□□ □□ □□□□□□□□

Shrimayee-Editor a book give-PAST



Shrimayee-Editor gave me a book.

B: □□□□?

Whom

Whom?

A: □□□□□□

Me

Me./ To me.

The surface representation is not clear “what is the case and theta role of this word?” So consider the example (5).

5. □□□□□ □□□□ □□ □□□□□□□□

Me a book give-PAST

Gave me a book.

Here is the full deep interpretation of the ELIPTIC SENTENCE “□□□□□”.

Now consider the example no (6).

6. □□□□□ φ □□□□□□□

Me φ give-PAST

Gave me φ.

Here is created the THEME ellipsis. The CASE feature is ACCUSATIVE.

Now consider the example no (7).

7. □□□□□ φ □□□□□□□

Me φ give-PAST

Gave φ to me.

Here is created the THEME ellipsis. The CASE feature is ABLATIVE. S



So in CONVERSATION ANALYSIS of INDIAN LANGUAGES as well as Bangla is needed to consider this multiple notion of case relation.

- Evidentiality of Example Usage: About evidence of the examples are loaned, those are marked by reference like (1974a, 157) format. [Anderson: 1977: 147].

5. RE-READING and RESPONDING

This text or Research is very valuable to analyze or further any research in CASE RELATION. This book is a milestone in study of the CASE as a Grammatical relation. We need to develop this multiple notion of CASE in INDIAN LANGUAGES' CONVERSATION ANALYSIS or any type of structural analysis of INDIAN LANGUAGES.

6. WORKS CITED

Anderson, John M. *On Case Grammar*. Great Britain: Croom Helm London Humanities Press, 1977.

Zwicky, Arnold M. *Naturalness arguments in syntax*. . Vol. CLS., 1968. 4 vols.