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ROCK PEBBLES

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Editor Speaks.....

As Durga Puja approaches, we at *Rock Pebbles* invite our readers to explore the profound themes of resilience, community and renewal that this celebration embodies. It is a cultural tapestry woven with rich narratives, artistic expressions and collective spirit.

However, in this latest issue of *Rock Pebbles*, we celebrate the vital role of scholarly inquiry in literature. Our journal is dedicated to publishing rigorous research articles that contribute to the understanding of literary texts, movements and theories. This issue brings together a diverse array of studies that illuminate the complexities of literary interpretation and the ways in which literature reflects and shapes human experience.

The articles featured in this edition encompass a wide range of topics, from analyses of canonical works to explorations of contemporary voices. Each piece engages with critical theories and methodologies offering fresh perspectives that challenge conventional interpretations and invite deeper dialogue.

In a time when literature often grapples with pressing social issues, our contributors delve into the ways writers address themes of identity, power and resistance. These research articles provide valuable insights for educators, and general readers alike. We hope they will inspire further investigation and foster an appreciation for the intricacies of literary scholarship.

As we move forward, *Rock Pebbles* remains committed to promoting high-quality research that pushes the boundaries of literary studies. We encourage our readers to contribute and explore the rich terrain of literature through a critical lens.

Thank you for being a part of our academic community. We look forward to your feedback and continued contributions as we embark on this journey of exploration and discovery together.

Happy Durga Puja! ■

- Editor

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Post-humanism: A Theoretical Overview

Rohit Yadav

Post-humanism emerged as a critical discourse with a view to offering a corrective discourse of humanism and anthropocentrism. Humans inherently work to make life comfortable and luxurious by possessing technological creations. Posthumanism as a critical discourse questions when technological creations become powerful enough to replace humans in the workplace. The term ‘posthuman’ emerged within the field of science fiction (SF) and philosophy implies embeddedness in the human body and enhanced capacities by cognitive and physical means. The study focuses on posthumanism as a critical and philosophical phenomenon and its implication in literature. SF authors problematise the issues vis-à-vis technology, biotechnology, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, cloning and digital technologies through fictional representation. Posthumanism interrogates humans’ position of centre and postulates that humans including non-human species are residents of the world without any ownership and control. It also alarmingly deliberates on cautionary measures and horrendous consequences, if governments do not implement strict policies concerning advancement in biotechnology, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, and digital technologies. The commercialisation of technological advancement is a pertinent concern of critical posthumanists. Further, the paper attempts to postulate how dystopian nightmare is a consequence of liberal humanist subject wherein imagined perspectives are crucial in changing the dreadful effects of a corrupt political system.

Key Words: Cyborgs, Posthumanism, Science Fiction, Technological Landscape, Transhumanism.

Introduction

The term ‘posthuman’ finds expression in science fiction (SF) and philosophically signifies “species that might evolve from human beings.” Posthumans evolve artificial intelligence (AI), genetic engineering, and biotechnological advancements. Posthumans are enhanced through “genetic or bionic augmentation” (*Oxford Lexico Dictionary*). The term ‘posthuman’ does not imply absence of humans, rather talks about stretched boundaries vis-à-vis cognitive and physical capacities. However, a compelling reason for posthumanism to emerge as a critical notion is because technology as an external phenomenon asides

“man” at a marginal position concerned with usage and control in the technological landscape. As posthumans evolve from humans, are associated with powerful/ privileged status among all the living and non-living species. Therefore, the privileged status of humans as hero of development and scientific temperament are leading factors toward technologically progressive society. Humans inherently dream and work for progress and development. Gradually, humans are only living beings who endlessly work towards making technological progress. Hence, the world is radically transformed by technological means.

The term ‘posthumanism’ comes from science fiction and philosophy signifies “humans can be transformed, transcended, or eliminated either by technological advancements or the evolutionary process; artistic, scientific, or philosophical practice which reflects this belief” (*Oxford Lexico Dictionary*). Posthumanism as a critical method of inquiry attempts to scrutinise “anthropocentric and humanistic assumptions” in literature (Ferrando 29). Further, posthumanism seeks to inquire about the relationship between humans and technology alongside rethinking humans’ position in a technologically mediated and tampered world. Posthumanism as a critical discourse deconstructs the anthropocentric human activities that have caused chaos in the world. Posthumanism as a critical discourse postulates on concerns about animals and environmental ethics. The presence of posthumans can be traced in literary and philosophical texts which constantly warn about technological enhancements. Moreover, we cannot draw parallels between history of posthuman discourse and the evolutionary history of technology. Theoretical arguments concerned with posthumanism deal with critical inquiries into technological enhancements and anthropocentric humanism.

Post-humanism as a Critical Discourse

Posthumanism deconstructs humanism while seriously looking into the changed subject position of centrality. The prefix ‘post’ identifies a new mode of interpreting literature, which radically exposes ‘humanism’ by citing loopholes rooted in anthropocentrism. It shows restlessness and displeasure for the human actions that replace humans in various spheres of life such as the workplace, household chores, reducing employment opportunities for human beings and so on and so forth. Posthumanism is a philosophical and critical phenomenon, that may be considered as a populist notion wherein concern for humans including living beings, environment, and technological advancements are at the core of deliberation. In fact, the critical and popular notion of populist agency functions as hope. One facilitates enhanced abilities and adds luxury to human life, whereas other critically questions anti-human and anti-environmentalist ventures.

Francis Fukuyama’s book, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of Biotechnology Revolution* (2002) opens with a description of Aldous Huxley’s dystopian work *Brave New World*: “The aim of this book is to argue that Huxley was right, that the most significant threat posed by contemporary biotechnology is the possibility that it will alter human nature and thereby move us into a “posthuman” stage of history” (7). If advanced technologies fall

into the wrong hands, these may push the whole world into a horrendous situation. Technological advancements become dangerous when they create disparity in society, discriminate on the basis of technological superiority, and when an anthropocentric view of life is lent more prominence. Fukuyama further emphasises the inevitable commercialisation of technological and biotechnological innovations. He critically expounds on the future of enhanced humans. His understanding of posthumanism speaks more about the political economy: “Human nature shapes and constrains the possible kinds of political regimes, so a technology powerful enough to reshape what we are will have possibly malign consequences for liberal democracy and the nature of politics itself” (7). Fukuyama’s nightmare is situated in the political history of liberal democracy wherein a corrupt political system oversees policies concerned with the welfare of humans including companion species.

Human imagination and fantasy are crucial in experimenting with new ideas within the field of technology. Likewise, imagination and science can also work wonders in human life by becoming agents of cultural transformation. Ihab Hassan in his article on “Prometheus as Performer: Towards a Posthumanist Culture?” claims: “[B]oth imagination and science are agents of change, crucibles of values, modes not only of representation but also of transformation, their interplay may now be the vital performing principle in culture and consciousness—a key to posthumanism” (838). Thus, posthumanism does not create a binary line between human and posthuman, but its philosophical foundations can be found in robotics, biotechnology, cognitive science, computer science, etc. Posthumanism deconstructs the human in multiple discourses and examines them to unfold inherent humanistic and normative notions of humaneness.

The notion of posthuman and technology are linked together and was first suggested by Ihab Hassan in 1976 in the essay titled “Prometheus as Performer: Towards a Posthumanist Culture?” According to Hassan, “astonishing convergences of imagination and science, myth and technology in contemporary culture have tended to elude them” (839). The latest developments in the field of science and technology have reconfigured the world beyond the human paradigm. Posthumanists thus interrogate the anthropocentric view of humanism which discriminates against environment and non-human species. Instances such as humans’ prerogative as a superior species to make desirable changes in the genetic line, and their experimentation with animal breeds to use organs for transplantation, call humanism into question. Jerold J. Abrams claims thus:

Genetic line can be manipulated, even while the technologies are still very much in the experimental stages. It is hardly difficult to imagine several wealthy families manipulating their genetic lines and mating strictly with one another, in order to enhance desirable traits in the given line. They would be built to live longer, to be healthier, and for all practical purposes to approach the Nietzschean ideal of the overman. (247)

New technologies alter the biological enhancements that provide a healthy life. Although

experiments in the extension and modification of life in the genetic line, as well as organ transplantation, are done for the betterment of humans, they end up tampering with/ distorting the innate bodily unification of humans. Thus, in the very process of donating organs, one lives at the cost of terminating the other's life.

Life in posthuman discourse has thus been discussed as a process of establishing new connections among species and technological artefacts, and therefore, unethical organ harvest and xenotransplantation give rise to neo-cannibalism. Many science fiction writers have been writing about potential dangers of technological advancements and AI. Critical posthumanism critiques technologies that reduce human body to a sheer organ continuum. The embeddedness of posthuman body has to be understood in two ways, "firstly, the mind-body continuum – i.e. the embrainment of the body and embodiment of the mind – and secondly, the nature-culture continuum – i.e. 'naturecultural' and 'humanimal' transversal bonding" (Braidotti 1). Posthuman body is the combination of dissimilar species and material entities situated in new media environs wherein human beings and AI interact.

Technology is the biopower in Foucauldian sense and knowledge as a cognitive process. Knowledge is acquired from social interactions. At the end of *The Order of Things*, Foucault famously wrote that "man is an invention of recent date" (422). In the process of this "invention," people somewhere lose the unified structure of the body and lead towards posthuman condition. Human beings thus reached a situation wherein dependency on technological artefacts increased substantially. Cary Wolfe in the book *What is Posthumanism?* Observes thus: "Transhumanists believe in the perfectibility of the human, seeing the limitations of the human body (biology) as something that might be transcended through technology so that faster, more intelligent, less disease-prone, long living human bodies might one day exist on Earth" (10). There are numerous versions of the transhuman and some of them have questionable capitalist dimensions. The idea of transhumanism is dangerous because it creates more social inequalities by making somebody more intelligent and beautiful compared to others.

Chris Hables Gray questions appropriation of cyborg technologies that create cyborgs who are self-regulating creations made of cybernetic and organ combination. Today, scientists are in the process of creating a perfect robot that carries human sensibilities and capacities. Cyborgs use technological devices, as Gray in *Cyborg Citizens: Politics in the Posthuman Age* observes:

If you have been technologically modified in any significant way, from an implanted pacemaker to a vaccination that programmed your immune system, then you are a cyborg. Even if you are one of those rare people who is in no way a cyborg in the technical sense, cyborg issues still impact you. We live in a cyborg society, no matter how unmodified we are as individuals. So, as we humans continue to transform ourselves, this process will play an increasingly important, eventually fundamental role in politics- and not always for the better. (2)

Gray, in fact, makes a strong claim that humans are in a continuous process of transformation into cyborgs as vaccines are being given at a very early stage after birth. In the field of medical science, experiments have been done on human to affect/modify their life as well as their genetic line. In the 21st century, people are bound to work with technological creations. Technology has been inseparably occupying human body and landscapes and has become an inevitable part of life.

Transhumanism and Post-humanism

Transhumanists on the other hand attempt to bring significant changes in the physical and cognitive structure of the human. Transhumanism, a branch of posthumanism, aims at making perfect humans with the help of genetic engineering and biotechnology. Posthumanism suggests prosthetic relationship between human beings and AI. In the process of transformation, human beings as a species evolve better whereas their genetic line gets transformed. Robert Pepperell in his book, *The Posthuman Condition: Consciousness Beyond the Brain* observes:

We are transhuman to the extent that we seek to become posthuman and take action to prepare for a posthuman future. This involves learning about and making use of new technologies that can increase our capacities and life expectancy, questioning common assumptions, and transforming ourselves ready for the future, rising above outmoded human beliefs and behaviours. (170)

Several attempts have been made to change the physical and mental capacities of humans. Transhumanists attempt to make changes in humans' biological structure with a view to postponing death. For Robert Pepperell, posthumanism is an anti-human idea characterised by the absence of humanists' interests. One wishes to live a longer life by overcoming some of the biological limits of the body. This process requires experimental research to enhance human physical and mental capacities.

Transhumanists always desire and imagine better and reformed humans' bodies. They aim to make life more comfortable by way of using surgical, medical, electronic, and neurocognitive sciences. Critical posthumanism finds it problematic when the outcome of a transhuman venture takes an adverse turn and becomes devastating. Robert Pepperell further writes about technological dominance over human and non-human species:

Humans have imagined for a long time that the ability to develop and control technology was one of the defining characteristics of our condition, something that assured us of our superiority over other animals and our unique status in the world. Ironically, this sense of superiority and uniqueness is being challenged by the very technologies we are now seeking to create, and it seems the balance of dominance between human and machine is slowly shifting. (3)

Pepperell, in fact, worries about shifting of power centre from human to AI owing to advanced technological developments that seem more powerful. AI supersedes humans in terms of

work capacity and effectiveness. For instance, a woodcutter machine is far more efficient than a person who cuts wood. But, it also reduces employment possibilities for humans involved in the particular workplace. The theoretical postulations in the paper highlight the adverse impact of biotechnology, information technology, artificial intelligence, cloning, surrogacy, and robotics on human life. Ferkiss warns that “the synthesis of postmodern technology and industrial man could produce a new civilization, or it could mean the end of the human race” (Waters ix). The threat is the result of a transformative vision of future technologies. Ferkiss’s view is more concerned with the technologies that land us in landscapes inhabited and dominated by AI. Technology today occupies a place of centrality in human life and has resulted from a historical process.

Transhumanism is an intermediary agency between the human and the posthuman/perfect human, and is identical to Donna Haraway’s vision of life, which is to live as long as possible. It uses brain engineering, brain transformation, prosthesis and genetic engineering. As advanced medical science opens up the possibility to avail oneself of an original prosthesis to be able to live a longer life, unethical organ harvest has a negative bearing on the neo-cannibalist nature of the advanced technologies. Posthumanism can be marked from the point of human realisation of his human reliance on technologies. Initially, it becomes visible in the forms of urbanscapes and ruralscapes that are reflective of technological landscapes. In fact, “Civilizations are based on the interplay of technology and human values” (Waters ix). Undoubtedly, the skilful efforts of human beings have contributed toward progress to make life more comfortable. Still, critical posthumanism puts forth the idea that there is something wrong with the world after the arrival of advanced technologies. Literary writers and thinkers have been postulating about excessive human indulgence in technological landscapes.

Post-humanism and Science Fiction

In literature, science fiction as a genre in particular deals with the issues of futuristic technologies and their threat to different species living on this planet. It also depicts the potential dangers of technological advancements. Further, such situations have been represented by various novelists such as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley who, in 1818, wrote *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*. Frankenstein’s monster is a genetically engineered being with enhanced capacities. His creation becomes dangerous for the creator, and the story ends in a chaotic situation. Another novel of hers namely *The Last Man* (1826) unfolds the story of a man living in a future world depopulated by a devastating plague. The damaged environment of Philip K. Dick’s novel, *Blade Runner* (1981) plays a fundamental role in shaping the idea of a post-apocalyptic scenario. The total destruction of the environment and eradication of non-human species alarmingly convey potential dangers of technological advancements and climate change. Environmental degradation and eradication of species a pertinent concerns of the novel that contribute in shaping the idea of a post-apocalyptic situation.

H.G. Wells' novel, *The War of the Worlds* (1898) portrays the Earth's invasion by the planet Mars's occupants. The story unfolds a futuristic tale where Aliens plot an invasion on Earth for widening their gradually depleting natural resources. *The Scarlet Plague* (1912) by Jack London is set in San Francisco in 2072 and narrates a story of depopulated landscapes on the earth. It portrays a situation where a deadly plague empties the planet which horrifies the reader. Aldus Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) is a story of those people who believe that happiness can be achieved through the use of drugs. Technology is the most powerful thing in society which can become dangerous for humanity if it falls into the wrong hands. Huxley depicts how technology controls society in terms of birth and future. George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) talks about the technological surveillance and manipulation of recorded history by an authoritative government. *Neuromancer* by William Gibson tells a near-future story of a computer hacker hired by a mysterious employer for one last job against powerful artificial intelligence. Thus, there are numerous writers who contributed by shaping the idea of posthuman landscapes in their writings.

Likewise, there are agencies of posthumanisation such as robotic technology, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, cloning, communication technologies, and new media that have contributed immensely to the fictional representation of posthuman landscapes in literature. Novelists such as Philip K. Dick, William Gibson, Aldus Huxley, George Orwell, Margaret Atwood, Cormac McCarthy, Vernor Vinge, and Kazuo Ishiguro have written about how technology has become a necessity. Everything in our life is reconstructed by how we travel, communicate with people, and seek information about everything. Internet chatting offers a broader scope of communication with relatives and strangers. In this way, physical reality is being replaced by virtual reality.

Posthumanism lays emphasis on the question of how we think about human beings in relation to the environment, animals, cloned bodies, and robots. N. Katherine Hayles, Cary Wolfe, Stefan Herbrechter, Francis Fukuyama, Donna Haraway, Niklas Luhmann, and Neil Badmington have contributed to the concept of the posthuman and its practice in humanities. In fact, the notion of posthuman is understood as the human of extended capacities as N. Katherine Hayles writes in *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*:

[T]he posthuman view thinks of the body as the original prosthesis we all learn to manipulate, so that extending or replacing the body with other prostheses becomes a continuation of a process that began before we were born...the posthuman view configures human being so that it can be seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines. (3)

Hayles emphasises the shift in the focus from the body to the material objects. After the advent of advanced technologies, human and robotic bodies seem essentially similar. The human body is treated as an organ continuum which can be further used for prosthetic transplantations. The posthuman subject is a combination of several material entities.

Posthumanists view human consciousness as the centre of identity and body as a prosthetic entity that can increase the lifespan of socio-economically privileged people. The posthumanist view presented by Hayles above points toward extension of human life through the use of technological, medical, surgical, digital and electronic gadgets. The posthuman thus crosses “normality’s threshold,” and leads the body into “techno-scientific colonisation” (Goicoechea 5).

The thrust of posthuman fiction writers remains on the landscapes materially occupied/overpowered by technological gadgets. It also depicts how prosthetic (original and artificial) relationship is destined to enhance human capacities. Posthuman bodies are an amalgamation of technological devices and tools. They are fundamentally similar to AI. Hayles observes that “becoming a posthuman means much more than having prosthetic devices grafted onto one’s body. It means envisioning humans as information-processing machines with fundamental similarities to other kinds of information-processing machines, especially intelligent computers” (246). Likewise, in the 21st century literature, we come across virtual characters who seem similar to the human characters. They are in prosthetic relationships with electronic devices and other species. They adapt their bodies according to the external object/s fitted/transplanted in the body.

Current trends in technology offer a futuristic vision via transporting human beings into a better future, and therefore, the idea of posthuman seems fascinating as it carries utopian traits. Robert Pepperell in *The Posthuman Condition: Consciousness beyond the Brain*, observes thus:

Posthumans will be persons of unprecedented physical, intellectual, and psychological ability, self-programming and self-defining, potentially immortal, unlimited individuals. Posthumans have overcome the biological, neurological, and psychological constraints evolved into humans. Extropians believe that the best strategy for attaining posthumanity is a combination of technology and determination, rather than looking for it through psychic contacts, or extraterrestrial or divine gift. (170)

Technology, an agency of posthumanisation and survival, cannot be alien to the human. Digital technologies widen the boundaries of the posthuman as people become dependent on artificial creations for a relatively better, healthier life. AI can be a dangerous agency in replacing human beings. Excessive indulgence of humans with machines, medical and surgical world, in fact, hybridises biological humans and technology. Artificial prosthesis helps enhance the capacities of the human body in desirable ways. Within the domain of posthumanism, information technologies and digitalisation hold an important place and thus merit discussion. Digital technologies blur boundaries between animate and inanimate images wherein devices talk to one another. Richard Jordan in the thesis titled “Posthuman Drama: Identity and Machine in Twenty-First-Century Play Writing” observes: “In a world where our devices ‘talk’ to each another, where our virtual personae outlive our bodies, and where our memories are outsourced to the cloud, we have already become posthuman”(4). Thus, posthuman subject equates human

identity with digital landscapes and intelligent machines.

Communication technology also has brought the entire world closer. Internet chat has created a wider scope of communication with one's relatives as well as strangers. Posthumanfiction explores the consequences of excessive indulgence with/ reliance on technology/ machines. Virtual reality blurs boundaries between animate and inanimate objects and at times, it becomes challenging to distinguish between both. Posthuman subjectivity changes readers' perception of technology, which results in a horrifying apocalyptic future based on the latest developments in the technological sphere. Whereas "[c]yberculture invokes a romantic apocalyptic vision of a cybernetic rapture, a new electronically induced return to the unity, an age in which the material world will be transcended by information" (Dinello 3) critical posthumanism deals with the question: "What happens when human beings are equated with intelligent machines or artificial intelligence?" (3). Posthuman fiction as a remarkable intervention represents human and non-human agents essentially similar to each other through intelligent machines crucial in unfolding the narrative.

The concept of posthuman comes into play when science fiction and philosophy deliberate on the issues concerned with the relationship with technology: "It is more accurate to describe two forms of discourse that run through both scientific and fictional narratives, in unequal ways. "Technoromanticism" and "cybergothic" can be used to refer to the techno heaven and the technohell, using Daniel Dinello's notions, respectively" (Goicoechea 3). Based on the above-mentioned argument, it can be said that posthuman fiction addresses issues related to the utopian human desire for a better life by using technology. The desire and excitement for a better life leads people to an unmanageably chaotic situation.

Similarly, Jacques Derrida may be viewed as a critique of humanism when humans are involved in "unprecedented transformation" and their consumerist relation with non-human entities get enhanced (24). Further, the opportunities offered by capitalism are grabbed by anthropocentric humans as Rosi Braidotti postulates, "[P]osthuman condition consists in grabbing the opportunities offered by the decline of the unitary subject position upheld by Humanism, which has mutated in several complex directions" (54). She further argues, "Derrida's attack on anthropocentrism is presented consequently as a necessary correlate of the critique of Humanism" (69). Posthumanism questions anthropocentric activities that grab the opportunities offered by technological advancements to transmute non-human species while exercising man's prerogative as a superior species.

Post-humanism and Technology

Critical posthumanism castigates anti-human activities and denounces any endeavour due to which human survival is endangered. Indian playwright in English, Manjula Padmanabhan, in her play *Harvest* set in Bombay, portrays an urbanscape where the protagonist namely Om Prakash becomes jobless just because machines need few skilled operators. So, he decides to sell his body organs for the survival of his family. This is the

severe side of biotechnological advancements. Technologically and economically rich section of society challenges the mortal nature of human life by harvesting organs from people who are economically deprived. Posthumanism thus questions humanist discourse when biotechnology, nano-technology, and artificial intelligence tend to undermine human beings: “Posthumanism questions biocentrism, the concept of life itself, blurring the boundaries between the animate and the inanimate in quantum approach to the physics of existence” (Fernando 10). Critical posthumanism raises serious concerns about the interference of technology in human life besides emphasising how technologised human/ posthuman is alienated in society and how vulnerable sections of human population are compelled to sell their organs.

Conclusion

Anthropocentric activities start harming humans, the physical environment, and non-human species. In posthuman discourse, humans enter into symbiotic relationships with AI and companion species. Contemporary technoculture and biotechnology create chaotic situation which may be called apocalyptic which reinforces rethinking anthropocentric humanism from different perspectives. Critical posthumanism intervenes when humans desire to shape a utopian world characterised by perfect human traits ends in chaos and destruction. Socially constructed nature of the human is different from the one that is technologically constructed. Posthuman view considers human consciousness as a separable part of the human body and organ continuum. Further, posthumanism denounces the binary line between human and posthuman, but its philosophical foundations can be found in technologies such as robotics, biotechnology, cognitive science, computer science, etc. Posthumanism deconstructs the human in multiple discourses and examines them to unfold inherent humanistic and normative notions of humaneness. ■

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The Spire: A Critique on William Golding's *Tree of Knowledge*

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A story of Dean Jocelin's dream of a spire on his cathedral which would symbolize man's praise of God, is an investigation of two different world: the spirit and the flesh, the faith and the reason and it moves towards an emphatic resolution. The novel is scrutinized as to the author's imagination in presenting conflicting ideas in tension in a concrete situation and the protagonist gradually progresses from ignorance to self-knowledge. Edeavour is made to show as to how protagonist's phallic ambition to erect the spire is more genuinely Christ like with love and forgiveness as at the end, the narrative shows human nature and life itself as a miracle, rooted deeply in both innocence and guilt, in beauty and in blood that changes one's vision from limited knowledge to full-blown consciousness. Select texts have been studied to focus on the subject of self-knowledge through the methodology of comparative and critical analysis in terms of extant literary theories and secondary sources on the subject.

Key Words: Christian, Chaos, Dichotomy, Faith, Self-knowledge.

Introduction:

The Spire (1964), Set in the Middle Ages, the novel is about the erection of a huge, 400 feet tower on an English Cathedral. It is told from the point of view of the protagonist, Jocelin, through whose eye everything significant is seen so that the novelist's narrative persona is almost suppressed. Parallely, an omniscient narrator is also present. Two narrative perspectives parallel the movement of the story towards the reconciliation of two worlds. Jocelin dominates the scene with his vision of the spire as a 'crowning glory' (SP: 3). As he pushes on with his ambition he comes to understand his own past, his motives and the human cost involved in his enterprise. It is the progress of understanding that is the chief movement in the novel. The progress of the story tells how making of the vision a reality entails human tragedy, and development of human consciousness, slow but sure.

The pit dug for the foundation of the church was too weak to withstand the load of the spire. The conflict of faith and reason starts between Jocelin and the master builder, Roger Mason on the issue of construction. The workmen refuse to go on for such a risky job without a foundation. Jocelin, out of his sheer faith that the spire is a 'diagram of the highest prayer of all' (SP: 20) forces the master builder to carry on the activity. Water seeps into the graves and the Cathedral fills with the smell of corruption. Workmen are beset with irrational fear, hysteria, and one of them falls from the roof and dies. The rumour of plague adding to their woe, turns the place into hell,"... in fear of age and death, in fear of weight and dimension, in fear of darkness and a universe without hope". Thus, the church stands desecrated and "this is the beginning of Joceline's premonitory feeling" (Rao:73).

There is human corruption all around. The Patron and the architect are both engaged in colossal folly. The spire is 'Jocelin's folly' (SP: 35) and Roger Cohorts in his folly. Roger is practical man, but his bitter experience leads him to suicide attempt. He is reluctant to be involved in the folly of building too high but he is dragged down into perversity. Jocelin is aware of the evil as the spire is 'a diagram of the folly they don't know about' (SP: 128). Jocelin realizes that 'the renewing life of the world was a filthy thing, a rising tide of muck...' (SP: 58). Professor Boyd observes that, "one might almost say that Jocelin with his arrows of love plays Cupid to Roger and Goody... He allows the house of God to become an unruly house, that he himself becomes a pimp for the sake of the spire" (95).

Jocelin uses Roger as his tool and leads himself to his guilt. He is an outraged keeper of God's house and not only desecrates the church but also enjoys the sin of illicit love. Jocelin feels that he may be able to hold up the spire by sheer force of will but the will power lacks purity and appears to be a satanic will. At certain height the earth creeps and Roger wants to resign as 'we have gone as high as we can' but Jocelin scolds him saying, 'you're a man for a little dare' (SP: 85). What is striking here in the progress of the spire is 'the dreadful glow of his dedicated will' (SP:137) and "his pious complacency and his stance of spiritual superiority appear to be no more than the manifestation of his will" (Boyd:95).

Jocelin's folly and its concomitant self-assertion incur death and destruction, blood and sacrifice. Sacrifice is interwoven throughout the novel with revelation and vision. Pangal is slaughtered because the workers are afraid that the mighty cathedral will collapse but the actual threat is, Jocelin, their ruler. Jocelin is protected against the mob by the dumb man's body. Pangal substitutes Jocelin what can be compared, according to anthropological history, a substitution of fool for priest-king. Jocelin learns to 'count the cost' in terms of blood and sacrifices. Jocelin offers himself but Pangal is the first victim and "the spire is built not merely on Christian faith but on pagan human sacrifice" (Boyd:100). The image of impotence is killed to bring new life in the impregnation of Goody by Roger. Frank Kermode also observes in his analysis of the novel that 'all

Golding's books are violent and his basic figure for terror, violence and bloody creation is child birth' (84). Thus, creation and destruction go together. The Spire grows at the expense of Pangal's death.

In this context it is possible to see Pangal as pre-Christian representative, who is destroyed by Christianity. Jocelin identifies the pre-Christian religion with devilry, with the forces of evil and all stirrings of sexuality. Still Pangal finds a place in the enterprise with his power of driving magical power. The name of Pangal itself originates from pagan world with the word 'pan', meaning goatish and archetypal deity. Moreover, Golding cleverly manipulates the term pagan in the spelling of the name Pangal. The armies of workers along with Pangal constitute the energy, the workforce to raise the Spire. The diagram of prayer or Jocelin's folly stands erect on the foundation of pagan darkness or scape-goats. Professor Boyd observes that "the Christian story of the redemption from sin of the world by the crucifixion of Christ is itself built upon pagan myths of the sacrificial scape-goat, fool or priest-king" (93). Therefore, the body of workers essentially stands for goodness. At the same time Jocelin's folly originates from his strong and unflinching faith. Again, "Golding writes of a faith so strong that it's destructive powers amount to what is virtually a blasphemous travesty of faith..." (Kermode:148).

Jocelin's dying thought is that there is no innocent work. Hence, it is clear that all this antimonies, conflict of good and evil swirl together in Jocelin's as well as ours tormented mind. Good and evil seem to run together, one is impossible without the other. But Jocelin has not yet fully realized the dichotomy at this point. Jocelin, like Sammy mount joy, commits himself to a course of action and asserts his will on others and the actions imparts him self-knowledge even at terrible cost and sacrifice: 'I am only learning now, how terrible it is' (SP: 88).

So far, the Chaos below, corruption and sacrifice have dominated the scene with each foot of the Spire's growth. Now he begins to feel the moral compunction and counts the cost involved for his big dare. His commitment forces him into corruption and conflicting involvement. Now he is like one lost in the maze of his contrivance. Goody's death strikes to his consciousness. Jocelin begins to learn the lesson of the cost involved but he himself is not skilled at seeing the significance of his cathedral or the world. He admits, "I'm not very intelligent"(SP: 140). While he is beset with confusion and chaos, he still wants that the "spire to be thousand feet high to oversee the whole country". (SP:106). Professor Boyd comments that: 'he is both ignorant and obtuse'(Gresen:92). Jocelin is in the Jack's tribe of the *Lord of The Flies*(1954) who believes that evil is threat outside humanity and Satan is the beast who should be contained by the Holy Nail. His repressed sexual feeling appears in his dream in a Freudian way what he misjudges as sin and satanic visitation, not working up to reality. Even when he gains self-knowledge he blames Goody's red hair as witchcraft. He commits the same evil of externalizing the devil there by letting his evil within, a free hand. The result is death and destruction. Golding devises the characters in a subtle manner, so that the protagonist moves continuously from ignorance to revelation.

William Golding is a religious novelist and the novels are structured almost entirely on the acceptance of the authenticity of their Christian parallels. He has shown in *Free Fall* that, “Man is doomed by Original Sin, and Fall is a reality” (McCarron:23). Jocelin’s faith on God is his arrogant assumption of God’s favour which in turn grows into pride—a deadly sin. He is subjected to other deadly sins also which results in Chaos and sacrifices. His big dare is a mark of pride. He shows envy and lust in the alleged involvement of Goody and Roger. At times he finds fulfillment of his lust through the sexual dream. His heated argument with Anselm, the sacrist, shows his anger. He fires an arrow of love, casting himself unknowingly in the role of Love—God or Eros. His sexual desire for Goody is a desire for self—glorification. Lust and pride are at the root of much evil in Jocelin

The Spire represents in one sense a genuine aspiration towards God but in building it Jocelin moves away from ordinary human concerns yet, discovers the knowledge of the truth of things and of our own nature through the symbolic meaning. Love and forgiveness are more genuinely Christ like. He goes among the lowly tradesmen, shares their work and becomes a jack-of-all trades as he realizes their pain and suffering. As he experiences the reality of human love, he babbles foolish things about an apple tree in the gutter. The symbol of apple tree and king fisher flashed before on Jocelin’s eye on his way to Roger which “establish themselves as part of his universe” (Rao:81).

He still lays faith in God. “He believes in the ability of the crucified Christ to transfigure his Church and make it prevail” (Cowel: 123). The driving of the Holy Nail enacts his faith so that the second Tree redeems the first. Again, the tree of the Spire brings about the tragic fall of both Roger and Jocelin dragging them through stinking pit and corruption. As Jocelin climbs above in its dangerous branches: “He felt the same appalled delight as a small boy feels when he climbs too high in a forbidden tree” (SP: 101). But the tree of the Spire also recalls the Tree of the Cross upon which Christ redeemed man from his fallen state. Christ sacrificed his body on the Cross; Jocelin is also torn ‘from arse to the head’ (SP: 188) by the Spire. Jocelin, like the Christ, attempts to make a bridge way to heaven. Christ is believed to be crucified at the place of Adam’s skull. The Spire also stands on the skull of Pangal with a message of faith and redemption. In this context, the blasphemous nature of the spire stands as a symbol of all—encompassing nature of humanity.

The self—knowledge, the knowledge of good and evil in a spiritually barren world is the only hope for humanity and the movement from ignorance to revelation is a continual process in Golding’s novels. Jocelin also moves from ignorance to knowledge as it is in Golding’s earlier fictions: Ralph weeps in recognition of human evil in *Lord of The Flies*, Lok realizes that Liku has been eaten in *the Inheritors*, Martin’s epic fight for life disintegrates in the face of the black lightning and he learns that he is dead in *Pincher Martin*. In fact, Jocelin and Martin share much in common as both the characters are concerned with a central act of construction yet, they differ sharply at the point of revelation. Martin negates selfless act of dying and in his self—creating egoism he is lost

into absolute nothingness. Jocelin, on the other hand, gains the vision of the spire as a unity that moves the eyes into focus.

The Inheritors suggests that the Homo sapiens achieve historical success with their evolutionary knowledge of guilt. *The Darkness Visible* (1994) is primarily concerned with the act of ‘seeing’ and the novel implies that good and evil are based upon our perceptions. Jocelin in *The Spire* is seen at war with himself. He faces the chaos within his search for a pattern. He imposes a pattern with the terrible paradox of his vision. As the spire progresses, Jocelin learns new lessons leading to his full-blown consciousness. The paradoxical meaning, the conflict of reason and faith gives way to insight. He, like his predecessor Ralph and Sammy, moves to self-knowledge. The symbolism plays a great role in all Golding novels. The Spire itself constitutes the central symbol with its various interpretations. Finally, it meets the infinity in exultation with the fusion of the magical world of good and evil.

Golding is true to the medieval setting of the novel by presenting the Tree of cross as the medieval people believes that the wood of the Tree of Knowledge was used to form the cross. The combination of the two trees is not blasphemous as it in its all-encompassing nature bridges the gap between earth and heaven, bears the message that good and evil in larger context are fall and redemption. The tree of spire being many branched images of our life, it demands to be likened as the Life-Tree or World Tree. The sameness of eternal human experience is evoked in the world of the spire in a sense that despite all the many coloured changes in manners and beliefs, we remain the same creatures struggling between the forces of good and evil, between earth and heaven. The cathedral as the microcosm of the universal order stands on human pillars, the substance of which is ‘a kind of vital morality’. (FF: 189). In this substance reason and faith, good and evil are necessary ingredients and are in constant war threatening at times the order to fall yet, the order stands as ‘crooked beauty’(FF:190).

The medieval setting of the novel is true to the history itself. Golding, unlike his earlier novels, has not based the story on any intertextuality. The structure of the spire is modeled on the Salisbury Cathedral near which Golding had lived for many years. The constructional details of Jocelin’s spire are similar to that of Salisbury. The spire in Salisbury is a little above 400 feet and the highest in England. It is octagonal, strengthened by iron bonds and has no orthodox foundations. Golding has adopted the details of the construction to create his own myth of man’s fall and redemption in a manner Milton created his masterpiece, *The Paradise Lost*, from the allusion of the Bible. Golding himself accepts that the purpose of his novel is to write about “a cathedral of the mind” (Rao:83).

The novel is more an imaginative analogy of the mind than mere architectural detail. The phallic aspects work through Jocelin’s mind subconsciously which can be at best be interpreted in Freudian terms. The conventional symbol is integrated into Jocelin’s experience so that one simple, straight forward message can never be final. It is always

possible to show that alternative interpretations are as viable. The alternative ‘messages’ of the spire exists in tension, so that the problems posed by human existence admit of no simple solution as man is bounded in finitude and tossed between faith and reason. The spire is a universal order and a concept of unity, the tree of knowledge. It is also a club, “a stone hammer ... waiting to strike”, an upward rushing towards the sky, ‘a silent cry’; it is a slim girl as a symbol of creation, and it breaks ‘all the way to infinity...’ (SP: 89). The spire that bends but does not fall is also a morally ambiguous structure. It emphasizes man’s vulnerability and involvement with evil and his final regeneration into goodness through suffering.

The spire is built on both good and evil, faith and pride, and fall and regeneration. The central message is that man is free to choose good or evil. When the good is eclipsed man falls to degrading heights and suffers, but suffering leads to self-knowledge. The construction of the spire begins with ill-begotten money, hellish pit and human cellaring; at times it shakes and creaks with a threat of fall yet, it touches the perfection of heaven. Thus, it is a structure of multiple ramifications – a complex image that suggests human aspirations that of physical, emotional and spiritual levels all at once. The spire is an embodiment of human nature from its infancy to maturity. It is an art that grows from medieval to the modern. The slow and gradual evolution of the spire vis-a-vis Jocelin’s consciousness is symbolic of mankind’s primitive to modern state in which progress is achieved though not without fall. Professor Subba Rao observes in this context that: “Jocelin’s quest for a pattern is Golding’s own quest for a suitable objective correlative to embody ‘his sense of transcendent evil and good’. It successfully culminates in the spire/ Apple tree image” (Boyd:86).

Conclusion:

In the ultimate analysis, the novel on its deeper level is a spiritual idea and its realization in concrete terms. The novel shrieks and creaks in evil, shades a silent cry for the loss of innocence and finally triumphs in goodness and innocence. Jocelin suggests his life time experience by analogy. His dying attempts, indeed, is to characterize the spire as the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which brought death and suffering thereof into the world, yet it redeemed the world too. Jocelin tastes the bitterness of knowledge of evil in himself and all around him but succeeds in making his diagram of prayer stand as hope for humanity. His vision is transcendental but arises from the physical world particularly from the similes of the king-fisher and apple tree. The conflicts throughout, the personal dimension of guilt and knowledge are finally subsumed to these pair of radiant images which constitute natural yet magical beauty. Life is an admixture of terror and joy, good and evil. That is the magic. They can never be fully defined or decoded. Language is an ineffective medium for the communication of such experience. Jocelin realizes that life is a miracle, rooted deeply in both innocence and guilt, in good and evil. They are all the part of one unity. Jocelin is privileged enough by the making of Golding to have this vision. ■

Note: The abbreviation used: *the Spire* is SP and *Free Fall* as FF

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J.M Coetzee's *Foe* as Post-colonial Counter-narrative through Intertextuality: An Analysis

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The Post-Modern age confirms to the existence and authenticity of mini-narratives and lays bare the illusion of the superiority of grand narratives. This de-stabilizes the so-called parent narrative and the same function is performed by J.M Coetzee's *Foe*. The presence of Intertextuality has gone on to destabilize the parent narrative of *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe and opened it up for interpretation from different perspectives. This paper is an attempt to analyze it from a post-colonial perspective and show how *Foe* presents a counter-narrative to colonialism through its various facets and the character of Friday.

Key Words- Appropriation, colonialism, Intertextuality, language, marginal.

Introduction:

The Present Age is an era of freedom from mini-narratives from slavish imitation and obedient subordination of grand narratives. An age where the illusion of monologic texts has been exposed and their counter-narratives have been breathed with new existence. Alternative reality is the zeitgeist of the age and the same function is performed by the famous work *Foe* by J.M Coetzee, which is considered as one of the master-pieces of the writer. The conscious presence of intertextual relationship with Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* has invited both comparisons and interpretations. This paper will focus on how Coetzee's *Foe* can be read as a counter-narrative to the archetypal colonizer narrative of *Robinson Crusoe*.

As a term 'Intertextuality' was first used by Julia Kristeva in *Word, Dialogue and Novel*, in which she puts forward the idea of viewing a text as a dynamic site whose analysis should be conducted on the basis of its relation to other texts (qtd in Martinez 269). According to her, literary work is an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point, just like a dialogue amongst several writings. Presence of various words in a word and subsequently of various texts in a text is inevitable. So, a text cannot be considered as a self-contained closed system but understood only as a dynamic site where traces of other texts are present. A text is compelled to retain its relation with its predecessors. The principle which holds that deciphering the meaning of a text is an act of penetration into the author's life and

experiences is transformed into an act of enquiry of discerning the echoes of various works written before a specific text (Martinez 270-72). Intertextuality, thus, rejects the principle of textual autonomy and proposes the progressive dissolution of a text as a coherent and self-contained unit of meaning.

So, Intertextuality can most easily be understood as the interdependence among independent texts which transforms them into intertexts and counter texts. This relationship whether intertextual or counter textual affirms that reality may change according to changing perspectives and destabilize the parent narrative. As, such Intertextual enquiries have been employed as strategy by post-colonial critical theory in order to expose and deconstruct the dominant discourse of canons. With the myth of logocentric meaning of a text being shaken up, fresh and hitherto hidden narratives are given space to originate and prosper. Post-colonialism wields Intertextuality as a weapon to challenge the authority of canonical works and give utterance to marginalized, silenced voices of the “other”. It empowers the marginalized to be re-located from the periphery of dominant discourse.

J.M Coetzee’s *Foe* has a “counter textual relationship” (Turk 296) with the parent narrative of *Robinson Crusoe*. It challenges the ideologies and colonial values of its prequel. The narrative of Susan Barton in *Foe* serves as a counter narrative to the archetypal colonial narrative of *Robinson Crusoe*. It offers resistance to the monologic text which presents the story from the viewpoint of the colonizer, by bringing Friday’s muted protest and Susan Barton’s feminist struggle to the forefront. The empire is writing back through these two margins and the center can no longer hold.

Daniel Defoe’s character Robinson Crusoe signifies authority, a creator of an empire, a dominant voice of his narrative, a self-sufficient figure and his struggles point the way to lift the white man’s burden. He reached the island which time and again he designates as ‘my fortress’ (19) after rebelling against his father, escaping the clutches of slavery of sea pirates, leaving behind the Brazilian plantation life, continuous struggle and clever planning. He was successful in establishing civilization on a barbaric island visited only by cannibals. As per Imperialistic terminology, civilization moved from mainland to the island through the character of Crusoe. Defoe created the perfect castaway who by the end of the novel declares himself to be the “Governour” of “my island” (8). The novel bespeaks the underlying power of colonizer. J.M Coetzee deliberately revises the history of *Robinson Crusoe* in order to expose this myth and present a new perspective different from dominant reality. By analyzing the character of Crusoe from the narrative of Susan Barton he “lays bare the illusion of colonial superiority and the conventions that sustain it” (Turk 297).

Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe is a confluent figure of the ideology of colonialism; however, Coetzee’s Cruso is a creative response to that ideology impersonated by Defoe’s master narrative. The eponymous hero of Defoe’s tale has complete control of the island. He rears sheep, keeps arms recovered from the wreckage, uses tools to build his fortress, fashions a canoe to escape, trains a parrot to speak, keeps pet dogs, maintains a journal of

time and date, and in time builds a civilized empire on the island. Instead of surviving on the island, now the island survives through him. However, Coetzee's Cruso seems to have lost the authoritarian status and imperial fore-sight (Naramore) as he doesn't maintain a journal, lives in a hut surrounded by a primitive fence furnished with a narrow bed, lettuce, fish and bird eggs as part of his monotonous diet. He has not recovered any tools or armaments from the wreckage site. Indeed, he is a man with the most minimal needs.

Coetzee's Cruso seems to mock the basic premise of colonial strategy, to usurp maximum economic benefits from its colony. While Defoe's Crusoe could extract maximum benefits from natural means, Coetzee's Cruso is bereft of any need of them. The futility of the capitalist character of the colonizer stands exposed.

Coetzee's Cruso is in fact an authority without history. When Susan Barton, enquires about his past life, he has various contrary tales to narrate, one different from the other and neither is he clear as to how he met Friday to the extent that it cannot be discerned "what was truth, what was lies and what was mere rambling" (12) about Cruso's life. In *Foe*, Coetzee presents Cruso as a man of few words and the tongue less Friday as a man of no words. They have no inclination to author their history and of their island and thus in *Foe*, the very history of the colonizer gets problematized. It consequently renders him incapable of writing his and Friday's life history. History, which was employed as a weapon of colonial domination, has deserted its own master. The writer of history has lost its privileged position, as his own history is vague and incomplete. Ethnocentric perspective of the colonizer stands deconstructed and the master narrative can no longer proclaim to be the reference point. The margins can once again claim their own reality.

Apart from history, Cruso seems to be bereft of any inclination to leave behind a legacy for posterity. He and Friday spend their whole day, tirelessly working to build terraces for farming, but cannot grow anything on them because they do not possess seeds and he intends to leave them behind as his legacy because of his belief that "They will be enough. They will be more than enough." (18) He considers not having anything to plant as their misfortune and comments: "The planting is reserved for those who come after us and have the fore-sight to bring seed. I, only clear the ground for them" (33).

His intention of leaving behind only the terraces as his legacy in contrast to Defoe's Crusoe who leaves behind an empire can have various significations. But it definitely seems to point to the futility at the core of empire building. He seems to mock the achievements registered by building an empire. Coetzee's Cruso seems wholly incapable as well as uninterested in building colonial empire; indeed, it would be highly inaccurate to term him as a foreigner with an Imperialistic agenda. He doesn't consider himself marooned on the island, but is well ensconced in it, with no intention of being saved. He is not a castaway, but intends to complete his life on the island itself. *Foe* presents a Cruso as an unheroic and unproductive white master. J.M Coetzee seems to point at the perspective of colonialism from the contemporary age. Instead of colonialism being an agency of salvaging civilization,

it has left only barren terraces. The colonial agenda of civilizing mission stands exposed in wake of the fruitless past it has left behind and the contemporary age has to start afresh in order to establish a new order and a new world.

The only ambition that Cruso seems to be garnering is to continue the complete authority that he holds over his island. When Susan Barton tries to venture out against his wishes he blasts out at her—"While you live under my roof you will do as I instruct" (20). Susan Barton looks after him when he falls sick and also satisfies his sexual desires, but his attitude towards her, remains passive and objective. His authoritative position forbade him to accept Susan Barton as anything else except a subordinate. Cruso's relationship with Friday is also devoid of the affections it possessed between the two in the tale of Daniel Defoe. Coetzee's Cruso is not ready to accept him in any position other than a slave. Their relationship is devoid of any kind of feelings but a strict master-slave one. Cruso is not ready to teach Friday any words, so that any possibility of a revolt by the slave maybe eliminated. The colonial master has denied his subject the benefits of language and taught him only "as many as he needs" (21) or more conveniently as many as Cruso needs, in order to forge and sustain a master- slave relationship and signify authority. But Susan knew language and challenged Cruso's authoritative position, Friday on the other hand was denied of the linguistic authority to do so. Friday's attitude towards Cruso also remains within the realm of a master-slave relationship. He shuns the hut when Cruso falls ill and it is Susan who nurses him back to health. The colonizer-subject relationship has reached an all-time low and the colonizer is not ready to concede his authoritative stance, which although has been shaken up.

This challenge has been thrown by the mute, tongue less Friday, "a slave unmanned" (119), who is the primary element of counter-textuality to colonialism in the narrative. His enigmatic presence gains prominence with increase in the intensity of efforts of the author Foe in the novel and Susan to write the island's story in which his story perpetuates like a "hole in the narrative" (Foxcroft 348). In order to write it, it is of paramount importance to extract Friday's story either by cajoling or by coercion, so that it can be retold as per the author's convenience. But Friday refuses to communicate with them and all efforts to teach him alphabets or to converse with him pictographically end up with no success. This defiance by mute Friday represents the resistance to colonialism. Friday refuses to speak and communicate in the language which signified him as cannibal and barbaric and refuses to once again become an object of appropriation at the hands of Susan and Foe.

After the death of Cruso, the burden of Friday and the right to tell the story of the island falls on the shoulders of Susan and she declares to herself "...as it is I who have the disposal of all that Cruso leaves behind, which is the story of his island" (45).

She assumes the role of colonizer vacated by Cruso and controls the slave to gain access to him by communicating with him but not by teaching him to communicate. She confesses during the course of the novel that her attempts to educate Friday out of darkness

and silence are just an illusion to cover her attempt and the narrative of Crusoe also becomes hers by right. In Daniel Defoe's tale it rested with Crusoe and in Coetzee's narrative it falls in the hands of Susan, but is never with Friday himself. He becomes an object of appropriation passed on from one authority to another. However, this time the symbol of minions, the subjugated and the colonized refuses to partake in the communication process so as not to be inscribed by his colonial master. Friday's muteness and his abject denial to communicate refers to his non-complicity with the power structures as Clarkson has pointed out in his work *J.M. Coetzee: Counter voices*- "authority is invested in the one, who speaks, who takes up the position of I" (Clarkson, 36).

The act of dismembering Friday's tongue from his body seems to point at the symbolic silencing of the colonial other. He has been devoid not just the benefits of language, but the agency through which to acquire it. So, that he may always remain within the precincts of being the "Other". The authority as well as the capacity of his narrative, his tale, and his reality always rest in the hands of a colonial master, previously with Crusoe, now with Susan. But, as pointed out in the story, the silence of Friday has become self-sufficient to generate linguistic meaning. He stands as a figure of colonial atrocities who has been silenced, mutilated and bears the mark of colonial violence, exemplified by the loss of his tongue and the mark on Friday's neck left by a chain or rope.

His presence in the novel is filled with enigmatic acts like his ritualistic scattering of petals in the sea, Buddhist like circumambulations which confirm to Susan that a spirit or soul existed beneath Friday's dull and unpleasant exterior. The cultural existence of the colonized was beyond the colonizer's comprehension. She was further unable to discern the reason behind Friday's silent submission to slavery and his lack of desire for Susan. His silence filled Susan's narrative with questions which remained unanswered and problems which remained unsolved. He was a lack which had to be filled; the hole in the narrative had to be covered. But Susan's every attempt to do so is thwarted by a defiant Friday whose silence is clearly more voluble than his words. By non-participation, he refuses to partake in the discursive forces of colonial discourse and escapes being signified with a new meaning in a new narrative. Teaching language has always been an effective Imperialist tool to internally-colonize their subjects and the refusal of its acceptance points out to internal decolonization of the subjugated. The colonial writer can only make vague guesses about his subject's reality, but can no longer alter it according to its own suitability. Just as Foe, the author in the novel, wishes to pen the story of the island as per the necessities of the market, similarly the colonized would go on telling and retelling, modeling and re-modeling, shaping and re-shaping the story of the colonized "Other" in their concocted narrative as per its own needs, requirements and desires.

But Friday is a signifier who escapes their discourse (Maher). His acts can be interpreted in any way but the exact way. His presence can be given any meaning but the true one. Friday refuses to let his story be told and made part of history. His story is safe within his tongueless mouth. His narrative remains hidden as Susan understands: "...he is

himself; Friday is Friday... He is the child of his silence, a child unborn, a child waiting to be born that cannot be born" (122).

The muted Friday stands as a true post-modernist figure, which can be analyzed only as a signifier, without being appropriated with a final signified. Various interpretations can be drawn of Friday's silence, his act, his performing arts but each would be as far from reality as the other. He is a constant who has been applied in equation for different purposes. As it is in the narrative where multiple voices can be heard, various significations can be applied but cannot be put to specific locale. He is a point where pluralities flourish and silenced voices find utterance.

Coetzee's novel *Foe* confirms the presence alternate realities and marginal perspectives. It deconstructs the master narratives and allows the suppressed voices to be heard. There can be even more versions, more perspectives, more narratives, but until now they were under the dominant control of Defoe's narrative. Coetzee with his work *Foe* has allowed them to flourish and post-colonialism has strategically employed this freedom to present a counter narrative to dominant colonial narrative. ■

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Exploring the Wry World of Anees Salim: An Analysis of *Tales from A Vending Machine*

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This essay delves in to the intricate world crafted by Anees Salim in his novel *Tales from A Vending Machine*, analysing its narrative techniques, themes, and character development. Through a blend of wry humour, poignant storytelling, and insightful commentary on contemporary society, Salim paints a vivid portrait of his protagonist, Hasina Mansoor, a vending machine attendant at an airport in India. The essay examines Salim's use of irony, humour, and social commentary, as well as his portrayal of Hasina's journey from innocence to practicality (experience). Drawing parallels with other literary works and situating Salim's writing within the broader context of Indian English literature, this analysis offers a comprehensive exploration of the novel's themes of class, gender, and societal pretensions.

Key Words: Humour- character development- contemporary society-globalization- Indian writing in English.

Indian English literature has experienced a significant surge in the last decade, driven by the desire for a global readership. This expansion encompasses two distinct groups of authors: those residing in India who write in English and the diaspora who articulate their Indian experiences through the English language. The ability to seamlessly translate their Indian heritage into English, facilitated by India's bilingual nature, is a captivating feature of these writers. Raja Rao's insightful observation in the introduction to *Kanthapura*, "one has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own," underscores the challenge of conveying one's spirit in a foreign language. Nonetheless, Indian writers adeptly overcome this hurdle, enriching the literary landscape with diverse narratives.

Contemporary Indian English fiction has undergone a profound transformation, characterized by a fusion of material and philosophical influences. This fusion has resulted in a literary scene that is multifaceted, diverse, and thematically rich. Authors such as Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Anita Desai, whether settled abroad or navigating between India and other countries, offer nuanced perspectives on displacement and identity. Salman Rushdie's seminal work, *Midnight's Children*, revolutionized literary trends. Meanwhile, writers like Nayantara Sehgal and Amitav Ghosh skilfully delve into India's socio-political

complexities. Their works challenge traditional notions of home, nation, and identity, significantly contributing to the global recognition of Indian English literature.

Kerala, a state in India, has emerged as a notable hub for English literature, with its writers gaining international recognition. The recent success of Sabin Iqbal, whose novels have been translated into Polish, exemplifies the growing global appeal of Kerala authors. The state's thriving literary scene is further evidenced by its three international book festivals, solidifying Kerala's position as a centre for English writing in India.

AneesSalim: A Literary Force

Among the prominent figures in contemporary Indian literature is Anees Salim, a Kerala-based writer whose unique path to literary acclaim is noteworthy. Despite facing numerous rejections and enduring years of waiting, Salim's unwavering perseverance eventually led to recognition from renowned publishers and literary agents. His novels, including *The Blind Lady's Descendants* and *Tales From a Vending Machine*, offer astute social commentary, often through characters grappling with existential questions. Salim's narrative voice, characterized by witty irreverence and keen observation, resonates with contemporary readers, establishing him as a prominent figure in contemporary Indian literature.

Salim approaches the world with a distinct tone of wry irreverence, infusing his storytelling with a keen sense of time and place. His writing stands out for its unexpected flashes of irony and humour, offering insightful glimpses into the thoughts and actions of ordinary individuals. Despite being a school dropout, Salim immersed himself in books and train journeys, drawing inspiration for his novels from his observations and experiences. His philosophy on writing is simple yet profound: "You just need to know the technique, and be honest about your stories."

Known for his dual identity as an advertising professional by day and a reserved introvert by night, Salim embarked on his journey into Indian English literature with his debut novel, *The Vicks Mango Tree*, published in 2012. His literary prowess was quickly recognized when he clinched the esteemed Hindu Literary Prize for fiction in 2013. Over a short span, Salim has published four consecutive novels, carving out a distinct niche among contemporary Indian English fiction writers. Renowned for his delightful tongue-in-cheek humour, Salim's novels offer readers a fresh perspective on the world, leaving them with vivid impressions of the human condition. Through his sympathetic and insightful portrayal of human behaviour and situations, Salim challenges readers to adopt a non-judgmental attitude, inviting them to immerse themselves fully in his rich literary universe.

Tales from a Vending Machine: A Deep Dive

Tales from a Vending Machine delves into the mundane life of Hasina Mansoor, an attendant at an airport vending machine in India. Inspired by a real-life encounter, Salim notes, "The idea of this book came to me at an airport lounge where I was waiting for a

flight that was indefinitely delayed” (Ghose 2). Hasina, modelled after an irksome girl at the airport, becomes an unsympathetic character whose actions disrupt the lives of those around her.

Narrated from Hasina’s perspective, the novel unfolds through her memories, diary entries, and imaginative stories. Through a conventional tale-like opening, Salim sets the stage for a narrative journey that blurs the lines between past and present. Each chapter, titled with aviation terms, introduces a new set of characters, enriching the narrative.

Despite lacking a definitive plot, the novel weaves a series of interconnected stories, providing insight into Hasina’s world and the people she encounters. The title metaphorically reflects the process of storytelling, akin to mixing ingredients in a vending machine. Salim deftly navigates gender perspectives, presenting the world through Hasina’s critical lens.

Hasina’s character embodies resilience amidst adversity, portrayed as a typical Muslim girl with humanist qualities. However, her flaws, including self-pity and deceitfulness, offer a stark contrast to her aspirations. Salim’s narrative, presented through Hasina’s lens, offers a gritty yet compelling view of the world, challenging readers to confront uncomfortable truths.

At the outset of the novel, Hasina Mansoor appears as a compassionate soul, attempting to reason with an old man about the exorbitant price of the tea she sells. However, as the story progresses, her economic circumstances shape her worldview, transforming her into a character indifferent to the struggles of others. Salim’s narrative aims to highlight societal attitudes that isolate those who speak out against injustice.

Salim employs Marxian Humanism to critique society’s valuation system, where wealth determines worth. Hasina’s disdain for societal labels and her frustration at being underpaid reflect a broader societal disparity. Through Hasina, Salim ridicules a money-driven society indifferent to the plight of the less fortunate.

Despite her flaws, Hasina emerges as a resilient protagonist, unafraid to take risks and challenge societal norms. Her actions, like sabotaging a potential employer, demonstrate her assertiveness and willingness to retaliate when wronged. Through Hasina’s complex character, Salim explores themes of truth, betrayal, and resilience, capturing the uncertainties inherent in human existence. The novel offers a critique of contemporary society and religious practices, exposing their pretensions of social responsibility. Salim’s narrative reveals how commercial interests often masquerade as altruism, as seen in the airport’s publicity stunt involving orphans. Such events highlight the cruelty and insincerity of modern society.

Furthermore, the manipulation of religion for personal convenience is evident in the patriarchal intervention in women’s attire, as depicted in Hasina’s experience with the vending machine. This reflects the societal pressure to adhere to religious norms, even in seemingly unrelated contexts.

Hasina Mansoor, though not a complex character, becomes a vessel for Salim's exploration of societal injustices. Through her encounters, Salim unveils the discrimination and prejudice faced by the underprivileged, exemplified by Haji Osman's selective treatment of Hasina. Despite her attempts to find solace in history lessons, Hasina ultimately confronts the harsh reality of class divisions and the injustices perpetuated by those in power. Salim's humour, though not slapstick, leaves a lasting impact, infusing his darkly humorous tale with a touch of poignancy.

Hasina's mispronunciations add a comedic element to the narrative, such as when she refers to Anne Frank as 'Anne French' and aspires to live a life like hers. Despite her aspirations to become a gynaecologist, her confusion between a microscope and a stethoscope adds to the amusement. Her interactions with others, like the coupon man and her mispronunciation of 'Jews' as 'Juice,' further showcase her carefree attitude and humorous misunderstandings. Even her inability to correctly state her blood group or her misguided science lessons to her brother add layers of humour to the story.

Hasina emerges as a relatable character, neither entirely lovable nor detestable, but someone we might encounter in our daily lives. Her journey, marked by lies and self-discovery, invites readers to join her without judgment, ensuring that her presence lingers long after the flight has landed. Without Salim's tongue-in-cheek wit, the novel would lose its charm and fail to take off.

In literature, male authors portraying female protagonists are not uncommon, as exemplified by Leo Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina." While Anees Salim's work, *Tales from a Vending Machine*, may not rival such masterpieces, it showcases his talent in portraying the inner world of a young Muslim woman with realism and humour.

Salim's strength lies in his sense of humour, which adds depth to the narrative. He effectively employs traditional techniques like flashbacks, although the dominance of the past in his storytelling sometimes risks losing readers in the narrative web. Yet, his craftsmanship skilfully navigates this challenge, keeping readers engaged.

Coming from an advertising background, Salim's writing exudes simplicity and authenticity, drawing readers into the world of his protagonist, Hasina Mansoor. Through Hasina's perspective, readers gain psychological insights into her character, observing society and its nuances through her eyes.

In *Tales from a Vending Machine*, Hasina's narrative voice dominates, providing a singular viewpoint of the world. Salim's use of humour, including Hasina's mispronunciations and witty remarks, adds layers to the narrative, making it both entertaining and thought-provoking.

Despite her impoverished background and mundane job, Hasina's passion for life shines through, often expressed in humorous language. Salim's adeptness at blending simplicity with humour makes the novel a delightful read, with Hasina's antics leaving a lasting impression.

In conclusion, AneesSalim's "Tales from a Vending Machine" is a testament to his narrative talent and humour. Through Hasina Mansoor, he crafts a compelling story that resonates with readers, showcasing the power of storytelling to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. ■

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The Ironic Vision of Dilip Naik's Poetry: An Analysis

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*Can't ask for anything else or more,
for nothing can be given as chosen,
what one gets is tattooed on the soul
and signed and sealed by time. ————— Dilip Naik*

Irony is both a rhetoric and literary device. Ordinarily, it refers to the doubleness of sense or meaning. From the point-of-view of its meaning, it is defined as “saying what is contrary to what is meant” (Quintilian 1995-98, 401 [Colebrook 2009, 1]). According to the eminent scholar, J.A. Cuddon, an irony denotes “the meaning ... contrary to the words” (omission added, Cuddon 458). As a matter of fact, the concept of irony is too complex; its sphere is too vast and varied; and its history too long. About its tone, by and large, it is sarcastic. Its function is more than singular. About its function and approach, once again, Cuddon has observed,

Irony has many functions. It is often the witting or unwitting instrument of truth. It chides, purifies, refines, deflates, scorns and ‘sends up’. It is not surprising, therefore, that irony is the most precious and efficient weapon of the artist (461).

On the whole, an irony is dynamic in nature and disposition. Its dynamic aspect is evidential in its diverse form and the ever-expanding field or sphere of its operation. The most popular of its multifarious forms include verbal or rhetoric irony, dramatic irony, cosmic irony, and Romantic irony. The form of cosmic irony is of seminal importance to understand the poetic vision of Dilip Naik. This cosmic irony is also variously called as the irony of fate, the irony of situation and the irony of existence. Such irony refers to, writes Claire Colebrook, “the limits of human meaning; we do not see the effects of what we do, the outcomes of our actions, or the forces that exceed our choices” (*Irony* 14). Such irony takes cognizance of the working of, to quote Colebrook again, “another order of fate beyond our predictions.” The poetry of Dilip Naik is expressive of a vision of human condition very much similar to the one an irony of fate or cosmic irony denotes. Before we come to the ironic vision of Dilip Naik's poetry in detail, it is pertinent to spell out a few words of introduction on the poet.

In terms of quantity, Dilip Naik's contribution to the province of modern Indian English poetry is certainly not massive for he hasn't gifted a large number of volumes to this field. Naik who hails from the east coastal Indian state, Odisha, has altogether three collections of English poems English to his credit. These collections are *You I Could Hold* (2013), *By Inference* (2014), and *A Gift of Smoke* (2018). A bilingual poet, Naik also has written two anthologies of poem in Odia, his native tongue. True, his contribution to Indian English poetry is meagre. But it is definitely not of little significance. The following couplet from the poem, "The Noble Nature" by the noted English poet, Ben Jonson, holds good to describe Naik's poetry, his artistic calibre as well as poetic contribution.

In small proportions we just beauties see;
And in short measures life may perfect be.

Naik's poetry is small in quantity but astoundingly fecund and erudite in quality. An uncommon profundity in vision and a rare dexterity in style are the two artistic hallmarks of his poetry. As to his poetic motif, love has remained to be the pivotal one. In addition to love, other issues of perennial importance and value like fate, desire, memory, and time have also found expressions in the Naik's poetic arena. As B.C. Nayak, has aptly observed, Naik's poetic terrain is expressive of a fatalistic vision of love. As he has put it in his review of *A Gift of Smoke*,

The spectrum of love it reflects has a definite fatalistic contour to it. Love with Naik has never remained an exercise of human will. Destiny has a decisive say in it. In the divine dispensation of love, the lover can be either a blessed beneficiary or a damned soul depending on the decree of the arbitrary unseen ("Vindication of the Mortal Given" in *OIRJ* 271).

Further, Nayak has termed Dilip Naik's poetry in toto as "a versified narrative of love" and his imagination, "a mythopoeic imagination" ("Love at Habitations of the Word" *The Atlantic Critical Review* 52, 56). With regards to Naik's poetic sensibility, the overall corpus of his poems is affirmative of the idea that an arbitrary destiny has remained at the very helm of human affairs. Optimum poeticization of such a providential scheme of things has led to a definite ironic vision in Naik's poetry. The blind and soulless providential dispensation has remained the sole factor of the predicament of human existence in this world. The prime purpose with this writeup is shedding some lights on this ironic trajectory as well as vision of Naik's poetry.

To begin with the illustration of the fatalistic dimension, the poem "A Boy Walking Down" fixes the point squarely. The short middle stanza of the poem underlines the preordained state of things of the world. According to it, here everything is "given" already tailored and readymade. Human will or choice has little to "do with it." The stanza reads,

The given:
what can one do with it

when it's already done with?
the given is not always a gift (*You I Could Hold* 42).

In this preordained scheme of things, one cannot help receiving whatever is delivered to him/her. It doesn't matter whether s/he likes it or not. Besides, as the last line of the excerpt emphatically states, there's no guarantee that "the given" shall be "always a gift." Through the speaker, the concluding stanza of the poem expresses dismay and bewilderment over this arbitrary way of the dispenser of things. In the last stanza, the poet writes,

The question:
why am I like this?
echoes through the skies of centuries
unrelieved, inconsolable, as deep
as the silence of an arbitrary creator
who himself may not know the answer (42).

The speaker is a victim of this arbitrary allotment of things. He has been given "a jinxed face." The consciousness of being given "a jinxed face" makes him feel "shy" and miserable. Therefore, while "walking down to school every day," describes the poet in the opening segment, the boy is "too shy to raise his drooping head." The jinxed gift being lifetime and inalterable, life to the speaker has turned a curse. This idea of human's utter limitations or paucity of choice persists in the length and breadth of Naik's poetry. In the last lines of the poem "Of Appearance" of Naik's second volume, *By Inference*, for example, this ironic position of humans has been clearly stated. In these lines, the poet deplores,

In a world of change
you cannot change
into the beautiful.
from the ordinary to the morbid
is the meaning of time for you (93).

Yet, at the end of another poem titled "In The Beginning Was Memory" of Naik's first volume, the ill-fated narrator is heard bemoaning,

Born to a rainy life
in the beginning
it's evening (28).

Here, it is worth the mention that the persona of Naik's poetry has suffered a wreck early in his life. In his adolescence, he has loved and lost. That wreck has shattered his life completely and shaken his soul. As the plot of Naik's love narrative reveals, the ladylove has never been within the ambit of the persona's choice. She was sent to him as a gift of chance. In the last lines of another poem of Naik's debut volume, the speaker muses on his lost love in the following words,

you the gift of chance
given as a libation
given for once (*You I Could Hold* 31).

The beloved was given to him only for once, and that too, only for a short while. Soon after the allotted timeslot was over, she was taken away from him. With the loss of love, the protagonist of the narrative has lost the very purpose and meaning of his life and existence. Halfway in another of his monologue, he is seen lamenting his pitiable situation in the aftermath of the loss,

Here I live in the same season
as the days and the years pass
and time changes into time again
the upside-down of the hour glass (*You I Could Hold* 103).

What is so ironical here with the speaker is that he is made to live the same changeless life for good in a world of “changes.” The protagonist of Naik’s versified narrative has deplored his accursed living still in another poem of the same debut collection, *You I Could Hold*. The poem is “To Be Left Behind” and in its third stanza, the abandoned narrative hero deplores his place and mode of living there,

This is no place for the young,
no colour startles the eyes here,
the wind howls in a monotone,
the day’s an evening all the year (93).

The question of human predicament arising out of the denial of freedom to choose has remained a core one with the poet. He has come over and over again to it in various of his poems. He has found human limitations a salient feature of the providential dispensation over which the humans have no control. He has the realization that human feelings over and responses to such fatal provisions are of no count at all. The very opening song, “Better If Nothing Happens” of the debut collection, *You I Could Hold*, talks about such providential scheme of things and its neutrality or little importance to the human module of values and meaning. This is clear in the following lines of the song under reference here.

this is how things are
this is the rule of law
high above our most felt intensities
irreducible to our most valued terms (13).

The “rule of law” laid down by the arbitrary creator is final and binding. Whether such “law” is suitable to us or not is immaterial. It is altogether beside the mark. The concluding words of the song, “we don’t matter/for the meanings are quite different” (13), pronounce this point in unambiguous terms. The third poem of the same debut collection also reiterates

this issue of, so to say, the conflict of interest between the divine dispenser and the human world or individuals. The utter apathy and indifference on the part of the arbitrary creator toward humans mark the focal point of the following segment of the third poem, "After You Left." Here the poet has written,

What is a separation between two beings of chance
compared to everything that exists?

The cycles revolve
in rhythms of recurrence –
what is to them
the finality of loss? (15).

Conspicuously, the poet has seen a pattern behind the fixture of things. In spite of the gross injustice to human individuals involved in the governing rules and mechanism of the universe, the protagonist of Naik's love narrative apparently is seen making effort to come to terms with such apathetic rules and mechanism. He is reflecting such "rule of law" upon his pulses and mapping its importance in the dispassionate veins of a "monk." He is doing so ironically enough, in simultaneity with "languishing in a fixated loss" which he has undergone in the early phase of his life. This way of living is without doubt, very difficult. But he has no choice in the matter. It is a compulsion. At the end of the poem, "Moving On", he hints sardonically at such compulsion, "To live with the difficult is not a choice" (*By Inference* 13). The irony of situation he is entangled in is manifest in the excerpt below as well.

As a monk watches his thoughts
As they pass through his mind,
I observe my fate
As someone else's (*A Gift of Smoke* 75).

This is certainly not a healthy situation by any stretch of imagination. To exist by living on "memory" is the hardest thing for a being of flesh and blood. But that is the option left with the lovelorn narrator. He is trying to make both ends meet with this difficult option of his life. He depicts this painful situation of his accursed life in the following moving words.

Among the ruins
dwells my only life,
an afterlife.
The remains –
my wage, my share, my fatal food
to survive a whole lifetime (*By Inference* 47).

The protagonist has remained a victim clearly in the cruel hands of fate or destiny. The loss of love has robbed him of his health. He has been reduced to "a shadow." What is more painful and alienating as well is that he is left now devoid of the very purpose of living. The

following lines of his poem titled “What A Pitiable Demand – Desire Me” tell how the narrator has been subjected to the loss of dignity and meaning of his living.

The humiliation of loitering outside consent
like a shadow that’s just been disqualified to be a body
doesn’t know what to do
with the unassigned reason
for being itself (2013, 85).

The last lines of the poem resonate with a distinct ironic note of self-mockery. They deserve quotation here. They read,

the arms outstretched in the gap
between wanting and being wanted
rust in the rain of the passing years.

What a beautiful prayer to an absent-minded god – desire me (85).

With no assigned reason for living left with the narrator, it is no wonder he is getting increasingly alienated from the business of living. Still haunted by the stinging memory of the lost love, he keeps languishing in the fixated moments of the past loss. Damned by destiny to undergo an accursed living, he often resorts to praying to the vanished deity of love for attaining her grace and thereby get redemption. But the irony of situation, the protagonist has been subjected to is that he is inescapably stuck “between wanting and being wanted” and made to “rust in the rain of the passing years.” Naik’s short poem titled “The Desire to Depart” accommodated in his last volume *A Gift of Smoke* is unequivocally telling about the speaker’s perturbing state of ennui and lack of any zest for living. His deep sense of ennui as well as alienation, and his desperate longing for redemption from the damned life, are too obvert in the lines to miss. The poem in its entirety is worth mention here. It runs,

How I want just to go away...

To leave this house, this place, this work, these things,
and go away to I don’t know where.
I don’t know the geography of redemption.
But the desire to depart remains.

Wherever I live
is the place I want to go away from,
always(77).

Conspicuously this world has turned alien to the narrator. The business of living has become sickening to him. The effect has been alienating. Therefore, he has expressed desire to leave this world. The arbitrary order of the fate has run counter to his will and desire.

To conclude, the embedded vision of Dilip Naik's poetic edifice is unequivocally tragic in nature, ironic in tone and cosmic in contours. His poetic harvest is very much in line with the ironic trend and tradition of the modern Indian English poetry. ■

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Alternative Aesthetic Paradigm of Representing Conflict

Vandana Gupta

Aesthetics and politics have been viewed as oppositional concepts conventionally. In current critical studies, however, these are no longer seen as absolutely distinct domains. These make cross-roads into each other especially in literature that creatively recreates and represents the situations of conflict and political turmoil. Aesthetics, in this kind of literature, becomes a means of engaging with conflict and politics.

The present paper seeks to explore the complex relationship between aesthetics, politics and conflict in Temsula Ao's fiction. Her writings, despite being expressly enmeshed in the political, are not bereft of aesthetics. In her literature, aesthetics lends itself as a creative form through which politics and conflict can be better understood. This paper attempts to study select stories from her repertoire with a view to understand her literary perspective throughtrans-disciplinary alternative analytical framework.

Key Words

Aesthetics, alternative paradigm, poetics, politics, transdisciplinary perspective

Much of the emerging literary writings from the Northeast spring from its contemporary contexts of conflict, violence and disruption of everyday life due to constant threat of terror. The singularity of their experiences lends a unique tone and tenor to the writers from the region. Emphasising the uniqueness of the situation of a writer from the North-East, Robin S. Ngangom and Kynpham S. Nongkynrihaver in the introduction to *Dancing Earth-*

‘The writer from the Northeast differs from his counterpart in the mainland in a significant way... living with the menace of the gun he cannot merely indulge in verbal wizardry or woolly aesthetics but must perforce master the art of witness.’ To be a tenacious witness of the agonising political violence without sensationalizing it, is also a risk that a north-eastern poet has to undertake often. (xii)

Temsula Ao's fiction has been expressly enmeshed in the political. As a writer from the geo-politically volatile state, she re-interprets, re-imagines and restructures the issues of

identity politics, nation and nationality and at the same time attempts to negotiate with violence through literature. Ao presents the grim reality of the everyday life of the strife torn region as a witness. Her stories underline an attempt at unbiased recording of the political tension and the resultant horror in the Naga hinterlands without sensationalizing, distorting or romanticizing the lived reality.

Her fiction manifests a distinct register. Aesthetics has been employed in her writing for understanding and representing conflict and politics creatively. Ao is a chronicler of her subjective reality. The present paper seeks to explore the complex relationship between aesthetics, politics and conflict in her fiction. Her writings, despite being political, are not bereft of aesthetics. In her literature, aesthetics lends itself as a creative form through which politics and conflict can be better understood. This paper attempts to study select stories from her repertoire with a view to understand her literary perspective through trans-disciplinary alternative analytical framework.

Tensual Ao's aesthetic exploration of life in the face of conflict throws up unexpected critique of the strife imposed by the politics of power. The opposite poles of power and protest seem to merge even as these unleash almost identical violent measures onto the ordinary people living in the region.

Magaret Ch. Zama puts into perspective the context of the emerging literary discourse from the Northeast region-

[The literary discourse from the Northeast] must be received as voices of individual authors from societies caught in the cross current of their political and historical inheritances, personal tragedies and cultural ambivalence, voices that are involved in developing and contributing to a much larger literary consciousness that needs to be recognized and interrogated.(xii)

Temsula Ao's literary consciousness offers her a way to negotiate, translate and articulate her worldview. Her narratives function as new histories that refuse to valorise any of the sides involved in conflict. Her narratives reflect a sense of dissociation and alienation among Naga people from the mainland nation state. In the story, "The Letter," from the anthology *Laburnum for My Head*, the fervent appeal from a hapless villager to be allowed to pay a lesser amount as 'tax' as he needed to send money for his son's exam fees, was met with angry rebuke from the operative of the underground army-

One of the extortionist assaulted the poor man with the butt of his rifle and shouted, 'What examination, what fees? Don't you know what sacrifices we have made in our fight against the government? Are you saying that we should not collect taxes so that your sons can give examinations and become big "babus" in the Indian government to rule over us?'

Even as he uttered the word 'Indian' his face seemed to distort with naked rage, like a fierce animal at the sight of an adversary. (Ao 2009: 56)

The idea of belonging to the nation is completely antithetical to the rebel army's notion of the state. The adversarial sentiment is bolstered by the sense of being 'othered.'

The convoluted politics of the land has been critiqued in subtle descriptions of the operations of the underground forces. The extortion and violence by the underground army wreaks havoc on the lives of the ordinary villagers. They robbed the poor villagers of their hard-earned wages, livestock and foodgrain.

Ao's narratives aim to record the pain and suffering of the people trapped between the ethno-nationalist and statist forces which fight each other to establish dominion over the other. The ordinary people of Naga community were caught in the cross-current of conflict between the rebel forces and the state military. Their lives were made impossible by the pressures exerted by the opposing forces. The extortionist rebel groups force them to pay taxes in cash and kind while the state military subjects them to punitive measures for 'cooperating' with the rebels.

The discourse of nation is turned head on in the story, "A Simple Question," in which a simple, straightforward question by an ordinary Naga woman problematises the ill-conceived administrative policies and actions of the state.

Imdongla, the marginalized subaltern woman is the protagonist of the story. The narrative presents her wit and clever insight to be her medium of resistance and empowerment. Despite being 'barely literate', she was a worldly-wise woman having knowledge of the history and politics of the village. Her father and her husband have been the 'gaonburahs'- i.e., a person who belonged to a major clan, appointed by the government as its agent to help maintain order in the village. The text highlights how this privileged status became a liability at the time of conflict.

If, during the peacetime these elders enjoyed a privileged status, they became the most vulnerable ones when hostilities broke out between the Nagas and the Indian state.(81)

Their role would be looked upon with suspicion by both, the government as well as the rebels. The government would hold them responsible for the young men reported to have joined the rebels; whereas the rebels forced them to identify young men representing each clan for forced conscription into the rebel army.

The story subtly highlights the degeneration of the ethnocentric politics into mindless orgy of violence. Their demands from the ordinary villagers began as a nominal collection of Re 1 from each household for the travel expenses of the rebel leaders for travelling to foreign land to seek support for Naga independence. Subsequently, these metamorphosed into forced 'conscription' and material support in terms of money, grain and livestock. The story details the atrocities meted out by the rebels which ranged from beatings, burning down of granaries and sometimes even execution and killing, if their orders were not followed. The reluctance and protest to pay the 'tax' invoked the wrath of the underground operatives.

The story unambiguously lays bare the double whammy that the villagers faced with the Naga underground groups oppressing them on the one hand and Indian Army on the other. '[The] entire land was gripped by terror unleashed both by the underground forces as well as the government soldiers.'(83)

Ao, in her stories, details the actualities of the lived life of the Nagas through frequent authorial interventions. The complexity of the situation of the lives of the villagers has been presented through these vivid descriptions. To deal with the rebels, the army established its camps in strategic villages. The villages allowing army camps were suspected by the underground rebels and were taxed double as punishment. Those resisting the entry of the army, were made to suffer punitive measures by the government in the form of all able-bodied men being forced to work without wages or food in government projects. The worst of all the punishments was the 'grouping,' whereby the errant villagers 'would be forced out of their villages; their houses and granaries would be burnt and they would be relocated along with other recalcitrant villagers in a 'grouping' zone and kept in fenced-in areas, not allowed to cultivate their fields, their movements monitored and under constant surveillance.'(2009: 84) It was the worst form of group incarceration 'which the Nagas hated and dreaded even more than bullets.'(2006: 3)Through such extensive details, the narratives presents a stringent critique of the subjugation of the ordinary men and women by the wielders of power on both the sides.

Besides narrativizing violence and terror, Ao's narratives also underscore the novel ways of protest and resistance by the victims of the violence. Imdongla, the marginalised subaltern woman, saves her husband, Tekaba, and a villager from beating by the rebel collectors through her sheer wit and presence of mind. She pretends that she owed a basketful of rice to the poor villager who was facing punishment due to bringing less rice than he was supposed to. Offering a basketful of rice to the rebel collector on the villager's behalf, she manages to prevent the punishment.

Khatila, the protagonist of the story, "The Jungle Major" from the anthology, *These Hills Called Home* has also been presented as an index of agency like Imdongla. Through her insight, ingenuous thinking and quick wit, she manages to save her husband from being captured by the state army. Punaba, her husband, is a member of an underground resistance group. He risked being apprehended by the army when he secretly came visiting his wife. Khatila saves her husband and the entire village from the wrath of the army through her presence of mind. She surprised the captain through her sheer courage and grit.

Taking her own time, she opened the door with a loud yawn. 'What do you want?' she growled at the young Captain who looked somewhat surprised at her manner. Whereas he had expected to see a cowering woman, crazy with fear for her husband and herself, he was confronted by a dishevelled but defiant person who displayed no agitation and seemed to be utterly oblivious to any danger. He stood there in confusion...(2006: 6)

Despite lending Khatila agency, the story succumbs to some of the stereotypes of the patriarchal discourse. Khatila is described as a tall, fair, slim woman having the most charming smile. She came from a good family and belonged to a major clan. Being married to Punaba, who is described as a short, dark man with buck teeth, they are called as the ‘most mismatched couple’ with ‘immense disparity [in] not only the outward appearances but also [in their] family positions.’(2)

The story falls into the conventional trope of gendered representation of the leading woman character. Her clever and heroic act of saving her husband and her community has also been associated with her physical appearance- ‘The young and inexperienced army officer did not realise that the beautiful but simple village woman had thus foiled a meticulously planned ‘operation’ of the mighty Indian army and that a prized quarry had simply walked away to freedom.’(7)

The conventional ideological mediations seem to have framed the representation of some of the women characters in Tamsila Ao’s stories. The simplistic characterization, however, doesn’t camouflage the complex reality of their lived lives. It rather serves to accentuate the descriptions of the grim reality of their socio-political predicaments-

Had he been killed or captured that morning the entire village would have been punished for harbouring a notorious rebel and not informing the government forces about his presence in the village. As had happened to other villages, their barns would have been set on fire, their houses destroyed and the people would have been taken to the ‘grouping’ areas.(7)

In “A Simple Question,” however, Ao reproduces in new ways the conventional textual representation of woman. The narrative places Imdonglain a position of power right from the beginning. She has been presented as a far-sighted woman who warns husband about her foreboding about the developments during the course of day.

Imdongla represents resistance by the subaltern woman to the patriarchal discourse. She denounces the attempt of her husband at silencing her when she interjects into the discussion of the village elders regarding the ways to deal with the undue demands of the underground army. Her angry retort to her husband’s rebuke to stay quiet, reflects her power and agency-

‘Know nothing? Well, who saved you the last time when you stood there like a statue about to wet your loin cloth? Just think how our daughter will feed her children if they take away what’s left after paying their debt to the uncle!’(85)

She challenges the village elders to use their courage and wisdom to deal with the irrational demands and strike some reasonable deal with the rebel leaders to help the villagers to survive.

Imdongla displays exceptional courage and wit to get her husband released when he is apprehended and held in captivity by the soldiers on charges of giving supplies to the underground groups. Her ingenuous way of protest coupled with her grit and resolute will not only helped in getting her husband out of the captivity but it also struck hard the captain of the army. Her simple question, asked repeatedly, “What do you want from us?” serves to underscore the predicament of the Naga villagers. Imdongla’s genuine query made captain realize the ‘impossible situation faced by the villagers’ and the absurdity of the violent action of his own army on the hapless villagers.

Imdongla’s act confounded the patriarchal nationalist ideology as embodied by the captain even as it ‘unsettled his military confidence by challenging the validity of his own presence in this alien terrain.’(87)

Ao’s narratives examine and map the contours of violent politics and the responses of the individuals that evince their resistance to violence. The narrative voice is objective but sensitive towards the plight of the ordinary men and women facing the atrocities at the hands of both the forces.

The individual lives of the characters are intertwined with the sociopolitical developments in the history of ethnic Naga movement. Ao contextualises Khatila’s story by recording the early history of Naga movement for independence-

It was after a year or so of Khatila’s marriage, that the entire land was caught in the new wave of patriotic fervour that swept the imagination of the people and plunged them into a struggle, which many did not even understand. This particular village also became a part of the network, which kept the underground outfit supplied with information, food and occasional arms. The subject of independence became public talk; young people spoke of the exploits of their peers in encounters with government forces and were eager to join the new band of ‘patriotic’ warriors to liberate their homeland from ‘foreign’ rule...skirmishes were taking place close to the village and the atmosphere within the village became one of fear and mutual suspicion...it seemed a pall of gloom had descended upon the entire land.(2006: 3)

The high idealism of the movement for self-determination has given way to terror politics which is hardly concerned about the welfare of the ordinary Nagas. The initial demand for independent political status and identity degenerated into a reign of terror and anarchy. The self-styled rebel leaders and their cohorts terrorize the villagers to extort money. In the introduction to *These Hills Called Home* titled as ‘Lest We Forget,’ Ao notes-

“Nagaland’s story of the struggle for self-determination started with high idealism and romantic notions of fervent nationalism, but it somehow got re-written into one of disappointment and disillusionment because it became the very thing it sought to overcome.” (x)

Her narratives trace the progression and successive degradation of the Naga politics from ideological purity to ethical degeneration and moral corruption. What began as a movement characterized by high idealism and patriotic fervour, slowly metamorphosed into a cult of violence and terror pandering to the egos, whims and fancies of the self-serving tribal chieftains. Despite being a Naga herself, Ao doesn't engage in a biased representation of the ethnic groups and doesn't sympathise with their violent politics which has undergone a degeneration over time. Her fiction records the crippling effect of the political terror on the ordinary existence.

Ao's stories are polyphonic that register the multiplicity of the voices emanating from the violence-hit zone. She focuses on the lived experience of survival under terror while giving a peak into the complex and oppressive social-political system. Her stories are based on the everyday and the ordinary to lay bare the stark contexts of the lived reality. The narratives bring forth the ways in which the ordinary people negotiate the violent politics of power and domination to find ways to subsist and survive.

The plot, in her stories, is frequently put to a halt and the overarching authorial voice takes over to engage into a commentary on contemporary sociopolitical situation lending the narrative its perspective. Such authorial interventions serve to underscore the ideological stance of Ao and provide a peak into her worldview. These highlight her objective presentation of the strife in which she steers clear of endorsing either of the warring sides. She is equally contemptuous and critical of the mindless violence unleashed by each of the clashing sides.

In order to narrativize the Naga history of dispossession, displacement, subjugation and oppression, Temsula Ao breaks down the oppositional paradigm between the political and aesthetic. Aesthetics has been employed by her for understanding and representing conflict and politics creatively. She enunciates a new paradigm of creative expression which transitions between the discourse of fiction and nonfiction. Zama terms such inter-genre transitionality as a pre-condition for the writings from the troubled regions like those in the Northeast of India. Such an intersectional approach leads to new and more inclusive frameworks while affirming the concerns and practices of both the discourses.

Conclusion

Temsula Ao's fiction requires to be studied and examined from alternative theoretical and analytical frameworks. Her stories serve to underscore the idea that aesthetics and politics do not necessarily have to be oppositional concepts. These call for a trans-disciplinary perspective to explore the relationship between aesthetics, politics and conflict. Despite lacking narrative embellishments, these are not devoid of aesthetics. In her stories, aesthetics lends itself as a creative form through which politics and conflict can be better understood.

Instead of conforming to the formal features of mainstream canonical literature, her stories problematise the conventional norms of literary form and structure while forging alternative paradigms of literary aesthetics. Her writings spring from her own unique socio-

political, cultural milieu and, thus, are premised on an alternative consciousness and worldview which militates against its marginalization by the hegemony of the mainstream literary discourse.

Frequent authorial interventions, detailing the lived actualities of Naga life, historical contextualization of the individual lives are some of the prominent features of her fiction. Literature serves her as a medium of resistance to political and cultural marginalization. The dominant approach to literature requires a redefinition for dealing with this sort of literature from the margins. Her aesthetics serves as a means of empowerment and agency and inheres in multiple possibilities of resistance and subversion.

In current critical studies, the distinctiveness of fictive and nonfictive discourses has been problematized. Fiction is seen as an intersectional medium which involves an inclusive framework of fictional as well as nonfictional actualities. TemsulaAo's literature occupies such a liminal space between fiction and nonfiction. The formal features of fiction require a reframing and redefinition to explain the alternative narrative strategy of her stories. Her poetics is geared towards her aim to represent the multiple aspects of the sociopolitical contexts of the post-independence Naga society. ■

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Socio-Cultural Prejudice as depicted in *Just One Word* by Bama

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My paper has for its focal point *Just One Word*, a collection of stories authored by Bama Faustina Soosairaj, a popular Tamil Dalit writer, mostly around the theme of caste, which reverberates deep within one's consciousness, making one think about the consequences of one's prejudices. Bama's stories by themselves are simple but they carry the weight of her experiences and show us a world of subtle comments and snide remarks which are central to how communities build and sustain prejudice.

Bama is one of the most readily recognizable names in the pantheon of Tamil Dalit writers. She rose to fame with her autobiographical novel *Karukku* (1992), which chronicles the joys and sorrows experienced by Dalit Christian women in Tamil Nadu. Her works have been appreciated for embodying Dalit feminism and celebrating the inner strength of the subaltern woman.

This work is a collection of her 15 short stories, selected to showcase the range of social concerns and the depth of her perception of human frailties. In each of these stories, Bama documents the emerging influences on the lives and consciousness of people. She picks up a character one is likely to meet every day and builds a narrative that reveals, with a touch of ironic humour, the internalized caste and patriarchal sentiments that the society passes on to the future generation every single day.

The paper aims at showing realistic situations, based on the above anthology, when good sense is forced to take a backseat in our so-called democratic system, and we either become victims to a distorted mindset, or stand by as mute witnesses to atrocities committed in the name of democracy.

Key Words: snide subaltern internalised backseat atrocities.

The barriers of caste, creed, religion are all impediments to civilization and progress. They are man-made constructs for the convenience and politics of the power hungry groups of people who would like to prove themselves superior over others and thereby assert their rules and their power over the less vocal and hence the weaker sections of the society. Equality for them would be a double-edged sword that would not only prove that the so-

called weaker sections of society are not just equals but in some areas, even superior to them. An equal Society would also serve to be iconoclastic and break their images of superiority and privilege. Hence equality has been made a far-flung proposition, a fairy-tale situation, impossible in the present scenario. The mindsets of the privileged as well as the marginalized have now become almost frozen. Whereas on one hand the privileged will never give up on the privileges they enjoy, and have been, enjoying since beginning. While on the other hand, quite ironically the underprivileged and downtrodden seem to have made a strange compromise with their Fates. They have accepted their inferior stance and even if they realise that what is going on is extremely wrong and needs to be stopped, they cannot take a stance for the right ,they cannot stand up for themselves. It is this irony of situation that keeps recurring in many of the short stories authored by Bama under the title Just One Word. Originally written in Tamil, it is indeed to the credit of the translator

MaliniSheshadri that the finest nuances of the emotional dilemmas, the argumentative explanations and empty justifications are all brought to the forewith almost the stark honesty of a rapporteur.

In the short story titled **The Verdict**, Bama describe how the caste system is concretized into young minds by the social constructs. The school had planned a trip to the next village to treat the children to a movie. The highly excited children had happily walked the entire distance, enjoyed the movie and were coming back when many of the children started feeling thirsty. Bama describes how these children were mostly from humble backgrounds and did not have even slippers on their feet. Just a kilometre away from their own village was another village called Pallathur and as soon as the children reached this village many of them rushed to the roadside water pump for some water. However the teacher noticed how two children deliberately stayed back. The teacher, Mary asked these two girls Mahalaxmi and her sister Vijayalakshmi why they were not drinking the water here and was quite shocked at the response she received. The elder girl Vijayalakshmi explained to the teacher that her parents had forbidden them from using the taps of this locality. Bama is able to bring out the emotional churning going on inside Mary. On one side were the high ideals propagated by philosophers, poets and educators, talking of a free and equal society where everyone walks hand in hand towards development and prosperity. On the other side are the age-long dictates of an orthodox society that has nothing to do with such high ideals. The only thing that matters here is upholding the dignity of the higher caste, whatever be the price to be paid. The troubled Mary even tries to approach the Headmaster expecting that education might score over social constructs. But to her disappointment, the Headmaster does call for the two girls but exhibits an indifferent attitude and allows the two girls to leave the room after just explaining that the rule was not to accept anything to eat or drink from such homes, but the taps of the localities could be used. The story is ironically called The Verdict. Bama tries to tell us that the society has already pronounced its verdict on such issues; people have already been judged on the basis of their castes and the code of conduct already decided- no amount of education or enlightenment can change this verdict.

In another story called **Shards** Bama tries to show the pressure and anxiety associated with any kind of ostracization and imprisonment. The story escalates the scope of this anthology to a higher level. The author is preoccupied not only with the caste issues in India; she also throws light on the harassment and psychological burden associated with any kind of suppression, oppression and unnatural retention.

In this story the protagonist is a young thirteen year old boy who is being kept in a rural Reformatory. The boy is naturally mischievous and had been always up to some prank or the other along with the other village boys, his friends. But the boy has a knack for playing musical instruments, especially the paraai and the maracas. Hence the warden of the reformatory has included Chandran in the Reformatory band where Chandran plays the maracas beautifully. However Chandran is not at peace with himself. He is always yearning to go back home where he used to live with his mother and sister. He is an acute case of nostalgia and depression. The only thing that keeps him going here is playing on the maracas. It reminds him of the intensity with which he used to play the paraai in his village. This constant longing to go back home and reunite with his family had once forced him to attempt running away. However he had been caught and now the warden was extra wary about him. He kept on warning him and this time also, before they set out to play on the band at a public celebration, Chandran was repeatedly cautioned by the warden and some plain-clothed sleuths were also planted around him to prevent him from any such attempts to escape. Actually Chandran was unaware of this and was excitedly looking forward to this ceremony where he had decided to perform really well. When the immaculately dressed-up Reformatory band reached the village, they were instantly surrounded by onlookers who were whispering amongst themselves about these boys. Especially Chandran caught the attention of a few villagers who started talking about him, observing him and discussing him- all within Chandran's earshot. Their whisperings made Chandran realise, for the first time, how and what people think of children who are sent to reformatories. Their loud whisperings changed his mood. Chandran now felt the urge to escape from this place, stronger than ever before. His hands moved mechanically on the maracas and they became the mirror of his inner turmoil. The discussion going on around him pushed him to the verge of hysteria, his agitation became almost unbearable. His hands became so obsessed with the instrument that it finally broke and all the beads scattered all over the place. Bama says,

*Chandran looked at the scattered beads. He could
feel their freedom in the depths of his heart.*

Thus, in the story we see how sensitive the author is towards any kind of oppression. The marginalisation of individuals due to any reason, whatsoever, causes repercussions deep within. The effect of such oppression can be manifested in unimaginable ways.

In the short story titled **Just One Word**, from which the anthology takes its title, the protagonist is a supposedly hard taskmaster. The boss of the office called Maadasamy is shown to be a perfectionist when it comes to the work front. As soon as Maadasamy is

transferred to this office, he takes it upon himself to transform the work ethics of this place and in fact he is successful in not just getting the office in shape and the work done in the perfect manner possible, he is also able to perform the impossible, change the mind sets of his employees, who start looking upon him with respect and obeying him from their hearts. All except one, a senior female employee named Sundari whose superannuation was imminent. She was not ready to buckle down before Maadasamy at any cost, would keep on grumbling and muttering under her breath whenever the boss would give her any instructions. One day, unconsciously, she over-stepped her mark. The boss heard with his own ears, Sundari instructing the peon to take some files to his chamber, using the words

That Maadasamy

On hearing this, it was unbearable for Maadasamy, it triggered off a childhood incident. Many years ago, when he had been made to realise for the first time that merit and hard work were not running this world as he had been believing till now. All such ideas existed only in the books and in the hollow words taught in school. He had been just a fourth-grader when an Education Officer had visited his village school. He had been very excited that day and had rushed off to school even without eating. When the Officer entered their classroom, and ask him to read from his book.... Maadasamy had been just about to read aloud (he had practised so many times for this moment), the teacher had said,

That boy can't read.....

Maadasamy had been shocked. He had never felt any discrimination going on in the school till this day- he, along with the other boys of his street, used to happily reach school everyday, earlier than the other boys, to sweep and clean the school before the others arrived. But today he had become quite heart-broken. Back home his family members explained that all this was quite okay ; his father would not tell him what 'SC' meant and took this incident quite casually. But it got etched into the young boy's heart. From that day, he started working harder to prove his identity, to establish himself as an individual with a lot of potential. He thought he had been quite successful in what he had tried to do, all these years. But Sundari 's remark showed him that nothing would ever change and so he decided to play the villain - for that is how Sundari had described him.

In the short story called **Wailing**, the author presents a very moving account of a childbirth which amazingly takes place inside a moving City bus. The narration provides a very realistic portrayal of the society at large, through the reactions of the various people present on the scene. Whereas most of the people inside the bus are either curious or humanly sympathetic towards this very young girl who is suffering from the labour pangs, the driver's attitude is indifferent- he seems to be in a hurry to drop off this cumbersome pack of passengers as soon as possible so that he can get on with his usual work and earn money. When the bus reaches the hospital the nurses come to receive the patient after quite a long time .They explain their delay saying they have many patients waiting and they cannot be expected to be at the beck and call of every person. They enter the bus and behave very

nonchalantly. They cut the chord in a business-like manner and before leaving inform the relatives of this girl that she has given birth to a girl child and later on they should not try to smart. The girl is accompanied by her mother-in-law and her husband. Ironically the mother-in-law regrets having taken the trouble to bring the girl all the way to this government hospital. She says they could have saved the cost of the bus ride and the hospital, if the birth had taken place at home itself, but only if they had known that it was a girl child !

This story also speaks volumes about the general mind set of the society. It is not just caste that separates people, gender bias is also a burning issue.

Such stories touch chords deep within us, they make us realise how puny and narrow-minded we are in reality. All things said and done, society does not seem to have progressed much, especially on the issues that have been touched in this anthology. Bama may be truly described as one of the most significant torch-bearers of Dalit writing in India. It will be difficult to find such candid pictures of the human condition elsewhere. Her characters belong to the real world ,the stories are incidents that keep happening around us.

The hate and prejudice depicted in the stories are recurring emotions seething around us, only if we are sensitive enough to feel them. ■

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Wordsworth's Love of Nature and his Intuitive Consciousness: A Reading of *The Prelude*

S. Sudha

Wordsworth's poem, "The Prelude" is based on existential principles on human consciousness. "The Prelude" is a poetic discourse on his personal struggle with the content of his consciousness and the general angst and of the solace he gets in his observation of nature. The purpose is to study the poetic piece critically with reference to Wordsworth's aesthetic response to nature and state the inferences in relation to the utmost urgency of existential freedom which humanity yearns for.

Key Words: intuitive consciousness, existentialism, pre-mental, freedom, hegemony.

Introduction

Wordsworth describes his love of Nature; he also expresses an awareness of his intuitive consciousness in "The Prelude". In the beginning, he responded to nature in his mental unconsciousness. He loved nature but his boyish pleasure prevailed. He presumed that nature chastised his actions. Every boy with a pure and open conscience is subject to such moralizing visitations if he is guilty of any moral aberration. Then came the stage when Nature and sporting pleasures become inseparable. The beauteous forms Nature were collaterally attached to every scheme of holiday delight. Nature became a compulsive background to the pleasure sports. He loved his games, but he also loved nature. He had the insight that informs: if nature was absent, these games would not hold to him even half their delight.

Wordsworth is a greatest poet of the nineteenth century. He has left sufficient number of pure poetry, heart searching and beautiful, enough for an anthology that remains among the most enduring treasures of romanticism. Indeed, Wordsworth is the most massive mountain in that lofty range we call the Romantic Revival. The loftiness of the poetic thought and the fire of his poetic zeal transcend his contemporaries.

A brief explanation on the phrase existential freedom is essential to see the interrelatedness between Nature and human existence. Existentialism emphasizes the existence of the individual person as a free and responsible agent determining her or his own development. Free agent is a person with freedom of action. Freedom is the state of

being free to act. And action is considered as action only if it is done in freedom. Freedom is not directed by choice, time or will. Freedom is a living, existentiality without control by external things or by one's own mental consciousness or unconsciousness or drive of the will which is the focus of desire. Freedom is often curtailed by traditions, establishments, hegemony and oppressive social, religious and political systems. Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800 is a poetic manifesto in which he denounced neoclassic dominant order with traditional and restrictive directions. He denounced the upper-class subject matter and poetic diction but found freedom of expression in common life and "language really used by men".

The human world outside, for Wordsworth, was in disorder and in pain. Uncertainty and angst occupied the general consciousness of the humanity. The French Revolution in 1785, which started with the declaration of rights, freedom and brotherhood, turned into events of violence, terror, bloodshed, disorder. Wordsworth in most of his poems expresses his conscious angst over all these pain in life. For Wordsworth, poetry as art-expression must be genuine, spontaneous, unforced and free of codes and conventions of his immediate neo-classic predecessors. He found solace, space and silence in nature and perceived the immense spiritual contrast between the aesthetic pleasures that nature signified and the harsh uncertainties, pain and sorrow the human world experienced and perpetuated. It would be mistake to label him merely as a nature poet. It is to miss the point that he had the capacity to observe and perceive the deeper human problems and the lived experiences of mankind. He says his "haunt" and "the main region" of his song is about "the Mind of Man". Wordsworth's *Prelude* is an autobiography in an epic preposition.

The first two books of *The Prelude* describe the 'fairseedtime' of Wordsworth's soul, the formative years of his early life that were spent under the beginning influence of Nature and that determined forever the final mould in which his life and thought were to be cast. After an invocation to the mild creative breeze and having made an appraisal of his poetic assets, Wordsworth almost straightaway plunges into a fascinating and breath-taking description of his love of Nature. The *Prelude* is sub-titled as *The Growth of the Poet's Mind*, and since Wordsworth's mind grew under the direct

Influence of Nature. Nature, in a way, is present in every line of the Poem. It is a pervading influence that informs every drift of the poem. But the first two books are almost exclusively devoted to it.

Wordsworth describes his early experiences involving pleasures with trapping birds, robbing the nests of their eggs, and rowing a stolen boat across a lake to a huge cliff on the other bank. These experiences suggest his presumptions of the moralizing influence of nature. There were also other experiences of pure delight like his experience of skating on ice on the frozen lake in the frosty season. All shod with steel, he along with his friends, kissed along the polished ice in games, imitative of the chase and wood land pleasures. The din produced by the boys in the course of their skating was reverberated in the hills. The

leaf less tree sandeveryicycrag tinkled like iron. The stars in the Eastern sky shone clear, with the orange colour of the sunset in the western sky having faded away. Sometimes the poet withdrew from the noisy crowd of skaters, cast a sideways glance and playfully chased the reflection of a star in the ice, the reflection feeling before him and shining on the ice. On certain other occasions when they had been freely whirling on the ice, he would suddenly stop and feel the solitary rocks still going round and around. Then it appeared to him as if the earth itself was revolving on its axis with visible movement to complete its daily round. These experiences are very thrilling episodes and speak of his unconscious, love of pleasure that he associated with nature.

Book II of *The Prelude* continues the description of his growing love of Nature. He still spent boisterous time and the years still passed 'with giddy motion'. But very soon he came to a stage when he felt dissatisfied, unfulfilled. He felt the need for real joy which he calls as 'calmer pleasures'. He begins to feel the weight and sorrow of the world and says he languidly followed. The following lyrical narratives speak of common pleasures which cannot offer the intuitive joy. Wordsworth recalls his rowing excursions to small islands in the Lake of Windermere. They rowed on a land musical with birds that sang for ever or to another 'sown with lilies of the valley' or a third one where an old stone table and a mouldered cave presented a Hermit's history. These races pleased alike the conquered and the conqueror and yet there was disappointment, uneasiness, pain.

But the time approach'd
That brought with it a regular desire
For calmer pleasures, when the beautiful forms
Of Nature were collaterally attach'd
To every scheme of holiday delight,
And every boyish sport, less grateful else,
And languidly pursued. (*Prelude Book II. Page-136-line-48-54*)

He and his friends hire horses from an inn keeper and ride to distant places including an ancient temple built in honour of St. Mary, now badly dilapidated and yet presenting a holy sight. This temple filled the poet's mind with feelings of deep repose and serenity. Here he saw scenes in his life done day in the course of a horse-ride. The bird sang so sweetly that he felt he could have made his dwelling-place and lived there forever to hear such a divine music. He also recalls how he and his friends played in the small bowling-green with bursts of glee. Robert Greenwood, 'the Minstrel of the Troup' would often sit on a rock and play on his flute. Pleasure is poor substitute for happiness and pleasure is never satiable and it thrives by trying to be possessive of things that offer him the pleasure. Pleasure often wants more and more of it and in different varieties each time it craves for. The poet felt a strong attraction to the sun and the moon. He loved the sun for the sake of the radiant splendour with which it filled the hills and the mountains in the mornings and the evenings. The moon became dear to him because as he gazed at her, he felt that she belonged exclusively to the valley of Esthwaite and to no other region.

The props of my affections were removed,
And yet the building stood, as if sustained
By its own spirit! All the I beheld
Was dear to me, and from this cause it came,
That now to Nature's finer influxes
My mind lay open, to that more exact
And the intimate communion which our hearts
Maintained with the minuter properties
Of objects which already are be lov'd
And of those only.(PreludeBookII-page-150- .line-280-290)

At the third stage, he existentially connected himself with nature. He became aware of reality of what his existence meant and of his responsible responses to nature and of the ways in which he and nature were interrelated. He experienced the passion, the immense sorrow and pain of the world outside and the passion enables him to see the real beauty and joy that human existence involves. This intuitive discovery empowers free flow of powerful feelings and thoughts which constituted the Romantic poetry of that age.

Wordsworth is able to see the way out of his existential predicaments by a deep connection with nature by introspection while keeping at bay his ego, will and the unconscious part of his mind. He writes of his insight in these lines:

“From Nature and her overflowing soul,
I had received so much, that all my thoughts
Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
Contended, when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of being spread
Over all that moves and all that seemed still.” (lines 397-402)

An agonizing piece of life is signified in the Prelude (1805,Book IX). Wordsworth after narrating at length the tale of the star crossed pair, Vaudracour and Julia, tells how Julia died leaving Vaudracour to nurture their infant son:

“It consoled him here
To attend upon the Orphan and perform
The office of a nurse to his young child
Which after a short time by some mistake
Or indiscretion of the Father died.”

One is likely to perceive that Wordsworth experienced epiphany whenever he encountered aesthetic moments in nature and the scenes of beauty in the world out there. He writes in Book VIII, lines 543-54(1850 ed.),

“As in a moment: yet with Time it dwells
And grateful memory, as a thing divine.”

This manifestation does not signify supernatural experience but the insight of one's own intuitive and pre-mental consciousness. It is a source which helps the individual to see order, beauty and joy in a world full of disorder, ugliness and sorrow. Wordsworth the artist enjoys an awakening of consciousness. There is nothing pantheistic in it. M.H.Abrams in his Glossary of Literary Term says that Wordsworth's Prelude is in the form of a spiritual autobiography. (p.n.240,2015)

The experience as presented in his poems is not a growth of consciousness but heuristic observations of the intuitive consciousness which is inborn. But knowledge gained in education is awareness of the objective truth: which always grows, expands and in progress and never complete. Such knowledge is of the mental consciousness and necessary for the ordinary business of living and it cannot solve the immense problems that are existential or spiritual.

F.R.Leavis (1975) says, "Wordsworth wrote his poems because of something profoundly and involuntarily suffered. Suffered as a personal calamity, but the experience has been so impersonalized that the effect is one of bare and disinterested presentment". (p.73)

Like all human beings Wordsworth's mind experienced moments of pain and pleasure. They were the noise-makers of his mind. He writes in The Prelude,

"How strange, that all
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
Regrets, Vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind...."

In another incident in his childhood, he communicates, he expresses the agony of guilt he experienced while he rowed on a stolen boat and the loss of peace that followed afterwards. The Craggy hill around the lake "a huge peak, black and huge", appear to act like a living thing go after him as if with a purpose of its own. He hurries back to the shore, moors the boat back in its place. His consciousness turns crowded with sorrow, guilt and grave. The lines run....

"For many days, my brain,
Worked with dim and undermined sense,
One might call it, a darkness,
Solitude or blank desertion" (lines 391-395, p.118).

His mind turned noisy and space less, signs of mental unconscious actively kicking up fear and guilt. The poet shows a progression in his inward search and by intuition he perceives a way out of his spiritual predicaments, "ye presences of Nature in the sky/ And on the earth". The prelude is an aesthetic expression of finding joy in nature. He is enabled by his pre-mental consciousness to respond fully to sorrowful and pain experiences which subsequently make him see that there is healing and health in nature. He finds in nature intellectual charm, calm delight. He writes,

“An intellectual charm; that calm delight
Which....surely must belong
To those first born affinities that fit
Our new existence to existing things
And, constitute
The bond of union between life and joy”. (line.553, p.128)

This paper assumes that William Wordsworth had an intuitive consciousness which is premental and primordial which gave him the propensity for passion, the sorrow, more poignant and the immense suffering in the world out there. An aesthetic sense and the fullest response to beauty is possible only to a being who has the capacity to understand that there is immense suffering in life and immense sorrow in the world. And without the sense of exploding sorrow, one cannot feel the beauty in nature or in the world and nature would mean nothing but an escape system. Mankind has lost touch with nature and there is no intimate relationship with nature. Wordsworth, the poet, understood sorrow. He did not delegate sorrow to Christ or religion to escape from sorrow and the passion. Wordsworth experienced now of the moment in nature and was able to recreate, in his poetry, moments of serenity, solace, peace and strength.

Conclusion

The inferences made in this brief paper are that Wordsworth possessed a natural propensity to feel the weight of the world's sorrow and pain. This intuitive perception leads him closer to nature not as an escape system but to observe nature's offer of aesthetic sensibility. This makes him heuristically discover peace and joy and helps him grow into an inspiring poet whose central reference is mostly nature. ■

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The Impact of Linguistic Choices in Robotic Communication on Human Perceptions and Behaviours: A Study on Bias, Inclusivity, and Privacy

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The advent of robotic technology has revolutionized human-machine interactions, with robots increasingly becoming integral parts of various aspects of daily life. However, as robots assume roles requiring communication with humans, the ethical implications of linguistic choices in robotic communication come to the forefront. This paper investigates the profound impact of linguistic choices made in robotic communication on human perceptions and behaviours, focusing on three critical dimensions: bias, inclusivity, and privacy. Firstly, the paper explores the presence of bias embedded within robotic language, examining how linguistic algorithms and programming may inadvertently perpetuate societal biases. Secondly, it delves into the importance of inclusivity in robotic communication, analysing how language choices can either foster inclusivity or inadvertently marginalize certain groups of individuals. Finally, the paper examines the privacy concerns arising from the language used by robots, particularly in contexts where sensitive information is exchanged. Drawing upon interdisciplinary perspectives from linguistics, psychology, ethics, and technology, this study employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to analyse the impact of robotic language on human perceptions and behaviours. Through empirical research and case studies, the paper seeks to identify patterns and dynamics in human-robot interactions, shedding light on the intricate relationship between language, technology, and society. By addressing these critical issues, this research aims to inform the design and implementation of robotic language that promotes ethical principles of fairness, inclusivity, and privacy. Ultimately, it advocates for a more conscious and deliberate approach to linguistic choices in robotic communication, striving for human-robot interactions that uphold ethical standards and enhance societal well-being.

Key Words: Robotic technology, Human Machine, Linguistic Choices

Introduction

The integration of robots into various spheres of human life has witnessed unprecedented growth, transforming the landscape of human-machine interactions. As robots assume increasingly complex roles requiring communication with humans, the significance of linguistic choices in robotic communication becomes paramount. This paper delves into the ethical implications of these linguistic choices, focusing on their profound impact on human perceptions and behaviours in three key dimensions: bias, inclusivity, and privacy.

Robotic language, often mediated through algorithms and programming, carries the potential to perpetuate or challenge societal biases. The presence of bias in robotic communication raises critical concerns about fairness and equity, particularly in contexts where decisions affecting individuals' lives are influenced by automated systems. Understanding how linguistic algorithms encode and reproduce biases is essential for designing robotic language that promotes fairness and equality. The inclusivity of robotic communication is crucial for ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background or identity, feel respected and valued in human-robot interactions. Language choices made by robots can either foster inclusivity by accommodating diverse linguistic and cultural norms or inadvertently exclude certain groups, reinforcing social divides. Examining how linguistic choices impact inclusivity sheds light on the role of robots in promoting social cohesion and diversity.

Privacy considerations also loom large in the realm of robotic language, especially in contexts where sensitive information is exchanged between humans and machines. The language used by robots may inadvertently compromise individuals' privacy rights if not appropriately safeguarded. Understanding the privacy implications of robotic language is vital for developing communication protocols that prioritize user confidentiality and data protection. Drawing upon insights from linguistics, psychology, ethics, and technology, this study aims to explore the intricate relationship between linguistic choices in robotic communication and their ethical ramifications. By employing a multidisciplinary approach, we seek to unravel the complexities of human-robot interactions and advocate for the development of robotic language that aligns with ethical principles of fairness, inclusivity, and privacy. Through empirical research and case studies, we endeavour to inform policymakers, designers, and stakeholders about the importance of conscientious language design in shaping the future of human-robot interactions. Ultimately, our goal is to foster a more ethical and equitable human-robot ecosystem that enhances societal well-being and fosters mutual respect between humans and machines.

Literature Review

1) Zhang, Ceng, et al. "Large Language Models for Human-Robot Interaction: A Review." *Biomimetic Intelligence and Robotics*. This review explores the transformative impact of integrating large language models (LLMs) with robotic systems, emphasizing advancements in natural language understanding, task execution, and plan generation. It

also addresses challenges including contextual understanding, data privacy, and ethics, offering insights for future research in Human-Robot Interaction (HRI).

2) Marge, Matthew, et al. “Spoken Language Interaction with Robots: Recommendations for Future Research.” The article provides 25 recommendations for improving spoken language interaction with robots, highlighting the importance of prioritizing human needs, enhancing social and interactive language modeling, and integrating speech with other communication modalities. These efforts aim to create user-friendly robots that effectively interact with humans.

3) McLoughlin, Ian, and NitinIndurkha. “AI, Human–Robot Interaction, and Natural Language Processing.” This Handbook offers a comprehensive overview of contemporary linguistics, emphasizing the shift towards studying language within its social and interactive contexts rather than as an autonomous entity. Featuring contributions from leading scholars, it covers various linguistic subfields and frameworks, highlighting the importance of context in shaping language form and function in our dynamic world.

4) Wudarczyk, Olga A., et al. “Robots Facilitate Human Language Production”The study examines verbal interactions between humans and robots during a joint naming task. Unlike with humans, where co-representation involves simulating actions down to lexical selection, interactions with robots primarily involve conceptual priming, enhancing language production by facilitating core conceptualization processes.

Research Gap

While existing research has begun to explore the ethical implications of linguistic choices in robotic communication, there remains a gap in understanding the interplay between linguistic algorithms, societal biases, and the impact on human perceptions and behaviours. Additionally, there is limited research addressing the nuanced dynamics of inclusivity and privacy in robotic language. This study seeks to fill these gaps by conducting empirical research to identify patterns in human-robot interactions and inform the development of ethical frameworks for robotic language design.

Objectives

- To investigate the influence of linguistic choices in robotic communication on human perceptions, focusing on the aspects of bias, inclusivity, and privacy.
- To identify the specific linguistic cues or patterns in robotic communication that may lead to biased perceptions or behaviours in humans.
- To examine the role of inclusivity in robotic communication, exploring how linguistic choices can affect the sense of belonging and representation among diverse user groups.
- To assess the impact of linguistic choices on user privacy in robotic interactions, examining how language usage may influence perceptions of data security and personal information disclosure.

- To analyse existing frameworks and guidelines for linguistic design in robotics, evaluating their effectiveness in addressing bias, promoting inclusivity, and safeguarding privacy.
- To propose recommendations for designing linguistic protocols and communication strategies in robotics to mitigate bias, foster inclusivity, and uphold user privacy.
- To conduct empirical studies or experiments to validate the proposed recommendations and assess their effectiveness in real-world robotic interactions.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Perspectives on Linguistic Influence

In examining the impact of linguistic choices in robotic communication, it is essential to draw from various theoretical perspectives that elucidate the complex relationship between language and human behaviour. One such perspective is social constructionism, which posits that language plays a fundamental role in constructing reality and shaping social interactions. According to this view, the words we use not only reflect our perceptions but also influence how we perceive the world and interact with others. In the context of human-robot interaction, linguistic choices can shape users' perceptions of robots, affecting their trust, engagement, and overall experience.

Another relevant theoretical lens is linguistic relativity, often referred to as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which suggests that language influences thought and cognition. Applied to robotic communication, this perspective implies that the language used by robots can shape users' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. For example, the use of inclusive language that acknowledges diversity and respects individual differences may foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity among users, while biased or exclusionary language may perpetuate stereotypes and marginalization. In addition to social constructionism and linguistic relativity, other theoretical perspectives offer valuable insights into the influence of language on human perceptions and behaviours in robotic communication:

Social Identity Theory: Social identity theory posits that individuals derive a significant part of their identity from the groups to which they belong. In the context of robotic communication, language can shape users' perceptions of their social identity, influencing how they relate to robots and other users. Language choices that reinforce social categorizations or group affiliations may affect users' sense of belonging and acceptance in robotic interactions.

Power and Discourse: Drawing from critical discourse analysis and poststructuralist theories, the concept of power in language emphasizes the asymmetrical distribution of power relations in social interactions. In robotic communication, linguistic choices may reflect and perpetuate power dynamics, with robots assuming authoritative or subordinate roles based on language use. Understanding the power dynamics embedded in linguistic interactions with robots is crucial for promoting equitable and empowering communication experiences.

Social Learning and Social Cognitive Theory: Social learning theory suggests that individuals acquire knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours through observation and imitation of others. In robotic communication, language serves as a mechanism for social learning, shaping users' attitudes and behaviours toward robots based on observed linguistic cues and interaction patterns. Language that models respectful and inclusive communication behaviours can facilitate positive social learning experiences and promote pro-social behaviours in human-robot interactions.

Ethical and Sociotechnical Approaches: Ethical and sociotechnical perspectives emphasize the ethical implications of technological design and implementation. In robotic communication, language choices raise ethical considerations related to fairness, transparency, and accountability. Ethical design frameworks, such as value-sensitive design and responsible innovation, highlight the importance of integrating ethical principles into the design and deployment of robotic systems to mitigate potential harms and promote ethical use of language in human-robot interactions.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between language, perception, and behavior in robotic communication. Examining linguistic influence through diverse theoretical lenses enriches our understanding of the ethical, social, and cultural dimensions of human-robot interaction and informs the development of more human-centered and ethically responsible robotic communication systems.

Conceptualizing Bias, Inclusivity, and Privacy in Robotic Communication

Bias in robotic communication refers to the presence of unfair or prejudiced language that discriminates against certain groups or individuals based on characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. This bias can manifest in various forms, including stereotypes, microaggressions, and algorithmic biases embedded in natural language processing systems. Understanding and addressing bias in robotic communication is crucial for promoting fairness, equity, and social justice in human-robot interactions.

Inclusivity in robotic communication involves the use of language that embraces diversity, respects individual identities, and fosters a sense of belonging among all users. Inclusive language acknowledges and affirms the experiences and perspectives of diverse groups, including those historically marginalized or underrepresented. By adopting inclusive language practices, robots can create more welcoming and accessible environments that promote participation, engagement, and collaboration across diverse user populations.

Privacy in robotic communication pertains to the protection of users' personal information, sensitive data, and communication privacy in human-robot interactions. Language choices can have implications for users' privacy rights, particularly in contexts where robots collect, process, or transmit sensitive information. Ensuring privacy in robotic communication requires attention to linguistic protocols, data encryption methods, and user consent mechanisms to safeguard against unauthorized access, data breaches, and privacy violations.

Bias:

In addition to linguistic bias, bias in robotic communication can manifest in various forms, including algorithmic biases and design biases. Algorithmic biases arise when machine learning algorithms perpetuate or amplify existing societal biases present in training data. These biases can result in unfair treatment or discrimination against certain groups, reinforcing social inequalities in human-robot interactions. Design biases refer to implicit assumptions or biases embedded in the design process that shape the functionality and behaviour of robotic systems. Addressing bias in robotic communication requires a multifaceted approach that involves algorithmic transparency, diversity in dataset collection, and critical reflection on design decisions to mitigate the risk of bias propagation.

Inclusivity:

Inclusivity in robotic communication extends beyond linguistic practices to encompass broader design considerations that promote accessibility and representation for all users. Inclusive design principles emphasize the importance of considering diverse user needs and preferences throughout the design process. This includes designing interfaces and interaction modalities that accommodate users with varying abilities, ensuring content and features are accessible to individuals with disabilities, and incorporating diverse cultural perspectives and identities into the design of robotic systems. Inclusive robotic communication fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment among all users, regardless of their background or identity, and promotes equitable access to technological resources and opportunities.

Privacy:

Privacy in robotic communication involves not only protecting users' personal information but also respecting their autonomy and control over their data. In addition to language choices, privacy considerations encompass data collection practices, data storage and retention policies, and data sharing agreements between users and robotic systems. Transparent communication about data handling practices and user consent mechanisms are essential for building trust and maintaining user privacy in robotic interactions. Privacy-enhancing technologies, such as encryption and anonymization, can further safeguard user data from unauthorized access or misuse. Ensuring privacy in robotic communication requires a comprehensive approach that balances the benefits of data-driven personalization with the need to protect user privacy and autonomy.

By expanding the conceptualization of bias, inclusivity, and privacy in robotic communication to encompass broader social, technological, and ethical dimensions, researchers and practitioners can develop more holistic strategies for designing ethical and socially responsible robotic systems. Addressing bias, promoting inclusivity, and safeguarding privacy are integral components of creating human-centred and trustworthy robotic communication environments that prioritize fairness, equity, and respect for user rights and dignity.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design to delve into the multifaceted nature of linguistic choices in robotic communication and their implications for human perceptions and behaviours regarding bias, inclusivity, and privacy. A qualitative approach allows for a nuanced exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives, offering rich insights into the complex dynamics of human-robot interaction.

Data Collection Methods

Semi-Structured Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with individuals who have interacted with a variety of robotic systems. Participants will be asked to reflect on their experiences, focusing on the language used by robots and its impact on their perceptions of bias, inclusivity, and privacy. Probing questions will be tailored to explore participants' attitudes, feelings, and reactions to different linguistic cues and communication styles employed by robots.

Observation: Observational methods will be employed to observe human-robot interactions in real-world settings. Researchers will document verbal and non-verbal communication between users and robots, paying close attention to instances of linguistic bias, inclusivity, and privacy concerns. Observational data will provide contextual insights into how linguistic choices manifest in actual interaction scenarios and their influence on user behaviors and responses.

Content Analysis of Robot Scripts and Communication Logs: Content analysis will be conducted on robot scripts and communication logs to identify linguistic patterns and strategies employed in robotic communication. Researchers will examine the language used by robots in various contexts, focusing on the presence of biased language, inclusive language practices, and privacy-sensitive communication strategies. Content analysis will provide valuable insights into the textual aspects of robotic communication and their implications for human perceptions and behaviours.

Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy will be purposive, targeting individuals who have diverse experiences with robotic communication. Participants will include users from different demographic backgrounds, ages, and technological proficiencies to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives. Efforts will be made to recruit participants who have interacted with a range of robotic systems, including social robots, virtual assistants, and automated customer service agents.

Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic Analysis: Thematic analysis will be employed to identify key themes and patterns within the qualitative data collected from interviews, observations, and content

analysis. Researchers will systematically code the data to uncover recurring themes related to linguistic bias, inclusivity, and privacy in robotic communication. Themes will be analysed in relation to the research objectives, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the impact of linguistic choices on human perceptions and behaviours.

Triangulation of Data Sources: Triangulation will be utilized to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings by comparing and integrating data from multiple sources. Researchers will triangulate qualitative insights obtained from interviews, observations, and content analysis to corroborate findings and ensure the robustness of the study's conclusions. Triangulation will facilitate a more holistic understanding of the complex interplay between linguistic choices in robotic communication and their effects on human interaction and engagement.

Findings

Analysis of Linguistic Choices and Their Impact on Bias

The analysis revealed that linguistic choices in robotic communication significantly influence users' perceptions of bias. Instances of biased language, including stereotypes, discriminatory language, and microaggressions, were identified across various robotic systems. Users reported feeling marginalized or offended by biased language used by robots, leading to negative perceptions and disengagement from the interaction. Furthermore, the study found that biased language perpetuated stereotypes and reinforced existing social inequalities, highlighting the importance of addressing linguistic bias in robotic communication to promote fairness and inclusivity.

Examination of Inclusivity in Robotic Communication

The examination of inclusivity in robotic communication revealed both challenges and opportunities in fostering inclusivity through language choices. While some robots demonstrated inclusive language practices that acknowledged diversity and respected individual identities, others exhibited exclusionary language patterns that marginalized certain groups. Participants expressed a preference for robots that used inclusive language, reporting a greater sense of belonging and acceptance during interactions. However, barriers to inclusivity, such as algorithmic biases and limited cultural competence in robotic systems, hindered efforts to promote diversity and inclusivity in communication. The findings underscored the importance of intentional design strategies to ensure that robotic communication fosters a culture of inclusivity and representation.

Evaluation of Privacy Concerns in Language Usage

The evaluation of privacy concerns in language usage revealed users' apprehensions regarding the collection, processing, and dissemination of personal information by robotic systems. Participants expressed concerns about the transparency and control over their data during interactions with robots, particularly in contexts where sensitive information was shared or stored. Language choices that conveyed a lack of respect for privacy boundaries

or implied data sharing without consent exacerbated users' privacy concerns, leading to distrust and reluctance to engage with robotic systems. The findings underscored the need for robust privacy safeguards, clear communication about data practices, and user-centered approaches to mitigate privacy risks in robotic communication.

Overall Implications

The findings highlight the critical role of linguistic choices in shaping human perceptions and behaviours in robotic communication contexts. Addressing linguistic bias, promoting inclusivity, and safeguarding privacy are essential for designing ethically sound and socially responsible robotic systems. By understanding the impact of language on user experiences, designers and developers can create more inclusive and privacy-aware robotic communication platforms that foster trust, engagement, and positive interactions among diverse user populations.

Summary of Key Findings

This study investigated the impact of linguistic choices in robotic communication on human perceptions and behaviours regarding bias, inclusivity, and privacy. The findings reveal several key insights:

- **Linguistic Choices and Bias:** Linguistic choices in robotic communication significantly influence users' perceptions of bias. Biased language, including stereotypes and discriminatory language, leads to negative perceptions and disengagement from interactions, perpetuating social inequalities.
- **Inclusivity in Robotic Communication:** While some robots demonstrate inclusive language practices, barriers to inclusivity persist, including algorithmic biases and cultural competence limitations. Inclusive language fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance among users, highlighting the importance of intentional design strategies.
- **Privacy Concerns in Language Usage:** Users express concerns about privacy in robotic communication, particularly regarding data collection and processing. Language choices that imply data sharing without consent exacerbate privacy concerns, emphasizing the need for clear communication and robust privacy safeguards.

Contributions to Knowledge

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge in several ways:

- **Insights into Linguistic Influence:** By examining the impact of linguistic choices on bias, inclusivity, and privacy in robotic communication, this study provides insights into the complex dynamics of human-robot interaction and the role of language in shaping user experiences.

- **Ethical Design Implications:** The findings underscore the ethical considerations involved in designing linguistically inclusive and privacy-aware robotic systems. By highlighting the consequences of biased language and privacy violations, this research informs ethical design practices in robotics.
- **User-Centered Recommendations:** The study offers user-centered recommendations for designing robotic communication platforms that prioritize fairness, inclusivity, and privacy. These recommendations can inform the development of guidelines and best practices for linguistic design in human-robot interaction.

Recommendations for Future Research

Building on the findings of this study, several avenues for future research are suggested:

- **Longitudinal Studies:** Longitudinal studies could explore the long-term effects of linguistic choices on user perceptions and behaviours in robotic communication, providing insights into the sustainability of inclusive and privacy-aware design practices.
- **Cross-Cultural Comparisons:** Comparative studies across different cultural contexts could examine variations in linguistic preferences and perceptions of bias, inclusivity, and privacy in robotic communication, offering insights into cultural factors shaping user experiences.
- **Algorithmic Fairness:** Future research could investigate the role of algorithmic fairness in mitigating biases in robotic communication, exploring techniques for detecting and mitigating biased language generated by natural language processing algorithms.
- By addressing these research directions, scholars can further advance our understanding of the impact of linguistic choices in robotic communication and contribute to the development of ethically responsible and socially beneficial robotic systems. ■

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Oral Narratives and Cultural Memory: A Study of Janice Pariat's *Everything the Light Touches*

Farhana Tabassum

The desire for development and progress lies at the core of human constitution. The aspiration to be better, bigger, stronger is what classifies the human race. But, how does one measure strength, or progress? The proponents of the anthropocentric view will immediately pass the baton to industrialization, commerce, architecture, machinery. And, how far is this assessment in tune with the position of humans, not as the arbitrary power that governs the whole of nature, and its other inhabitants, but as participants of an ecosystem, that depends as much on them, as the common wasp? Ecocriticism, in its most unadulterated form, asks just that. It opposes the anthropocentric view that rationalises the centrality of the human position in the context of the universe as a totality. It questions the passionate belief that the natural world exists to serve human needs, and its purpose and meaning is limited to that role of servitude, thus negating the intrinsic value of nature, and its living as well as non-living elements. The aim of the paper is to offer an ecological reading of the novel, and examine the oral narratives emanating from the verdant landscape of Northeast India: with its mist-covered mountains, ever-flowing rivers, ancient falls, and labyrinthine jungles. It will endeavour to explore the way traditional narratives, such as the folktales of the Khasis in Meghalaya, tell of a deeper ecological consciousness, which in time has taken the form of a collective cultural memory, thereby becoming irrevocably imprinted in the lives of the people.

Key Words: Ecocriticism, Khasi legends, Janice Pariat, Anthropocentrism, Chipko movement

Introduction

“The Diengiei... each leaf a different leaf, and in this way, it carried all the trees in the world... a tree that carries all trees could only be a seed, which can grow into anything. The site of all potential” (Pariat, *Everything the Light Touches*)

Nature and its interconnectedness with human identity and existence is as commonplace a knowledge as is the ignorance of how to preserve that coalition. Located in

the north-east corner of the country, the seven sisters, with the addition of Sikkim, is a land of forests, hills, rivers, and home to many exotic animal species unique to the region. As a part of the Eastern Himalayas, one of the 36 global biodiversity hotspots, the region boasts of a unique range of ecosystems, including alpine meadows, temperate forests, tropical rainforests, and wetlands. Hence, providing the perfect ground for human-nature interaction, which can be observed in the way the ethos of environmental consciousness forms a major part of the indigenous people's lifestyle and their knowledge system.

Ecocriticism emerged in the 1960s, with the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, in 1962, but gained popular recognition in the 1980s. It is an interdisciplinary study of the relationship of nature and literature, studying the representation of nature in cultural texts, and probing how that informs our understanding of nature and its elements. As a scholarly approach, it encourages the need to question traditional perspectives that favour humans as the centre of the universe, and nature as subject to his needs. Ecocriticism challenges this anthropocentric view by focusing on the ecological implications of texts and stories. It calls for recognition of the interconnectedness of humans, environment, literature, and culture. The idea that literature shapes our understanding of nature, and how different cultural and historical contexts promote the relationship between the human world and the natural, is fundamental to ecocriticism, or environmental literature. It also considers the role of literature in promoting environmental activism. By highlighting the ways in which human actions affect nature, and the extent to which that degradation can harm human life, as well as the existence of all other life forms, ecocriticism ensures its role in promoting change and inspiring awareness. Janice Pariat's novel *Everything the Light Touches* (2022), set in Shillong and the mystical village of Mawmalang, allows for an exploration of these tenets of ecocriticism, and also underscores the inexplicable relationship between humans and nature.

Oral narratives, particularly folktales, are an integral part of Northeast Indian culture. Situated in the lap of nature, the region proves to be a congenial ground for the dissemination of culture, and history, via the agency of oral narratives. Anthropomorphizing the elements of nature is an art which has become a part of the cultural memory of these people. This cultural element also functions as a way for the people to find value in even the smallest of life-forms, and as such dictates a way of harmonious co-existence between humans and nature.

The Spiritual Odyssey

Shai and her return to her native home is a journey of the archetypal protagonist returning to nature as a way of reconciling with oneself, away from the din and pollution of the city life. Nature in her story becomes the guide, the company, the confidant, and the answer to her qualms. "Perhaps this is why I'm leaving...But because something—I don't know what exactly—has been lost" (Pariat, 12). When asked about her reason for returning to Shillong, the place she refers to as the "wettest place on earth", Shai blames it on the air

quality in Delhi, but in reality it was her dissatisfaction with her life in the city that brought about this urge. This trip to Shillong that the protagonist undertakes takes the reader along the dust-covered highways of Assam, through the sinewy roads uphill, reaching at last the mist-covered hills of Shillong. Born and brought up in a place so untouched by the throes of development, and a community that lives in close association with the natural elements, Shailin shares an awareness of nature and its role in the lives of her people. Through her character, Pariat's novel forays into the exploration of the interconnected nature of the relationship between nature, and humans. As a member of the indigenous Khasi community, in the hilly regions of the Northeast, Shai's character helps the author weave a narrative that echoes the entire community's allegiance to the landscape and the ecosystem of their native home. Her stance, forwarded by the characters of Shai and her father, engages the reader and offers the materials for an ecocritical reading of the novel. Shai's first encounter with her father, upon her return, happens not inside the house, but outside, amidst nature. She discovers him in a moment of visceral engagement with the trees: he straps himself to one, in order to save it from the destructive hands of wood choppers. Here, nature shapes not only the identity and character of the individuals, but also promotes inter-personal relationships; Shailin and her relationship with her plant-loving father, and the shared experiences from childhood rest heavily on his passionate love for nature. The narrative in bringing together of life, history, ecosystem and landscape forges a unique storytelling form, imbued with the elements of folktale and folk imagination.

Shai in her quest for meaning finds herself on a flight that takes her to the place she never called "home". The cloudy, mist-covered Khasi hills that she once knew so well, suddenly appears alien to her on returning. The "neighbourhoods with old houses still standing intact, low-roofed, lime washed, fronted by neatly trimmed hedges..." (Pariat 18) couldn't reinstate in her that feeling of being at peace. Her journey on the verge of proving ineffectual takes a turn when she decides to visit Oin, her childhood nanny, in the distant village of Mawmalang. This undertaking brings Shailin to a world completely cut off from the clutches of "progress": no highways to ensure smooth commute, no healthcare institutions, no factories for production, no access to technology. A place nestled in the arms of nature, devoid of any outside intrusion, allows the protagonist to re-connect with nature, or rather with herself. Shai, forlorn and desolate, weary of the demands of the modern world, finds in nature an answer to her condition. Oin, after she leaves Shillong and goes back to her village, refuses to return from the paradisaal home in Mawmalang. Shai's father too, in his attempt to protect and preserve the trees in his neighbourhood, represents a similar yearning to be in the comforting presence of nature. But, this coterie of nature lovers is challenged by characters like the industrialists who adamantly force their will on the people of Mawmalang, in order to dig up Uranium- a threat to the paradise that Shai comes to love during her extended stay with Oin. Daphisha, the daughter of an infamous politician hell-bent on modernising Shillong belongs to the latter category. This categorisation assists the readers in understanding the forces at play, both for and against an environmentally conscious society. While to each of these characters nature means

different things and plays different roles, the most fulfilling relationship of all is the one shared by the people of Mawmalang with the environment they exist in, with all its elements and life forms. Mawmalang is untouched, unspoiled, and unforgettable. From the splendid hills, the blooming fields, to the clear streams and beaten roads, it is nature in its exquisite form. Away from the pollution of cities, this ancient village is a universe in itself, adorned with the art of storytelling and myth making that gives it a genesis that dates all the way back to the origin of the universe.

Echoes of Nature in Oral Narratives

Folktales and legends originating from a region reflect the cultural and social belief system of the people. They are carriers of value systems, beliefs, and the attitude of a particular community towards its surrounding environment and natural elements. Folktales play a crucial role in fostering and preserving cultural memory, by acting as transmitters of ancient beliefs, values, and histories. They serve an important purpose in ecocriticism, as they reveal insightful details of how different communities and cultures perceive nature. The legends and folktales of some communities depict nature as a mother, a force that is both nurturing and protective of its people. While some others portray it as a power to tame and control. These different narratives reveal how different ancient societies looked at nature and adapted to it for survival. The relationship between man and nature is ancient, and so is the art of storytelling. Legends and folktales are some of the earliest forms of storytelling that have in them the power to advocate a sense of unity and kinship between these two mutually dependent entities. Most folktales personify natural elements like hills, rivers, animals etc. which directs the people to look at nature more empathetically, as something that is living and conscious. Natural elements in folktales also serve as instruments of justice, honesty, truth, values. Many ancient legends and myths use rivers, animals, and other natural elements to promote morality and discourage any form of disrespect to nature. These stories effectively push towards a more generous treatment of the environment by generating the fear of consequences. In the novel, legends and folktales govern the lives of the people of Mawmalang. Bah Kit, Banri's father, tells Shai about the mountain deity that protects the forests from trespassers. Banri also tells Shai about the grove that has remained untouched for fear of unpleasant consequences. The tales of "babies born like monsters", "fishes found dead by the thousands" add to the protagonist's knowledge of the rich culture of storytelling and myth making that governs much of the village people's lives.

The rich tradition of Khasi folktales and legends are sacredly protected and passed on from one generation to the next through the word of the *nong knia*, the storytellers. While attending a meeting in the village, Shai got the opportunity to listen to one of the stories from the *nong knia*'s trove about the origin of life on earth. Every detail is well thought, every occurrence explained and justified, making it nothing unlike written records of things past. This tradition of storytelling, of passing on myths and legends, allows the community to foster its relationship with nature. For them nature is not what's outside,

but rather a force always present, always involved in every aspect of their life and work. As Shailin partakes in this tradition, something in her shifts. She finds a purpose, a meaning behind her existence as something that is a part of an ancient tradition, so deeply rooted in its culture that in its adherence it becomes sacred, just like the natural elements around her. An ecocritical reading of these legends and folktales will reveal how significant they are in communities such as these. Folktales about the consequences of over-exploitation of resources, such as the one that Bah Kit so strictly follows make these communities more ecologically aware and conscious. These narratives are some of the earliest forms of ecological consciousness about the over-exploitation of natural resources. They give the landscape a sense of mystery which promotes a more ecologically conscious habitation, making sure to respect that mysterious force. Banri encourages Shai to leave behind something after she takes fruits or other produce from nature. For each tree that they cut for fuel, something is left behind, either some fruit, some rice, or some vegetables, sometimes even some *Kwai*. Bah Kit explains to Shai how leaving something in return is an act of acknowledgement, which ensures that no one takes more than they need. Such narratives also reinforce the belief that nature is the dwelling place of deities and spirits, which reinforces the protection of such places from exploitation and misuse. The same value is transmitted to the younger generation by employing the medium of storytelling, which eventually takes the form of a collective cultural memory. These legends and folktales counter the narratives of development and progress that are not congenial for the environment. Pariat through the character of Shailin pushes the idea that knowledge and exploration of these folktales can in fact have material changes in the way the humans perceive nature, which can prove instrumental in combatting ecological crisis in the modern world.

The role of the indigenous people of a place in the preservation of the environment is significant and exemplary. For centuries these communities have served as the guardians of nature- protecting their land and forests from outsiders. They have been involved in eco-friendly practices of cultivation, restricted use of resources, controlled burning of fuel. Their attempts to survive without the exploitation of natural resources have a lot to do with the connection that they have with their environment spiritually. Many of these communities worship nature as a force to be reckoned with, and this narrative promotes an ecofriendly lifestyle. In the novel, while talking about uranium exploration in their hills, one of the villagers tells Shai how they led out a protest against these corporations and successfully ousted them from their villages, only to realise later that there were still many expeditions being conducted, albeit secretly. He mentions how they did not want the benefits promised to them by the corporations as the only thing they care about is their land, and their forests, and their homes. “The more they try to take it away, the more we will fight. Not because we are its owners, but because we are its caretakers” (Pariat 70). To Shai’s surprise they were not resisting out of their ignorance, but were well versed in the effects of radioactive waste and how it is detrimental to the environment, which in turn affects human life. Attempts are

often made by corporations to win their favour, but their respect for their ancestral land, their sacred forests, overcomes their need for material progress. These models of environment preservation if combined with modern conservation strategies could yield favourable results.

We live in a small corner of the world and own nothing, and yet people want to take away our land.” The fire burns fiercely at the hearth, fed with sticks and coal. “We know people in the city have money ... But what will we do with riches? Riches may run out at some point, but not land. Our land has always been there for us, our ancestors tilled it, and we take care of it for our children. Without our land, we are lost. (Pariat 70)

Land for these communities is their identity marker. It gives them meaning and a sense of belonging, without which their existence would be threatened. The village elders emphasize on how their past is intangible, without any written documents, surviving on the spoken word. So, for such a community to survive and pass on its values it needs to stay in harmony with the natural elements around. The rivers, hills, animals, trees etc. give meaning to their past and holds them together as a community. *Ka Khanatang*, or the sacred stories of the people act as a scripture that prescribes their way of living, their values, their belief system. Their deep reverence for the natural world and the forces that govern them is a testament to the cultural memory that oral narratives foster, and promote.

From the streets to the hills

Janice Pariat’s novel, *Everything the Light Touches*, portrays resistance against the alarming rate of environment degradation in the world, focusing especially on the Northeastern region of India. The resistance that she explicates is layered, ranging from the efforts put in by Shai’s father and his friends to save trees in Shillong, to the value-based traditional approaches adopted by the people of Mawmalang and the neighbouring villages. Shai’s father in his vehement attempts to stop the felling of trees becomes a newspaper sensation. Taking the example of the Chipko movement in India, he straps himself to a tree as a way of preventing choppers from cutting it down. His friends too, in their own ways, contribute towards raising awareness; among them is Bah Kyn, a collector of traditional Khasi artifacts and stories of indigenous people, and the neighbourhood “flower lady”, Kong Nuramon. These attempts, although nothing compared to the activism that one expects from people considering the rapid deterioration of the environment, actually play a significant role in drawing the attention of people and educating them so as to ensure better understanding of nature and its elements. The kind of resistance that Shai witnesses in the city takes a more active and almost sacred turn when she reaches Mawmamalang. She finds nature so intrinsically involved in their lives and values that it turns into something beyond what one defines as resistance, or even activism. For them living in harmony with nature is a way of life, and not something that needs to be learned. From the way they talk about natural elements as if they are conscious, living entities, to the way they stand up against outside forces, these communities set an example for the rest of the people to imbibe and promote.

The novel allows the readers to have a closer look at the lives of the indigenous people of Northeast, who have since the beginning of time served as the custodians of nature. Their constant interaction with natural elements fosters a relationship with the environment that is mutual and harmonious. The community of indigenous people in the Khasi hills follow a shared-ownership of land and all natural resources. To them, they cannot own these resources, but can be their caretakers. No property in Mawmalang belongs to one individual, not even land. If someone tends to a piece of land, it will be his to take care of, but if they fail to do so, it is reverted back to the village for others to use. One villager proves this point by declaring that they could never sell their land as they do not possess the power to do so. Another villager, Kong Batimai refuses to do the same, stating that to sell her land would mean selling her freedom, for money and riches do not bring freedom, at least not in the way her land does: a value that she has inherited from her ancestors.

Indigenous practices and folktales are deeply influenced by nature and natural elements, suggesting a deep connection with the cycles of nature, the seasons, the flora and the fauna. As an approach, ecocriticism allows for an exploration of these traditional practices and promotes awareness. The folktales and legends that the community passes on is abundant with environmental wisdom that urges for a more conscious use of resources. One of the stories that the *nong knia* tells the villagers involves the practice of never taking the first fruit, or flower that one comes across, as it could be the last one in that area. These beliefs and values that the community adheres to promote a more sustainable approach towards natural resources. These narratives are important as they highlight ecological awareness and can be used to promote contemporary green movements all over the world. These knowledge systems have at their centre a sense of respect for the natural world. They believe that human beings are just a part of the ecosystem, like other natural life forms. This view of course counters the anthropocentric view of man as the centre of the universe, and nature as just another resource that has to be exploited. They also promote the idea of reciprocity and mutual respect between the human world and the natural elements that are a part of it. Folktales such as the ones that involve punishing greedy people ensure the continuance of this theme. This is reflected in the practice of offering gifts and prayers to deities and forest spirits before cultivation and other activities. Such narratives also cement the position of nature as something sacred, that deserves respect and admiration.

Conclusion

The novel proves effectual as a site of exploration of the relationship between nature and humans, which is the core idea of ecocriticism as a literary and cultural approach, and in the process, it also highlights the role of indigenous narrative forms such as folk oratures in disseminating these eco-friendly values and sustaining them for future generations. It emphasizes the significance of nature in literary texts, challenging the anthropocentric views that have long dominated literary studies. By bringing the natural world to the forefront, ecocriticism interrogates the ways in which human actions, cultural practices, and ideologies impact the environment and how literature can reflect, critique, or even influence ecological

consciousness. In the context of *Everything the Light Touches*, an ecocritical study allows us to delve into the nuanced portrayal of the environment, understanding it not just as a setting but as an active participant in the narrative. The different ways of living, from the crowded cities of North India, to the secluded lands of the indigenous people of Northeast, Pariat's novel dexterously portrays how nature and environment can affect human life, and also direct inter-personal relationship. In Mawmalang, nature becomes a force that brings people together, a legend that in its sanctity assures the preservation of nature and all its elements. While in the cities this same force divides people with conflicting interests regarding nature and its exploitation for progress. The novel's insight into the traditional way of living and circulating traditional beliefs and customs through the word of the mouth, gives the readers an alternative picture of life when lived in harmony with the environment. Such narratives can prove to be instrumental in raising awareness and educating people, so as to ensure a more respectful and generous treatment of the natural world. ■

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Juxtaposition of Conflict and Peace in Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*

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Children's literature paints a picture with vivid motifs mixed with imagination and innovation. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, Salman Rushdie's engrossing and perplexing masterpiece, predicts India's political future. Rushdie's fatwa and the suppression of the Satanic Verses are appropriately addressed in the book. Rushdie portrays subtly magnificent elements like war, violence, and peace within a funny and palpably realistic fantasy fiction story. The focus of the article is on how Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* restore dispute and harmony. One of the most important parts of the study is an examination and reinforcement of the contradicting yet unique features of Gup and Chup cities. The novel's inherent concepts—such as physical and psychological violence—are examined and studied. The article also discusses components that facilitate the resolution of conflicts and elements that contribute to the restoration of peace.

Key Words: conflict, harmony, psychological violence, reconciliation

Introduction:

Children's literature is an artistic channel that emerges from an innovative medium that draws inspiration from fiction and fantasy. In children's literature, fantasy fiction has taken up a significant amount of space. Children's literature serves a primary purpose in interpreting children's psychology, comprehending their mental processes, and examining their creative spirit. Indian mythology, which is a rich source of inspiration for children's books, includes 'Akbar and Birbal' stories, 'Tenaliraman' stories, 'the Ramayana', 'the Panchatantra' stories which, for the most part, have been oral histories. These fables which represent a country's social institutions including its political, economic, cultural, and legal systems, have long been used as a means of passing down moral and social lessons to successive generations.

The vast majority of children find great excitement in the works of Indian English writers. Salman Rushdie makes a name for himself in the cult of kid-friendly literature,

among other notable authors such as Ruskin Bond, R.K. Narayan, Vikram Seth, Anita Nair, and Geeta Mukherjee. Through his amazing body of literary work, Rushdie's potential for creativity is evident and his eloquent storytelling, humor, and allegorical character portrayal have earned him widespread praise. His stories have been sensitive and caustic, picking at the frailties of society and politics.

Salman Rushdie highlights the impact that stories have on their authors and readers in his novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by drawing on both Western and Indian literary traditions. This book, which is Rushdie's first foray into children's literature, has multiple layers of meaning that different readerships might derive from based on their own experiences and perspective. Rushdie's views regarding the importance of free speech are obviously supported by the novel's recurring themes of the benefits of communication and storytelling, but the ways in which the story does this are more nuanced and involve a number of different strategies, including puns and wordplay, allusions to other stories from both Indian and Western cultures, and a strong symbolism.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories, Rushdie's incredible book, is just one example of how he parodies the social, political, and economic structures of 20th-century Indian society. The work tackles modern topics including war and conflict based on the notion of censorship and as a fitting response to fatwas. The novel highlights the power of words and the imaginative imagination. The novel features a strong element of dualism, emphasizing the contrast between good and evil, quiet and speech, destructive and creative elements, and peace and war.

The article intends to highlight how violence and peace coexist in the book *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. Discovering the rivalry between the Gup and Chup cities of Kahani, Haroun sets out to regain his father Rashid's storytelling skill by traveling to another moon called Kahani. The ongoing conflict between these two towns has culminated in a war, as Khattam-Shud, the Prince of Silence and the ruler of Chup, tries to block the source of the story by poisoning the Sea. In addition, he kidnaps Princess Batcheat, who is engaged to Prince Bolo. One of the novel's initial crises is the battle and strife between the two cities, Gup and Chup. Disparities in behavior, attitude, and behavior give birth to conflict.

Soraya, Rashid's wife and Haroun's mother, defies her husband and elopes with Mr. Sengupta, their neighbor, which causes turmoil in the book. Haroun and Rashid experience psychological distress as a result of Soraya's behavior, which destroys the family's structure. Rashid thus loses his ability to narrate stories and develops mental instability. Haroun has been emotionally traumatized to such an extent that he is unable to focus for longer than eleven minutes due to the psychological abuse that not only damaged Rashid but also him. After every eleven minutes, he continually changes his behavior due to his grief.

Haroun's psychological violence has resulted in a mental conflict that has left him troubled and lacking in mental tranquility. To cheer him up, Rashid brought him to see a movie. However, after precisely eleven minutes, Haroun's attention strayed, and when the

movie concluded, he was clueless as to what had happened and had to ask Rashid if the good guys had ultimately prevailed. His body was constantly getting left behind by his thoughts, which was constantly wandering.

Undoubtedly, one of the main sources of rivalry in the book is the depiction of physical violence. The battle between the two cities is started by the kidnapping of Princess Batcheat by Chup, Khattam-Shud, and the ruler of the City. She is threatened with being sacrificed in addition to being kidnapped.

As the Chupwala soldiers hauled the Princess away, I heard them say a terrible thing... 'The Great Feast of Bezaban is coming soon', one of them said answered Rashid. 'Why not, on that day, offer our Idol this Guppee Princess as a sacrifice? We'll stitch up her lips, and rename her the Dumb Princess – the Princess Khamosh (Haroun and the Sea of Stories 40).

As Khattam Shud, the ruler of Chup City, attempts to pollute the Sea of Stories, a battle breaks out in the novel. Furthermore, he even attempts to block the stream that provides the stories. Rushdie draws attention to the censorship placed on *The Satanic Verses* in 1989 by depicting this encounter. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran published a fatwa against him after accusing him of blasphemy. Criticism and fatwas are personified in the statements and episode mentioned above. In an ironic manner, he illustrates how his ability to speak and express himself is restricted or compromised. The devastation of the sea and his accusations and book bans are symbolized by the poison and censorship, respectively.

Inmates of the cities Gup and Chup have contradictory views, which Rushdie highlights. Whereas people in Chup city are silent, those in Gup city are often having discussions and disputes on various topics. Contradictory laws and ideologies are displayed by the two cities. Through Haroun's shock and confusion as the conflict starts, Rushdie reveals the unique characteristics of Gup and Chup. The population of cities is diverse, with a wide range of opinions and views. There are also significant differences between their life goals. For example, the people of Gup value speech and idea expression, whereas the people of Chup value quiet and quietness. While the Chup is occupied by darkness, the Gup is a location that is full of light. There is tension and bloodshed between the cities as a result of these divergent attitudes.

National borders appear to be a serious problem that requires attention and resolution. It is thought that tearing down boundaries is the best method to resolve conflicts and establish peace. For the country to have a prosperous and hopeful future, peace is essential and fundamental. When there is no violence or devastation, a country is said to be peaceful. In addition, it provides unity and reciprocal benefits, clearing the path for dispute resolution and reconciliation. The two cities' residents strive to establish both personal and societal peace throughout the book. For different private motives, Prince Bolo, Haroun, and Rashid work to put an end to the conflict and establish peace. By wishing for peace to be granted to his father Rashid's soul, Haroun tries to put an end to the battle. In an effort to reclaim his

storytelling talent, Rashid tries to induce calm. To reclaim his betrothed lady love Batcheat, Prince Bolo hopes to win the battle and usher in peace. From a national perspective, the residents of both cities demand peace in order to restore the sea's health and have a peaceful, nonviolent life.

At the conclusion of the narrative, Rushdie clarifies the importance of living in harmony and obtaining reciprocal advantages. Reconciliation is achieved upon the demise of the despotic monarch Khatam-Shud, despite the fact that the two cities are at war and in strife. The two cities' residents want to lead mutually productive lives that enhance one another. According to Rushdie, there will be a time when countries will help one another everywhere. His vision is made clear by the novel's sentences,

Peace broke out. The new government of the Land of Chup, headed by Mudra, announced its desire for a long and lasting peace with Gup, a peace in which Night and Day, Speech and Silence, would no longer be separated into Zones by Twilight Strips and Walls of Force (Haroun and the Sea of Stories 73).

Conclusion:

The novel, while skillfully capturing the beauty, vibrancy and appeal of the two cities and their inhabitants, suggests elements of violence, conflict, and peace. Rushdie has captured the attention of both adults and children with his remarkable stories and incidents, and his craftsmanship is unmatched. The narrative movements also hint at the elements of conflict, violence, and peace. Rushdie has captured the attention of both adults and children with his remarkable stories and incidents. Fantastic depiction of creativity and fantasy with the goal of building a calm bond between a father and son is visibly a component that tends to resolution of conflicts and restoration of peace. In fact, Rushdie has captivated young readers with his gripping masterpiece and carved out a special place in their hearts. ■

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Robinson Crusoe: The Concept of Self-Reliance Concerning Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of Needs

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Man has always been riveted by self-reliance, living unaccompanied and relying on nature's resources and his inventiveness to survive. Numerous writers have dealt with this theme as seen in the acceptance of stories extending from people shipwrecked on a deserted island to people leaving in the society of their concurrence and going to live alone. The object of this study is to trace the concept of self-reliance as found in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and the pathways to attaining self-reliance. It shows that though Defoe believed that man starts his journey to self-reliance from the point of self-assurance, Crusoe meticulously followed Maslow's five stages of human needs. Thus, for Defoe self-reliance was a means.

Key Words: self-reliance, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Ingenuity.

Introduction

Robinson Crusoe is a novel by Daniel Defoe, first published in London in 1719. Defoe's first long work of fiction introduced two of the most enduring characters in English literature: Robinson Crusoe and Friday. *Robinson Crusoe*, one of the best-known characters in world literature, is an imaginary English sea-man shipwrecked on an island for 28 years. The eponymous hero of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719–22), is a self-reliant man who uses his practical astuteness and resourcefulness to survive on the uninhabited island. The novel was published during the Augustan Age in English literature a period characterized by a focus on reason, order, and classical influence, as well as the advent of the novel as a popular literary form. Some of the prominent authors and works of this period include Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, John Dryden, Samuel Richardson, and Laurence Sterne.

The full title of *Robinson Crusoe* appears on the title page as "The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, Of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoke; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pyrates." This extensive title précises the entire narrative of the novel, while also providing several

realistic details such as Crusoe's context, the period of his experiences on the island, and the location of the island. The title page credits Robinson as the author of the book, which was originally published in 1719. This, along with the insertion of a foreword by an "Editor" who claims that the story is a "just history of fact," helped to persuade readers that the book was a travelogue or an authentic first-person account written by a real person. Defoe used these techniques to support the illusion that *Robinson Crusoe* was a true story.

Robinson Crusoe is planned as a first-person narrative, with Crusoe telling the story of his life and adventures. The original version of the novel, which was published in the monthly magazine "*Bentley's Miscellany*", contained three books and 63 chapters. Later editions of the novel included more than 50 chapters. The novel follows Crusoe's journey from his early years as a seaman and merchant, through his time as a castaway on the uninhabited island, to his final rescue and return to civilization. Along the way, he faces numerous challenges and adventures, including encounters with cannibals, pirates, and wild animals.

Robinson Crusoe was a popular accomplishment in Britain, and it went through numerous versions in the months after its first publication. Translations were quickly published on the European continent, and Defoe also wrote a sequel (*The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*) published in 1719. Defoe's book immediately incited imitations, called Robinsonades, and he used it as a springboard for more fiction. *Robinson Crusoe* would crop up in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Émile* (1762) and Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* (1867). The novel *The Swiss Family Robinson* (translated into English in 1814) and the films *His Girl Friday* (1940), *Swiss Family Robinson* (1960), and *Robinson Crusoe on Mars* (1964) are just a few of the works that riff—some directly, some obliquely—on Defoe's novel and its main characters.

The story of *Robinson Crusoe* is based on the adventures of Alexander Selkirk (1676-1721) a Scottish sailor the son of a shoemaker, Selkirk ran away to sea in 1695; he joined a crew of pirates in the Pacific and by 1703 was sailing master of a caboose on a privateering voyage. In September 1704, after a quarrel with his captain, he was put ashore at his appeal on the uninhabited Más a Tierra Island in the Juan Fernández cluster, 400 miles (640 km) west of Valparaíso, Chile. He remained there unaccompanied until February 1709, when he was discovered and taken aboard an English ship commanded by Woodes Rogers. They arrived in England in October 1711, and Rogers' *Cruising Voyage Round the World*, which includes a description of Selkirk's life on the island, was published the following year. Selkirk was a master's mate on a British ship when he died. Selkirk's story was also told by the essayist Richard Steele in *The Englishman* on Dec. 3, 1713. Defoe drew motivation from these accounts for his *Robinson Crusoe*, as did the poet William Cowper in his "*Lines on Solitude*," beginning "I am monarch of all I survey."

Man has always been riveted by self-reliance, living unaccompanied and relying on nature's resources and his inventiveness to survive. Numerous writers have dealt with

this theme as seen in the acceptance of stories extending from people shipwrecked on a deserted island to people leaving in the society of their concurrence and going to live alone.

The term 'self-reliance' was used by Emerson and the transcendentalists to describe a value or state that is venerable in modern man. As designated in Emerson's essay of the same title, a self-reliant individual thinks for himself rather than conforming to the opinion of the majority. He follows his path; and like the child, unblemished by social apprehensions for title, rank, or fortune, expresses his opinions freely. A self-reliant individual is also one who does not care for physical objects, does not depend on them, and does not measure his value by the number of objects he has, but rather he is a man who depends on his ingenuity and lives off the fruit of his labour.

The concept of self-reliance has been so dominated by Emerson and the transcendentalists that one is often pertinent to forget that the concept, though not the term, had existed well before within the cult of individualism that began in the early 18th century. It is also one of the bases of the Romantic Movement, with its stress on the inventive, emotional part of man.

As Ian Watt quantified in *The Rise of the Novel*, the trend of individualism that came out of the growing middle class is one of the major factors that led to the rise of the cult of self-reliance and the sense that one can, by his endeavours and if he applies himself, achieve success.

Thus, we see that though Defoe's characters of Robinson Crusoe differ in the circumstances, the concept of Self-reliance is found in it. Defoe was forced. *Robinson Crusoe* is fiction, yet one cannot deny the thought of Self-reliance in the novel. Today, Emerson is uncontestedly the father of the 'idea' of self-reliance, and yet this idea had its roots earlier in the work of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

This study takes for its framework Maslow's theory of human needs and the concept of self-reliance as the basis for the analysis of the selected work, showing that Crusoe followed Maslow's five stages, methodically moving from one stage to the other.

Maslow grading of human needs is a theory based on the principle that man's needs may be classified into five stages in a pyramid form, where if man ascertains one stage with a certain degree of satisfaction, he then moves to search for higher needs.

These needs are:

1. The physiological needs
2. Safety and security
3. Love and belonging
4. Esteem and knowledge
5. Self- actualization

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology including a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. Needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can attend to needs higher up. From the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, the needs are physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization.

To explain in brief the five needs:

1. Physiological needs: are biological requirements for human survival, e.g., air, food, drink, shelter, clothing, warmth, sex, and sleep.
2. Safety needs: people want to experience order, predictability, and control in their lives.
3. Love and belongingness needs: refers to a human emotional need for interpersonal relationships, affiliating, connectedness, and being part of a group.
4. Esteem needs: are the fourth level in Maslow's hierarchy and include self-worth, accomplishment, and respect.
5. Self-actualization needs: are the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy and refer to the realization of a person's potential, self-fulfilment, seeking personal growth, and peak experiences.

Thus, we see that when Crusoe rouses on the island his first impulse is to provide for his immediate physiological needs (food, water, shelter), which are the basic needs for existence. Once he has ascertained these needs, he then moves on to expanding and fortifying his home, discovering the island, and having peer recognition in the form of Friday's character, until he finally feels in control and the master of his surroundings.

Defoe, who lived during the 18th century, was a self-made man in many aspects of his life. He worked as a journalist, and writer, became affluent from his works and lost his fortune, much like his hero. *Robinson Crusoe* was Daniel Defoe's first novel, written when he was approaching sixty years old and published in 1719. *Robinson Crusoe*, an adventure novel, became instantaneously popular with the commoners.

Stories of deserted sailors were plenty at the time, and most definitely Defoe was neither the first nor the only writer to take up this theme, yet his story gained instant success and appeared to the public to be very contemporary.

The character of Robinson Crusoe is the personification of the concept of self-reliance where a man is shipwrecked on a uninhabited island and forced to live by his labour. The detailed journal that the character keeps reads like a step-by-step manual for anyone who wants to follow the same path. It is a manual on how to rely on your ingenuity and wisdom to survive.

The novel's first few chapters deal with Crusoe's annoyance and intolerance with life in the city and his yearning for adventure and travel reflecting Defoe's resentment with society that so much energy has been consumed trying to belong where worth is not acknowledged (Ajroud, 2010). However, the account of Robinson Crusoe proper begins at the point in the novel when the hero is stranded on the island for more than 25 years, and must endure and survive in perilous and challenging situations on his own for the first time in his life.

When Crusoe awakens on the island to discover that he is the sole survivor he immediately starts to plan for his survival. His first thoughts go to trying to secure the essentials, fresh water, food, and shelter to protect him from wild animals. Thus, the first things Crusoe thinks about are the necessities of survival, also called by Maslow the first and second stages of human needs.

The subsequent morning Crusoe sees the ship lifted by the waves and driven closer to shore. Crusoe instantaneously swims out to the ship to recuperate whatever he can for he knows these will help him in his fight for survival. The writer offers him the means to survive such as tools, weapons, powder, shot, clothes, and bedding, by letting him get some basic provisions from the ship that "happened" to be lifted to the shore. Feeling a little safer of being able to acquire his prerequisites he starts to look for a place to build accommodation for himself. He sets up a temporary tent from the sail and some poles to store the provisions he repossessed from the ship and to protect them from the rain or sun that might damage them. Crusoe's choice of location for his shelter must fulfill the requirements for care and security, both from the elements and wild animals that might be found on the island. Thus, he selects a small open plain on the hill that can only be reached by a ladder from one side. Then he builds a tent and cellar next to it, thereby expanding and improving on his dwelling to satisfy the need for more luxury, safety, and possession.

Once established on the island, Crusoe spends most of his time reconnoitering his surroundings and becoming familiar with his environment. As the first two stages of his needs are met with a relative degree of self-assurance, he yearns for the third stage which is the feeling of love and belonging. This may be characterized by the two cats and dogs that he rescued from the ship, for they remain his faithful companions for a long time. The sudden appearance of Friday also serves to satisfy the need for love and belonging for Crusoe as well as the need for esteem, as Friday looks up to him and obeys him. Though Friday is not considered a peer by Crusoe, his adoration of Crusoe satisfies in him the need to feel appreciated and valued.

After he has been on the island for a while, he realizes that he could lose track of time unless he keeps some kind of chart. He also starts a periodical in which he documents the actions he takes to survive. He can do so for he has carried pens, ink, and paper from the ship. His periodical prospers with meticulous details on his activities, all of which are of interest to the modern reader, who values individual experience and the concerns of the

common man away from family status. This periodical serves not only as a diary of his actions but also as the actual text of the novel.

Over the months, having become certain of his basic physiological needs, safety needs as well as love and belonging, Crusoe then twitches to inhabit himself with progress on his dwelling and the fortress. He starts to expand and extend the cave, making more room for moving around and storing things. He builds a crude table and chair with the tools he had saved from the ship and puts up some shelves and hooks in the wall of the cave. He then explains how during his wanderings on the island he discovers and learns new things about his surroundings, which gratifies in him the need for information (stage 4 of Maslow's theory), and how he employs these findings in refining the quality of his stay on the island. He makes use of the animals as well as the vegetation he finds on the island to continually provide himself with new and better comforts. He grows barley, breeds pigeons, and sews a sack. His enterprising nature is very useful to him on the island, as he makes and approaches many of his needs out of the simple supplies available to him, almost like a technologist.

For the most part, Crusoe has depended mainly on himself to survive and provide for himself. Through his hard work, he has managed to formulate a good existence for himself. This is not surprising for Crusoe for he descends from a class historically called upon to be active and involved in energetic action. Thus, it would surely be more practical to antedate the advantage of such action and to have hopes of a lucrative variation in the future. (Ajroud, 2010). This disposition that is set to yield serves Crusoe well as he further explores the island and discovers all kinds of new and useful things that he can use to his advantage. Finally, we see Crusoe becoming the explorer, building a "country house," which he calls his "castle" so he can seldom escape from his cave, establishing a colony, building a fort, and mastering his surroundings, which to Crusoe is identical to self-actualization, the fifth stage and acme of human needs. Thus, in a sense, Crusoe becomes the "basis for the creation of the myth of the gun-wielding, heroically resourceful white man. [for] This was the heroic age of the militant middle class. It is no wonder that we have kept getting variations on the theme since and that this is what has made Robinson Crusoe one of the foundational fictions on which the imperial stance has thrived" (Ajroud, 2010: 116).

For Crusoe, self-reliance, determination, ingenuity, and sometimes mere dumb luck, all combine to empower him to overcome his fear and prepare for survival. He works precisely and diligently to provide for his needs one by one until every need is met.

Conclusion

To sum up we can say that Defoe investigates man's needs and the stages one goes through to fulfill these needs, each in his way. He believed that man starts from the point of self-reliance and for Defoe, self-reliance was a means.

Conclusion:

Crusoe's story on the island shadows almost religiously Maslow's five stages of human needs. As seen his first apprehension was with securing the physiological needs then matters of safety and shelter. Then, he moves towards exploring and monitoring his surroundings, finding the more he understands about his environment the better he feels about himself, till he can safely say that he has mastered his world, which for him was the objective of life. On the other hand, can also see that there is an effort to determine how far man's higher abilities and capacities can be developed if he lives according to his mind in nature, where nature becomes the focus of his survival, as it provides him with his basic human needs of nourishment and shelter, and by doing so allows him to fulfill his other higher need, which is to follow the bent of intellect. Thus, man's connection to nature takes on an almost spiritual form; he is dependent on her for the basic means of keeping himself alive, as only then can one be able to develop his higher potentialities. ■

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Changed Spaces : Culture, Tradition, Modernity and Interrogating Dichotomy of Indigenous Lives in the Works of Ama Ata Aidoo

Shweta Gaurav

Piyushbala

The word “culture” has been defined in a variety of ways by academics. Generally speaking, culture describes a group of people’s way of life. The study starts off with an overview of how culture is defined by proponents such as Stephen Greenblatt, Mathew Arnold, and Raymond Williams. A tradition is a set of values, customs, or behaviours that members of a community or group of people have carried down through the ages that have symbolic or historical significance. The paper explores the dichotomy between culture, tradition and modernity by analyzing Ama Ata Aidoo’s works. Her writings, which cover more than forty years of the post-independence era, have established her as Ghana’s leading female author. We can examine the synopses, themes, and the relevance of these references in the two chosen works, *Anowa* and *Changes: A Love Story*, by examining how they represent various cultural concepts and practices of the Akans. In order to improve the situation of women, Aidoo creatively takes advantage of the disarray in social life as well as the breakdown and degradation of traditional norms in post-colonial Africa, extrapolating from Ghana.

Key Words: Culture, dichotomy, tradition, modernity, the Akans, post-colonial.

Culture, Tradition and Modernity: An Introduction

The loss of cultural values has a negative impact on colonial societies. A company whose cultural values have corroded is comparable to a person with one eye and one leg that have lost their identity completely. Our culture determines who we are, how others see us, and how we interact with our social and natural contexts in order to survive. Given that African societies aspire for growth associated with the ideals of culture and identity, the battle for survival frequently results in environmental debilitation driven by some unrestrained competition for political and economic supremacy.

There are numerous definitions of “culture” offered by academics. A group of people’s way of life is generally described by the term “culture”. Raymond Williams, the

author of “Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society”, claims that “culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language” (Williams 87). The historical evolution of the word in numerous European languages, according to him, is a contributing factor in this. He adds that “the Latin word culture, which has its roots in the Latin word colere, which means cultivate, protect, and honour with worship, is the word’s immediate predecessor”(William 87).

Edward B. Tyler’s definition of culture is cited by Stephen Greenblatt in his essay “Culture” as “Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and the habits acquired by man as a member of society”(Greenblatt225). The majority of what makes up society is included in Greenblatt’s concept of culture.

Mathew Arnold, describes Culture in his book “Culture and Anarchy” as “a pursuit of our total perfection using getting to know, on all matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits which we now follow staunchly but mechanically” (Arnold 6). He is of the opinion that no civilization can reach complete perfection if its cultural values are not upheld.

Culture is essential, as seen by the different definitions of it. As a result, cultural values must be upheld in order for society to survive. As a result, while culture refers to a particular people’s way of life, literature also explores this way of life. So both consider the question of human’s life.

Tradition refers to relevant, enduring cultural practices, beliefs, and rituals that are passed down from one generation to the next, imbued with the concrete or abstract qualities or instructions that are considered supernatural by Gods, Goddesses, heroes, legends, humans, animals, and plants. They include actions and symbolic representations in celebrations, festivals, and rituals that are analogous to acts of worship. The Latin word tradere, or traderer, literally means to convey, give, and keep secure. This is where the word tradition originates.

A tradition is a set of values, customs, or behaviors that members of a community or group of people have carried down through the ages that have symbolic or historical significance. Typical illustrations include special occasions or ridiculous yet symbolic clothing, such as military officer spurs or lawyer wigs. However, the concept has also been used to social norms, such as those found in anthropology and biology, which have redefined the term Tradition to serve as a tool for more specific definitions that support academic debate. Tradition is frequently used in political and philosophical discourse to refer to the idea of clinging to a bygone era. For instance, it is the foundation of many world faiths, including traditional Catholicism, and the political idea of traditionalism.

Generally, modernity refers to apost-medieval, literal period characterized by the transition from industrialization, secularization capitalism and nationalism to capitalism, husbandry, and the nation- state with its associated institutions and surveillance ways.

Modernity is said to have been first used by Charles Pierre Baudelaire. Modernist to refer to the transient, momentary sensation of living in a city and the obligation of art to depict that reality. From a conceptual standpoint, modernity is related to modernism and the modern era, however it is its own notion.

· **Culture, Tradition - Modernity Dichotomy In Ama Ata Aidoo's Works**

Since her writings cover more than 40 years of the post-independence era, Ama Ata Aidoo has become Ghana's most prominent female writer. She is a prominent novelist, playwright, poet, academic, and political activist. Her multigenre writing explores and clarifies difficult topics including feminism, cultural transformation, and the psychological ramifications of neocolonialism on Africans. The destruction of tradition and cultural continuity, which characterizes social cohesion through predictable social outcomes, is evidence of the imperialist attack's irreversible damage to Africa's creative integrity. African women's status and role put them at the center of cultural conflict since their fight for equality in a world where men rule has given them more options that could hinder their ability to succeed in their roles as wives, mothers, and professionals. The demands of contemporary nationalism require women to make a significant contribution to society as capable spouses for males.

As a voice for African women, Aidoo has done a commendable job of balancing culture, tradition, and modernity as well as recording and examining how African women have responded to oppression and gender dynamics. Through the portrayal of powerful African women who reject victimization and forge their own paths in the midst of conflict, her second book, *Changes*, addresses this conundrum. Mary Modupe Kowalowe observes in *Womanism and African Consciousness*: "The emergence of women writers as their own voices transformed the depiction of femininity in African literature. Women as objects and marginal characters gave way to women as subject and positive protagonists. This breakthrough came with women writers such as Ama Ata Aidoo and Flora Nwapa as pioneers" (Kowalowe80).

Ama Ata Aidoo has made a name for herself as Ghana's most prolific female writer because her works span more than 40 years of the post-independence period. It investigates and enlightens complex issues like feminism, cultural change, and the psychological effects of colonialism on Africans. Finding a good mix between tradition and modernity, Aidoo has taken on the artistic responsibility of speaking for African women by documenting and analyzing their responses to gender dynamics and oppression.

This research paper will look at the sometimes confusing and sometimes conflicting landscape that results from the blending of modernism and African heritage. Through her works "Anowa" and "Changes: A Love Story", Aidoo suggests a shifting cultural landscape that could not lead to predictable, calm, or socially cohesive outcomes, but ironically reveals unsettling realities and new challenges for African women.

· Synopsis of the text, *Anowa and Changes*

The plot of the drama “Anowa” is adapted from an ancient Ghanaian folktale or legend about a beautiful but independent young woman who marries the man of her choosing, defying her parents’ desires and turning down other suitors. The husband reveals himself to be the devil in disguise, which comes as a complete surprise. About her source Aidoo herself says “ I come from a people who told stories... and my mother ‘talks’ stories and sings songs. *Anowa* for instance, grew directly out of a story she told me although as the play has come out, she cannot even recognize the story she told” (*Anowa*, 64). It is evident from her comment how the oral and written literary traditions combine, with oral stories becoming the basis for written texts. It’s interesting to see how Aidoo adapts the universal story into a particular historical setting, giving the play newfound meaning now. She also raises important issues regarding accountability related to the slave trade, pointing out how African people wanted to forget about their involvement in the whole thing and neglected the problem.

The play opens with a prologue in which Anowa and Kofi Ako are introduced by *The Mouth That Eats Salt and Pepper*, an elderly couple, and a discussion of Anowa’s rejections of various strong men. The Old Woman believes that Anowa is pompous and haughty because of her intelligence and attractiveness. However, the Old Man speaks objectively about the situation of Abura and how Odomankoma, the community’s founder, constructed this planet in moderation. The manner humans use all these reserves is up to them; the gods and goddesses, in their kindness, allowed humanity access to every resource, both living and inanimate. This generation inherited the slave trade’s heritage from their forebears, and it is directly mentioned. The large slave forts that are positioned along the shore make it impossible for future generations to escape, so even if the members of this clan wish to move past their violent pasts, it will be pointless.

During the first phase, we got to meet Kofi Ako and Anowa, the frank, easygoing, and deeply in love pair. After Anowa’s parents, Maami Badua and Papa Osam, were introduced, they expressed concern for the future of their daughter. Being a mother makes Badua more nervous because her daughter is still single six years after reaching adolescence. The husband-wife talk reveals that Badua and her maternal family have greater responsibilities for Anowa’s future than Osama does. Abura society is a matrilineal society. Osam states that once his daughter is born, his responsibility would come to an end. In their talk, Osam reminds his wife that Badua consistently declines his requests to apprentice Anowa to a priestess. Badua believes that despite their grandeur and dignity, the priestesses are not your typical, flesh-and-blood human beings. As a result of their unique lifestyle, the priestesses have become too much like the gods they are supposed to be representing.

Anowa and Kofi are depicted in phase two as leading independent lives filled with hard labor, which has made them affluent. However, sooner or later, they run into difficult circumstances that highlight their differences. Kofi wants to purchase slaves so that they can assist him in his work, but Anowa rejects Kofi’s idea, claiming that doing so has no

moral justification and will only dehumanize the people. Kofi then began buying slaves and forming ties with British traders. He finally quit working and moved into an opulent “big house.” He expects that Anowa will follow him and will become the perfect bejeweled idle ideal wife. Anowa declines to adopt her husband’s exploitative lifestyle and rejects Kofi’s attempts to domesticate her. She compares herself to Kofi’s slave and preents herself as a “wayfarer, with no belongings here or there”(Anowa, 64), someone who is perpetually de-territorialized. In defense of his status as an enslaver, Kofi claims that none of them are mistreated and that they all have equal possibilities. He also charges Anowa of “dreaming up miseries that do not touch her” (Anowa,64).

Ultimately, because of his physical and spiritual avarice, Kofi compromises family bonds and ultimately loses his virility and impotence. Kofi shoots himself to death after being confronted by Anowa, who is childless, about his emasculation and impotence. The Old Woman tells the audience that Anowa drowns herself after growing upset in the play’s second conclusion, but in the first, Anowa becomes insane. The Old Man delivers the final judgement, emphasizing once more how Anowa was unable to avoid the injustice and corruption that were part of the slave trade and how that legacy and its current ramifications ruined her entire civilization.

Ama Ata Aidoo wrote the 1991 novel “Changes”, which tells the story of an African woman focused on her career who marries into a polygamist family after divorcing her first husband. After she remarries Ali Kondey, Esi divorces Oko to free up more time for her work. She now needs to strike a balance between her roles as a wife, a career woman, and a friend to Opokuya, who is going through different kinds of marital difficulties.

While verifying travel plans for a work vacation, Esi first meets Ali at Linga Hideaways. Following a disagreement between Esi and Oko, there is a marital rape, which prompts Esi to leave her husband. Kubi and Opokuya quarrel over who gets to use their car. Ali’s early years are altered by Mma. Danjuma’s choice to provide him with a sufficient education. When Opokuya runs into Esi at Hotel Twentieth Century, she tells him that she left Oko because she felt like his attention was too controlling. While they converse, they run into Ali, who, although being married to Fusena, whom he met at teacher training, is enthralled with Esi.

When Esi refuses to go back to Oko and starts seeing Ali, Ali starts to court her. Ali pays Esi a visit after a protracted absence and asks her to wear his ring. Once Esi visits Opokuya to tell her of her engagement, her mother is not happy that Esi is taking a second wife, so devaluing herself. Fusena grows infuriated when Ali chooses to get a second, educated wife.

Since he brings no family members to sponsor him, Ali’s first trip to Esi’s village is a failure. When Fusena grudgingly agrees to Ali’s second marriage, his people promise to support him. Ali then goes back to Esi’s village with his people. Esi is upset when Ali does not spend that evening at her house after they get married. Ali struggles with choosing

between his two wives. After an altercation between Ali and Oko on New Year's Eve at Esi's house, Esi and Ogyaanowa escape to Opokuya's house, where they spend the holidays. They spend a great holiday together when Ali takes Esi to see his people in Bamako halfway through the new year.

Ali is really lonely for the holidays that year and doesn't spend much time with Esi. On New Year's Day, he pays Esi a visit and gives her a new car as a gift. After dropping Ali off at Hotel Twentieth Century, Esi comes to terms with the fact her marriage is over. She offers to sell her old car to her pal after visiting Opokuya. Ali's visits resume their regular schedule after a brief uptick, and one day Esi informs Ali that this is not a marriage and she is not having it.

After a few months, Esi contacts Opokuya to discuss her breakup with Ali. Esi sobs by herself in the dark when Opokuya visits her to console her and fetch her car. Kubi shows up at Esi's residence in search of Opokuya and gives her an embrace. Esi repels him, remembering her friendship with Opokuya. Esi and Ali remain excellent friends and occasionally engage in sexual activity after Esi decides not to dissolve their marriage. Even though Esi is loved by Ali in his style, she feels that it is insufficient and wonders what sort of love she will accept.

Reflection of Culture, Tradition - Modernity Dichotomy In Indigenous Lives In Ama Ata Aidoo's *Changes and Anowa*

In African society, marriage is a significant institution. The community thus despises persons who are of marrying age yet remain unmarried. Women believe they can live past the age of marriage, which is why in "Anowa", Anowa's mother, Badua, is concerned that her daughter won't accept the many suitors who come her way. The social validity of contemporary African women who are bucking societal conventions in a changing environment is demonstrated by their refusal to accept marriage proposals.

The legitimacy of traditional marriage parameters is called into question in "Changes: A Love Story" through Esi's growing dissatisfaction and repulsion over sexual domination by her husband. The novel opens with a gendered encounter that traces Esi's evolving feminist consciousness through articulating forced sex with her husband as "marital rape" and the subsequent resolve to divorce him. Esi's decision to divorce her husband is later told to Opokuya, another professional career woman who mirrors her dissatisfaction with role expectations and balancing family and career responsibilities. Therefore, the contemporary African woman paradoxically makes her predicament worse through self-awareness by drawing more flak from her husband and society.

The second cultural activity that merits discussion is childbirth and its importance to society. It is a special problem for African women authors. Women in African culture are primarily expected to bear children. It is done to ensure continuity. According to Gyekye : "In the African view, the whole or ultimate purpose of marriage is procreation- to produce

children who will continue with the heritage and name of the family, so that the family does not diminish or disappear” (Gyekye 78). That’s why being infertile is still seen as a social shame, and infertile women are sometimes stigmatized as outcasts. The continuation of human life and existence is thought to be threatened by barrenness and sterility. Because having children is so essential in traditional culture, it is considered a tremendous tragedy when a woman is unable to have them, and she will often endure shame as well as abuse and mockery.

The reference to it, “Anowa” under study, illustrates how society supports reproduction but despises barrenness. As was already mentioned, childbearing is one of the main reasons for marriage. Consequently, if someone gets married and has a happy marriage for many years, others start to wonder. In numerous of her writings, Ama Ata Aidoo recounts the suffering and shame that childless women experience. Most of them feel worthless as women since they couldn’t have kids that society expected them to.

In *African Religion and Philosophy*, John S. Mbiti stresses the significance of having children during marriage: “In some African societies, marriage is not fully recognized or consummated until the wife has given birth. Unhappy is the woman who fails to get children for whatever other qualities she might possess; her failure to bear children is worse than committing genocide: she has become the dead end of human life, not only for the genealogical line but also for herself. When she dies, there will be nobody of her immediate blood to remember her, to keep her in a state of personal immortality. She will simply be forgotten”(Mbiti 290). In the play “Anowa”, the chief character, Because she is childless, Anowa experiences severe anguish. She gets upset and looks for the source of the problem. She is aware of how unpleasant it is to be called “barren.”

On the other hand, In “Changes: A Love Story”, Esi is an individualistic self-absorption in collision with the traditional role of wife and mother. Oko makes disparaging comments about Esi’s use of birth control. Esi made it clear that she didn’t want any more kids. She was nevertheless taking those horrible contraceptive pills, loops, or whatever.

Tuzyline Jita Allan points out that: “new attitudes about marriage also appear against an immovable background of cultural beliefs and practices. For example, Esi’s sense of independence stands in opposition to the view of a woman as an object of exchange embodied in the ‘breathing parcel’ (Allan71).

Aidoo, in positioning such gendered encounters, exposes many layers of incongruent and disquieting changes neatly woven into her characters’ dilemmas. The sustainability and social legitimacy of contemporary African women who are defying societal conventions in a changing environment is a burning subject that *Changes* explores. Esi exhibits agency in determining her fate, according to McWilliams, “she forges ahead trying to create for herself a space in which her sexual desires, her need for companionship, her counter need for freedom, and her career ambitions can all coexist” (McWilliams 354).

Libation is the last cultural practice to be discussed. Regarding culture, people believe that living people and their ancestors have a close bond. So, in these texts under discussion, the pouring of libation is used to demonstrate this. A libation is a prayer offered to the dead. There is proof that the ancestors' spirits were invoked in both passages. According to Mbiti, "The Departed, whether parents, siblings, children, or other family members, form part of the family, and for that reason, they must be kept in touch with their remaining relatives. Liquor and food offerings to the deceased are signs of camaraderie, hospitality, and respect; they also serve as reminders of family ties and interaction" (Mbiti 9)

In "Anowa", the older guy imitates the process of pouring a drink by raising his hand and acting out the pouring motions while bending the fingers of his right hand as if he were carrying a cup. He expresses gratitude to the gods for their protection and makes a request that everything stay well and even get better.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear from the examination of the works that Aidoo is a writer who has a keen understanding of cultural customs and beliefs, which are evident in her works. We must pay attention to how she makes mention of various cultural customs, including marriage, the value of having children and drinking. The importance given to some of them—such as marriage and regard for older people—illustrates that they must still be upheld to achieve a better society.

However, one must acknowledge that culture is dynamic and that, to satisfy the demands of the modern world, some traditional practices must be modified. Someone needs to change. Cultural difficulties include the choice of wives by parents for their children, the use of a spouse's family heritage as a barometer for character, the interference of extended family members in marriage, and the sacrifice of human life to meet contemporary needs.

These works cannot be categorized as literature solely based on the themes and problems they present, but rather—and this is crucial—based on their literary language. Aidoo employs terminology in "Anowa" and "Changes: A Love Story" to make the reader think about it long after finishing it. She makes use of similes, proverbs, and words that are borrowed from Akan. These are all supposed to give the plays a classic feel. ■

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Exploring Feminist Themes and Perspectives from Jane Austen to Bronte Sisters

Sudipta Pandey

Pratima

The nineteenth century is the most significant period in the history of English literature because of many female authors and works about women came out. Their sharp vision, reasonable and critical thinking, and distinct viewpoints challenged the British culture. Their compliments included women's intelligence and beauty. After reading *Pride and Prejudice*, the Bronte sisters acquired strong identities, feminine awareness, and a powerful female voice. This dissertation compares *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, and Edgar Allan Poe, the three most famous 19th-century British female writers. This study examines marital perspective, female awareness, and the two creation definitions to understand the topic's growth. This study investigates female awareness, marriage, and creation purpose from both perspectives. This shows 19th-century British feminist growth. The Feminists say literary critics oppress women. Some say gender and patriarchal ideologies taint literature and critical thinking. The Writings project males as dominant and women as weak and submissive. Gender and patriarchy affect literary critics and artists. Feminists attacked patriarchy, gender, and prejudiced literary criticism to illustrate their points. The Eastern culture develops, conforms the traditions differently than the western culture.

Key Words: Feminist Themes, Exploration, Perspectives, English Literature, Thought.

INTRODUCTION

Literature has historically been influenced by feminist concepts and perspectives, which reflect societal norms and spur change. Modern English literature has been heavily influenced by feminist ideas, which focus on women's lives, power structures, and gender relations. Feminism has been utilized to examine, challenge, and reimagine the world in anything from well-known literature to avant-garde poetry.

A diverse array of intricate storylines about women may be found in contemporary English literature. These narratives explore gender relations with other identities such as sexual orientation, class, and race while highlighting the diverse experiences of women. The intricacies of gender are examined by writers, who also provide examples of people

who assert their agency in patriarchal settings and reject stereotypes. Minority voices are also amplified in contemporary English writing.

Diverse female writers have added perspectives to feminist debate that are often ignored by mainstream narratives. Their stories challenge established narratives and provide alternate perspectives on gender equality, encouraging literary inclusivity and representation. In this feminist study of contemporary English literature, we will look at a range of works to see how authors deal with gender, power, and identity..

A feminist Perspective

Humans' perception has been skewed for millennia by the association with masculine experiences. Only women are seen as dangerous to males. The problem still exists. With regard to attire, attitudes, culture, and family, Western and Indian civilizations have distinct ideas about what femininity is. Early feminists were overwhelmed by the fight for independence. Women gained social and constitutional freedom during the liberation struggle. Unrest in politics changed society. Liberation war women were more educated, more self-sufficient financially, and supported by their families. They were in charge, yet they did not combat sexism and patriarchy. Women avoided one another and worked in areas where males predominated in the early 20th century. Males dominated women in traditional Indian households.

. According to Anna Jameson, "The old law of raising women to be 'happy wives and mothers' is dangerous and wicked in these days.' As for women, there was only one destiny, hope, blessing, object, and passion in existence; some say it, but we know that hundreds of thousands of women are not happy mothers, are never mothers." For Indians, men control culture and authority. Indian males instinctively worship the masculine and hate women. Cultural and religious customs denigrate women. Eliminating marginalization is our goal. Women's discourse was altered by the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Books by feminists might benefit women.

Feminism recognizes the position of women. Gordon continues, "feminism is an analysis of women's subordination for the purpose of figuring out to change it deserves a mention". Presenting women encourages femininity. Women's words and lives should be placed within a feminist framework. Not accepting the "ism" of history. Children's customs that are controlled by males must be overturned by women. Ending male damage to women is the main goal of most social and socio-political feminism. "Father, husband, and sons care for her young and old," says the early Hindu jurist Manu. Women are not meant to have freedom." Indian females place a high importance on lifestyle. Feminists need to be aware of the disparate views Indian society has of women.

Feminism In English Literature

The idea that women should have equal rights in politics, society, the economy, and culture has had a significant influence on English literature for centuries. It has shaped tales

about women's lives, aspirations, and challenges. We might take a literary trip to thoroughly investigate this broad subject by looking at feminist themes from several historical periods and viewpoints.

➤ **Early Seeds of Dissent:**

- **16th-17th Century:** Even before the term “feminism” existed, female voices like Jane Anger and Mary Astell challenged societal views on women's education and roles.
- **18th Century:** Mary Wollstonecraft's groundbreaking “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” (1792) argued for equal access to education and participation in public life, sparking a wave of feminist thought.

➤ **19th Century & The Rise of the Novel:**

- **Gothic heroines:** Characters like Jane Eyre and Bertha Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's novels defied conventions and sought autonomy, reflecting anxieties about female agency in a restrictive society.
- **Realism and Social Critique:** Writers like George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell exposed the limitations placed on women's choices and opportunities, pushing for social reforms.

➤ **20th Century & Diverse Voices:**

- **Modernism and Experimentation:** Virginia Woolf's “A Room of One's Own” (1929) demanded intellectual freedom and space for women, while Sylvia Plath explored female identity and societal pressures in “The Bell Jar” (1963).
- **Second-wave Feminism & Beyond:** From Margaret Atwood's dystopian “The Handmaid's Tale” (1985) to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's portrayal of cultural norms in “Half of a Yellow Sun” (2006), feminist literature diversified to explore race, class, and global perspectives.

➤ **Contemporary Landscape:**

Feminist literature is still developing today, addressing topics such as gender fluidity, body image, and sexual assault. Writers that push boundaries and defy conventional narrative formats include Roxane Gay and Carmen Maria Machado.

Beyond the written word, feminism has a significant influence on English literature. It has stimulated social movements, developed critical thinking, and kept igniting conversations about gender equality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Zhang (2015) explores the environment of the nineteenth century, emphasizing the changes and evolution of feminist ideas throughout this time. Zhang offers insights into the

changing views on gender, power relations, and female autonomy via an examination of literary works from the time. Numerous academic studies that examine the transformation and trajectory of feminist discourse in English literature show how it has changed significantly over time.

Zhuang (2010)Expanding upon this historical basis, He provides an extensive analysis of the development of feminism from Jane Austen to Charlotte Brontë. Zhuang sheds light on the continuity and development of feminist ideas in English literature by following the emergence of feminist themes throughout several literary eras. This examination highlights the many ways that writers have embraced feminist concepts across the canon of literature.

Tu (2014)explores the growth and evolution of women's views inside English literature, which adds even more to the conversation. Tu clarifies the complex relationship between feminist rhetoric and larger political and cultural changes by synthesizing diverse literary works and critical viewpoints. This sophisticated comprehension offers important insights into the nuances of feminist criticism and gender portrayal in literature.

Huang and Zeng (2009)Examine how feminist theory has been transformed in contemporary English literature. Their research provides a modern prism through which feminist themes and viewpoints in literature can be examined. Huang and Zeng clarify how literature reflects and reacts to shifting social norms and ideologies by placing feminist discourse within the framework of modernity.

Bartky (2017)explores the subtleties of contemporary patriarchal authority via the philosophies of Michel Foucault. In her work, she investigates the ways in which patriarchal dominance shapes femininity and the means by which power is wielded over women. The convergence of feminism, power relations, and sociocultural frameworks has been a central theme in a number of academic conversations. Bartky's analysis clarifies how gendered identities are formed and maintained by society norms, which eventually sustains inequitable institutions.

Baumgardner and Richards (2000)provide insight into the conversation around feminism and its applicability to modern culture in their book "Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future." The writers provide insights into the complex nature of feminism and its future consequences by combining personal stories, cultural analysis, and political criticism. Young women are encouraged by their work to embrace feminism and take part in creating a more just and equal society.

Bergmann (2002)offers a thorough analysis of the financial aspects of gender disparity in her book "*The Economic Emergence of Women.*" The historical background and structural elements that have influenced women's economic engagement are clarified by Bergmann via empirical research and theoretical ideas. Bergmann's study emphasizes how difficult it is for women to have equal chances in the workforce, which emphasizes how crucial it is to remove structural obstacles in order to attain gender parity in economic areas.

FUNDAMENTAL THEMES OF FEMINISM

Female Aesthetics

Feminist critics from throughout the world have begun to address female aesthetics as a central topic in their work. A global woman's nature and culture serve as the foundation. A unique societal phenomenon in the US, Germany, Italy, and Russia prompted the development of this overarching idea. A separate movement known as the "Women's Liberation Movement" was founded by feminists who opposed patriarchy and the idea of canon construction in literary production and critique.

Female aesthetics is based on the assumption that women have a unique literary consciousness that sets them apart from men. The growth of "Black Literature" (Negro Literature) in the United States throughout the 1960s gave women the tools they needed to craft their own artistic identities, which in turn gave the movement a boost. A different kind of consciousness exists in Black people, as stated in Black literature, than in White people. Accordingly, "female aesthetics" refers to "the female sense of beauty" or "the female literary consciousness" as portrayed in literature.

Gynocriticism

There is a universal notion at the heart of female aesthetics theory: the cultural and natural aspects of women everywhere. Gynocriticism, on the other hand, holds that women are inherently diverse from one another across dimensions such as nature, ethnicity, culture, and country, making it impossible to generalize about them. In addition to being more forward-thinking, it just deals with practical issues.

The term "gynocriticism" refers to an unusual feminist reading-criticism of works written by women. The primary goal of "gynocriticism" was to analyze works produced by women and to identify the features that make these works uniquely female-authored.

Canon Formation

Literally, canon formation is reworking what is considered to be the canon of literature. A shift away from women's marginalization was necessary. A unique canon of women's literature was developed at a time when "female aesthetics" and gynocriticism were flourishing. Notable female authors from the late 18th and early 19th centuries include Emily Bront, George Eliot, and Jane Austen.

Feminist critics' efforts culminated in the 1970s, giving rise to the concept of female tradition in literature. A number of female authors and their works were examined thoroughly, highlighting the uniqueness of these writers and their works.

Female Subject or Female Identity

The female author is undeniably the topic and the subject has personality in the feminist critique notion. The 'unity of the self' is embraced by this kind of concept, which

involves the author or character as a person. The term “unified self” describes this concept. A “substantive or unified self” is present in the subject.

Gender Theory

Gender theory emerged as a second major movement in the latter half of the 1980s. Actually, there are a few male reviewers who are ignoring the feminist perspective. K. K. Ruthvin’s “The Feminist Literary Studies” is an important piece of writing in this regard. An argument of sorts breaks out between male and female critics of “feminist criticism” as a result of male critics’ arrival on the feminist horizon. The inclusion of men critics in feminist critique has led to a decline. Finding masculinity in literature is a topic that a few female critics are attempting to explore. A fresh change has occurred.

Eve Sedgwick’s “Between Men” stands apart from the 1980s in this regard. The focus is on literary representations of male homosociality. Here we see literary manifestations of the macho patriarchal ideal. This is an innovative method of research since it is a debate about gender. Here, “gender” is the most important component under investigation, but in the late 80s, a post-colonial group backed a component of the coloniality process where “race” is the differentiating feature. Now both sexes’ expressions of femininity and masculinity are examined in literature.

Feminist critique opened people’s eyes to the fact that women’s creative work has a long and distinguished history that deserves recognition. The fact that feminist critique has evolved into a critical practice that may include elements from other critical practices is an additional contribution. Although it is anti-patriarchal in theory and practice, its color is distinct. It exposes the female protagonist in literature.

FROM JANE AUSTEN TO THE BRONTË SISTERS THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMINISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE :

Purpose of Creation

English women, particularly those from the middle class, saw writing as a pastime in the eighteenth century, when the practice first emerged. However, Jane Austen saw it as a platform from which she could address a range of societal concerns. Through portrayals of rural life, marriage, and families, she mirrored the issues facing Victorian-era England. Austen’s assertions were consistent with the prevailing social norms of the period; she failed to provide a unique way of expressing feminine emotions and devoted too much attention to the conventional methods of studying literature. Having a strong sense of self-worth allowed her to be both a barrier and a sight for male culture, and she only wanted to convey to her readers that women were special and necessary. This is how *Pride and Prejudice*’s heroine, Elizabeth, is played. In contrast, the Brontë sisters could have written more as a means of expressing their discontent with the patriarchal society’s treatment of women and their rejection of conventional values and norms promoted by males. Both *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* demonstrate that a woman’s modesty isn’t

the source of her strength and elegance; rather, it is the source of the strain and difficulty placed on her personality. The shifting focus from Jane Austen to the Brontë sisters demonstrates a progressive change in the way women are portrayed in literature, moving away from submissive and man-pleasing roles and toward male antagonists and even rescuers. The writings of the Brontë sisters, who were victims of patriarchal tyranny, are more grounded in reality compared to Jane Austen's impractically utopian characters and settings.

Views on Marriage

Jane Austen believed that women had the same level of intelligence and reason as men and should be free to choose their own marriage partners. A genuine marriage, in her view, must be based on equality, mutual affection, learning from one another, and understanding, but she believed that wealth and social status were prerequisites for marriage. Marrying for monetary gain is not a good idea, she said. Quite innovative for its day. In order for women to enjoy marriage and freedom, the Brontë sisters thought that being conscious of feminist issues was crucial.

The Brontë sisters, in contrast to Austen, reestablish their emphasis on love rather than marriage. According to the Brontë sisters, love, not marriage, is where a woman might find true happiness. When it comes to achieving life's goals, the Brontë sisters place a higher value on independence and love than does Austen on marital harmony.

Female Consciousness

In developing her human persona, Jane Austen primarily displays her feeling of uniqueness. She writes about strong, independent women who are treated as equals to males in her stories. Aside from the typical feminine traits—honesty, compassion, attractiveness, and tenderness—that are expected in a patriarchal culture, the women portrayed in Austen's books also exhibit reason and ingenuity. Of all the characters that Jane Austen created, Elizabeth from *Pride and Prejudice* is the most memorable and intimate. She may not be the most attractive, trustworthy, or behaved person in the world, but her charm comes from her sharp mind, hilarious sense of humor, and quick wit. In every way imaginable—their elegance, haughtiness, wit, logic, sensitivity, etc.—the female characters in Jane Austen's novels exemplify the distinctively feminine beauty that is central to feminism.

Most significantly, many great works of English literature have the capacity to delve further into the inner lives of women in society, which reflects the image of modern feminism and embodies the feminist ideals of dignity, respect, and self-love. Through her work as a writer, she brings women's awareness to a higher level by elevating their image to that of the novel's protagonist, who is a woman. Having said that, she downplays the importance of women attaining parity with males in society. Her perfect protagonist is logical and smart, but she uses her personality and intellect as pawns to get where she

wants to go. She has no interest in achieving parity with males in society. Jane Eyre tells Rochester, “We are all fair in character,” contrasting the Brontë sisters’ and Austen’s views on femininity, which deny the difference between men’s and women’s positions in society.

An important step in elevating women’s awareness in English literature from a focus on “women’s traits” to an appreciation of women as “persons” is the rise of a feeling of equality. An exterior sense of female social awareness, for instance, was given less weight than women’s interior emotional values, and the emphasis was moved from women’s cultural upbringing and self-esteem to their greater human freedom.

The message conveyed by the Brontë sisters’ portrayal of femininity is as follows: I may not be your kind of woman, but that does not make me less valuable. I was born with a small stature and an unpleasant appearance, but I am strong-willed, self-respecting, and secure in my own skin. The Brontë sisters greatly contributed to the advancement of women’s awareness in England after Austen, from highlighting traditional gender roles to highlighting women’s autonomy. Another major departure from the mild treatment of women’s responsibilities in earlier works is *Wuthering Heights*’s depiction of Catherine the Great’s and Small’s insanity. Rather, she defies societal expectations and fiercely defends her feminist philosophy, representing a thorough contemplation of the many interconnectedness’s in the actual world, among ideas and aspirations, and among individuals. Another significant step forward in the study and application of feminism in English literature has been the representation of these feminist roles, as well as the promotion and pursuit of gender equality. This has led to a renewed focus on women and their inherent value, as well as on their moral development, honesty, and unique personalities.

In India, women’s standing is all over the place. Despite her professional success, she quietly suffers from domestic violence. The modern woman has come a long way, but she has accomplished much. A number of obstacles stand in their way. Brave women have left their homes to battle for survival. Their evidence was clear. India still hasn’t paid them back. Men in India believed that no woman should have an education since the patriarchal system had severely damaged Indian intellect. People thought men were all-powerful and superior. Without a man’s income, no family could survive. It seemed as if humans could manage without females. All of these characteristics point to the underutilization of ancient Indian women’s abilities. Older generations of people saw women as “abla,” frail, reliant on males, and unproductive outside the home. Fearless women turn the tables on men today. As Indian society and culture progress, women have a choice: prove themselves or run away from males. Now women may join males on walks. Showing the world its splendour will allow them to do more than just sit back and observe. The outstanding men of today see the potential of women now that they are spouses and employees. Both men and women perform at the same level as in contributing to literature. ■

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The Evolution of Daenerys Targaryen: A Comparative Study of Character Development in Literature and Screen

Deepali Ramesh Bankar

We have seen chapters in history depicting women as oppressed and facing their challenges as gender roles and other stereotypes. This paper explores a study of Daenerys Targaryen a female character in George R.R. Martin's novel *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Her struggle for Survival from the age of five, getting married to an unsuitable Dothrakhi, suffering rapes. She is profoundly shaped by magic and dragons, elements that symbolize her Targaryen heritage. This study illuminates the transformative journey of a once-dispossessed princess who evolves into a formidable leader. It explores her character development from the original source material to her vivid portrayal in the *Game of Thrones* adaptation, highlighting the intricacies of bringing such a dynamic character to life on screen. This paper also studies a detailed table that examines the nuances and differences between the novel *A Song of Ice and Fire* and its OTT adaptation, focusing on the first four books. This comparison will delve into the key literary aspects, such as character development, plot progression and thematic elements, highlighting how these were translated or altered in the screen adaptation. I have meticulously gathered data from various reputable sources to ensure a thorough and insightful analysis that captures the essence of both the written and visual narratives.

Key Words: Daenerys Targaryen, Magic and Dragons, Challenges and triumphs Transformative journey, Gender roles, Patriarchal society, Feminism, Literary Adaptation.

Introduction:

"*A Song of Ice and Fire*" is a popular fantasy novels written by George R.R. Martin, first published in 1996 as book 1 *Game of Thrones* following 2. *A Clash of Kings*, 3. *A Storm of Swords*, 4. *A Feast of Crow*, 5. *A Dance of Dragons* and upcoming Books. This series was later adapted into the Television show *Game of Thrones*, created by David Benioff and D.B. Weiss. The show aired on HBO from April 17, 2011, to May 19, 2019, spanning eight seasons and a total of 73 episodes.

Set in the fictional continents of Westeros and Essos, *Game of Thrones* weaves a complex and captivating story with a large ensemble cast of characters. The key plots revolve around the fierce battle for the Iron Throne among the noble families of Westeros, the determined efforts of the realm's last exiled heir to reclaim their rightful place on the Throne, and the Night's Watch's relentless defense of the kingdom from looming threats beyond the northern Wall. Each storyline interlaces with the others creating a rich and intricate tapestry of power, loyalty and survival.

Daenerys Targaryen is the youngest child of King Aerys II Targaryen infamously known as "The Mad King" and his wife, Queen Rhaella. As one of the few surviving members of the Targaryen family, who wiped out, Daenerys plays a central role in *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Her journey is vividly depicted through 31 chapters from her perspective, making her one of the main characters in the series. Only Tyrion, Lannister, Jon Snow and Arya Stark have more chapters than Daenerys, highlighting her importance in the unfolding saga.

Daenerys Targaryen's life in George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* is profoundly shaped by magic and dragons, elements that not only symbolize her Targaryen heritage but also fundamentally influence her journey from a dispossessed princess to a formidable leader. Here is how these elements evolve from Book 1 to Book 4:

Book 1: Game of Thrones

Dragon Eggs: Daenerys receives three petrified dragon eggs as a wedding gift from Magister Illyrio Mopatis. These eggs are considered priceless and largely decorative, symbolic of the lost glory of the Targaryen dynasty, which was known for its dragons.

Blood Magic: After her Dothraki husband Khal Drogo is mortally wounded, Daenerys turns to the Mhazdoreen women skilled in both healing and blood magic, in a desperate attempt to save him. The ritual she performs requires a sacrifice, and though it saves Drogo's life, it leaves him in a vegetative state and causes Daenerys to lose her unborn son, Rhaego, who was prophesied to be the "Stallion who mounts the World".

Birth of Dragons: In the grief and determination, Daenerys places her dragon eggs on Drogo's funeral pyre and steps into the fire herself after it is lit. Miraculously, she emerges unscathed with three hatched dragons- Drogon, Rhaegal and Viserion- reintroducing magic and dragons to the world, which had been absent for centuries.

Book 2: A Clash of Kings

Growing Dragons: As Daenerys' dragons grow but are still small, symbolizing her burgeoning but still developing power. As she travels through the desert and then to the city of Qarth, the dragons become a sign of her unique status and attract both awe and covetousness from those around her.

House of Undying: In Qarth, Daenerys seeks knowledge and aid from the enigmatic warlocks

of the House and the Undying. Here, she experiences vivid prophetic visions about her past and the potential futures, facilitated by the warlock's magic. The experience culminates in the warlocks attempting to trap her, but her dragon Drogon burns down her House, saving her and demonstrating the power of Dragons against magic used with malintent.

Book 3: A Storm of Swords

Dragons as weapons: As Daenerys liberates the slave cities of Astapor and Yunkai, her dragons begin to show their potential as weapons. She uses Drogon strategically to intimidate and overpower the slave master of Astapor, securing her an army of Unsullied warriors.

Symbol of Liberation:

The Dragons symbolize not just Daenerys's claim to power but also her role as liberator. They awe and inspire the freed slaves and become central to her identity as "Mhysa" or "Mother" to her followers.

Book 4: A Dance with Dragons

Dragons and Governance: As Daenerys rules Meereen, her dragons grow larger and more uncontrollable, paralleling the complexities and challenges she faces as a ruler. The Dragons inadvertently cause destruction and death, reflecting the unintended consequences of her rule.

Dragons Chains: The killing of a child by one of her dragons leads Daenerys to chain up Rhaegal and Viserion, symbolizing her struggle to maintain control over the forces—political and magical—that she unleashed. Drogon, however, remains free and untamed, mirroring her own struggles with power and the burdens of leadership.

Key Dialogues and scenes:

- **"Tonight you must look like a princess"**

Viserys insists on Dany presenting herself as princess, reflecting his obsession with reclaiming the Iron Throne. Dany's role in his plan is to embody the regal image necessary to gain support from powerful allies. It's also an indication of the manipulation and control Viserys exerts over Dany, treating her more like an object than a sister.

- **"I Will Answer injustice with justice"**

The dialogue marks a significant moment in Daenerys as she transitions from a young inexperienced ruler to someone who understands the weight of power and the importance of justice. It shows her growing confidence and determination to be a just ruler, which contrasts with the tyrannical rulers she has encountered.

- **"You Promised me, My sword is yours, My life is yours, This is what I command".**

Daenerys speaks these words to one of her followers, reinforcing the oaths of allegiance that were made to her in the book *A Storm of Swords* by invoking this

promise, Daenerys is not just asking for a favour; she is demanding the fulfillment of a solemn vow.

- **“ I will take what is mine with fire and blood”**

exemplifies her defiance against male oppression and her willingness to wield power traditionally reserved for men.

- **“Dracarys”**

The repeated use of this word throughout the series highlights Daenerys’s growing willingness to use her power ruthlessly. It is both a command to dragons and a symbol of her readiness to burn down the old world to create a new one.

Following table compares the novel *A Song of Ice and Fire* with its OTT adaptation from Book 1 to Book 4.

Aspect	In the novel <i>A Song of Ice and Fire</i>	In the TV Series <i>Game of Thrones</i>
Physical appearance	Described as having silver-gold hair and striking purple eyes a characteristic of Targaryen lineage slender and pale, taller than some other ancestors	Portrayed by Emilia Clarke with platinum blonde hair and blue eyes, adapting distinctive Targaryen hair but modifying eye color for practical
Age of Start	Daenerys is introduced as a 13 year old girl	Her age is adjusted to be older of being around 16-17 years old
Personality Development	Starts as timid and submissive due to her upbringing under the control of her abusive brother Viserys. Grows into confident, strong and sometimes ruthless leader	Similar development but with more rapid progression in TV Series, emphasizing her strength and resolve earlier in the storyline
4.Cultural Integration	Deeply integrates into Dothraki and later Ghiscari cultures, which is pivotal in her development and acceptance as a leader	While cultural adaptation is shown, it is less detailed compared to the novels. The series focuses more on her role as a conqueror than as a cultural chameleon

5. Magical Elements	Her connection to dragons and prophetic visions in the House of the Undying are deeply mystical and significant to her character arc	Magic is visually spectacular but less mysterious and complex; her immunity to fire is portrayed as more of a mystical, defining trait than in the books
6. Leadership Style	Explores her leadership style in-depth, showing her learning curve, including her mistakes and successes in ruling	Focuses more on her actions as a leader than her internal deliberation, emphasizing decisive moments and her capacity for both mercy and ruthlessness.

Early Vulnerability and Empowerment

Daenerys begins her journey as a pawn in her brother Viserys' quest for power. Sold into marriage to Khal Drogo, she initially appears as a victim of patriarchal oppression. However, Daenerys soon begins to assert her autonomy. Her relationship with Drogo evolves into a partnership of mutual respect, marking the start of her empowerment.

Rise to Power

Daenerys' rise to power is marked by her determination to reclaim the Iron Throne and free the oppressed. Her liberation of the Unsullied and the freeing of the slaves in Meereen are pivotal moments that solidify her status as a liberator and a strong female leader. These actions align her with feminist ideals of fighting against oppression and advocating for equality.

Complex Leadership and Moral Ambiguity

While Daenerys' early actions are rooted in justice and liberation, her quest for power grows increasingly complex and morally ambiguous. Her determination to "break the wheel" of oppression in Westeros sees her resort to extreme measures, leading to debates about the balance between feminist empowerment and ruthless ambition.

Gender Politics and Feminist Themes

Daenerys' journey addresses significant feminist themes, including the struggle for female autonomy in a patriarchal society and the complexities of wielding power as a woman. Her challenges and triumphs reflect broader conversations about gender and leadership, illustrating the multifaceted nature of feminist representation in popular media.

In an interview with Vanity Fair, actress Emilia Clarke, who portrays Daenerys, reflects on the character's feminist impact, stating, "Daenerys is a symbol of female empowerment and strength. She challenges the status quo and inspires women to believe in their own power and potential."

Through her resilience, courage, and unwavering determination, Daenerys Targaryen emerges as a feminist icon in the world of *Game of Thrones*, leaving a lasting legacy of empowerment and liberation for women everywhere. Daenerys Targaryen faced numerous challenges in her journey towards empowerment in *Game of Thrones*.

Conclusion:

The journey of Daenerys Targaryen in both George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* and its OTT adaptation, *Game of Thrones*, is a profound exploration of character evolution, power dynamics, and feminist themes. The comparative study reveals that while the novel offers a more intricate and detailed portrayal of Daenerys's growth, the adaptation successfully brings her character to life with a powerful visual and emotional impact, albeit with certain modifications.

In the novels, Daenerys's evolution is carefully mapped out through her experiences with magic and dragons, beginning with the symbolic dragon eggs, moving through the trauma of blood magic, and culminating in the birth and growing power of her dragons. Her story is one of survival and empowerment, as she transforms from a vulnerable, dispossessed princess into a formidable leader who challenges the status quo. The novels delve deeply into her internal struggles, her cultural integration, and her evolving sense of identity as she navigates a world steeped in patriarchal oppression.

The television adaptation, while condensing and altering some aspects of her journey, captures the essence of Daenerys's rise to power and her eventual moral complexities. The visual medium amplifies her dramatic rise and the symbolic weight of her titles, reflecting her growing influence and the responsibilities that come with it. However, it also accelerates certain aspects of her character development, sometimes at the expense of the rich detail provided in the novels.

Ultimately, Daenerys Targaryen's story, whether in the literary or visual narrative, serves as a powerful commentary on leadership, gender, and the burdens of power. Her journey reflects the struggles and triumphs of women in a patriarchal society, making her a multifaceted and enduring character in modern fantasy. The comparison between the novel and its adaptation underscores the importance of narrative depth and character complexity in storytelling, while also highlighting the unique strengths of each medium in conveying the epic tale of Daenerys Targaryen, the Unburnt. ■

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Akam Poetry: Love Across the Topographical Explorations in the Inner World

Surbhi Parakh

Kirti Jha Kulshreshtha

Sangam literature is said to be one of the ancient ones in the world of literature. The best way to understand the culture of a particular place is to explore its religion, art, literature, and customs. Sangam Literature distributes the whole of the corpus into *Akam* and *Puram*. *Akam* is the inner world of humans, observing the inner feelings, mainly emotions of love, romance, and sexual relationships. The most unique feature of *Akam* poems in Sangam Poetry which differentiates it from other literary works is the description of nature and documenting it with the various phases of romance and love. This paper explores the *Akam* poetry and its concept of love and analyzing the meaning of them through the framework of *Thinais*.

Key Words: *Sangam poetry, Akam, thinais, love, inner, Tamil society*

Introduction

Sangam literature which has its Tamil origin was rediscovered in the later decades, the original work being written on palm leaves. This vast sea of literature was gradually compiled into different anthologies and idylls. Although all the literary works from the first two Sangam academies have been lost in the sea, the third Sangam which was assembled in the ancient Madurai has been revived and translated to be available as a monumental genre in Indian classic literature. It is said to have shaped the “literary, academic, cultural and linguistic life of ancient Tamil Nadu”, states Zvelebil. As the study suggests Sangam Literature at the time of its composition was not in the form as is presented today. The distribution of the whole corpus into anthologies was done decades or may be centuries later, their arrangement into anthologies is logical and enables one to make sense of the various themes, moods, settings, and situations that the poems embody. The whole of Sangam poetry comprises of eight anthologies and 10 Idylls, which are in turn divided into the thematic classification of love poetry (*Akam*) and War Poetry (*Puram*).

Sangam poetry in its *Akam* Poems, as the name suggests has solely focused on the concept of love and emotional depths, exploring its profound complexities. The poems best

describe the vivid imaginations and the world of fantasies of its characters. The *Akam* chapter the Sangam Literature presents seven stages of love (Rajeshwari 23), of which only the middle five are deemed appropriate subjects of poetry: unrequited love, love in union, patient waiting, unfaithfulness, separation, love in hardship, and mismatched love

Erotic love alongside betrayal is also a part and parcel of the varieties of love relationships that are projected in Sangam Poetry. So Sangam Poetry displays various kings and their magnificent kingdoms, wartimes as well as their routine lives. Within love genre, intimacy and desire form important components for these poetry forms. Elizabeth Rani Segnar further mentions one instance where the woman's emotional state has been highlighted as she complains about her lover's avoidant attachment approach of physical love along with resentment and betrayal at the same time:

This intimate articulation of a woman's emotional state is typical of the love genre of classical Tamil poetry. Our speaker expresses ambivalence towards her lover. As she recalls their lovemaking, she is nostalgic about the closeness they shared but she is also resentful that he now denies his love for her. This man has betrayed her and she feels helpless to change his behavior. She compares him to a thief, for he has stolen both her heart and her innocence. With brevity, the speaker communicates her unfulfilled desire, her frustration and her sense of loss. (1)

Out of these seven forms of love, major *Akam* (also called *Aham*) poems deal with the first five. Love as a central theme has captured the essence of its myriad forms, be it romantic, platonic, self or unrequited love. The intense emotion and complexities of a relationship have been portrayed, with a backdrop of landforms in varied forms and describing the similarities of the landforms with the said aspect of love. Out of the eight anthologies of the Sangam Poetry, a major part consists of *Akam* Poems. The anthologies are distributed based on the length of the poem. Compilation of eight anthologies or Ettuthokai is named as Natrinai, Kurunthokai, Ainkurunuru, Pathirupathu, Paripadal, Kalithokai, Akanuru, Paurananuru (Rajeshwari 2).

THINAI

Sangam Poetry intricately weaves nature with human emotions to form a beautiful tapestry that uses natural landscapes to symbolize the different stages of love. To understand the concept of poetry in Sangam poems, one has to understand the concept of Thinais on which the whole of *Akam* poems are based on:

In Sangam poetry *thinai* is the key poetic device which anchors the whole poetic discourse. *Thinai* is formed by the triad *Muthal* (place and time), *Karu* (things thereof) and *Uri* (human aspect). Thus far the "place" (*Muthalporul*) in *thinai* has been regarded as a geographical social space. (Constantine 77)

The *thinai* concept identifies love in its five forms with the five landscapes which are hilly regions, forests, farms, seashores, and deserts. These landscapes in turn describe the love in

its varied aspects and the poetry blends the similarities of both in such a beautiful manner that the comparisons are easily understood. The five aspects of love to denote the landscapes are union, separation, anticipation, hurting and sulkiness. . Early modern scholar Pillai mentions that:

Love is true or natural, when mutual affection draws the parties together, and untrue or unnatural when it is one sided (*kaikilai*) or ill- assorted and morganatic (*perumthinai*). True love is considered under five aspects , viz, union (*punarthal*) separation (*pirithal*), patience in separation (*irruthal*, wailing (*irangal*), and sulking (*udal*), and these are made to fit in with the five-fold physiographical divisions viz, mountain (*kurinchi*), desert (*palai*), jungle (*mullai*), beach (*naithal*) and fields (*marutham*). (17)

As Dr. P. Aruna Devi in her article “Landscape in Sangam Literature” very beautifully describes the embedding of human emotions (*Uri Porul*) into the *Thinai*s. When the feelings are channelized into different compartments the location acts as a scaffolding, triggering deep contemplation, enhancing quick and easy comprehension due to the imageries that emerge in the embedded framework.

To understand the different moods and concepts of love as described in Sangam Poetry, one should have an understanding of the framework of *thinai* concept on which the segregation of Sangam Poetry is based. The *thinai*s, apart from the tract of land also mentions the animals, gods, flora and fauna, seasons, and also the particular time of the day about a particular landscape in the corresponding poetry. These all in turn correspond to the feelings or human emotions of the characters of the *Akam* Poems. The *Thinai*s have been named on the flower which are said to have been found in the region the *Thinai* describes. As each region has its flora and fauna and people, Tamil poetry beautifully weaves each of them in different aspects to create the theme of the relevant *Thinai*. Every poem is classified in such a manner and this makes it a unique feature in the vast treasure of different literature. While reflecting upon the nature-human intersection in *Thinai*, one can reflect upon the intense relationship between human emotions and natural surroundings and ecosystem. The nature corresponds with the several phases of human emotions in the most connected way. Each phase has a flower or a tree; even the colours are syncretic with the upheavals and tranquility of love:

In *thinai*, the nature/culture binary is realigned in productive ways, where human society and other nonhuman ecosystems are in a dialectical relationship. This was rendered possible perhaps, given its place in human history. *Thinai*, a system of identification in the Dravidian (Tamil) culture, was relational, emphasizing human and nonhuman interconnectedness. (Sankaran 2020)

The Tamil System of constructing a poem is understood by the whole pattern of segregation in its whole literature. The poems are divided length wise in the eight anthologies , which in turn are divided into the five *Thinai* as per the dominant mood of the poetry set in the

background implied. The five *Thinai*s on the basis of which all the *Akam* Poems in the eight anthologies are distributed are: *Kurinci*, *Mullai*, *Marutam*, *Neytal*, and *Palai*. They are named after characteristic flower or tree that is specific to each region.

***Kurinci*.**

Poems in this scenario are set in the backdrop of mountains and hills and refer to the union of lovers. The time of the meetings is usually night and the subject is the secret meetings between the hero and heroine before the marriage. The name of the *Thinai* is the *Kurinjiflower* which is native to the region and blooms once in twelve years, thus symbolizing the blossoming of female senses and showing her indication to unite with her lover. Thus the imagery of the landscape along with its components forms a basis of providing a multi-dimensional interpretation of the poetry.

Long live my friends
Listen to my words
A lass tied to my heart
With beautiful hair
Pretty broad shoulder
Short stature and slender form
If I hug and make love for a day
I seldom want a half day life
Anymore, thereafter. (Rajeshwari 54)

In this translated work of *Kurinci* (mountain idyll) poem from the *Kurunthokai*, by Dr. C. Rajeshwari the above poem describes how the Hero describes the beauty of his lover to his friends and how he can't live without her. This poem is an onset of the love affair which would be subsequently followed in the other *Kurinci* poems, describing the beauty of the union of the lovers and the events afterwards. While highlighting the intersections of topographical features and human emotions Constantine comments:

Kunrinci- is sexual union and the incidences that lead to it. *Kurinci* and *kānthai* flowers belong to this area. *Murugan* is the God of mountain land. Tigers, bears, elephants, monkeys, wild pigs, parrots and peacocks live here. Millet, paddy, and tubers are cultivated. Sandal wood trees are in plenty. Millet cultivation and honey collection is done. Springs and waterfalls add beauty to this landscape. The assigned time for this *thinai* is mid night of the cold season. This sets a very conducive backdrop for the romantic drama. During such times lovers long to meet each other even at the risk of losing many things. This is the time when birds and animals return home to be with their loved ones. The subject of these *Kurincipoems* is usually the pre-marital secret meeting of lovers, at the millet field, or at night where the heroine escapes her mother's watchful eyes. However with time gradually the suspicion arise that the heroin is up to some mischief. (83)

Some examples which draw comparisons from nature are:

People scold me, but what do they know? Just as a turtle's hatching draws strength from its mother by looking at her, I draw mine from my lover. If he leaves me I should waste myself and wither away like a motherless egg. (Kurunthokai 152) (Trans. Herbert n. pag.)

The longing of lovers for union is conglomerated with the flora and the contours of nature so as to give rise to the season of love itself. There is risk involved so *Thinai*s are also indicative of adventure and evasiveness of the lovers. The nature motifs in the poems are enough to evoke the fervor of *Kurinci*:

My lover is like the *kurunji* flower, blooming in the mountains, waiting for the rain. (Kurunthokai 203) (Trans. Herbert n. pag.)

This particular poem from the *Kurunthoki* can be identified as an example of *KurunjiThinai*, where the heroine compares her lover to the native flower that blooms in the mountains and can depict a secret meeting between the lovers in the mountains highlighting their forbidden love.

Mullai

When during the hot and humid season the jasmine flower (*Mullai*) blooms then it creates the perfect ethos for *Mullai* poems. Poems in this *thinai* are set in the backdrop of a forest and refer to the separation of lovers and hopeful waiting by the wife. The times mentioned in these poems are late evenings, and the heroine waits for the return of Hero, who has gone on a trip.

Will the bright new blossoms of neem trees with dark colored trunks, wilt and drop before he comes? Now that my lover has gone, the tongues of cruel people hurt me. I'm like a single ripe fruit, fallen from a river side fig tree with white branches, being crushed by seven crabs. (Herbert n. pag)

The heroine's hopeful waiting and anxiousness which she accounts to her friend after the lovers departure is beautifully described in this *MullaiThinai*. This poem beautifully captures the essence of heroines state and compares it to the wilting of neem leaves and a fallen ripe fruit. Also she is disturbed by the wagging tongue of society, and compare it to the crushing of branches. During the *Mullai* season, vegetation motifs like *Thonral*, *Kondrai Kayaetc* are used to intensify the wait of the heroine:

This is the time where the environment is neither hot nor too cold. The heroin is waiting for the hero's return. The hero who went on business returns home. On his way home he see various scenes that arouses sexual desire in his heart. This background intensifies the feeling of separation. (Constantine 73)

Marutham

Poems are set in the cropland of Paddy fields and depict the bitterness and sulking of the heroine due to the hero's infidelity. The *MaruthamThinai* has the tone of anxiousness owing to the husband's interest in a younger woman. The time mentioned in these poems is usually early morning, which is the time for the return of the hero. The agricultural activities such as sowing and tilling are used as a motif of indulging in extra marital relationship. The ironical quality which the *Marutham* poem displays is that despite the husband's waywardness, his wife welcomes him home without any complains (Aruna Devi). Scholar Robert Butler comments:

The subject matter of the *marutam* tract is *utal*, which means feigned dislike on the part of the heroine as a result of the hero's infidelity; it is often translated as sulking or love quarrels. However, this deignition does little justice to the *marutam poems* of *Kuruntokai*, the bulk of which deal mainly with the psychological reaction, often subtle and nuanced, of the heroine or her friend to the husband's attempts at reconciliation.(xv)

In a Translation By Dr. C. Rajeshwari, the lady tells her friend the state of her sulkiness which is due to the infidelity by her lover and how her heart aches and her beauty diminishes:

My heart aches, my heart aches
The new tribulus flowers
Once feast for the eyes
Bloomed among the thick tiny leaves
In the land of scanty rains
Now turned to prickly thorns
The lover who did the sweet things
Now do the wretched ones
My heart aches. (41)

Neydal

This *thinai* gives a backdrop of the seashore and depicts the human feeling of agony. The time assigned is the time of night when the heroine feels the loneliness due to separation from her lover. The poem depicts the mental agony and feeling of restlessness due to the separation, which are in turn compared to the continuous movement of the waves of the sea. An apt description of the anguished state of the heroine can be seen in this poem from the given translation:

My heart aches! My heart aches!
My perfect lover who consoled me,
When I cried hot tears that almost

Scalded my eye lids, has changed.
My heart aches! (Herbert n. pag)

The *Neydal* (water lily) *Thinai* is situated in blue waters. Anxious waiting is associated with *Neydal* or *NethalThinai* and here the reader could witness a pining beloved (*Annapoorni* 175). The flora and fauna resonates that of a shoreline area where the coromant bird, crocodiles and water bufflaos dwell (*Murugathas*). A scholar pinpoints the poignant way in which the human emotions coincide with the nature surroundings:

Here the heroine expresses her sorrow of her separation from her beloved to her friend. The land and the imagery of the land and season provide the backdrop for the humane motions. This backdrop functions like a word picture intensifying the human condition. This prescriptive poetic composition is a unique feature of the Sangam poetry. (Constantine 74)

Palai

This *thinai* is set up in the desert area or wastelands and the theme is the separation of the hero from his family. The time often mentioned in the poetry is afternoon and portrays the mood of separation from the beloved or the family. This shows the journey of separation from the loved ones and walking into the barren to overcome all the difficulties. The time of scorching heat implies the complications of the journey. In the *Palai* Translation of *Kuruntokai* in her book, Dr. C. Rajeshwari translated one of the poems as follows:

My natural charm
Of the yellow spotted Mons Veneris
Is eaten away by the pallor
Like the sweet milk of a healthy cow
Shed down on the floor
Not collected in a pail
Or consumed by a calf . (14)

This poem describes how the heroine feels her beauty and charm are being wasted like the wasted milk of a cow which is not collected. Her charm will be lost as her lover has gone away from her. In another translation work by famous Tamil scholar Vaidehi Herbert from the *Kalikothisai*, *PalaiThinai* states how the heroine expresses her current mood of separation to her friend.

My tender friend!
If abandoning one's partner
To earn wealth, and
Forgetting love and grace
Is intelligence,
Let him be the intelligent one.
May we be the stupid ones!

Even in her state of desperation, she still defends her lover.
Understanding the concept of love. (n. pag.)

The above five *thinai*s address the emotions of a lover by portraying its unique features to set them at par with the underlying emotions of the current state of the lover. The whole collections of poems in the anthologies are distributed on the basis of *Thinai*s.

With the description of wilderness as a backdrop, the poem can be referred to as the *Palaithinai*, where the husband explains his reasons for not coming earlier to his wife.

Even as the river swells with monsoon waters, my heart is heavy with longing for my beloved. (*Akananuru*86) (Trans by Herbert n. pag)

This poem from the *palaithinai* portrays a wife's longing as she waits for her husband's return. Simultaneously the subject matters of the *PalaiThinai* expands from landscape, animals, forests of the rocky region interspersed with the heroine imagining the number of dangers the hero must have come across and the male counterpart also regrets about leaving the beloved behind (Butler xi).

Most of the poems are monologues by the characters of the love drama, which are mostly the Hero, the Heroine, the heroine's friend, her mother, and the hero's charioteer. No names have been mentioned in any of the *Akam* Poems, leaving it to the imagination, the speaker, and the listener of the poem. Although the description in the poems makes it easy to understand the hidden meanings and the message it means to deliver.

The poem uses the rich landscapes as a metaphor to identify with the theme of the poetry and aptly describe love and longing of its characters, and beauty by comparing it to the objects of that landscape, desire, anxiety, infidelity, parting, anguish, and such strong emotions to portray the glory and strength of a relationship.

Conclusion

The poems in Sangam Poetry use nature and its components to convey the complexities of human emotions. Though the original work of Sangam Literature is in Tamil, the translations makes the understanding of the poetry very easily understood by a non-Tamil reader. The exploration of love in the poems has had a lasting impact on the Tamil Cultural and Literature development. They capture the essence of human emotions through a harmonious blend of nature, culture,, and lyrics. The lyrical beauty of Sangam Poetry is manifested in such a way that it encompasses the beauty of nature and creates a collection of poems showcasing the emotional journey of lovers in every stage, be it their union or their separation and the myriads of emotions pertaining it.

The poems in Sangam usually portray the feelings and thoughts of the characters in love, and the different attributes of their relationship, their phase, their feelings, and their doubts. ■

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Attaining Point of View through Grammatical Features in Khushwant Singh's *The Portrait of a Lady*

Nandigama Madhu

Point of view is a much discussed and rigorously explored area in fiction studies, whether in the stylistics framework or any other framework of literary criticism and theory. Point of view basically refers to the way a story is told, the mode of its narration. Point of view concerns, produces, results in, perspectives on, evaluations of, events and characters. It is about influencing readers to form certain opinions, or not to form certain opinions. This paper is concerned with the analysis of 'Point of view' in Khushwant Singh's Short story "The Portrait of a Lady" by applying Fowler-Uspensky model. It makes an attempt to investigate how Khushwant Singh achieves his spatio-temporal, ideological and psychological perspectives through his language. He continuously interferes with the comprehension of the readers by guiding them in terms of locating the places and time through his spatio-temporal perspective. He also influences the feelings of the readers by communicating his ideas through his psychological perspective. He also presents the mindset of his characters by describing the commonly accepted social practices in the society through his ideological perspective. Point of view on spatio-temporal, ideological and psychological planes helps the narrator achieve his purpose effectively.

Introduction

This paper presents the stylistic analysis of the short story "The Portrait of a Lady" written by Khushwant Singh. Khushwant Singh is a well-known Indian English Writer and a famous essayist. He got well equipped by background, education, exposure and experience to view the Indian scene from a wider angle without any sentimental attachment. He is known more for his books of jokes and his column *With Malice Towards All*. He has penned books on religion, Sikhism, and history of Sikhs and Delhi. He is a man who loves life fully and deeply as is evident in his books. The ironic mode that he adopted also enabled him to look at the human scene with detachment.

"The Portrait of a Lady": A Perspective

"The Portrait of a Lady" is the picture of the narrator's grandmother and a clear description, in which the central character is effectively individualized. The grandmother's

face was a crisscross of wrinkles running from everywhere to everywhere. She walked about the house in spotless white telling her rosary beads. She was an extremely pious woman and spent a great deal of her time in the village temple. She was also a remarkable humanitarian in her beliefs and actions. And her generosity and kindness were demonstrated in her giving away Chapattiesto village dogs. Then the family shifted to the city, and the links between the grandmother and the grandson could not remain intimate or strong. She saw him off when he went abroad for higher education, but she showed no sentiment. She also welcomed him on his return home after about five years. Then, she spent a lot of time feeding sparrows. But she was excited by her grandson's return home and sang songs and beat the drum. She was taken ill the next morning. She said that her end was near and then began to offer prayers. Soon the rosary fell from her lifeless fingers, and a peaceful pallor spread over her face. She was to be taken on a crude stretcher for cremation, and, surprisingly all over the veranda, in her room, and in the courtyard, thousands of sparrows sat scattered on the floor. These birds did not chirp, nor did they even touch the crumbs of bread thrown to them. The next day, the sweeper had to collect all the breadcrumbs and throw them into the dustbin. The sparrows gave her a moving, silent salute and farewell. "The Portrait of a Lady" is moving, and the response of the sparrows seems even more effective and inwardly felt than what the reaction of human beings could have been. Singh's delicate sensitivity to the animal world is beautifully reflected in this exceptionally touching and moving story.

For the study of Point of View in fiction, in an influential publication on prose composition, the narratologist Boris Uspensky proposed a four-way model (Uspensky, 1973). This model was later revised and refined by Roger Fowler. So it is probably referred as the 'Fowler – Uspensky model'. The four components indentified by the Fowler – Uspensky model of point of view are as follows:

- i. Point of view on the ideological plane
- ii. Point of view on the temporal plane
- iii. Point of view on the spatial plane
- iv. Point of view on the psychological plane

The broad compass of the model has proved significant in shaping much stylistic work on point of view because it helps sort out different components in narrative organization.

Point of view on the ideological plane: The term ideology has a wide scope of reference. It refers to the matrix of beliefs we use to comprehend the world and to the value systems through and by which we interact in society. It follows then that the concept of point of view on the ideological plane refers to the way in which a text mediates a set of particular ideological beliefs through either character, narrator or author. Indeed, the domain of ideology is so broad that just about any aspect of narrative can be brought within its compass, whether it be a facet of narrative voice like author, narrator, character or person, or an element of narrative 'preoccupation' like emblem, theme, motif, and most important of all, characterization.

Point of view on the temporal plane: Point of view on the temporal plane, in terms of the Fowler – Uspensky model, is about the way relationships are signalled in narrative. Temporal point of view envelops a whole series of stylistic techniques such as repetition, analepsis (flashback) and prolepsis (prevision or flash forward). It basically covers any kind of manipulation of time sequence in narrative, explaining how certain events might be relayed as remote or distant, others as immediate or imminent.

Temporal point of view is certainly an important narrative category. It seems to be less about focalisation and viewpoint and rather more about narrative structure; it does after all encompass the structural segments and sequential progression of the time-line of a narrative.

Point of view on the spatial plane: Spatial point of view is about the narrative ‘camera angle’ and is a device which has palpable grammatical exponents in deixis and in locative expressions. This is often communicated through adverbs like this, that, here, there and so on.

Point of view on the Psychological plane

Psychological or perceptual view point refers to the way in which narrative events are mediated through the consciousness of the ‘teller’ of the story. It will encompass the means by which a fictional world is slanted in a particular way or the means by which narrators construct, in linguistic terms, their own view of the story they tell (Simpson: 1993).

In this paper, groups of indicators are linked together interpretatively, namely in terms of ‘Spatio-temporal’ ‘Psychological’ and ‘ideological’ viewpoint. Spatio-temporal view point refers to the impression which a reader gains of events moving rapidly or slowly, in a continuous chain or isolated segments of the narration (Fowler, 1986: 127). It is the viewing position – as in the visual arts – that the readers feel themselves to occupy; the position from which their chain of perceptions seems to move. Such perspective is often communicated through adverbs (such as ‘here’ and ‘there’), demonstrative pronouns in noun phrases (such as ‘this week’ and ‘that room’) and so on.

Psychological or perceptual viewpoint refers to the way in which narrative events are mediated by the consciousness of the ‘teller’ of the story. “It will encompass the means by which a fictional world is slanted in a particular way or the means by which narrators construct, in linguistic terms, their own view of the story they tell” (Simpson, 1993:11-12).

Finally, ideological viewpoint, or world view, refers to the set of values, or belief system communicated by the language of the text and shared by people from similar backgrounds to the speaker. In this case, viewpoint has less to do with an individual’s spatio-temporal location in some particular sense, but with a generalized mindset or outlook on the world that a person, often as a representative of a group of people, might have (Short, 1996: 277).

To illustrate this distinction, three passages from the short story “The Portrait of a Lady” are stylistically analyzed below.

Passage – 1

When I went up to University, I was given a room of my own. The common link of friendship was snapped. My grandmother accepted her seclusion with resignation. She rarely left her spinning wheel to talk to anyone. From sunrise to sunset she sat by her wheel spinning and reciting prayers. Only in the afternoon she relaxed for a while to feed the sparrows. While she sat in the verandah breaking the bread into little bits, hundreds of little birds collected round her creating a veritable bedlam of chirpings. Some came and perched on her legs, others on her shoulders. Some even sat on her head. She smiled but, never shoo’d them away. It used to be the happiest half-hour of the day for her (Singh, 1989: 30).

The narrator’s spatio-temporal perspective is communicated through the time and place adverbials, a time-duration adverbial and an adverbial clause in the following lines.

- When I went up to University, I was given a room of my own.
- From sunrise to sunset she sat by her wheel spinning and reciting prayers.
- Only in the afternoon she relaxed for a while to feed the sparrows.
- While she sat in the verandah breaking the bread into little bits, hundreds of little birds collected round her creating a veritable bedlam of chirpings.
- Some came and perched on her legs, others on her shoulders. Some even sat on her head.

The place adverbial up to university lets us know both the place and time of the narration. The narrator reveals us that he entered the university and he was given a room of his own. The time adverbials from sunrise to sunset, in the afternoon give us the time of the action in the story by describing the routine of the narrator’s grandmother. The time-duration adverbial for a while and an adverbial clause while she sat in the verandah indicate the time during which she takes rest and when and where she feeds the sparrows. The place adverbials by her wheel, round her, on her legs, on her shoulders, on her head indicate the place where she sits during the day and where the sparrows sit while she is feeding them.

The narrator’s ideological perspective is communicated through the following lines which make us understand the mindset of the grandmother of the author.

- My grandmother accepted her seclusion with resignation.
- It used to be the happiest half-hour of the day for her.

The above lines indicate the worldview of the narrator’s grandmother. Her mindset is revealed by the above lines which explain that she accepts the changes in her life with resignation and starts being happy by spending time with the sparrows. The narrator states that she was not disturbed when the common link of their companionship has failed and the

only happiest time for her was the time in the afternoon when she feeds the sparrows.

The psychological perspective of the narrator's grandmother is communicated through an abstract noun and a superlative adjective in the following lines.

- My grandmother accepted her seclusion with resignation.
- It used to be the happiest half-hour of the day for her.

The above mentioned lines reveal the psychological state of the narrators' grandmother. She accepts everything without complaining. The abstract noun resignation reveals how she feels detached from the people around her and makes the readers get into her mind. The adjective happiest which is in superlative degree also reveals her psychological position when she spends time to feed the sparrows in the afternoon.

Passage – 2

When I decided to go abroad for further studies, I was sure my grandmother would be upset. I would be away for five years, and at her age one could never tell. But my grandmother could. She was not even sentimental. She came to leave me at the railway station but did not talk or show any emotion. Her lips moved in prayer, her mind was lost in prayer. Her fingers were busy telling the beads of her rosary. Silently she kissed my forehead, and when I left I cherished the moist imprint as perhaps the last sign of physical contact between us.

But that was not so. After five years I came back home and was met by her at the station. She did not look a day older. She still had no time for words, and while she clasped me in her arms I could hear her reciting her prayer. Even on the first day of my arrival, her happiest moments were with her sparrows whom she fed longer and with frivolous rebukes (Singh, 1989: 31).

The narrator's spatio-temporal perspective is communicated through an adverbial clause, an adverb, a time-duration adverbial, a time adverbial and place adverbials in the following lines.

- When I decided to go abroad for further studies, I was sure my grandmother would be upset.
- I would be away for five years, and at her age one could never tell.
- She came to leave me at the railway station but did not talk or show any emotion.
- After five years I came back home and was met by her at the station.
- Even on the first day of my arrival, her happiest moments were with her sparrows whom she fed longer and with frivolous rebukes.

From the lines above, the narrator could make us understand the time and place and the duration of the events in the story. The adverbial clause when I decided to go abroad

denotes the time. The adverb away has spatial reference of the events. It also indicates the remoteness of the narrator to the events. The time-duration adverbial for five years reveals the duration of his stay abroad. The time adverbial on the first day denotes the time and place adverbials back home, at the station denote the place of the narrator's existence and make us feel empathetic and look at the events from the narrator's viewpoint.

The narrator's ideological perspective is communicated through the following lines which make us understand the assumptions of the author about his grandmother when he was leaving abroad and the behaviour of his grandmother after he returned home. The lines mentioned below reveal her nature. The narrator explains her unsentimental and reticent nature through these lines. The ideological perspective of the narrator was communicated through the nature and mindset of his grandmother.

- I would be away for five years, and at her age one could never tell. But my grandmother could.
- She was not even sentimental.

The psychological perspective of the narrator is communicated through a verb of inert cognition, an adjective and the abstract noun in the following lines.

- When I decided to go abroad for further studies, I was sure my grandmother would be upset.
- She was not even sentimental. She came to leave me at the railway station but did not talk or show any emotion.

In the above mentioned lines, the word decided, a verb of inert cognition, and sure, an adjective reveal the narrator's mind. The adjective sentimental and an abstract noun emotion reveal the psychological position of the narrator's grandmother when he decided to go abroad for further studies. So we can get into the minds of the narrator and his grandmother through the above lines.

Passage – 3

But she ignored our protests. She lay peacefully in bed praying and telling her beads. Even before we could suspect, her lips stopped moving and the rosary fell from her lifeless fingers. A peaceful pallor spread on her face and we knew that she was dead. We lifted her off the bed and, as is customary, laid her on the ground and covered her with a red shroud. After a few hours of mourning we left her alone to make arrangements for her funeral. In the evening we went to her room with a crude stretcher to take her to be cremated. The sun was setting and had lit her room and verandah with a blaze of golden light. We stopped half-way in the courtyard. All over the verandah and in her room right up to where she lay dead and stiff wrapped in the red shroud, thousands of sparrows sat scattered on the floor. There was no chirping. We felt sorry for the birds and my mother fetched some bread for them. She broke it into little crumbs, the way my grandmother used to and threw it to

them. The sparrows took no notice of the bread. When we carried my grandmother's corpse off, they flew away quietly. Next morning the sweeper swept the bread crumbs into the dustbin (Singh, 1989: 31).

The narrator's spatio-temporal perspective is achieved through a number of deictic expressions related to place and time, such as demonstratives, time and place adverbials and adverbial clauses in the following sentences.

- There was no chirping.
- She broke it into little crumbs, the way my grandmother used to and threw it to them.
- Even before we could suspect, her lips stopped moving and the rosary fell from her lifeless fingers.
- After a few hours of mourning we left her alone to make arrangements for her funeral.
- In the evening we went to her room with a crude stretcher to take her to be cremated.
- The sun was setting and had lit her room and verandah with a blaze of golden light.
- All over the verandah and in her room right up to where she lay dead and stiff wrapped in the red shroud, thousands of sparrows sat scattered on the floor.
- Next morning the sweeper swept the bread crumbs into the dustbin.

In the above lines, we see the death of the narrator's grandmother and the incidents followed by her death. The adverb there denotes both the place and time which are remote to the narrator. The demonstrative determiner it (used two times) gives the cataphoric reference to the bread which the narrator's grandmother daily offers to the sparrows. The adverbial clauses even before we could suspect, after a few hours, all over the verandah (even and after are adjuncts), time adverbials in the evening, next morning and place adverbials her room, on the floor help us understand the time and sequence of the events. The adverb where is a conjunct which gives us the connection between what was narrated and what is being narrated.

The narrator's psychological perspective is effectively achieved through the verbs of inert cognition and perception which give us an access into the narrator's consciousness in the following lines.

- But she ignored our protests. Even before we could suspect, her lips stopped moving and the rosary fell from her lifeless fingers.
- A peaceful pallor spread on her face and we knew that she was dead.
- We felt sorry for the birds and my mother fetched some bread for them.

We, the readers, can see the action of the story and feel sympathetic with the narrator in all the emotions. We see the things as he sees. We feel everything as he feels. So we can strongly say that the narrator could achieve this through his effective use of the psychological perspective. The verbs of inert cognition ignored, suspect, knew and a verb of inert perception felt and an adjective sorry help the narrator achieve his psychological perspective.

The narrator's ideological viewpoint is also achieved through the following sentence. The sentence below explains the reader a common viewpoint which is in practice in many cultures in India. The sentence talks of traditions, culture and ritualistic practices of some religions in India. So, here, the narrator's ideological viewpoint can be understood by the readers on cultural grounds.

- We lifted her off the bed and, as is customary, laid her on the ground and covered her with a red shroud.

Table 1. The Grammatical Features in “The Portrait of a Lady”

Name of the Grammatical Feature	Number of times it occurred	Percentage
Place Adverbials	8	23.52%
Time-related Adverbials	10	29.41%
Nouns	2	5.88%
Adverbs	3	8.82%
Adjectives	4	11.76%
Determiners	2	5.88%
Verbs	5	14.70%

“The Portrait of a Lady” is narrated in the 1st person. The narrator gives a rich description of his association with his grandmother. In this story, we can find that the ‘place adverbials’ occurred most number of times with the percentage of 23.52%. The Incidence of ‘Time-related adverbials’ is with the percentage of 29.41. ‘Nouns’ and ‘determiners’ occurred with the same percentage i.e. 5.88%.

The above analysis depicts that Khushwant Singh achieves his intended perspective by the effective use of ‘Point of view’ in his story “The Portrait of a Lady”. One can easily get into the mind of the author or the character by following the ‘Point of View’ meticulously. The successful use of point of view and their desired results on different planes of narration help the reader feel stylistically sensitive to the language. ■

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Impact of Globalization on Folk Culture of West Bengal

Molla Hafizur Rahaman

Globalization has reshuffled the whole human existence by inserting numerous concepts and ideologies in the human psyche all over the world. It has been able to convince the world to accept the basic terms and conditions of globalization and the world leaders have cordially received globalization knowing well its merits and demerits. The globe is now blessed with the merits of globalization and some countries pant beneath the onslaught of it. It has brought revolutionary changes in the society but at the same time it has also forced some countries to change their basic structures. Education, economics, religion, politics, foreign policies, and all societal aspects including indigenous cultures, folk cultures, ancient convention and tradition have been reshaped by the violent flow of globalization. Indian old traditional livelihood is not an exception. Folk cultures all over the world have been drastically distorted by globalization and in order to survive various folk sections altered their original traits and functions. These changes are perceived in folk art, folk dance, folk song, folk performing arts, folk crafts, folk dresses, folk foods, folk medicines, and folk architects. The aim of my paper is to show how the folklore of West Bengal has received the influence of globalization and how folk cultures of West Bengal are surviving in the age of globalization and their present status.

Key Words: Globalization, folk cultures, influence of globalization, surviving, present status

Introduction:

J. Handoo views that historians are never free to ventilate their ideas and opinions as they are strongly influenced by existing rulers or specific ideologies or powerful and influential elite. The oppressed or suppressed common men had very little scope to be presented in the historical texts. Disregarding the hopes, dreams, agonies, and real existence of ordinary common people history and civilization depict wars, bloodsheds, conquests and defeats of the historical heroes of the ages. Mono-vocal and mono-dimensional historical texts do not record the charming and multi-coloured daily annals of the marginalized people and the collective consciousness of the commoner. Ancient hegemonic written discourses could not free itself from the subordination of the ruling class (Rahaman).

Folklore complements the hegemonic written history. Folklore is primarily seen as static item received from past but it is not so. Russian scholar W. M. Sokolov expresses that folklore records both the history of past and present consciously or unconsciously and

gives equal emphasis to ancient and present. Folklore of any region or community depicts the national glory and spirit. Almost all folk-thinkers believe that folklore basically belongs to the peasant communities which are supposed to be closer to nature. In various parts of the world Folklore has been used for propaganda and propagation of ideologies and Indian folklore is not an exception (Rahaman)

Folklore played a vital role in mobilizing the Indian sentiment against the British colonialism. Folklore study is closely related to different academic approaches like Mythological School, Diffusion or Migratory School, Anthropological School, Historical/Geographical School, Psychoanalytical School, Oral Formulae School, Contextual Theory of Folklore, Structural School, and so on. Tireless efforts of English Christian Missionary and British civil servants have made Indian folklore well-organized in the Missionary Period and Academic Period. They recorded all sorts of information about religion, tradition, customs, rituals, cultures and conventions of the Indian in the remote areas of India. Though the data collected was used in the propagation of Christianity, still most of it was preserved which we see today as our trustworthy past (Rahaman). The folklore of India serves as the non-historical texts providing history of India in a slightly different way. Indian religious scriptures like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Puranas and Upinishadas reflect Indian ancient age and teach all the art of living. Panchatantra, Hitopades, Brihatkatha, Kathasaritsagara, Jatake Tales, and Sukasapatari instruct and remind Indian the value of morality, honesty, spirituality and truthfulness. Real Indian society is reflected in Indian folk literature, folk dance, folk tales, riddles, proverbs, folk legends, myths, folk songs, and folk paintings (Rahaman).

Methodology:

This paper attempts a qualitative analysis of the subject matter. Detail research has been done to find out the origin and types of the various folk forms. For data the researcher has used many books related with the genre. The researcher has incorporated some information from his own firsthand experience.

Research Objectives:

The objective of my paper is to show (i) the function of folklore, (ii) how folklore reflects the Bengal society (iii) how Bengali people used to look at folklore and how they were influenced by the traditional folk culture and (iv) the condition of Bengal folklore in the age of globalization.

Research Questions:

-Indian society in general and Bengal society in particular has been greatly changed by the gentle onslaught of science, technology and various ideologies. Globalization has greatly changed the very pattern of globe. The present paper will try to probe: how Bengali Society is influenced by globalization, how globalization has altered the traditional Bengali folk culture and what is the future of folk tradition of Bengal.

Discussion:

Folklore may be defined as traditional cultural forms that are shared among individuals through verbal or non-verbal means of communication and wishes to remain active in variations. Sometimes through informal methods and means folklore is transferred orally. Scholars from various parts of the world believe that folklore suggests so called uneducated and unsophisticated rural peasant cultures that pass and remain dynamic through various community performances like dance, song, riddle, proverb, religious rituals and traditional activities. The entire life experience of human civilization is covered by folklore. Folklore is present in riddles, jokes, games, dance, song, history, linguistics, literatures, ethnography and where not! It is intimately connected with simple, ignorant people but its presence is also felt in various aspects of elite life. According to celebrated thinker Dundes “the term folk can refer to any group of people, whatsoever, who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is- it could be a common occupation, language, or religion-but what is important is that a group is formed for whatever reason it calls its own” (ignou). So about folklore it may be opined that it is deeply connected to the large societies with a large population. Folklore disregards geographical and cultural boundaries and it belongs to the people of similar occupation, race, caste, religion or gender. It is greatly influenced and reshaped by modern science, globalization, neo-liberalism and sophisticated technologies. It cannot be considered as dead culture but it is sincerely vibrant and alive in any conventional society. To some people folklore is intimately connected with falsity and fantasy, it is based on incorrect facts and myths but the fact is not so. Folk culture takes into consideration the earthly life of the people and that is expressed artistically through folksongs, folk dance, folk rituals and folk conventions. Folklore beautifully presents before the spectators/audience the socio-cultural aspects of the existing society providing ample aesthetic experience. It caters the real history of the community through its various elements. With the passage of time folklore accommodates perfectly with the changing scenario remaining deeply authentic and reliable.

In the swiftly moving era of globalization, modern life can rip along the tremendous speed. With its several demands adding to our worries and stress, we adopt various ways to cope with the life running on fast track. (101 Essays). The dawn of liberalization, privatization and Globalization affect almost various spheres of human existence. Globalization has brought about a revolution in the globe. Taking the assistance from different techniques and technologies globalization has been made highly successful and has altered the daily activities, performances of human beings all over the world.

Globalization has brought new pace in the world. With the help of computer, internet it has reduced the geographical distances between the countries. It has not only changed the broad aspects of human life but it has touched the marginalized spheres of the world also.it has given new look to the conventional happenings of human life. Globalization has brought about a sea change in the field of economics, religion, social, political and cultural spheres of the world. With the help of highly sophisticated information technology one man from

india can easily see what is happening in the corners of the world. People from Denmark or Norway can easily see the native rituals of a remote village in west Bengal and they enrich themselves about the global cultures. Globalization has taught human beings to compare, to compete and cooperate when necessary. The traditional cultures of India are getting popular and more popular because of globalization. There are several reactions of local cultures to the impact of globalization. The first is the full acceptance of global cultures that emerged after globalization took root. There is total rejection or lack of acceptance of global culture. There is also a selective adaptation or partial acceptance. The possibility of hybridization or mingling of local culture with the globalized environment is also a condition.

Globalization has many bright sides but at the same time it has destroyed some good aspects of human civilization also. It has annihilated native culture, tradition and convention. Once upon a time a race or ethnic group could be easily recognized by their folk or traditional cultures but in the age of globalization the traditional behaviours of the native people drastically changed and these changes are vividly visible in the usage of food, dress, languages, religious customs, and social activities.

Like everything in the world globalization has dark sides and glittering sides also. No one can deny the bright aspects of globalization but it has some dark results that have made the world a danger one. It has accompanied tension, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, uncertainty and exploitation. Globalization has destroyed the very foundation of Indian society. If we look at the market in West Bengal its bad effect is clearly visible. The very foundation of Bengali economic structure has been demolished by the globalization. Business, commerce and small scales industries are the worst sufferers because of global market. It has given birth exploitation almost every field of life. Multinational companies monopolize the whole market employing low aid service boys and girls.

Songs, dances rituals and other cultural artifacts are viewed as a living heritage and are an integral part of identity. Using images, reselling them and mis-representing these are rights are considered property theft and a heinous crime against communities. It is difficult to monitor or control what is out on the internet are therefore difficult to prevent and prosecute appropriately. This has been possible due to emergence of globalization and its various accessories.

Globalization has changed the work culture to a large extent. The existing workforce finds it difficult to adapt themselves to the changing work culture emerged aftermath of globalization. The new breed of workforce although fits into the new work culture the traditional features of self-fulfilment and satisfaction is said t be missing in it. Globalization has opened up many avenues for women as it opposed to gender disparity. A general change has occurred in orthodox societies where women were confined in domestic sphere of life. Due to globalization women are leading in different levels of life. Almost all governmental and NGO women are performing with great efficiency. Globalization has brought in professional in great number around the globe. Globalization has intruded into family as an

institution, religious practices to some extent. The concept of joint family, values of families and family bonding have undergone substantial changes after the advent of globalization. Due impact of western thoughts and temperaments that has been persisted after globalization, religious beliefs, regard for rites and rituals have got a new dimension. It has done away with narrow religious feelings among the masses to a good extent. A large number of people from underdeveloped or rapidly developing countries eagerly wish to have foreign dress, foreign culture and sophisticated life style discarding their own conventional traditions and these are applicable for all age groups. A small portion of educated masses prefer to have their own products. They attach great values to the native, folk tradition and as a result the uniqueness of a nation survives.

In order to protect the value of indigenous interests the policy named 'Protectionism' has been initiated by various Governments of the world. Protectionism refers to 'the policy of a government designed to protect the indigenous industries producing a particular commodity. Under this policy, import quota of that commodity may be fixed, or tariff on its import may be heavily increased so that the imported product sells in the domestic market at exorbitant price. As a result, the demand of foreign product would steadily decline, and the indigenous industry would be saved from facing a stiff competition while promoting its own product' (Gaub). In this way to protect the indigenous cultural products various effective steps may be taken by the government to protect the valuable folk culture of our nation. Cultural forms and practices are linked to material conditions of a social relations, production and profits. (Nayar)

With the help of urbanization, democratic liberalism, great development of science and technology globalization has consolidated its position in the world. It has assumed the form of a now colonialism. Globalization is colonialism but there is no colonizer. Globalization has made the world a global village. At the initial stage of globalization, it has destroyed the local, national boundaries in every field of life. It destroyed the national identities and promoted to support the global aspects and identities. People were convinced to forsake their national products, their indigenous cultures, their own conventional food habits, dress codes, languages, festivals, medicines, cooking and agricultural works or styles. Globalization becomes successful to change the mindset of the native people. Making the whole world characterized by countless varieties a global village the supporters of globalization succeed to monopolize over the whole world. They become successful to annihilate or alter the 'tradition, convention of a particular nation just become of commerce and business. Various multinational companies, the upholders of globalization, try to lure the customers all across the world. Their same productions are sold all over the world Globalization has created a global market for the multinational companies. Globalization has changed the native ideologies and native thinking pattern. People of developing or under developed nations are not satisfied with their native culture because of globalization. The controllers of globalization feel the emotion and pulse of the people and they very tactfully play with emotion and passions of people. They know the value of emotion and so

they very shrewdly utilize emotional aspects of human beings. At the initial stage of globalization people were convinced to leave their own native productions, the own conventions, their own cultural productions and cultures. . But with the passage of time people understand the value of native emotion, value of own culture and cultural production and people wish to have their old native convention and tradition. To continue their own business and commerce globalization also blends both, and world gets not just global ideas, cultures and convention but world is satisfied with glocal ideas and productions for all fields of life and existence.

Once upon a time people feel comfortably put on cotton products. But due to industrialization native cotton products were replaced by terry cotton. Polyester products. When people want to have cotton products with the help of globalization the society gets Bengal Linen from air conditional shopping malls at high rates. Now native producers are also getting benefit from Globalization because they can sell their production in the global market in various names doing some modification in colour, style, size, texture and design. Kantha stitch saree, Dhaniakhalsaree, Begampurisaree, Murshidabad silk, Batik saree or shirts. Government and non-government sectors are helping to promote native productions in the global market.

Conclusion:

Globalization has not just altered or modified the saree it has influenced the whole folk- culture of the world in general but India in particular. Indian folk – tradition is greatly influenced by globalization. Almost each sector of folklore has withstood the mild onslaught of globalization. Polk literature that includes folktales , riddles , proverbs, folk song ,is greatly influenced by globalization .Folk song, folk – dance , folk-science, folk medicine, folk engineering , folk –arts, folk- knowledge ,folk customs and tradition have been blessed with the touch of globalization .Yes, globalization has changed, altered , modified folk – existence, but change is the law of nature, change is the characteristic of animation , so we get new –shape of folk traditions and we have to welcome the new reshaped version of folk tradition in the globalization world. ■

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Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason* - A Bio-Regional Perspective

N. Karpagavalli

N. Kavidha

Amitav Ghosh is one of the prominent writers of India, who has achieved many awards and recognitions for his writings on ecological issues, which is the very need of the hour. All his novels talk about issues of colonialism, migration, sufferings of the migrant refugees, pollution, and the ecosystem of a place- bio-region. He has also talked about the relationship between man and nature that exists beyond centuries. This paper attempts to identify the relationship of man in his immediate locale and the crisis he encounters in the new place, where he is forced to survive with lots of hope.

Key Words: bio-region, locale, place, migrants, terrain, bio-regional history, and storytelling.

The term bio-regionalism was coined by Allen Van Newkirk, founder of the institute, bio-regional research in, 1975. It was given currency by Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmann in the early 1970s, and has been advocated by writers like David Haenk and Kirkpatrick Sale. The concept of bio-regionalism aims at focusing on the local environment with a sense of commitment to a place, giving best solution to environmental problems. A place is always connected to local culture which has traditional values, rituals, beliefs, and myth of a community from time immemorial. The living community is moulded by their knowledge based on their natural system and it gives a positive shift in the attitude of the people. Natural systems are defined culturally by its inhabitants of a particular place and by their local ways of life. So the preservation of local ecosystem is possible only by maintaining a friendly relationship with it.

Amitav Ghosh in his novels highlights the relationship between man and nature. He beautifully describes a bio-region – a local region, its history, flora and fauna, which tends to connect the local to the global. In the novel *The Circle of Reason* he has presented the life of the indigenous people and their struggle in an unknown land, suffering without any rights for their living. Lalpukur is a bio-region, a place that is newly born due to human subjectivity. The story begins in Lalpukur, a village full of refugees who live in the outskirts of Calcutta. It is a dumping ground for the refugees who have crossed the borders in search of new shelter waiting with their belongings.

Ghosh painfully describes the plight of the people of Lalpukur. He writes

‘vomited out of their native soil years ago in another carnage and dumped hundreds of miles away, they had no anger left. Their only passion was memory; a longing for a land where the green was greener, their rice was whiter, the fish bigger than boats’(TCR 63).

The people of Lalpukur are the victims of history. They cannot fight against the political and the oppressive bureaucrats. The refugees glorify the past through the painful memory of their home and native land. The migrants, who are far away from their motherland live in nostalgia of the past in memories. The refugees suffer in the dangerous environment very much for want of food and shelter. The Partition of India is the reason for the displacement of thousands of people from their native land.

According to Peter Berg and Dasmann bio region “refers both to geographical terrain and terrain of consciousness to a place and the ideas that have developed about how to live in that place”(399). Kirk Patrick Sale in his *Dwellers in the land* suggest that bio regions are made of

‘particular attributes of flora, fauna, water climate, soils and landforms and by the human settlements and cultures those attributes have given rise to (55)’.

The main objective of bio-regionalism is to achieve a go -adaptive fit between local cultures and local environments.

The first part *Satwa* of *The Circle of Reason* talks about the refugees who are forced to evict from their native soil because of war. The refugees of Lalpukur belong to different places of India. In the locality they try their best to adapt to the new place and earn for the living. Soon they have learnt to survive and establish their own community by their patience. They have also started working in the fields of Bhudeb Roy, for meagre wages. Alu the hero comes to Balaram his uncle’s house after the death of his parents. Toru-debi aunt of Alu looks after him with so much of love and care. She fears how the city boy of eight will reside, in the village, as he is brought up in city Calcutta.

The people of the village live in close quarters with nature. The people work in the fields of Bhudeb Roy to fill their bellies. She beautifully describes Lalpukur as:

the red-dust lanes of the village; past the great vaulted and pillared banyan tree with the tea-shop and Bolai-da’s unrepaired cycles nestling in dark niches in its trunk . . . where the young men of the village gathered in the evenings to read newspapers and play cards and drink toddy; past the ponds mildew with water-hyacinth and darkened by leaning coconut palms, through velvety green fields of young rice, to the red-brick station three miles away.(TCR 6)

The above words of Toru-debi clearly states, the dependence of the local people, only on nature for food. The poor people go for all sorts of work for their living. In the village the cruel, rich man uses them in a heartless manner to satisfy his needs and pays them very little.

Balaram being a rationalist tries to do something purposeful for the people of the village. So he starts a school by naming it 'Pasteur School of Reason'. It has two sections. The first one, department of Pure Reason that teaches principles of sanitation, and the second, known as the department of Practical Reason which teaches employability and life skills like tailoring and weaving to the students. The school is very successful in the first year and in the second year a new department, the March of Reason is started with the initiation of purification of the village and to promote awareness of health and hygiene. Soon the school, starts cleaning the village with carbolic acid disinfecting everyone and everything. Ghosh talks about pollution and its negative consequences in day to day life. Pollution not only harms the environment but also promotes innumerable health hazards to all the living beings. Hence, through the novel Ghosh warns the people to take necessary precautions to make a pollution free nation for a better future.

In the *Ecocriticism Reader* Glotfelty shares

“The Bios (or ecosphere) is the home that life has built for itself on the planet’s outer surface. In that eco-sphere there is a reciprocal interdependence of one life process upon another, and there is a mutual interconnected development of all the earth’s life systems” (112).

So it is the responsibility of man to protect nature and avoid unnecessary intrusion and hindrance for the healing of the planet.

Judith Plant in her essay REVALUING HOME: Feminism and Bio-regionalism says “Bio regional action is based on local control and decentralization; nonviolence; sustainable life- styles; and on a revaluing and redefining of home”(21). Here one can find the bio-regional spirit in the character Balaram. He as a teacher and a true bio-regionalist, follows the idiom thinking locally and connects globally. Balaram, with his bio-regional spirit plunges into action. He starts cleaning the village with the assistance of the villagers. Bio-regionalism insists saying that, all innovations begin from home and everyone can make the difference only by participating in the act of decision making. Balaram has really found a new meaning to his mission by disinfecting the village, and gives new hope to the people.

Balaram has a very big mind to think

“Why do we always think of changing the world and never of changing people? Surely . . . if we succeed in making even one person . . . be better cleaner human being, we will have changed the world” (TCR 113).

Balram strongly believes that if he is able to unite and create awareness in the minds of the people of Lalpukur, then it is possible to clean the world. Hence Balram proves the local bio-regional network by connecting people to work together and thereby, gives a positive impact to a greater level change in the globe.

Alu comes to stay in Lalpukur with his uncle. He is a quiet child by nature. Every one mocks at him, for his extraordinary head. Bolaida says “it is an Alu a potato a huge fleshy lumpy potato”(TCR 4). He’s an observer who unconsciously perceives the gestures of his uncle and aunt. Alu is good at reading books with great interest from Balaram’s library. Alu gets sparked by Balaram’s obsession with carbolic acid and joins his hands for the community effort with his uncle. In the village, carbolic acid is applied to prevent the outbreak of epidemics in the overcrowded “shanty dwellings of refugees” (TCR 61). Balaram’s craziness to disinfect the village ends with his death and severe environmental destruction to Lalpukur.

The Assistant Superintendent of Police, Jyoti Das is employed to have an eye on Alu and Balaram. He writes a paper cutting report

“teacher battles with germs it said, save thousands. The report claimed that Lalpukur had stayed germ-free when thousands of other villages on the borders were consumed by disease because of the efforts of one Balaram, a teacher who had doused the village in waves of antiseptic” (TCR 98).

The selfless service of Balaram shows his love for the local environment and also his respect for the brotherhood. At this context it is suitable to quote Vincent McGinnis from his book *Bio-regionalism* says the bio-regional spirit of Balaram “alters the place to shape them in accordance with their ideological vision and in turn cultures are shaped by the power of their place” (52). Balaram is able to perceive the dialogue of the natives and the village of Lalpukur.

Now Alu starts running for life, being accused as extremist by the police. He flies from Lalpukur to Calcutta, Kerala, al- Ghazira and finally to Algeria. Alu to save his life moves across continents, countries and has witnessed different types of men and women. After the death of his family members, he joins the board of the ship *Mariammato* to the Middle East. His constant shifting of the borders portrays the trials and tribulations of human life, in the clutches of globalization. The “dehumanizing character of globalization reduces one’s inner spirit and sense of place and home becomes inherent” (69). The journey of Alu to different places, promote cross cultural connections, build universal love and understanding of transnational ecology.

The second part of the novel gives an account of the experiences of Alu and the community of migrants in Al-Ghazira. In the ship Alu meets Kulfi, Chunni, a professor, Karthama

a pregnant lady, a newborn baby boss, and Rakesh. All these migrants took refuge in the household of Zindi. Her name in Urdu means “alive” is the heart of the household, with a big heart mother keeps her family intact and afloat. The inmates have to pay the rent for food and shelter. She in return helps her inmates to find jobs. Zindi not only earns money from the migrants but also takes care of them. She says “ It is not my business; it’s my family, my aila, my own house, and I look after them, as the boys and girls, and no one’s unhappy and they all love me”(TCR 194). Thus Zindi has become the guardian angel of her family.

Zindi’s Apple house is an abode of several ethnic and religious groups. They are deliberately forced to live together for survival. They earn, eat, and live together as a family. Zindi’s domestic house can be called neither a “home” nor “a world” to the migrants. She treats them as her adopted children. They are not happy within the walls of the house and outside. They are deprived of political, social and economic freedom and are forced into insecurity. These migrant workers are not given permanent residence and citizenship. They are the marginalized and have no power to challenge their working conditions. C. Chin at this context writes the migrant workers are “remarkably mobile” and “labor in a largely disorganized and vulnerable state” (3). They become mere puppets in the hands of the employers who are cruel to them.

The chapters titled ‘going west’ and ‘becalmed’ give a brief account of the voyage of the migrants to al- Ghazira. Michael Vincent McGinnis writes, “Human beings and other animals are boundary creatures . . . In crossing boundaries, I believe a culture can find the seeds of bio-regional change and be more complete”(61). In the novel *Alu* and the migrants cross the borders for a better future. Soon they get settled in the house of Zindi adapting to the local (bio-region) environment. The migrants having lost their roots suffer from terrible loneliness and a sense of emptiness by their thoughts of belongingness, and love for the native soil. They long for love, security, and human warmth in the new foreign region.

The novel explores the issues of migration, marginalization, female migration, and oppression of migrants. The migrants in search of new identity in an alien world are caught in a dichotomy between the lost world and the world ahead. Ambarish Sen in his article titled “The rootless in foreign lands: A postcolonial reading of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Circle of Reason*” has referred the statement of Idil Bozkurt as

“ However, rather than replacing the old identity with the new, the migrant experiences the coexistence of the old self and the new self. It is difficult for the migrant to return back to his/her “roots/origins once the change is initiated”(3).

They can neither return to their roots nor delete the memories of the past that haunt their nights.

In al-Ghazira every migrant has a story to tell but have no place to belong. So they remain passive listeners hearing each other’s stories for want of an identity. Every story of

the individual speaks of the bitter experience of the sufferer and listeners of the community. The migrant refugees share their past in the form of tales and create new bio-regional histories.

“In each transformation nature takes on a different meaning. Children are more familiar with a bulldozer or earthmover than the oak and chaparral that were once part of their landscape. The old nature/culture relationship becomes part of the bio-regional history” (62).

Thus human life is full of travels and voyages, and it is inevitable, for it is the order of life.

In the Apple house, the migrants identify themselves by the power of Zindi’s power of storytelling. She is a capable person to soothe the pain of her inmates, by the magical power of her stories. Zindi makes stories out of her imagination. Each story has a painful social and economic background. Every individual teller tries to find his identity and shows the resistance against the authorities by breaking the EuroCentre. Therefore experience gives form and meaning in telling stories for them. So each story teller becomes a master narrative and it forms a vital role in the society and creates a qualitative society by bringing conscious awareness.

Here in the novel Zindi easily minces the past experiences of the migrants with her own creativity and adds more meaning to address their present predicament. Story telling gives a great relief to them by negotiating the past to move forward in the present by gaining identity in the community. Padgett in the book *Ecocriticism* shares “Much oral story telling conveys a religious sensibility that stresses a deep sense of attachment between a people and the land they inhabit” (136). Hence the migrant refugees by storytelling try to forget the past and cultivate a sense of attachment in the new land.

The town al-Ghazira is a paradise for the merchants of all parts of the world who flourish, since centuries of trade. One can witness the solidarity and a harmonious relationship among the various merchants of India, Oman, Zanzibar, Iraq and Persia who stand by respect and mutual understanding. The British with the intention of appropriating the town join hands together with Amir Malik’s half brother and transformed the town al-Ghazira into an oil town. The British with the help of its missions plants specially grown date palms like a miracle.

The entire country is transformed into oil town. The migrants at the oil town are merely tools in the hands of the capitalists to obey their commands. So to celebrate the victory, the oilman of the country wish to construct a shopping complex called Najima the STAR as a monument of capitalism. The natives who join hands together with the local head rebel against the oil man, but it remains futile killing the local people. Hajji Fahmy narrates the fall of the Star as “no one wanted the star. That was why the star fell a house with which nobody wants cannot stand” (TCR 264). The Star stands as the emblem of the victory of capitalism but its collapse declares the signs of their potential demise in the cosmopolitan world.

The illegal migrants are very large in number than the natives of al-Ghazira. They work in constructions for long hours, for lowwages. They live in the outskirts of the town in a narrow inlet called “the Ras-al-Maqtu, the Severed Head, and a sandbar garroted by the road on the embankment” (TCR 210). The lively migrant world is painted as:

On one side of the road, jostling for space, were tiled Iranian chelo-kebab shops, Malayalam dosa stalls, long narrow Lebanese restaurants, fruit- juice stalls run by Egyptian from the Sa’I’d, Yemeni cafes with aprons . . . as though half the world ‘s haunts had been painted in miniature along the side of a single street. (TCR377)

The migrants live as a community beyond the diversity of caste, creed, language and nationality. They are so closely linked and foster solidarity. Their willingness to break the boundaries transcended all divisions to create a new non anthropocentric culture, by their interconnectedness of varied local culture by moving towards the Centre in the development of a world culture. The curse of globalization make the Ghaziri’s and the migrants to stand together despite their differences. It is the imperialistic notion that is in the minds of the migrants to experience a sense of place, terrain of consciousness to reinhabit their present land by changing their perception by acknowledging other’s difference as their way of life. Here in al-Ghazira, Ghosh’s delineation of characters from Egypt, Arabia, Persia and India living as a community stands as an epitome of Universal brother-hood (humanity) rather than racial identity. Thus Bio-regionalism is a politics of ‘re-inhabitation ‘ which encourages people for a better understanding of the natural and cultural landscape in which they already live by breaking the homogenized global culture in promoting solidarity of the community at local level.

Kirkpatrick Sale in his book *Dwellers in The Land :The Bio-regional Vision* proclaims,

“the crucial and perhaps only and all-encompassing task is to understand place . . . the cultures of the people, of the populations native to the land and of those who have grown up with it, the human social economic arrangements shaped by and adapted to the geographic ones, in both urban and rural settings . . . (42).

The migrants in al -Ghazira who are forcefully evicted from their native soil in course of time adapt to the new environment and adjust to the physical, cultural and social landscape of the new country. Bio-regionalism intends to question the neo-colonial mentality of westernization which hampers the harmonious relationship between man and nature.

The concept of bio-region is formed to re-establish man’s distorted relationship with the other non-human forms in the ecosystem. It exhibits the issues of nature- culture

dichotomy. Human beings are inseparable part of place's life in ones' bio-region. The adaptive culture of man to new places with regard to the existing ecology makes much sense to their survival. So the Bio-regionalists insist that man's attachment to land has a significant role in shaping person's personality and it gives him lot of new energy to live a meaningful life in the foreign landscape.

Alu as an idealist as his uncle Balaram emerges into a new avatar and wishes to destroy the dirt in the world is money and convinces the inmates of the Apple house to put an end to the profit making commerce in Ras. Alu and his friends challenge the economy of the town by encouraging the residents of Ras to join hands with them for a new material prosperity. In the encounter many of Alu's friends are killed by the police. Alu's trial of new micro-economy destroys the curse of capitalism. Sale in this context in *Ecocriticism* says that, the duty of the bio-regionalists is to promote decentralization of economy, in the form of regional diversity by breaking the central power and favoring the self-govern of the locals.

In *The Circle of Reason* the protagonist Alu is wrongly branded as a terrorist and is chased by the police officer Jyoti Das. He flies with Alu along the three parts of the novel. Alu having no roots travels from land to water and to desert. So travel itself becomes a homeland to him. The bird imagery in the novel highlights the flight of the characters from one region to other. In the novel Jyoti Das is the bird watcher and draws picture of rare birds. In the novel birds play a significant role in the story. The flight of the protagonist Alu from Lalpukur (land) to Mahe (water) then to al-Ghazira to Algeria (desert) and again to (home) India completes the circle. Thus place plays a very great role to play in Alu's life. He connects all the three types of landscapes, and through him the narrator has deciphered the value of a place its culture and the inseparable connection of man with land beyond centuries.

Jyoti Das shares his childhood experience watching birds in a lake witnessing:

he saw a shimmering, velvety carpet of ducks, and cormorants and storks covering the lake. Somewhere in that mass of birds his eyes picked out a purple of herons with their long bills raised to the sky and their brilliantly colored wing outstretched
“(TCR 39).

Jyoti Das in pursuit of Alu sees variety of birds in his journey. His trip to Mahe is pacified by the sight of “a paradise fly catcher” (TCR 163) and “spotted a Malabar Kingfisher on a telegraph pole” (TCR 171). In the Sahara desert in a little village of El Oued, the bird-man is called as a vulture, hunting for its prey. The play *Chitrangada* is in session and Kulfi dies in the stage. So the police officer decides to travel with Alu and Zindi to Tangier. Suddenly

“he saw a sky alive with Cory's shearwaters and honey buzzards, white storks and steppe eagles Montagu's Harrier's and sparrowhawks circling . . . My God! He

said. The whole sky will be migrating over Tangier now” (TCR 454-455).

The birds reflect the flight of the migrants who suffer from desperation and rootlessness. The migrants are deprived of a place to reside permanently crossing boundaries and borders of the nations.

Ghosh in the novel *The Circle of Reason* has brought in the limelight the conflicts that emerge in a space or place of a living community. Here Lalpukur is the bio-region, where people from different countries are forced to live together by political insurgency. The people try their level best to forget the past, and live in memories in the new place. In al-Ghazira the sufferings of the migrants in the oil town and Zindi's Apple house are the examples that picture the painful predicament of the people who travel beyond boundaries, with hope for a better future. So it is inevitable that man has to belong somewhere- a place to live. So it is the moral responsibility of man to understand the rhythm of nature and to preserve it for the future generations. ■

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Ethics of Disobedience: Thoreau's Philosophy of Civil Disobedience and its Relevance in Contemporary Society

Reena Chatterjee

Henry David Thoreau was an American author, naturalist, transcendentalist, tax resister, development critic and philosopher. His master piece oeuvre 'Civil Disobedience' argues for the moral and ethical duty of individuals to resist unjust laws and government policies and practices through non-existent violent civil disobedience. His essay profoundly advocates for individuals to prioritize their conscience and moral principles over blindly following directives, especially when these directives conflict with their sense of right and wrong. This essay has influenced various social and political movements, including those centered around civil rights and environmental activism.

This paper delves philosophical underpinning of disobedience as elucidated by Thoreau, particularly in his magnum opus 'Civil Disobedience.' Thoreau's exploration of the moral imperative to resist unjust laws and systems has enduring relevance, provoking critical reflections on the ethical obligations of individuals within contemporary societies. Presenting Thoreau's insights, this paper seeks to analyse the ethical dimensions of disobedience in the modern context. It reveals the applicability of Thoreau's philosophy in addressing contemporary issues such as social Justice, political corruption and environmental degradation. It explores the ethical considerations inherent in acts of disobedience including the questions of legitimacy, accountability and the balance between individual conscience and social order. This paper contributes to the ongoing discourse on ethics and disobedience by elucidating the enduring relevance of Thoreau's philosophy in guiding ethical actions and fostering social changes. It also underscores the importance of ethical reflection and conscientious dissent in navigating moral challenges and advancing towards a more just and equitable world.

Key Words: Accountability, Civil Disobedience, Conscience, Environmentalism, Legitimacy, Social Justice, Transcendentalism.

Introduction:

The ideal of literature is the nurturer of humanism. The criterion to judge the exaltation and deterioration of literature is that; the literature promulgates the holistic development of man or not, which is created for the purpose to empower the human society. Literary creation is a subtle act for that one has to go within one self and reappear. True literature takes the man to the zenith of sublimity when a man realizes the existence of pure consciousness which comes from the luminous thought and the exploration of truth.

In the annals of ethical philosophy, number of literary giants created their literature manifesting the ideas of sublime human values and their effect on the pure consciousness. Similarly, Thoreau, Emerson and Walt Whitman who were the great transcendentalist, had great concern to reform the American society. They were all good citizens of the world. These writers built on native American material and embodied American attitude specially, the concept of individualism and self- reliance. Among the luminaries who grappled with the ethics of disobedience, Henry David Thoreau occupies a prominent place. Thoreau sought throughout his life to live a life of meaning- a life in which he would understand the truth of his own nature, relationship with nature and with the universe. He was attracted to oriental thought and philosophy like a prominent transcendentalist. Emerson, Thoreau and other transcendentalist attained the concept of “Selfhood” found in Hindu scriptures, a well elaborated doctrine of self. Emerson was influenced by oriental thought and philosophy as he found in the Hindu doctrines of soul congenial to his own ideas about Man’s relationship to the universe. Thoreau found in Hindu scriptures a way of life with which he felt a profound affinity.

We know too that Thoreau’s reading led him to an interest in Yoga. He wrote in a letter to a friend: “Free in this world as the birds in the air, disengaged from every kind of chains, those who have practiced the yoga gather in Brahma, the certain fruit of their works.... The Yogi, absorbed in contemplation, contribution in his degree to creation.... Divine forms traverse him... and, united to the nature which is proper to him, he goes he act as animating original matter.... To some extent, and at rare interval, even I am a yogi.” (Thoreau 112) And in ‘Walden’, Thoreau describes a state of mind that has the close resemblance to the experience of the Yogi. It is similar also to the transcendental Self of the ‘Upanishads’ which as Sakshi or spectator merely looks on without participating in the pageant of the world.

Like Emerson, Thoreau in his early years expressed no interest in politics. He believed that social reform was at best superficial reform, that the only true reform took place within the individual. Nevertheless, as tensions grew in the 1850’s between North and South, he was impelled by compassion to join the verbal battle against slavery, becoming an active abolitionist and helping runaway slaves to escape. As an abolitionist, Thoreau raised his vociferous voice to eliminate the slavery system and as a social critic, he opposed the tyranny of government over the individual. Thoreau wrote essays and made speeches

which promulgates his idea of justice and human right that is more important than the policies and practices of elected government. The best and worldly acclaimed his essay 'Civil Disobedience' manifests his idea and his decision to defy the government and his refusal to pay a tax. For this action, he was jailed. This was published in 1849 which expresses the principle of passive resistance and the moral superiority of individual conscience to Governmental law.

Text Discussion:

Thoreau opens his 'Civil Disobedience' with the maxim "That government is best which governs least." (Fisher 112) He manifests his idea by stating "I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically." (Thoreau 112) Carried out it finally amounts to this which also I believe: "That government is best which governs not at all"; and when men are prepared for it that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The government itself which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it." (Thoreau 112)

Thoreau's idea here involves, the deliberate violation of laws to protest against perceived injustice. He raises the first ethical consideration: the legality of actions. While moral authority can underline it as unethical or violation of law. This perspective is rooted in the belief that morality and legality are not always aligned and that individuals have a moral duty to resist unjust laws. Being a transcendentalist, Thoreau advocates that true goal of man's life is leading it with simplicity and dignity that can be attained through self-reliance. It shows Thoreau's intense support for man's right, mentioned in constitution that should not be infringed by any government. In his essay, Thoreau proceeds with the thought that everyone should be a good citizen adhering the principles of constitution. But, he asserts that being a pure consciousness, a man must obey his moral duty. He states "Why has every man a conscience, then? I think that we should be men first and subjects afterwards" (Thoreau 112)

Thoreau propounds that all men should identify and attain the right of revolution that is the right to refuse unjust policies and practices of government. When government's tyranny or its inefficiency are uncontrolled and unbearable, we should resist and make protest against it. Everyone must admit the principles of justice and equality to protect the right of a man against the authoritarianism of Government.

Thoreau's idea underlines the philosophy that riches or property is not only our wealth. Rather, it includes the wealth of thought prominently. He suggests that if you get any information, you must use your sensibility before you go to deliver it. You judge it with your thought and with your consciousness and truth. Your mind should always be free from fear and thought should be boundless. Thoreau adds another remarkable point in his essay 'Civil Disobedience' that all voting is a kind of gaming. It is a sort of playing chess or playing a game from back side, adding the tinge or colour of morality. It shows the game of

playing with right and wrong with same moral questions. He remarks “The characters of voters is not staked. I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right, but I am not vitally concerned that right should prevail.” (Thoreau 112)

He says that slavery, that is prevailed in American society can be abolished by a conscious and just man. A just man can uproot slavery by refusing to support the unjust policies of government by going to jail as a form of protest. He advocates for nonviolent resistance and promulgates that one person taking a stand against an unjust system can inspire others to do the same. Thoreau’s concept of casting vote shows his different views as he doesn’t value of voting. He underlines that most elections are corrupt. The country would be better off with an absolute, just and kind ruler. Voting leaves justice to the chance of majority vote. He asserts that because generally governments are usually more harmful than helpful. Consequently, cannot be justified. Democracy is not cure for this, as majority is simply by virtue of being majority. It doesn’t also gain the virtue of wisdom and Justice. It means that the government which gets majority doesn’t mean that it will do the justice for all people similarly and make policies with wisdom. He asserts “Why government doesn’t cherish the wise of minority? Why does it not encourage its citizen to be an alert to point out its faults and do better than it would have them?” (Thoreau 112)

He exhorts that elected government may be failed to maintain all the democratic and secular ideas by becoming an authoritarian body. Because, basically they become the voice of majority and sometimes voice of the minority are suppressed. An elected government needs to have mandate which it gains from the majority of people. Therefore, minorities are typically sidelined. Thoreau again gives a great message to the humanity. Through these following lines, he shows his great concern about man’s indifferent attitude towards prevailing evils in society. He states: “Why do it always crucify Christ and excommunicates Copernicus and Luther and pronounce Washington and Franklin rebels.... But even suppose blood should flow... Is there sort of bloodshed when the conscience is wounded? through this wound a man’s real manhood and immortality flow out, and he bleeds to an everlasting death. I see this blood flowing now.” (Thoreau 112)

Thoreau, here encapsulates why several great men of the world were either crucified or poisoned or excommunicated or murdered. He elaborates that it happened because they raised their vociferous voice against those unjust, dictators and vote gamblers respectively over the centuries to the present situation. Those sacrificed souls actually heard the voice of their conscience to save manhood and immortality. They didn’t care of their lives and their families. For his contemporary situation, Thoreau says now people are determined to make protest against these injustice and suppression. To save life from everlasting death, Thoreau states that we shouldn’t let our immortal thought and pure consciousness die. Our body can be shackled or jailed but our thoughts, ideas and principles are immortal. Indeed, these forces and indomitable courage bring revolution in society. Thoreau states: “Under a government which imprisons anyone unjustly, the true place for just man is also a prison page.” (Thoreau 120)

Thoreau was jailed for not paying tax. It was his peaceful protest against an unjust system. Thoreau, here suggests that every true man who has manhood will make protest, if the government which is unjust and is leading an arbitrary rule. Therefore, just and true person are always imprisoned by an unjust government. When Thoreau was imprisoned Emerson, the great transcendentalist of that time and Thoreau's contemporary visited him and asked "Why are you here, Henry?" Thoreau merely replied, "Why are you not here?" (Thoreau120)

Thoreau in his concluding paragraph of his essay states: "The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy is a progress towards a true respect for the individual, even the Chinese philosopher was wise enough to regard the individual as the basis of the empire. Is a democracy, such as we know it, the last improvement? Is it not possible to take a step further toward recognizing and organizing the right of man?" (Thoreau 124)

Thoreau here manifests the significance of the responsibilities of individual in society. He argues for a higher moral law that an individual should follow by disobeying legal status perceived as unjust. He proliferates the idea that individuals can fix the limits of governmental authority for the pursuits of justice. Individuals can restraint the absolute power of arbitrary rule and can change it into democracy. By quoting a Chinese philosopher, Thoreau presents the idea that an individual is the basis of the Empire. He argues that we should take steps further to protect human rights. We can say that Thoreau's call for conscientious objection and ethical action resonates profoundly among us. In his concluding lines of his last paragraph of this essay Thoreau states: "There will never be a really free and enlightened state until the state comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly." (Thoreau124) Here, he remarks that individuals have a moral duty to resist the unjust laws and government actions and its policies. He underlies the universal principle of justice and fairness. He says that there will never be a complete freedom in the state until the right of a single person is hampered. He also states that state recognises the independent power of an individual through which the state derives its own power and authority.

It is remarkable that Thoreau's principles have inspired various movements globally, influencing great leaders and activists who accepted crucial challenges against injustice. It paved the way to advance human rights through non-violent means. Despite critiques and challenges, Thoreau's advocacy for individual moral autonomy and resistance to unjust authority continues to shape global conversations on civil disobedience and ethical governance. Leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela in South Africa and Jr. Martin Luther King drew inspiration from Thoreau's philosophy while advocating for independence and equality against colonial oppression. Thoreau promulgates non-violent resistance as a powerful means of protest against injustice. This ideology was embraced globally as an effective strategy for social and political changes. Gandhiji's application of

Thoreau's ideas in India's struggle for independence demonstrates the efficacy of non-violent civil disobedience in challenging oppressive regime.

Mahatma Gandhi read 'Civil Disobedience' some sixty years after its composition when he was in South African prison and was encouraged by it to persist in the path of passive resistance. He manifests "It left a deep impression on me," he later wrote. "The essay seemed to be so convincing and truthful that I felt the need of knowing more of Thoreau, and he had gone on to 'Walden' and other essays. After reading his literatures, he asserted "all of which I read with great pleasure and equal profit." (Thoreau 127)

In this regard, it is needed to quote Bertolt Brecht (German playwright, poet and theatrist). "The worst illiterate is the political illiterate; he doesn't hear, doesn't speak nor participates in the political events. He doesn't know the cost of life, the price of beans, of the fish, of the flour, of the rent, of the shoes and of the medicine, all depends on the political decisions. The political illiterate is so stupid that he is proud and swells his chest saying that he hates politics. The imbecile doesn't know that, from his political ignorance is born the prostitute, the abandoned child, and the worst thieves of all, the bad politician, corrupt and flunky of the national and multinational companies." [9] Bertolt Brecht, through his essays and theoretical writings promulgates the idea that theatre or writings, as an art should not merely reflect the word as it is, but it should serve a purpose beyond entertainment by encouraging ordinance to become more politically aware and engaging them in critical thinking about social and political issues. Bertolt Brecht's statement about political illiteracy reflects his views on the importance of political awareness and participation. It criticizes those who remain apathetic or ignorant towards politics. He emphasizes that political decisions affect every aspect of society including the quality of life for individuals. He considers those people stupid and imbecile who say individually "He hates politics".

Conclusion:

To conclude, it is regarded that Thoreau's worldly acclaimed essay 'Civil Disobedience' offers profound insights into the ethical obligations of individuals in confronting injustice and advocating for societal change. Its enduring relevance prompts continued research into the ethical framework, the revolution activism and strategies for promoting justice and equality in a rapidly changing world. Although rooted in 19th century America, Thoreau's idea reverberates beyond time and space. His ideas have been embraced by movement for civil rights, anti-colonialism and to sustain democracy worldwide. His essay is grounded in the belief that all people, regardless of nationality or circumstances should strive for society governed by ethical principles. In contemporary context, activist worldwide continue to invoke the principles of civil disobedience to resist oppression, advocate for human rights and promote democratic government. This idea of civil disobedience or calm protest against unjust lesser policies becomes very significant in today's socio-political scenario. In India number of movements made a considerable impact on the social and political surroundings here. In this regard, one thing is remarkable that every

responsible citizen should be conscious and except reality against the illusion created by government. In this contemporary world, this idea becomes ardently relevant to promulgate the resistance movements. Over the past several years, it has been leading numerous movements against worldwide authoritarianism. So, people should be politically aware about the formation of the government and the freedom of the institutions. Only casting vote is not our responsibility. Before that, we should know right governance of the government.

Indeed, the philosophy or ideas of Thoreau, Brecht and other writers manifest that art and culture should serve to educate and provoke critical thought. It should encourage audience to participate actively in all sorts of activities that happen around them rather than passively accepting and blindly following the decisions, policies and practices of opportunities and corrupt political leaders. ■

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Raymond Williams' Idea of Cultural Studies

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Culture is the way people live. Civilization is what they use such as books and theatres, offices and residential buildings, administration and defence. The famous Victorian critic Matthew Arnold defined culture as 'sweetness and light' and, "he tried to establish the nature of a broad and all-embracing nation of culture." (Sanders 452) But Arnold who classified culture into three categories said that the poor people have no culture. Raymond Williams defines culture as an ideal, as documentation and as a particular way of life.

Key Words: culture, anarchy, ideal. documentation, value

Raymond Williams (1921-88) has been a famous British leftist culture critic. He was born into a working class family in Wales. He graduated from Cambridge. He was a professor of drama at Cambridge from 1974 to 1983. He wrote on drama, culture, materialism etc.

Williams' most important work *Culture and Society* (1958) speaks of common culture against Arnold's elite culture as enumerated in his book *Culture and Anarchy*. Williams was a leftist critic having written on Orwell, Marxism and Problems in Materialism and Culture.

Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism observes (2001):

Literary studies in England after World War II were dominated by 'Cambridge English,' strongly influenced by F.R. Leavis, a long time professor at Cambridge and the editor of the leading critical journal of its day, *Scrutiny*. Extolling, in his famous phrase, *The Great Tradition*, Leavis privileged literature above all other disciplines, as offering a special morally edifying force. In so doing, he followed Matthew Arnold, who in *Culture and Anarchy* claimed that the literary canon could provide a civilizing 'sweetness and light' to society, in effect assuming the redemptive power previously enjoyed by religion. Williams desacralizes literature by setting it in its historical context and examining its social uses. (*Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* 2)

Williams' work *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (1958) revised Arnold's notions of culture for our times. Culture tends the human mind so that one might be a cultured individual. The

term ‘culture’ came to mean arts, meaning a high social value. He thinks culture is a body of intellectual and imaginative works – the whole way of life.

Williams calls his theoretical approach ‘cultural materialism,’ at once invoking the Marxist focus on the economic means of production and emphasizing the role of culture. Stressing the complex interaction of culture and society, he investigates the material, historical factors that inform culture as part of society’s superstructure – but he also shows how culture shapes society in an on-going process, often contesting and resisting dominant modes of production.

Williams’ work, as he remarks in *Culture and Society*, has been classified under headings as various as cultural history, historical semantics, history of ideas, social criticism, literary history and sociology. While some critics complain about Williams’ style, which can be murky and ponderous, his disciplinary boundary crossing made him a model for cultural studies.

Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall started Birmingham School of Culture Studies in 1964. It is called The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) which closed recently. The school played a critical role in developing the field of culture studies. Williams was associated with this school right from its beginning. The school veered from Arnold’s idea of culture to Williams’. It evolved from Modernism, Structuralism, Marxism, Subaltern Studies, Postcolonialism and Linguistics. The school pioneered a variety of approaches to the study of culture, including ideological analysis, studies of working class cultures and subcultures, the role of media, race etc.

In general, culture is a way of life. Roland Barthes was also a precursor of modern culture studies. Richard Hoggart’s *The Use of Literacy* (1958) also furthered the case. New Historicism pioneered Americans’ interest in culture studies. In like manner, anthropologists defined culture as a set of signifying systems.

M.H. Abrams and G.G. Harpham observe this:

A prominent endeavour in cultural studies is to subvert the distinctions in traditional criticism between ‘high literature’ and ‘high art’ and what were considered the lower forms that appeal to a much larger body of consumers. Typically, cultural studies pay less attention to works in the established literary canon than to popular fiction, best-selling romances (that is, love stories), journalism, and advertising, together with other arts that have mass appeal such as cartoon comics, film, television ‘soap operas,’ and rock and rap music. (Abrams and Harpham 75).

Raymond Williams defines culture as an ideal, as documentation and as a particular way of life. He observes,

There are three general categories in the definition of culture. There is, first, the ‘ideal’, in which culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values. The analysis of culture, if such a definition is accepted,

is essentially the discovery and description, in lives and works, of those values which can be seen to compose a timeless order, or to have permanent reference to the universal human condition. Then, second, there is the 'documentary', in which culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded. The analysis of culture, from such a definition, is the activity of criticism, by which the nature of the thought and experience, the details of the language, form and convention in which these are active, are described and valued. Such criticism can range from a process very similar to the 'ideal' analysis, the discovery of 'the best that has been thought and written in the world', through a process which, while interested in tradition, takes as its primary emphasis the particular work being studied (its clarification and valuation being the principal end in view) to a kind of historical criticism which, after analysis of particular works, seeks to relate them to the particular traditions and societies in which they appeared.

He elaborates,

Finally, third, there is the 'social' definition of culture, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour. (Williams 6)

It seems that there is value in each of these kinds of definition. For it certainly seems necessary to look for meanings and values, the record of creative human activity, not only in art and intellectual work, but also in institutions and forms of human behaviour.

This culture is a broad reference. It is to be taken as a whole. This culture contributes to the growth of man's power and it enriches his life, and regulates his society. It controls his environment. There is an important referencing in each of the three kinds of categories of culture.

We need to distinguish three levels of culture, even in its most general definition. There is the lived culture of a particular time and place, only fully accessible to those living in that time and place. There is the recorded culture, of every kind, from art to the most everyday facts: the culture of a period. There is also, as the factor connecting lived culture and period cultures, the culture of the selective tradition.

It is very important to try to understand the operation of a selective tradition. To some extent, the selection begins within the period itself; from the whole body of activities, certain things are selected for value and emphasis. In general this selection will reflect the organisation of the period as a whole, though this does not mean that the values and emphases will later be confirmed. There are reversals and discoveries too. ■

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English Language Education in Nagaland: A Review and Valuables

T Imsunaro

Rosaline Jamir

This paper explores the process of teaching and learning English language in the state of Nagaland, India. It presents a comprehensive approach to contribute positively towards teaching English language in Nagaland's education institutions. With the arrival of the British expedition and the American Baptist Missionaries in Nagaland during the 1800s, it is a fact that these events contributed towards disseminating the English language as the official language and the education aspect of it. It further expounds into the intricacies of the multilingual languages that is akin among different Naga tribes and how it has unfolded overtime. The methodology for this study being proposed is a mix-method, with a combination of qualitative and quantitative approach with the use of questionnaire to collect its data.

Key Words: English language; teaching; education; Nagaland

English is the official language of the majority of the world's top nations. Given the status of the English language on a worldwide scale, it is undeniable that it holds significant importance as a lingua franca in international communication, trade, diplomacy, science, technology, and academia. The English language brings the world closer together by unifying the diverse speech communities. It is a single language with multiple disciplines of study. It is also known as the International Language, the Global Language, the World Language, and the Common Language. The education of the English language is crucial in promoting proficient communication, analytical reasoning, and cross-cultural comprehension in an ever more integrated global society. English, being a widely used language worldwide, acts as a connector between different languages and cultures, impacting multiple domains such as education, commerce, technology, and global affairs.

The majority of people believe that teaching English should follow practical guidelines and be skill and language-based. When evaluating English language role in the Indian educational system, Patel and Jain made the excellent suggestion that it must be taught as a language, a medium, and a set of skills rather than as a literary language. They

emphasized that the English language needs to evolve, both in terms of how it is taught and the impact it has on a person's whole development.

It is crucial to understand that learners are responsible for their learning process. As Kumar has rightly pointed out, the attention has now turned towards the distinctive qualities of learners, including their specific learning styles and approaches (Kumar, S:1995). This perspective regards learning as a dynamic process that places greater emphasis on the method of instruction rather than the content being taught. This emphasizes the significance of the learner's involvement in the process of language teaching and learning. The term 'learner' no longer refers to someone lacking knowledge. Consequently, the teacher must adjust their mindset to better comprehend the student while strengthening their overall teaching approach. It is important to stress that the function of the teacher, which was formerly well-defined and obvious, must undergo significant modifications to accommodate the learners' mindset (Kumar, S: 1995).

With a broad scope in mind, this study aims to explore the process of teaching and learning, while also considering the teacher's perspectives of their role in language teaching. This treatise was inspired by the challenges the researcher confronts as an English language teacher at the undergraduate level in Nagaland, where there exists a wide range of challenges in terms of students' self-esteem, attitude, motivation, and ability to learn and the efficient use of the language. A teacher will be under constant pressure to raise the students' level of competency. When students join college, they have expectations of what language acquisition entails and what defines success. As a result, they should feel more comfortable speaking the language in social and academic settings. Nonetheless, the majority of students have not yet reached the confidence level. The degree of proficiency in all four language skills is well below par. All four language skills have far from satisfactory performance levels. By examining and analysing some of the underlying issues with the English language teaching in the government colleges in Nagaland, the researcher endeavours to delve into the teaching and learning process.

Nagaland is one of the North-Eastern Indian states where English has been proclaimed the official language. The English language is adopted and integrated into the fundamental fabric of the Nagas' language. From a broader perspective on India's official languages, it is significant to note that Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh are the only Indian states where English is the only official language. Noting that Nagas have adopted a language that is not one of their dialects is also intriguing. In Nagaland, there are various languages but no common language, a condition that is unique. Therefore, in such a circumstance, the English language functions as a unifying factor that brings everyone under one roof.

The first major event was the first British expedition in 1832, and the second major event was the entrance of the American Baptist missionaries in 1872, which happened forty years later. These two significant landmark events can be linked as the origins of English Language Education (ELE) in Nagaland. It should be remembered that after the middle of

the nineteenth century, Christian missionaries were the ones who first introduced the English language in Nagaland. Dr. & Mrs. E.W Clark of the American Baptist mission were the first Christians to set foot in the Naga hills in 1874. In 1878, a mission school was established in Molungyimsen, Mokokchung, and 8 (eight) more followed in the Ao region. Along with teaching them how to read the Bible, missionaries also taught them how to work as clerks. The fast expansion of Christian missions contributed to the further dissemination of education over the entire Naga region, as Zetsuvi and Shukla pointed out (Zetsuvi & Shukla 2006). Dr. E.W. Clark composed the Ao language in Roman script and translated the Bible into local languages. Additionally, it was decided to incorporate English in addition to Assamese and the native tongue. Clark believed it would be prudent and beneficial for the people to be educated in the English language due to the fact that textbooks are written in English and there are several fascinating and important books published in English (Clark 1888).

The origin of education in Nagaland may be traced to the Christian missionaries who, at the risk of their lives, undertook the arduous task of reaching out to the Nagas. Their major goal was to convert the animist Nagas to Christianity, but they would not succeed in this endeavour unless the Nagas themselves were first given a solid education. As a result, they established a number of primary mission schools, which were essential in the development of education in Nagaland. The number of schools and teachers began to increase throughout time. High schools and subsequently higher secondary schools were developed from primary schools later on. It also paved the way for colleges and, subsequently, their own central university. Every time missionaries travelled to Nagaland, they founded schools at the stations and neighbouring villages.

To comprehend the language education in Nagaland, it is crucial to grasp the intricate multilingual scenario of the state. In Nagaland, the diverse linguistic makeup requires that each tribe speaks a unique language, which in turn has additional dialectal differences. Within the Naga tribes, there exist different degrees of intellectual and economic advancement. However, every tribe is granted equal status and entitlement to the state's resources. Therefore, there does not exist a Naga language that can be regarded as dominant or more extensively utilized. This was the primary factor that led to English being the exclusive official language of Nagaland. In 1967, the Nagaland assembly declared English as the official language of Nagaland, and it is used as the primary language for education in the state.

According to Grierson's classification approach, Naga languages can be categorized into three categories: Western, Central, and Eastern Naga groupings. The Western group include Angami, Chokri, and Kezha. The central Naga group includes the Ao, Lotha, and Sangtam tribes, while the Eastern group consists of the Konyak and Chang tribes. The languages mainly pertain to the Sino-Tibetan language family. Due to the lack of mutual intelligibility among these languages, individuals rely on a pidgin language known as Nagamese for communication.

As noted above, recorded history indicates that English language education and Christian religion emerged simultaneously. During the British government in Nagaland, Christianity was introduced to the indigenous population. Christian missionaries began noteworthy work in the field of English language teaching with the onset of British administration. After attaining independence, Naga Hills was renamed Naga Hills Tuensang as a result of a constitutional amendment. On December 1, 1963, the then-president, Dr. Radhakrishnan, formally inaugurated the Naga Hills Tuensang territory, which was accorded the status of a state in the Indian union and was afterwards named Nagaland. With the formation of Nagaland as a state, education rapidly spread, and schools were created in even the most remote regions. By being selected as the official language, it also became the language of choice in the State legislative Assembly. As a result, English became the language of the learned and the common language among the Nagas.

The history of higher education in Nagaland predates the state's 1963 admission to statehood. Throughout history, the Naga society has consistently placed high importance on education as a means to instil its citizens with progressive life values. There was a time as Sreedhar rightly stated that Despite English being the official language at the state level, only a small percentage of Nagas were proficient in it. This dilemma is unique and cannot be found elsewhere in the world. Today, we envisage a Naga civilization advancing with a vision of self-sufficiency and all-around growth. This goal is intricately connected to the advancement and growth of the English language within the society. It is also important to possess a broad perspective grounded in historical trends. Nagaland, a state located in the North-Eastern region of India, places significant emphasis on English language education, acknowledging its significance as a universal medium of communication and a crucial instrument for socio-economic progress. The English language serves as the instructional medium in both schools and colleges. The state government, in collaboration with various educational organizations, persists in its efforts to improve students' English language proficiency.

English language education comprises a diverse array of activities and projects that focus on enhancing a person's mastery of the English language. This level of competency surpasses fundamental language abilities and encompasses the capacity to understand the textbook, articulate thoughts with clarity, participate in meaningful conversations, and navigate academic and professional environments. In recent years, studies in English language education (ELE) have emerged as a key concern and thrust area. This has been given much importance in the teaching and learning of English in Nagaland. The state presents a unique and complex linguistic landscape due to its diverse indigenous languages and the pervasive influence of English as a second language.

Within this context, the researcher is motivated by a desire to delve into various facets of English language education in Nagaland, aiming to contribute valuable insights and solutions to the challenges faced within the ELE scenario. The researcher's interest is not merely academic but also rooted in a genuine concern for improving the quality and

effectiveness of English language education for learners in Nagaland. Through this write-up, the researcher seeks to address both practical and theoretical questions that have long been a source of curiosity and concern. These questions may range from the effectiveness of current teaching methodologies to the materials used in teaching English and the assessment pattern and ideologies on language learning outcomes. By exploring these complexities through rigorous study and analysis, the researcher aims to offer contextually relevant recommendations for enhancing English language education practices in the region.

Overall, the impetus for this research lies in the researcher's deep-seated interest in English language education, coupled with a commitment to addressing the specific challenges and opportunities present within the ELE scenario in Nagaland. Through this study, the researcher aspires to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing dialogue and efforts aimed at improving language education outcomes for learners in Nagaland. The scope of the study is vast, given the geographical spread and the multitude of factors influencing ELE in Nagaland. However, by undertaking this endeavour, the researcher demonstrates a commitment to providing comprehensive insights into the state of English language education at the undergraduate level, which can inform policy-making, curriculum development, and pedagogical practices in Nagaland's educational institutions. The study is based on a systematic design and approach to study and analyse English language education at the undergraduate level. It employs a mixed-methods approach, which is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study utilizes both methodologies in order to conduct a comprehensive investigation.

(a) Qualitative: This shows that the research is exploratory and descriptive. According to Christians and Carey (1989), as cited in Potter (2013), when studying communication, researchers should immerse themselves in the situation to fully understand the thoughts and feelings of those being observed. In alignment with this approach, the present study aims to explore the experiences and perspectives of students and teachers across all the government colleges offering arts subjects in Nagaland.

(b) Quantitative: Quantitative data collection involves measuring the quantity or volume of information (Kothari, 1985). In recent years, Panthee has also defined quantitative research as the systematic investigation of objective reality that can be measured and expressed using numerical data (Panthee, 2020). Most importantly, it allows for measuring various dimensions, testing hypotheses, looking for patterns and averages, and making predictions with the available data (Traci, 2021). The research also makes predictions and shows the trend and progress of teaching and learning.

The objective of using the Questionnaire for collecting data:

Questionnaires are found to be reliable. They are simple to build, highly adaptable, and possess a distinct ability to efficiently collect a substantial amount of information in a format that can be easily processed. Moreover, they facilitate obtaining the desired feedback from both students and teachers. It is a simple and highly effective method to elicit responses

and gather opinions. Questionnaires using the Likert scale were designed for the current study, one for students and the other for teachers.

Research tools:

The research, which relies heavily on surveys and data collection, necessitates a substantial amount of data collection. To achieve the objective, information on selected dimensions was gathered using questionnaires. It is also the simplest and most reliable approach to eliciting comments and opinions.

. For this purpose, four tools were developed specifically for the current study.

- (i) Questionnaire for the students
- (ii) Questionnaire for the Teachers
- (iii) Unstructured interview
- (iv) Classroom observation

Unstructured Interview:

This is a very informal kind of research tool where the interviews depend on the social interaction between the researcher and the informant. As the preceding definition suggests, the researcher interviewed all the respondents without having any particular format in mind. The interview was characterised by a more spontaneous and informal exchange of ideas. These interviews are frequently employed to examine complex matters or get a profound understanding of the interviewee's thoughts and emotions. However, the unstructured interview supplements the questionnaire.

Classroom observation:

Classroom observation is a systematic research method that collects data on teaching and learning approaches, student conduct, and the classroom environment. This method also requires the researcher to oversee the classroom activities and carefully record the classroom activities including the interactions between the teacher and the students. It is a crucial research instrument for assessing the teaching and learning process. Moreover, it addresses the shortcomings of the questionnaire and unstructured interviews. The researcher obtains direct observation of the classroom activities conducted by teachers and students, providing valuable insights that can improve the teaching and learning process.

Procedure for Data Collection:

The data collection was made from both the primary and secondary sources. The primary data was obtained from the respondents through questionnaires, classroom observation, and unstructured interviews. This gave first-hand insights and direct evidence from the research subjects, such as students, and teachers and through classroom experiences. The secondary data was acquired from a variety of sources, including books, journals, newspapers, popular articles, the Nagaland Statistical Handbook 2020, the Nagaland State

Human Development Report published by the Government of Nagaland, and numerous published and unpublished works. Additionally, many libraries were also consulted for the present study.

The methodology outlined here is highly suitable for the objectives of this inquiry. The present study likewise offers a thorough examination of the field by measuring and evaluating several aspects, such as teaching methods, classroom resources, syllabus, and assessment. A mixed-methods approach, which combines qualitative and quantitative techniques, enables a thorough and nuanced knowledge of these components. This dual method used here ensures that the study covers both the depth and breadth of the current research, resulting in a strong analysis that combines numerical data with rich, contextual insights. By combining two techniques, the study provides a more comprehensive knowledge of the subject, addressing both statistical rigour and human perspectives.

Conclusion:

Method exposes both the teacher and the learner to the basic components of an English Language teaching classroom and pressing issues regarding both the stakeholders i.e. the teachers and the learners. The students and the teachers are the main stakeholders because they are directly involved and impacted by the teaching and learning process. The concept of a student-centred classroom does not imply a decrease in the obligations and tasks of teachers, but rather an ongoing evaluation and realignment of these responsibilities and activities. This review will trace the movement from the old to the new. It will look back to the old theories and methods of teaching and learning and then surge ahead to what is contemporary and analyse these methods. We have witnessed the growth and change of teaching methodologies for the last hundred years. The teaching of languages has changed significantly, much like any other field. Through this comprehensive study, the researcher seeks to contribute valuable knowledge and recommendations that can positively impact English language education practices and outcomes in Nagaland's education institutions. ■

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Death of A Salesman: An Overview

Sangappa Jakati

Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* (1949) won critical acclaim, running 742 performances at Morocco Theatre in New York City. It won the nation's highest literary awards the Pulitzer Prize and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award. *Death of a Salesman* narrates the tragic story of a salesman William Loman. The play is a critic of American society that discriminates against minorities like Jews and Blacks though it is a democratic nation.

Key Words: Jews, Salesman, American Dream, degeneration

Arthur Miller (1915-2005) happens to be a Jewish American playwright. He was born in Manhattan, New York City into a wealthy Jewish family of Polish stock. But the 1930s Depression weakened the Millers economically. Arthur Miller graduated in Journalism and English literature from the University of Michigan and had drama and theatre training.

Miller started to write plays at a very early age. His first successful play was *All My Sons* (1947) about a veteran who discovers that his father sold faulty aeroplane spares to the Government. Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, written and published in 1949, depicts an unsuccessful salesman William (Willy) Loman. The play won the Pulitzer Prize, Critics Circle Award, Antoinette Perry Award, Theatre Club Award and Front Page Award – a great success, indeed. Miller's next success was with *The Crucible* (1953), a play of the Salem Witchcraft Trials, written in passionate response to Senator Joseph McCarthy's investigation of accused subversives. In fact, the author himself was accused in that. His next plays of importance are *A View from the Bridge* (1955), and his screenplay *The Misfits* depicting Marilyn Monroe who he had married as his second wife, and his autobiography *Timebends*. It is said,

Miller's plays were given significant revivals / premiers in England and in the early 2000s revivals of *Death of a Salesman*, *The Crucible* were staged, establishing his reputation for a new generation. (*Cambridge Guide* 744)

Death of a Salesman is called a certain private conversation in two acts and a requiem. The background is that of a New York's modest house with a few bedrooms, a kitchen and a small garden. Salesman William or Willy Loman is 60 years old; and his wife Linda is few

years younger. The couple have two sons Biff and Happy. Biff is a spoilt child, then 35 years without a job.

The action takes place in Willy Loman's house and yard and in various places he visits in New York and Boston of today. (*Death* 12)

Once the play opens we hear Linda speaking to Willy who has returned abruptly from his journey to Florida. 'Why' she enquires. Loman tells that he suffered from headache. She provides him snacks and aspirin. Loman's great worry is not about his own failure as a salesman, nor about his dwindling economy, but his eldest son Biff's poor performance. The woman says,

'Work a lifetime to pay off a house.'

Willy responds- "When the hell did I lost my temper? I simply asked him if he was making any money. Not finding himself at age 35 is a disgrace." (*Death* 16)

The two sons are intimate and they are of the opinion that the father himself is going mad.

Miller's description of Loman's salesman's job is finely brought up in the following scene:

He said, "morning!" And I said, "You got a fine city here, Mayor." And then he had coffee with me. And then I went to Waterbury. Waterbury is a fine city. Big clock city, the famous Waterbury clock. Sold a nice bill there. And then Boston—Boston is the cradle of the Revolution. A fine city. And a couple of other towns in Mass, and on the Portland and Bangor and straight home! (*Death* 31)

There is a grumbling against Biff throughout the play, that he is a spoilt child. Bernard, his classmate tells Loman how Biff failed in maths, or how he stole things. The parents, particularly Loman the dreamer and idealist, talk of the elder brother Ben who did diamond business in Alaska or South Africa. Biff reminds his sire Bill Oliver, the boss of a big company and decides to take a hand loan of 10,000 dollars. On the other hand, Loman decides to beg his boss Howard Wagner for a transfer of his job from Boston to New York City. Both venture into their adventures and attempt to succeed in life. Biff's visit to Bill Oliver is an utter failure. Likewise, Loman visits his boss Wagner and because of his failure, he loses his job.

The father and son thought of going to the West and raising a ranch. They show their ego-clash. But nothing happens. Instead, Loman clashes with Biff, and his flirtations with women is exposed.

Act Two is full of scenes of failure for the Lomans. Willy begs his friend Charley for hand loans. However, as Linda reports the whole insurance (a sort of loan) was paid. So the Lomans were not to worry to death. But they had wrong dreams. Linda fails to understand it. One day, Loman commits suicide by crashing his car just outside home.

‘Requiem’ is a fine feature at the end, where the family with friends mourns Loman’s suicide. The widow tells that, “Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in paper. But he’s a human being and a terrible thing happened to him. So attention must be paid.” (*Death* 56). These long forgotten words about Loman is ever true. *Death of a Salesman* is this little man’s tragedy. By the way there is a hint that his being Jewish was one of the reasons for his failure.

Death of a Salesman became a classic of American literature, even in the world literature. It is one of the best 20th century English plays. Kathryn VanSpackeren observes, “*Death of a Salesman* is a moving paean to the common man – to whom as Loman’s widow Linda eulogies ‘attention must be paid.’ (VanSpackeren 98). Peter Thomson and Gamini Salgado call the play “one of the finest of all bourgeois tragedies.” (Thomson 277) ■

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Frantz Fanon's Postcoloniality with Reference to On National Culture

B. Suresh

Postcolonial study includes a critical analysis of the history, culture, and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies ruled by European nations. These former colonies are in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) pioneered the so called postcolonial studies.

Key Words: Postcoloniality, Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Third World, decadence.

Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) was a leading third world intellectual who inspired the struggle against colonialism and the growth of postcolonial studies (which was once in a limited sense, Commonwealth Literature). He was born in the French Antilles, Martinique, had his medical education in France, and he influenced African politics and theorists. His works *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* influenced most of the postcolonial thinkers. He prepared the ground for Kenya's Ngugi wa Thiong'O, Senegal's Ousmane Sembene and others. Aimé Césaire perhaps guided Fanon.

Black Skin, White Mask: This book includes an important chapter "The Fact of Blackness" which describes Fanon's growing awareness of racism in France and the rest of Europe. The work, personal and lyrical, shows the strong influence of Fanon's psychiatric training, as he concentrates primarily on the impact of racism and colonialism on the black psyche. It engages in a critical dialogue with French existentialism, particularly that of Jean-Paul Sartre, and exhibits the influence of the Negritude movement which called in the 1940s and 1950s for a distinctive black cultural identity rather than complete assimilation into French culture.

Much of Fanon's writing of that period concentrated on the Algerian Revolution, including the essays published in *L'An cionq, de la Revolution Algereinne* 1959; trans. 1965, *A Dying Colonialism*). Other essays were posthumously collected and published in 1964 as *Pour la revolution Africaine* (trans. 1976, *Toward the African Revolution*). The culmination of his work, however, was the publication of *The Wretched of the Earth*, just weeks before his death. This volume, which featured an impassioned introduction by Sartre, gained widespread recognition and solidified Fanon's reputation as a leading revolutionary thinker of the twentieth century.

The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism observes:

Fanon displays a distinctive political vision, centrally informed by the European tradition of Marxist thought in a version heavily modified to reflect third world, anticolonial perspectives (*Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* 1576).

In the chapter “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness”(discussed here), Fanon explores the pros and cons of nationalist attitudes in the struggle for independence from colonialism.

Colonialism disrupted the common life of a conquered nation. Dynamic life is subjugated, and replaced by a substantification of the attitudes of the conqueror. The colonizers degrade people and show that their culture is inferior. Fanon thinks that “The colonial situation calls a halt to national culture in almost every fieldA national culture under colonial domination is a contested culture whose destruction is sought in systematic fashion...” (Fanon, 1587).

Fanon thinks that a foreign rule is a short-lived one or transitory one. He emphasises on how to retain our national culture. This national culture includes literature, and all the fine arts like song, music, sculpture, dance and painting. It includes sports, folklore, too. According to Fanon, national consciousness is at the top of it. This national consciousness is a literature of combat, because it moulds the nation. The oral tradition – stories, epics and songs can electrify people’s national consciousness. There can be an effort to unify the nation and modernise that.

Frantz Fanon thinks how Algiers, a French Colony in the north of Europe, fought for freedom. He himself was in the forefront of that Algiers national movement. Fanon speaks of the importance of handicrafts, woodwork, masks and compositions for organising and maintaining the unity and integrity of the nation. He talks of ceramics, pottery, ochres and blues and stylization. He speaks of native style and its importance.

The keyword in Fanon’s essay “On National Culture” and “The Fight for Freedom” is:-

‘Nation.’ “It is first the expression of a nation... A national culture is the sum total of all these appraisals. It is nation’s liberation and the renaissance of the state. It is the rebirth of the imagination. It can be a new humanity. (Fanon 1591-92).

Then it is national consciousness which is the most elaborate form of culture. Fanon thinks the birth of national consciousness in Africa has a strictly contemporaneous connection with the African consciousness.

Lawrence Grossberg in his book *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense* appreciates Fanon’s contribution to postcolonial studies. He adds the list of great postcolonial thinkers: “I could add others, including Marx, Hall, Fanon, Gilroy, Césaire, Chatterjee, C.L.R. James, etc.” (Grossberg 301)

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Women and Higher Education in North-East India

Jungshimanen Jamir

Rosaline Jamir

There has been remarkable progress in women's status in higher education in the North-East region of India. Statistics shows that women are doing much better and sometimes even surpassing men in terms of enrolment, grades and achievements in education. However, there are also hurdles for the advancement of women's education and profession that is prevalent in today's society such as customs, traditions, societal norms and laws which inhibits the society moving ahead. Despite women's higher number of enrolment and achievements, data shows that there is a gender job crisis among teaching staffs where men are usually holding on to their jobs than compared to women. In pre-independence India, literacy rate among the North-East states of India has seen significant developments especially among women. Most of the statistics and data was analysed by looking into the Higher Education Profile which was published by the Ministry of Education of India (2019-2020). The North-East population and gender figures were extracted from the Census of India 2011.

Key Words: Higher Education; Women; Education; North-East India;

Introduction

Give a girl an education and introduce her properly into the world, and ten to one she has the means of settling well, without further expense to anybody – Jane Austen

The foundation of women's education in the North-East states of India has had its share of hurdles in the past. However, when we look at today's scenario, women in most parts of the North-East region have achieved many accolades and advanced their education and careers by many folds, sometimes even bypassing their male counterpart. This change is not by any means the end of the road but a glimpse of a new generation of highly educated women, holding on to the baton and running the race. Education is the basic right of any human, be it a boy or a girl and therefore there are no limits to our differences. The status and mobility of women has certainly improved due to advancement of their education but there are still hurdles when it comes to social, cultural, traditional and political context which will be further discussed in this paper. Women are indeed the building blocks of a community and given the opportunity, she can create impactful changes in the society and the world. The North-East Region (NER) comprise of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Each state is culturally, ethnically

and socio-culturally diverse but share many common attributes. The total population as per 2011 census is 4,57,72,188 which is only 3.78% with the rest of India (“Ministry of Home Affairs” 2011).

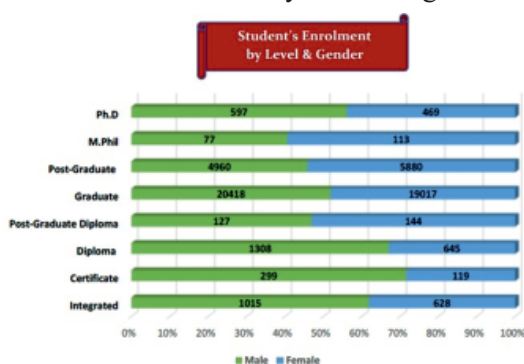
Higher education is “education to degree level or equivalent, provided at universities or colleges” (“Oxford Dictionaries” 2017). Over the years since India’s independence, the North-East region has many colleges, universities and institutions that provide good education and vocational training for women and data shows that women’s enrolment has excelled more than expected and many at times, surpassing men in enrolment, grades and achievements. There has also been study about the world-wide boom in higher education of women. Since the last 50 years, there has been a remarkable uptrend of women in higher education competing or many at times, outnumbering men in terms of college graduates, grades, achievements, jobs such as professoriate and college administration, and other academic professions. According to the analysis and findings worldwide on this phenomenon, “first, in the last 40 years [54 as of now], the increase in the number of women completing college greatly outsized the increase in the number of men. Second, the total number of women graduating from college now exceeds that of men in most countries” (Becker, Hubbard, and Murphy 2010, 237). When we look at states like Nagaland for example, in today’s world, there are many academicians with PhDs’, masters, professors, assistant professors, and administrators etc. There has been a lot of progress overtime despite the society being patriarchal, gender biased and traditional practices. In the article, *Longings and Aspiration of Naga Women in Education Process*, the author points out that “remarkably, Naga women are at the peak of their higher level of education process. A number of well qualified women are working in various organizations, and holding administrative posts in different offices. A number of Naga women have earned doctorate degrees (PhD), countless of them are post graduate and graduate degree holders” (Ovung and Ao 2015, 97).

Women in Higher Education: North-East India

Analysing only data evidences to understand the story of women’s upliftment journey in the North-East region is not the ends of means because untold stories and narratives can be ignored and autobiographies of women who had to undergo the hardships will not justify. In this census and survey done by the government, it will breakdown and analyse the demographics of the North-East region for women in higher education. It is also important to note that there is an underlying gender issues among societies in North East region which is still hindering the mobility of many women due to patriarchal nature of the society, traditional customs, norms, unemployment, corruption and discrimination.

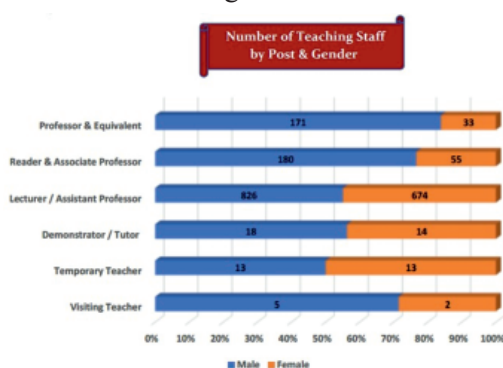
Arunachal Pradesh: The literacy rate of male and female respectively is 72.6% to 57.7% with a total of 65% (Census 2011). Students’ enrolment for male and female respectively is 28801 and 27015 with a total of 55816.

Table: 1.1 The student's enrolment by level and gender



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

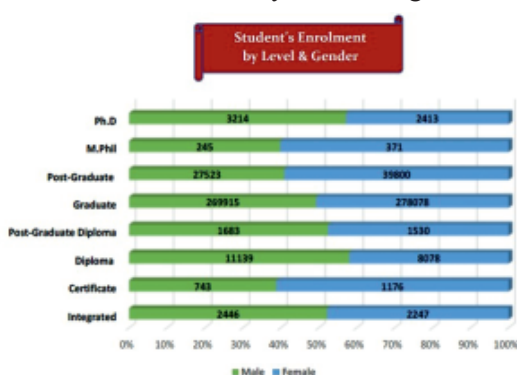
Table: 1.2 The number of teaching staffs



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

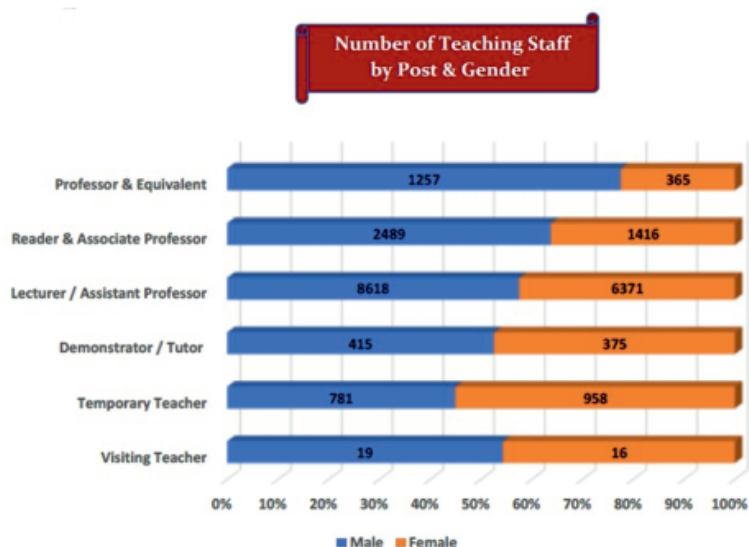
Assam: The literacy rate of male and female respectively is 77.8% to 63.3% with a total of 72.2% (Census 2011). Students' enrolment for male and female respectively is 316908 and 333693 with a total of 650601.

Table: 1.3 The student's enrolment by level and gender



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

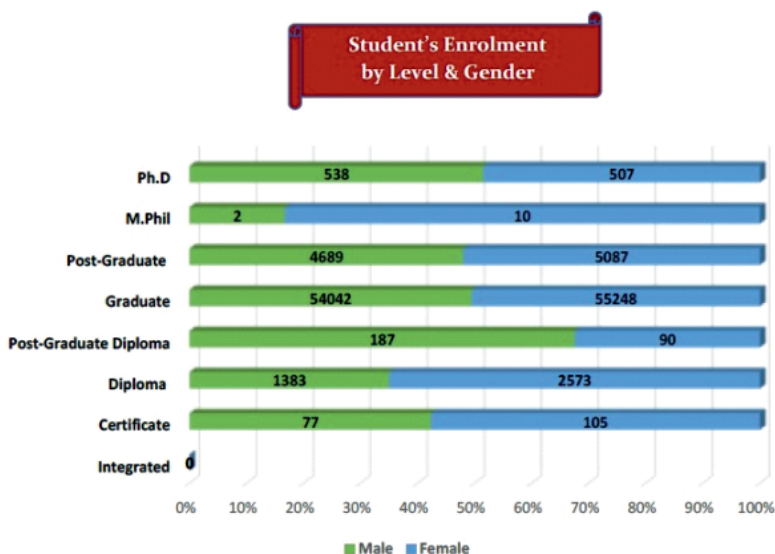
Table: 1.4 The number of teaching staffs



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

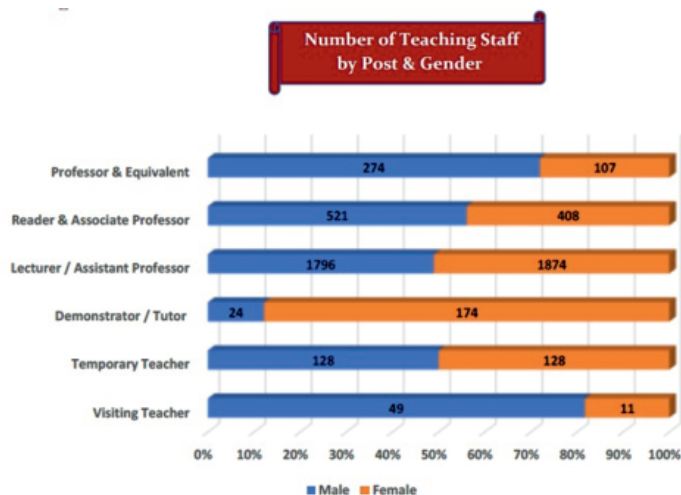
Manipur: The literacy rate of male and female respectively is 86.1% to 72.4% with a total of 79.2% (Census 2011). Students' enrolment for male and female respectively is 60918 and 63620 with a total of 124538.

Table: 1.5 The student's enrolment by level and gender



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

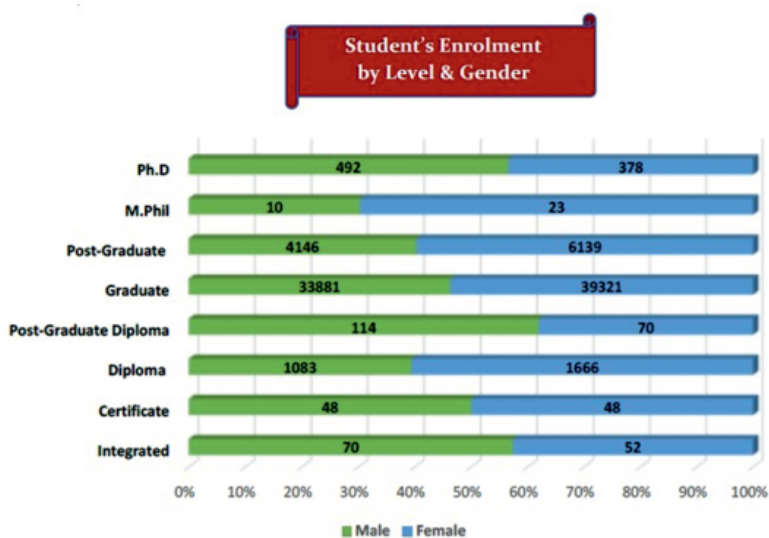
Table: 1.6The number of teaching staffs



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

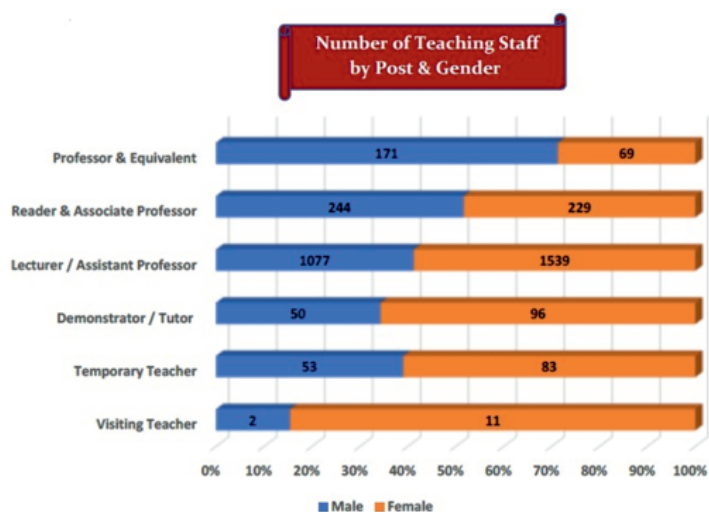
Meghalaya: The literacy rate of male and female respectively is 76% to 72.9% with a total of 74.4% (Census 2011). Students' enrolment for male and female respectively is 39844 and 47697 with a total of 87541.

Table: 1.7 The student's enrolment by level and gender



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

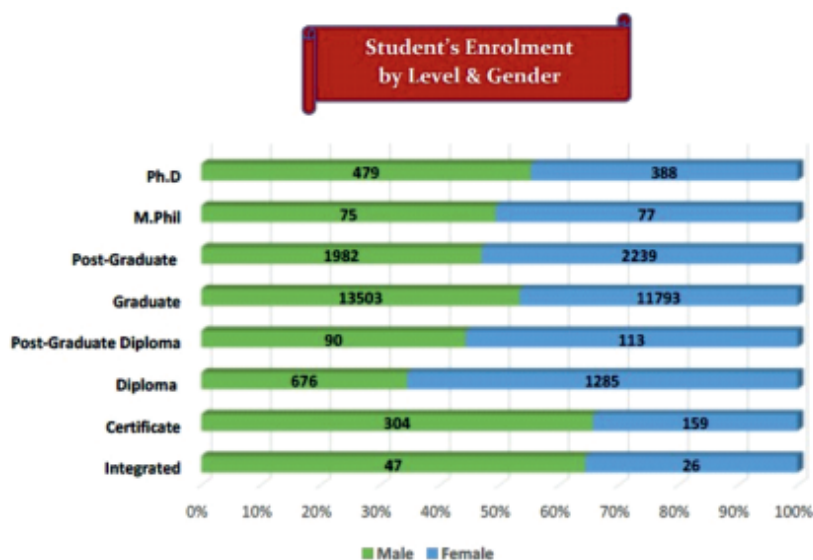
Table: 1.8The number of teaching staffs



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

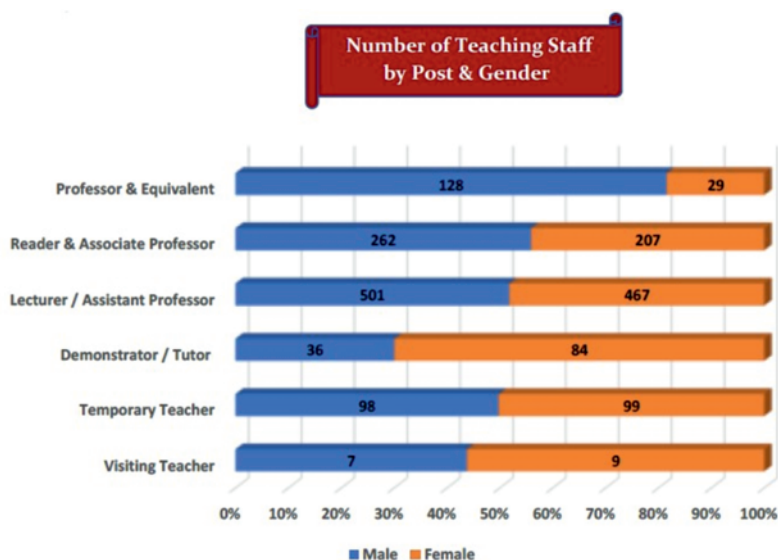
Mizoram: The literacy rate of male and female respectively is 93.3% to 89.3% with a total of 91.3% (Census 2011). Students' enrolment for male and female respectively is 17156 and 16080 with a total of 33236.

Table: 1.9 The student's enrolment by level and gender



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

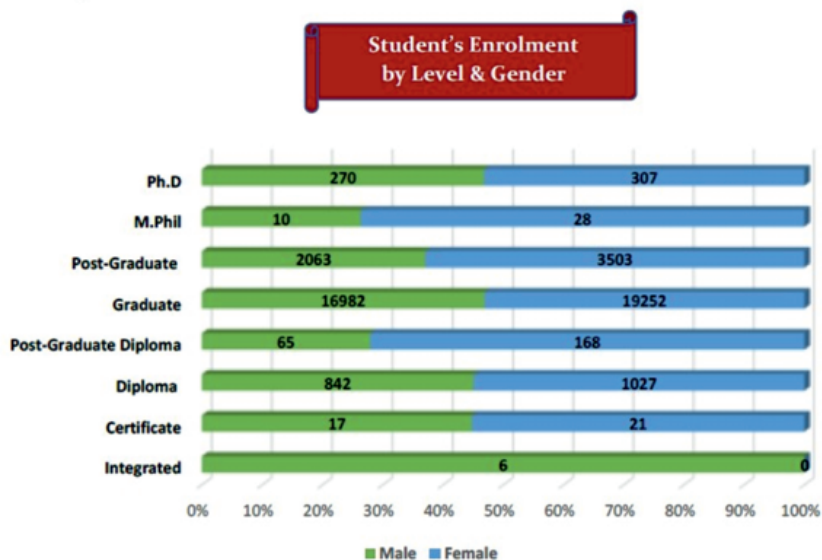
Table: 1.10The number of teaching staffs



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

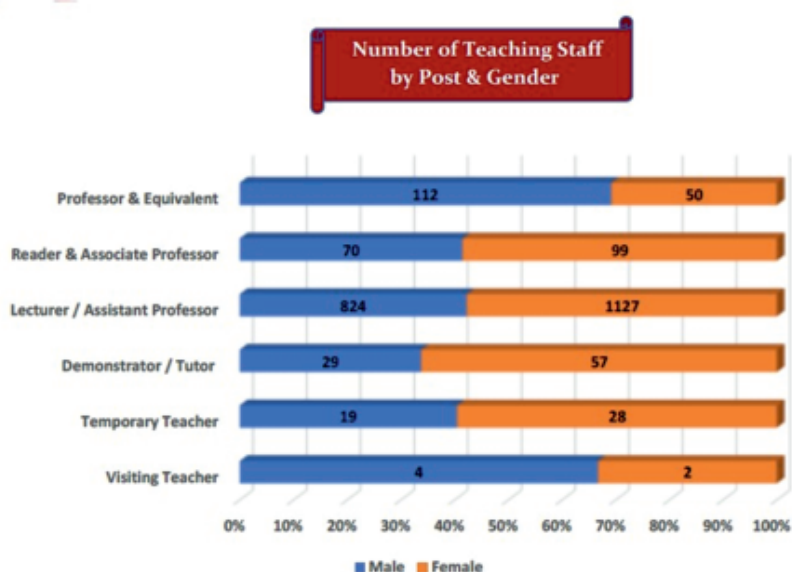
Nagaland: The literacy rate of male and female respectively is 82.8% to 76.1% with a total of 79.6% (Census 2011). Students' enrolment for male and female respectively is 20255 and 24306 with a total of 44561.

Table: 1.11 The student's enrolment by level and gender



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

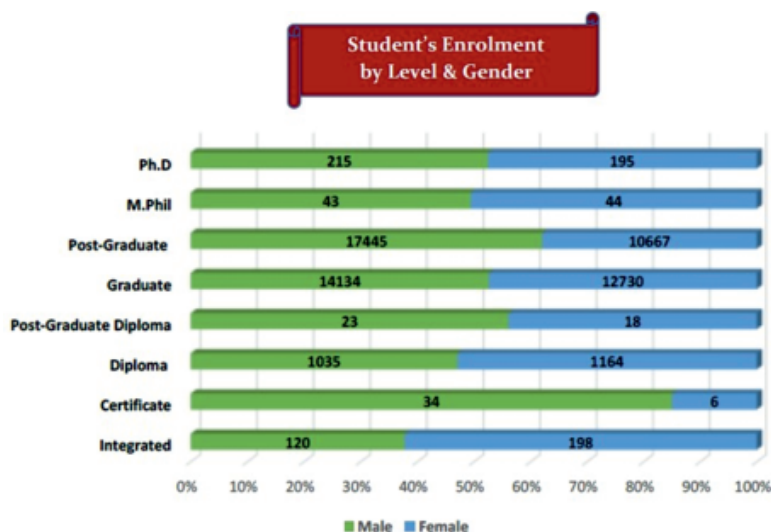
Table: 1.12The number of teaching staffs



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

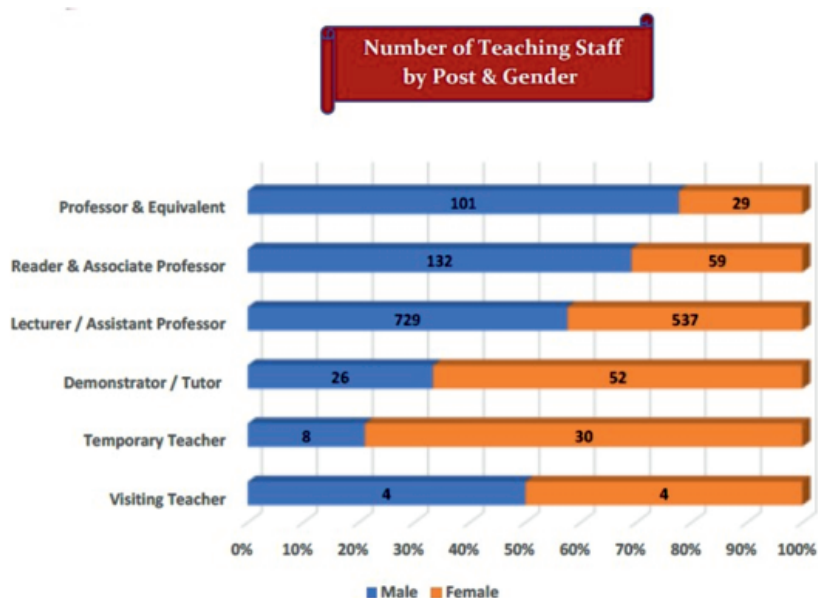
Sikkim: The literacy rate of male and female respectively is 86.6% to 75.6% with a total of 81.4% (Census 2011). Students' enrolment for male and female respectively is 33049 and 25022 with a total of 58071.

Table: 1.13 The student's enrolment by level and gender



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

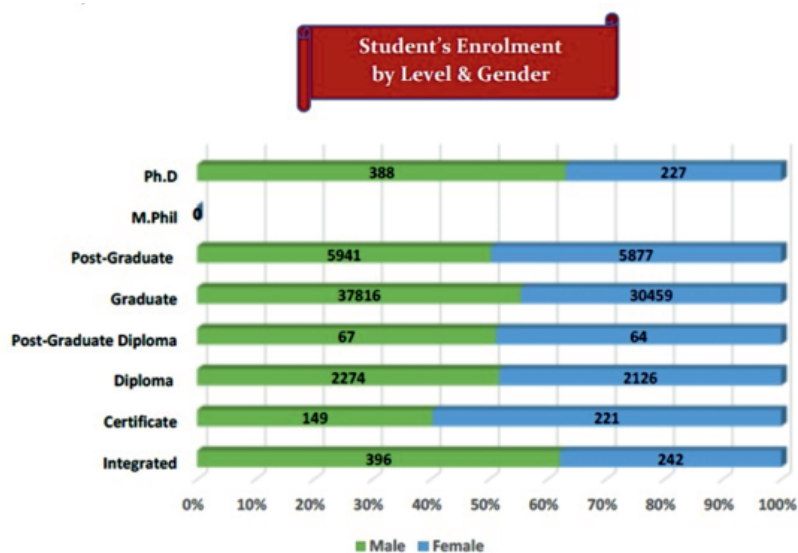
Table: 1.14 The number of teaching staffs



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

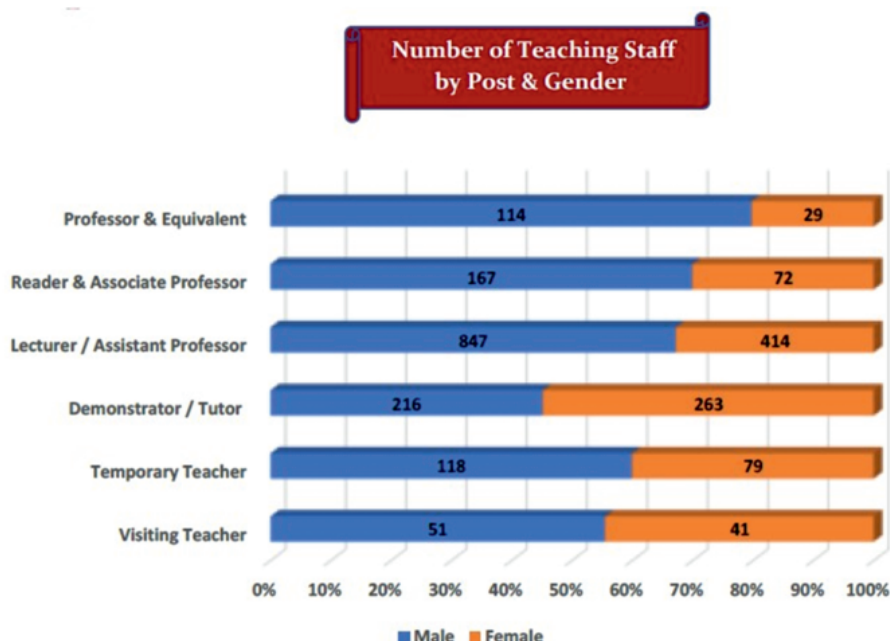
Tripura: The literacy rate of male and female respectively is 91.5% to 82.7% with a total of 87.2% (Census 2011). Students' enrolment for male and female respectively is 47031 and 39216 with a total of 86247.

Table: 1.15 The student's enrolment by level and gender



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

Table: 1.16The number of teaching staffs



Source: Higher Education Profile, Ministry of Education (2019-2020)

When we look into the women's education in North-East region of India and compare it to the rest of India, there are certainly some differences and the level of developments in the female literacy rate. In the article "Status of women education in North-East India", the authors Dr. J. Suresh Kumar and Mrs. D. Shoban points out that after India's independence, the North-East states has seen a significant increase in the literacy rate. In their article, they use census data from 2001 to 2011 and looks into population and literacy rates from government education census to analyse the status of women's education in North-East region of India(IJMRA-14646 Literacy Rates of the North-Eastern States and Education for All (EFA)). In the census, "Literacy Rate in North-East India Since 1951 to 2011"¹, the data points out that pre-independence time, the literacy rate in the North-East states of India has seen a major development in all the eight states. For example, in 1951, Mizoram's being the highest literacy rate among the 8 states was 31.14% but by 2011, it has spiked up to 91.33%. Whereas, when we compare with all India, in 1951, it was 18.33% and in 2011 it is 72.99%. Women's literacy rate in the census, "State-Wise Percentage of Female Literacy in North-East India according to 2001 and 2011 Census"², shows a higher increase of female literacy rate in North East states that compared to the rest of India. For example, in Tripura, in 2001 it was 64% and in 2011 it increased to 82.7%, whereas in all India, in 2001 it was 53.7% and in 2011, it holds at 64.6% which shows that female literacy rate in Tripura increased 20% but in India is was only 10% increase in the given 10 years of the census (Kumar and Shobana 2022).

There is also a clear indication in the student enrolment of higher education which shows that women have superseded in achieving or pursuing PhD, M. Phil, and Post Graduate than their male counterpart. However, in the professional level of teaching staffs by post graduates, males are still holding on to their jobs. Historically, when we look at countries like the United States and compare gender difference, females have a lower percentage of college students, professors and administrators (Parker 2015; Heward and Bunwaree 1998). In the early twentieth century, women faced hurdles for training and practicing in the same way as men. There were barriers for women such as quotas, legal restrictions, administrative regulations and anti-nepotism rules. For instance, "Quotas restricted women's access to higher education as universities set limits to the number of females they would admit. For example, under Stanford's quota system, three males were accepted for every female" (Parker 2015, 4). Other reasons are non-career oriented, raising children while the husband is pursuing further education or work related, responsibilities of motherhood so they choose for a low-paying job that requires less education. Many women with their mothers and grandmothers who were previously domestic wives have chosen the same footsteps as their previous generation or societal pressures. This is pertinent to North-East women's plights and hurdles. For instance, in Nagaland, "the appreciation of womanhood and her exercise of seriousness for pursuing higher education is not very much appreciated by the society in general. Women are subjected at times to comments such as, even though a women gets the higher degree or academic qualification, the right place for her would be the kitchen only...In fact, many women are contented to play only the traditional passive role because they conform that this passivity of women is a divine providence which women should not question but simply accept" (Ovung and Ao 2015, 101).

Education and work can also be bit of a tussle because with education comes economic independence, status and creating one's own identity in society and the world. However, when it comes to a working wife or a working woman in India and the North-East, they do not compromise with the domestic chores. Many successful women in high-ranking positions still assume the role of a housewife and therefore it places a double burden despite being the breadwinner. Another problem that could affect an educated women with a successful career is that many at times, men tend to look for women who are less qualified than them or they are afraid to be approached. While pursuing higher education, many girls also miss out on marriable opportunities. This stigma is among single woman who are called "spinsters" in Naga society and they are mostly looked down upon. According to Rajendra Kshetri and Oinam Shuraj, in Manipur, the reason for low participation of girls in education in Manipur is because "girls from a very early age begin to take care of their younger siblings and household work to relieve their parents to go out for work. The drop out rate of female students is much higher than that of male. Social prejudice, poverty and lack of proper facilities stand on the way of the progress of female education in the state" (Ovung and Ao 2015, 178). Indeed, there is a difference between urban and rural women and the community that they reside, but this is an issue not only for North-East women but in other parts of India as well.

Steps Ahead for Women's Education in India

In the article “women empowerment through higher education in India”, the author Dr. Gouri Manik Manas explains about the importance of empowering women through education in India. She narrates her views by saying that “women in India have been experiencing different status since the inception of civilization. Though women form half of the population, yet the masculine principles made the women suffer a lot. They were denied equal opportunities and importance as men. India was no different from the rest of the world. Indian women have been struggling for equal rights over the past millennium” (Manas 2014, 2454). However, over the years, women have come a long way but need a lot of developments and raising awareness for women's empowerment, be it through education, employment, skills, activism, and government policies etc. The author also goes on to argue that, women's education in India has its roots during the British regime, particularly in 1854, when the East India Company had acknowledged and given access to education and employment for women. The rise of feminist ideas based on women's conditions in society have developed significantly in India and the rest of the world.

In present day Indian society, there has been a number of established institutions and government initiatives for educational development for women and girls. These also benefit the women folks in the North-East region for the most part. For example, in pre-independence India, the government had initiated various schemes, constitutional acts and policies which give opportunities and rights for women and have access to better and affordable education. Some of them include *Mahila Samakhya Programme* launched in 1988, which is a part of the New Education Policy that was launched in 1986. It is a programme that gives education and empowerment to women in rural areas who were socially and economically marginalized. In 2003, the *National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level* (NPEGEL) was implemented to help girls attend schools. In 2004, *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyaya Scheme* (KGBV) was implemented and was then integrated into Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which provides education facilities to girls from scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, and other minority communities and families living below the poverty line. The *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* initiative was launched in 2015 to address and take action of the issues of declining child sex ratio. It was an effort to campaign and mobilize the public to prevent gender biased sex selective elimination for the survival and protection of the girl child and also ensure that the girl child is given education. In 2020, the STEM initiative (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) had been implemented to foster and inspire girls to nurture their interest in science and in return give them a career in their respective field.

Conclusion:

In retrospect, women's right to education and their pursuits for higher education and profession in the North-East has significantly become better but not the best. There is certainly a need to address the gaps and hurdles that are prevalent in today's society. It will

be also crucial to study the current status of women in higher education administration. Despite the fact that women are more educated and enrolled in higher education degrees and levels of profession, there is a gender job crisis that needs serious attention by policy makers, government, organizations, universities and the society. Although women have not had the best opportunities for higher education professions and recognition of their merit, it is crucial to look into societal norms, traditions, customs and laws which are hurdles for the advancement of the society at large. ■

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(Footnotes)

¹ Source: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India & Planning Commission, Govt. of India (ON326).

²Source: Census of India 2001 & 2011

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One Foot in each World

P. Raja

The much awaited hour came at last. The lecture hall was almost full with medical students and professors. A few more were trickling in.

At the stroke of six after the sunset, a physician rushed into that huge hall and clicked a remote he kept in his hand. All the doors through which people gained entry into the hall closed shut in a tick.

The stage lights were on. For a few seconds they were blinding the audience. The stage was empty while a voice from nowhere welcomed the audience to listen to a talk by the world renowned biologist Dr. Michael Nahm, who needed no introduction to such an audience.

Dr. Michael Nahm seated in the first row, got up, and moved on to the stage. His presence was welcomed with great glee by clapping of hands. He carried no file or sheets of paper in his hand and throughout his lecture he didn't fish for notes in any of his pockets.

"My grandpa lapsed into coma when I was still in high school," began the biologist and lured every listener with the smile of a model posing for a tooth-paste advertisement. "He did not regain his consciousness for months together" he continued. "One day, to the surprise of everyone in our family, he walked to the loo on his own, shaved himself as cleanly as ever, trimmed his moustaches and bathed, put on the best he had, came back and sat in his teak wood easy chair. My mom offered him coffee. He drank it with great delight and chatted with all of us in his usual L'allegro mood. He cracked jokes as was his custom and tickled us to laugh. He too laughed to his heart's content, leaned back and passed away."

Dr. Michael Nahm stopped for a second or two and stared into all those faces in the audience. Then as if satisfied with their not-the-same reaction, he resumed his lecture.

"Friends! I read your faces here and there and I thank you for giving me an opportunity to read your minds thereby. Now let me pose a question. What prompted my grandfather to behave in such a natural manner on his last day?"

Dr. Michael Nahm gave no time for anyone to answer. He cleared his throat and said, "This mysterious situation, is what I call 'terminal lucidity'. To define this term further,

it is the brief state of clarity and energy that precedes death. To put it differently, rather poetically, it is the light before the end of the tunnel. Friends, after I finish my lecture, I would like a few of you to share with me if you were witness to such ‘terminal lucidity’.

“The most compassionate gift of Nature to the human body is the interdependence of its parts. If the organs in the torso fail, automatically fails the brain. Vice versa is also true. Some die a sudden death, say victims of Cardiac arrest or a major road mishap, etc. But the vast majority experience a slumberous slippage from life. I do not say that they are incapable of sensing people at the bedside on a spiritual level. But what I mean is that they are not fully awake in the moments, and often hours, before they die.

“I repeat – every major organ in the body say heart, lungs, liver and kidney has the capacity to shut off the brain. This is what experts call ‘a biological veto system’. Imagine the heart going on a strike, refusing to do its work. Blood pressure drops throughout the body. Like electricity department on an unannounced strike, service goes out everywhere, including the brain. When lungs fail oxygen level in blood goes down and carbon dioxide goes up, both of which slow cognitive function. The only exception is ‘terminal lucidity’. It is certainly the mysterious exception...”

The biologist went on with his lecture, when my dead father pulled me by my sleeve and dragged me down into my memory lane. The words of the biologist were falling on my deaf ears. He began to fade from my eyes, as my father in his death bed began to emerge. I was sitting on a tripod next to his bed, feeding him with tasteless porridge measured by tea spoons.

My wife and three kids, all still in school, were standing beside me, perhaps learning from me the art of feeding a dying man. It may help them in the long run.

My father waved his hand at me to stop. “Not even half-a-cup. Open your mouth a few more times. You need food to live on,” said my wife. At her insistence he opened his mouth again a few more times and the cup was empty.

“Am I not a big botheration to all of you? How long God wants me to pull on? My name got erased on its own from Chitraputharan’s Register or what?” he said in his usual rude voice.

“We want you to be with us, *Thatha*,” said my first son, his favourite grand child.

My father motioned him to come closer. And when he did, he hugged him tight and said, “It’s a pity that I can’t carry you to the market anymore to get you carrot cake.”

“What does it matter, *Thatha*? Every morning when we go to school, you give us enough money from the purse you keep under your pillow. We get toffees and cakes of our choice,” said my little daughter, while my second son nodded his head in approval.

“Oh! What am I going to do with my money?” my father said, as my wife took all the kids to the dining hall.

I continued to sit on the tripod and watched my father close his eyes. He was lying in bed most of the time, except when he had to be carried to the bathroom to be given a shave and a wash. Advanced stage of arthritis has pushed him to bed. When a specialist told me and my wife that it was useless to go for any surgery or knee cap transplant all because of his age, he became our fourth child. Yes. Our last kid was 87 years young.

No kid ever complained of being a botheration to its caretakers. But this kid did.

I saw hot tears escaping his eyes and moving towards his earlobes. I arrested them by swiping with a hanky. My father opened his eyes and looked at me. "I know these are my last days. But when is the last day?" he said and closed his eyes.

He did not open his eyes for the next three weeks. Comatose.

"He may or may not regain consciousness," the physician friend said. "A very big responsibility to you and your family members", he said and promised to visit us as often as he could.

Yama must have already sent his henchmen to my village and they perhaps are waiting for the final order. All the three months passed like three millennium years.

On a Sunday, very early in the morning he regained consciousness. His arthritis too was gone, for we saw him standing before the mirror and shaving himself.

"What? A miracle has taken place in our house, eh!" said my wife cheerfully.

"Every day is a lesson in Miracles," responded my father before he moved slowly but steadily towards the bathroom. My wife and I looked at each other, unable to understand what really had happened to him.

"Ask him what he wants to eat for breakfast," I told my wife.

"Oh! He ate whatever I gave him without any complaint," she said.

"But today it is different. Better ask him," I said to my loving wife.

My father as if he had overheard the conversation going on between his son and daughter-in-law, raised his voice and said: "Six iddlis and coconut chutney plus a steaming cup of strong coffee."

My wife clucked and said in a hushed voice, "Wow! As if he is in a hotel".

I smiled as she sailed into the kitchen to prepare his breakfast.

My wife and I stood beside him while he ate the breakfast with nobody's help. "Quite sumptuous," he said as he sipped his coffee. We were delighted to hear him speak like that.

He then dragged a chair towards his huge teak-wood almirah, opened it and sat in front of it without any difficulty. He was in that position for more than a half hour. But I

could make out from the noise his notebooks and files made that he was arranging and rearranging them.

“*Dei Thambi*, come here for a minute,” my father cried. He was addressing me. I moved with quick steps towards him. “Look here! Out of the four compartments in this almirah, equally divided by two drawers, you will find all my notebooks and diaries that I have kept all these years. For heaven’s sake do not destroy them. They contain our family history. Go through them when you find time. You will find your first scribbles too. These occupy the bottom most compartment. The last but one compartment holds all my files. House tax, water tax, electricity bill, telephone, etc., etc. They are all filed in their respective folders. You know very well about our Government clerks. Don’t get cheated by the memos they send you. All of a sudden they would send a note finding fault with you for not paying house tax for the last ten years. If you do not produce the receipts they will fleece you with their special fines. That’s why I keep the records in order.”

“I know, *appa*. You are organized. I’ll follow you,” I said.

“I know about you, my son. But it is my duty to advise you,” he said. “Above these two compartments, these two drawers house my bank passbooks, fixed deposit certificates and life insurance certificates. All these are on the right side drawer. The left contains all our property documents, both mobile and immobile. All these have already been transferred in your name. Safeguard them. My father left me to clear a lot of his debts. I struggled a lot to clear them. All the property I leave you are the outcome of my hard work. They should multiply in your hands. For God’s sake don’t die a pauper.”

I nodded my head and said, “Yes, *appa*, I will.”

“I know... I know... you may not need my money. But you are the sole heir to my property,” he said. Then pointing at the top two compartments full with his clothes, he said, “These may not be of any use to you. Give them away to the needy, when I am gone”.

“Fine... *Appa*... everything is fine. What is the urgency to tell me all these things?” I asked.

“I’ll not be here to tell you again,” he said, locking the doors of his almirah and leaving the key in its hole. A pendent bearing the letters ‘I love you’ was dangling from the key.

Just at that moment, my wife entered the scene with a big tumbler of hot coffee. “This coffee is for you,” she said, handing it over to my father.

He drank that terribly hot and steaming liquid in one gulp. “After a long time... after a long time,” he said, turned his chair to face us all and sat again.

“You need anything else?” I asked him.

“What else do I need? Nothing more,” he said and went into a thoughtful mood.

An hour or so later I returned from my study to chat with my father. He was in his chair, in the same place, but his eyes have lost their brightness. They looked like that of a fish away from the sea weeks ago. And his eyes were rooted to the void.

“*Appa! Appa!*” I shook him by his arm and asked, “Can you hear me?”

There was absolutely no response from him. I raised an alarm. My wife rushed to the spot from the kitchen. All my three kids rushed from their play.

“What happened?” all the four asked in unison.

I had no answer, but only tears. While all of us stood surrounding him, he directed his eyes towards the entrance of the house as if he had heard foot steps and smiled.

We turned our heads a little to know what brought that smile to his face. We could not make out.

“Move... move... give way... my grandparents are coming,” said he in a hushed but jubilant tone.

An indescribable chill ran down my spine. My wife turned pale. But my children showed anxiety to see their grandpa’s grandparents.

I have never in my life seen my father in such an ecstatic state. A second or two passed.

“Give way... move aside... my parents and my co-borns are all here. They need more space. They have come to take me away with them. My time is over,” my father said frightening the shit out of us.

We moved and kept a safe distance from my father and observed him. My wife later told me that she felt like running out of the house with the children for fear that the dead would harm the living. We helplessly watched him behave in a strange manner.

My father was all smiles most of the time. He was laughing with wide opened mouth but we couldn’t hear his laughter. His hands were also at work as if he were using a sign language. His head bobbed up and down, turning to his right at one time and to his left the next moment as if he were addressing a vast gathering. Was there a noise free glass door that divided my father and us? We don’t know. But one thing was certain. He was having a chat with all those visitors from the unknown world. And that was going on for more than an hour.

During that time all of us were trembling with fear but we tried to show no signs of fear. Weren’t we playing host to ghosts? Luckily we didn’t have any dog in the house... it would have created a ruckus.

All of a sudden, as if the cotton wool that were plugging our ears got thrown out, we could hear the stentorian voice of my father. He said, “If that is the case, I would gladly follow you. It is good that all of you came”.

We were all eyes. We saw him directing his roving eyes slowly towards the main entrance and waved his hand.

He didn't take off his eyes. When he looked at us, fear in us calmed down, his eyes were quite normal. He motioned us with a nod of his head to come nearer to him. We all stood without moving a muscle. He repeated his action with a smile, as if curious to know why we were dumbstruck. Our faces turned grave and our eyes intensely probing.

With slow steps we moved unsure of what his next move would be. We stood keeping a respectable distance looking intently at him. "Show is over. Time to go. May come back... as your grandson," my father said. Those were his last words. He died in his chair.

The lecture hall that reverberated with the applause of the audience gave me a jolt. The image of my father faded, as the figure of the biologist budded into view. I could hear him say, "Like death itself, terminal lucidity retains a screen of mystery." With those words he wiped his forehead with a hanky, gulped down half-a-little bottle of water and then thanked the audience for our patient listening.

"Now is the time for you to share your experiences, if you have any, and that will guide me take my thesis in the right path. Friends! Who would be the first?" said the biologist and eagerly waited for a few hands to go up.

I held both my hands up. The biologist beckoned me to the podium. I walked up the aisle to tell the inquisitive audience of my father's last few minutes. ■

(This short story is inspired by an article titled 'The Gentler Symptoms of Dying' by Sara Manning Persin, that appeared in **The Globe and Mail** (Toronto) dated July 31, 2017.)

Dr. P. Raja, retired Prof of English, now lives in Puducherry.

POEMS

King's Wife

* Kumudini Jee

Mountain can not fly
but I pushed him to fly
I was flying with fountain 's lorry
also got tired like mountain ,
frozen with snow
as broken winged bird..
No one pushed me to fly then..
My dreams gone to die.
I had dreams..
now they are lying as barren field..
I want to stay in a cave
like king's wife (Asuryampasya)
Not want to see the light
nor to hear the voice of river
nor to see the world any more
I want my dreams to die. ■

* the poet lives in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Hope

-
* Jigyansa Sahoo

It may seem dark today,
Dark bellied clouds may hound and annoy,
Seconds may seem decades,
Squally winds may threaten to thrash
the barricades.

Your heart may quiver with despair,
But you don't let it sink in the quagmire,
Remember your sincere efforts
may strike elsewhere.

Cajole your heart to keep poise,
God will soon shower umpteen blessings

of his choice.

Like every dark night heralds
a sunny morning,
Your life will also bloom into
an endearing beginning.

Unimagined dreams will come true,
You will be amazed to see how you made
your way through.
Today's adventures will turn into
opportunities,
Have fervent faith on life's possibilities.
No adversity has the power to tame
the supreme grace,
You are that dark horse destined
to win life's race. ■

* the poet lives in Vadodara, Gujarat.

Rain of Relief Soaks this City

* Nurul Hoque

After a long while, rain of relief came
to this land of poetry alive with forests
Rain arrived, growing in form and volume
Chaotic yet orderly water
in every drop
Carrying the essence of imminent rain
at the foot of the hill
on the ground
on the corridors of tall buildings
on the tops of trees
Silent as birds' feathers
Rain flew from the pages of Kalidasa.

The prehistoric rain brings a tiding
of soaked peace today
The harsh sunburnt, scorched earth
The tired, noisy cries of birds

The scorching summer burns
The long sighs of the dry lotus pond.
Today, all have been transcended
by the heat-devouring, hugely longed-
for alluvial, diluvial, sedimentary rain.

After a long time in this burnt city
Rain came holding the hands of Sraban
With deep reliance and trust
in the embrace of rain,
the city cheers today. ■

* the poet lives in Bangladesh.

A Puzzle!

* Basavaraj Yalegar

What can you see
once in a minute,
twice in a moment and
never in a thousand years
I was puzzled by a friend
What could I see once in a Minute,
And twice in a Moment?
I glared and glared and glared.
And Hurray! I got it snared.
I smiled upto the Moon, I saw it.
I traversed to the Mars.
God! It showed up.
I set my foot on the Mercury.
It rose up.

For a moment unfazed I sat.
Suddenly it peeped through Manju,
Mahesh, Prema, Seema
And also peeped and laughed in
Amulya- my neighbours little girl.

Life...also like a friend !
Hurls and showers puzzles
Hiding all the clues there in!!!

Puzzles are not to punish us
Nor are they to finish us
They are there to polish us.

Puzzles can be out Puzzle D
If do we stay unpuzzled.
But clueless we do become,
Restless we do roam
Trot here and there like a musk deer.
But the baby in our waist
Laughs on our face
I am here. I am here. ■

* the poet lives in Karnataka.

Liberation

* Prof. Susheel Kumar Sharma

With trees in my head,
Thorns in my heart,
Bushes on my face and
Animals in my mouth
Looking to the West
I spent my life seeking
Light and warmth for
The shivering I and others.

Wrapped in the
Dazzling darkness of
The night club I kept
Warming myself with
Whisky, cabaret and talks
of Picasso and Dickens.
Multi-coloured lights
Reflected from my dreams
That had turned white
Under the snow of
California and London.
The wolves appeared deer
And leopards lambs and the

Vanishing fish a proper food
In place of banana. The earth
Ensued as a stepmother to
Be thrashed and blown over
With dynamite and bombs.

In the fading memory
Of my tribe I kept on
Waiting for some warmth
From Moscow. In face of
The avalanche I forgot the
Difference among the valley,
Mountain and plain and
Slowly erased myself to be
Drowned and lost for ever.

Marx was the promised
Sun hiding in the clouds that
Could be blown over just in a
Whiff in the calling. The night
Grew darker, the music louder
and the dancer friskier. The
bones need to be burnt in the
hearth to keep myself warm.

I, who threw cigarette butts one
After another caring a fig for the
Doctor's advice, am the butt of
Jokes. It is time for me to retire
Now; where is the song to lull me
To sleep; those leading me to the
Club laugh at my credulity 'n naivety.
Abandoning the club I have come
Out in the open and see the sun
Rising in the East dispelling clouds
And effusing ardour. I join the rishis
By the radiant fire of havan and
Sing the glory of the rising East. ■

* Prof of English, University of Allahabad,
U.P.

Morning Glory

*** Dr. Namita Jagaddeb**

Thanks A Lot
How much I longed for you,
when we had world enough and time,
sky was bluer greener the earth full and fine!
Why didn't you walk into me, in beauty,
when spring was in your step, music in voice,
sunshine eyes, smile of a genial soul
Glowing your skin?

I lay wasted as you kept on playing
the waiting game;
moments grew longer, lingered over,
shadows hazier, till you came, one day
in a pale afternoon, I was taking a nap smugly
by a shade unear the slanted sun.
You called me, your voice sounded remote,
yet intimate and urgent
as if the chanting of a hymn,
I, at once, relapsed into a silent twilight,
heard the home bound birds
flapping around me.
You stood there all night long waiting,
dawn flushed with pink the moment
you touched me.
I woke up like a baffled child about to cry,
for a missing toy; calmed down
seeing you, instead,
standing by my side, all smiles
in morning glory.
Thanks a lot, I said. ■

* the poet lives in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Penelope

* Emmanuel Mettles

The limitless ocean waves at me.
Ulysses has set off to the
War calls of the Troy...
Leaving a sea of queries in me.
A thousand warships !
To etch honour to his crown.
he, the son of Ithaca.
The prince of Penelope's dreams..
Has set to the shores of Troy..
To fight for glory's sake.

But Ulysses...
Here I could only see the curves
Of the Santorini..
Reminds me the curved dagger
in thy hand.
The red tint of warships.,
High masts, then flying flags
Vanished from my sight...
Yet Ulysses,a thousand questions
Raise war cries in my soul..
Making me sleepless..
The black sands of Santorini..
As soft as thy silky hair..
Are the ships safe ,
In the hands of Poseidone?
Do the silvery brims of the tides
Smiling at you?
I pray thee,beware of quagmires
Of companionships...

At noons,when sleep burns
Under the blazing memories,
Hope Diomedes balms
Your yearning heart.
At dawns, when dreams leave you,
To the warfront of truths...

Ulysses, won't you look for a
Hanky of my smile to wipe off
The teardrop, indisciplined!!

When the citadels of the Troy
Trembles in your war cry..
When Acheleas is wounded,
Menelaus exhausted..
Thy lionheart leads the troop..
When the fair princesses of Troy,
shoot flowery arrows
Stright into thy heart.
Hope,you would turn back into
The tents of my love...
Nights ,while sentries walk past
The last tent of Greeks..
Hope, thy thoughts travel beyond
The seas to reach my shores!! ■

*Lives in Hyderabad, Telangana

Power of Camouflaging

* Sulekha Samantaray

In the country of Futile Fame,
In the forest of Passion Fire,
Continued the hounding of a small hare.

Ignorant was she
of the intention of Hounders,
Immersed she remained
in her little homely pleasures;
illuminating her inconspicuous life
with inspirations from invisible God.

Never did the hare dare to
incite the animals of prey,
but hounders are after all
by nature always predators.

They feel themselves as impotent
if they fail to kill an innocent.

Chased by the Cheetahs and Lions
Pestered by the Panthers and Tigers
Harassed by the Hyenas and Wolves
Fervently prayed the hare for her safety.
God listened to her ardent entreaty
and gave a boon to hare petite.

Insubstantial was she
in the eyes of predators,
Iridescent became she
with power of camouflaging,
transforming herself into a tortoise,
living an amphibious life
at her own sweet will. ■

* Lives in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Retired Life

* Saroj K. Padhi

O the bliss of retired life !
The freedom to be lazy
and watch ants digging holes,
in some corner
of your house you never saw,

challenging you in their
stubborn moves and
in beat music, carrying on,
everytime invoking your
conscience not to kill on
in daily run for survival,
whether ant, elephant , cockroach
or me, all quest for living on
to the tune of modern music !

it's journey across decades
of memories sweet and sour

hanting you every reclining hour
reminding you of an exciting history
and a juicy rumination !
It's a time when you can call friends
in odd hours
to relieve everyday tension !
How much I see you
staying with me as a nice co-passenger,
silently heading on. ■

* Lives in Cuttack, Odisha.

Life is Unpredictable

* Poran Jyoti Nath

There is nothing to do
But have something to show,
Earth is round that makes a bound
Happy to live as human.

Prediction may be a cure
Unpredictable life is here,
No idea about the fear
But we love to live here.

Sorry my dear
Assuming the uncertain year,
My life is unpredictable
But nothing to be feel fear. ■

* Student in Assam University, Silchar.

Cup of Sin

* Jagaran Pujari

In halls of debauchery
I swirl down gullets to the roads
I make men betray their good God
and women lose their shame
for when the priest kneels in prayers

I am the cup of sin he bears
when I'm fair, justice turns blind
and all crown me divine
I am what the snake truly offered
in the gardens of angels
I am what sins are made of
in mockery of divine powers
I am the sweet poison
taunting saints and the pious
they drink me from casks of greed
they store me in cellars of lies
and when evil roars in joy,
they bring me out to waltz
I serve all in sorrow,
help forget their pains
the poet loves me
more than his wife
the lover despises me
less than his life
the student desires me
more than his quill
and the maiden with pink cheeks
has tasted from the cup of sorcery
they all drown their fears in me
I blind them all without discrimination,
lull them into sweet imagination
I turn men wretched
I am rightfully dreaded
for when all love dies,
the river of sin shall reign
I shall drown all the pure
devour all their souls
till none but the damned remain
to resurrect this world
in a glorious hellscape.... ■

* Student, NSCB College, Sambalpur,
Odisha.

Sahara to Amazon

* Sankha Ranjan Patra

Nature spread in this world
From Sahara to Amazon ,
Nature spread with its love
From Earth to Heaven.

within human inhuman zeal
Forget to feel the blessings of the hill ,
Within humans pride in moods
try to get rid of woods .

Nature spread in this world
From Sumeru to Kumeru ,
Nature spread with its love
From Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

Within humans lack of reminds ,
Oceans not known in curious minds ,
Within humans progress a hymn
Without fear for any time. ■

* psankharanjan@gmail.com

Rotten by Lust

* Anurag Nath

When our bedside lamps did go dim,
And every poet's quietude of night befell.
The decaying city of love that it once was,
Finally rotted at the lust
of a fallen aboard.

So proud are we of Durga's land,
The lands that thought ahead of its ages.
Where Tagore wrote the Geetanjali
that inspired,
And Rammohan Roy sang
of equality's praises!

Many did come for the fruits of Bengal,
Ours was a philosophy ripened above all.
Facing the Britishers who robbed us
of hope,
My Bengal breathed at the face
of being choked.

But today one robs her not of her fruits,
But the very robes that garland her pride,
Playing with the very patience
of Durga's might,
Forgetting Kali who watches
with three eyes!

It was the city of love and care,
Where now a demon plays his lustful lyre.
Helpless I pray to the Aigiri Nandini,
And call to the souls of poets long dead.
Since the time for Justice fell
with the robes,
And the stinker still spreads
his stench abode.

The heat from the blood of us millions,
Shall be the fire that burns this hound.
But heed my words when the deed's
fulfilled,
Scorching the nemesis won't lift
the very curse,
It yearns for sensibility, to make a man
not a devil from soul! ■

* Student, NSCB College, Sambalpur,
Odisha.

My Sweet Beloved

* Naresh Chandra Mandal

I am amidst the elegant scenes
Surrounded by magnificent flowers
Like spring creeper, hiptage, jasminun
Arborescence etc.
Nobody can forget that grace
Nobody can forget that charm
That dancing to the tune of
Dreamy glimpses.
Youthful pride of teens
Early winter
Evening excitement
Along with various flowers
Started fading.
It is real
Very often you
Rush into memory
Very calmly
Your five coloured paints
Come into sights.
Your eyes turn into
Fire of unavailability.
Become very sad in helplessness.
In my eyes you find
Modesty of glare
As if
Tiny and lovely shade
Sitting silently and has
Become sulky.
Solely in the verandah
At the root of tulashi
Putting evening twilight
Waiting for a stranger
Lovely lover. ■

* Lives in Bhadrak, Odisha.

Whispers of the Wind

* **Nirmal Kumar Rana**

In secret languages, the breeze confides
Ancient tales, and mysteries it hides
A gentle whisper, a soft caress
That awakens hearts, and soothes the mess

With sighs and murmurs, it shares its lore
Of far-off lands, and memories in store
A wandering traveler, with stories untold
That only the wind, may whisper
to the cold

In its ethereal voice, I hear a call
A summons to explore, beyond them all
To follow the wind, where'er it may roam
And discover secrets, in its whisper
at home. ■

* Lives in Boudh, Odisha.

Why do I Write

* **Ramesh Chandra Pradhani**

Writing my passion not profession
Why do I write really to me unknown
Something hidden forces me
again and again
I am not a poet but an ordinary man.

One thing I am sure to assert
It looks me an Oasis in my desert
Appears like a rainbow in my clouds
More or less, unknowingly it moulds.

Nothing teaches me how and what to write
Unexpectedly comes a flow to excite
Upset in me in any way urges to ignite

Speechless I am to reply why do I write.

It pleases my senses when I dive
into creativity
It heals me to stand and behold the reality
Stimulates me emulates me
to search for identity
Writing makes me bold enough
to work for society. ■

* pradhaniramaesh212@gmail.com

Night

* **Prafulla K. Panda**

Ah! The moon shines very bright tonight
As the clouds rest behind the hills
and not in sight
The stars twinkle in bleary eyes
amid their fluorescent light

And the day shares her bed with the sun
at the horizon
In silence, since no scream, no hullabaloo
rise from any avian
Nor a cock crows, or the mountain
thunders with a roaring lion

Here, under the still starry sky
many a dream are spun
When lovers throb and their hearts sizzle
with fiery passion
And their fingers run on velvety skin
and their lips many kisses churn

And a poet feels restless and reels
like a pregnant woman
Under the pangs of his rife and
pregnant emotion
When he listens to mothers'

whispering lullabies for their new born

And on the corridor of the night
the ecstatic owls hoot along
While the sassy crickets ceaselessly
sing their sultry song. ■

* Lives in Balasore, Odisha.

Vulture

* Gajanan Mishra

I am yours,
To save you dear,
Here I am.
Yours faithful and
Efficient scavenger.

Let me not go
From you dear,
See, how most sincere I am
To clean the landscape.

Ability is there
With me to digest
Toxic rabies, anthrax.
In my absence, know
Not easy to check
The spread of pathogens.

The path to reach
The truth is well known,
The witness I am,
Incidents and time.

Help me stay with you.
Symbol, I am
The symbol of
Bravery and selflessness.
See, cultural memory
In me, I am a testament

To the nobility.

Allow me to stay
Dear men and
Enable yourself to touch eternity.
Let me stay,
Stay save in my sky,
Hope of your future
Your friend, and your philosopher. ■

* Lives in Titilagarh, Balangir, Odisha.

Dusk

* Kajal Suman

The time when cosmos sparkles
Its intensity to mix the two
Light and darkness
The mesmerizing beauty mirrors divinity
A true design of serenity
The magnificent wonders of nature
Where past and future conflates
Birds fly to new destination
So blissful and invigorating
The fresh Breeze embraces the coolness
Soothes the pain of long day
The dove couple relish the eternal beauty
Sitting close on branches..
And the moon is about to appear
As shattered stars announce her stage
The sun is still shining in the western sky
With crystal melodies..
And praising God a million times
As the twilight says
“Every end is a new beginning”.....!!!! ■

* Lives in Nimapada, Puri, Odisha.

Everything, A Lie

* Sangram Sahoo

When will your own generation leave?
You will remain as you are
Time will not be there, the heart will tell.
The ultimate pain of life.
Time passed by eating rice.
It seems time is passing.
When will that time be Mahakal
Water is visible.
God will give you rope
and life will be messy.
In the rhythm of time
When will the name become anonymous
Everything will be washed away
in flames.
With happiness and sorrow,
laughing and crying
Will leave back and forth
Who will roll a stream of tears
Seems like
Everything is a Lie. ■

* Lives in Bhadrak, Odisha.

Thy Space I Dare Conquer

* Ratikanta Mishra

I

The reclaimed space is mine
I unfurl my flag of arrogance there
The golden cage is mine
Also the chains of liberty
and the lock of freedom.

I love my conceits
rejecting the sweet lullaby
of a throne

I prefer to be a slave
forgoing the prologue of a monarch
with a faint vision
of locating the slave
on the throne.
for a fraction of a second.
The king blinks at the throne
The slave whispers to himself
in an unheard voice.

II

What then is yours?
A palace with barbed fences to separate
Categorise provoke the plebeians
into a stasis
not to question your Authority.

To put one
down the line
in a trance of magical nihilism
to inhale incessantly
the fragrance of your
inverted awe and
convoluted reverence.

III

From
not so a high podium
you weave the lyrics
of your deceitful adoration
almost sermon-like
only to anchor them all
to your safe bay.
I am on a path
created by a wise Architect
You're on a temple
built by an Anonymous Sculptor.
I've seen Eternity
in the star-lit sky
You might
might not also
have seen a fragment
of Eternity

from the courtyard
of your Divine space.

By my side on the Path
with an evanescent moon
on the sky
as a mute witness
stands an obstinate child
whispering to her nubile mother
‘God is a person too
Like you and me
in the futile search of a Man
Whose end points He is
yet to trace and locate.

IV

I conquer your space
Question me
I perish
Answer me
You’re nowhere in sight. ■

* Lives in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Oh, How Can I Forget Thee?

(This Poem is a tribute to legendary poet

Jayanta Mahapatra)

* **Gayatri Goswami**

Oh, how can I forget thee?
Thou art remains in my breath
Thy poetry—eternal fragrance!
Cannot die into the eddies of the world
It is thy colour and light-
Illuminating my world
Entering into me and my entity-
like immortal spirit.

So, how can I forget thee?!
The images you have weaved
Remain stand still in my mind and psyche;
The images you have conceived
through your art
Touch my very consciousness;
The images by which
you have appealed your standpoint-
Envelop my very existence;
The images on which you have heaved
your sighs and ashes—
Circumscribe my world like vapour
from a cauldron;
Your melancholia haunts me and my heart,
So, how can I forget thee?!
Thee and thy world –
I sniff it, I drink it
I inhale it, I exhale it
I infuse it into my very being
So, how can I forget thee?!
Oh, everlasting light!
Thy immortal spirit flowing down
Thy divine grace streaks through the ages
Thy Sheds of light and colour refract —
Through the prism of root
Through the prism of life and culture
Through the undying life of dead
Chandrabhaga....
So, how can I forget thee?! ■

* Associate Prof. of English, Sibsagar
University, Assam

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Our Guest - Referees

Dr. P C Kambodia, B S R Govt. College, Alwar, Rajasthan

Dr. Dayanidhi Pradhan, Principal, Jaleswar Women's Degree College,
Dist. Balasore, Odisha

Dr. Arun Kumar Mishra, Lajpat Rai P G College, Sahibabad, U P

Dr. Nandini C. Sen, Bharati College, Delhi University

Dr. J. Jayakumar, Govt. Arts College, Salem, Tamil Nadu

Dr. Bikram Ku. Mohapatra, Brahma Barada College, Dist. Jajpur, Odisha

Dr. R.P. Lokhande, Principal, Mahavir College, Kolhapur, Maharashtra

Dr. Shobha Sharma, NBBG Govt. College, Gangtok, Sikkim

Dr. Sajal Dey, EFL University, Shilong Campus

Dr. Namita Laxmi Jagaddeb, Mahima Degree College, Jharsuguda, Odisha

Dr. R.C. Sheila Royappa, Seetalakshmi Achi College for Women, Pallathur,
Tamil Nadu

Dr. Dhrubajyoti Das, Cotton University, Guwahati, Assam

Dr. Amrendra Sharma (retd), C M College, Darbhanga, Bihar

Dr. Sayeed Abubakar, Sirajganj Govt. College, Bangladesh

Dr. Amar Singh, Govt. P G College, Chhindwara, M P

Dr. Radhashyam Dey, Yogoda Satsang Mahavidyalaya, Ranchi, Jharkhand

Prof. K. Sripad Bhat, Goa University, Goa

Dr. Binu K. Devasy, Govt. Law College, Thrissur, Kerala

Dr. Syed Wajahat Hussain, Govt. Degree College, Poonch, J & K

Dr. Anuradha Chaudhuri, Lanka Mahavidyalaya, Dist.- Nagaon, Assam

Dr. M.S. Wankhede, Dhanwate National College, Nagpur, Maharashtra

Dr. Rajendra Padhi, B.B. College, Chandikhole, Dist.- Jajpur, Odisha

Prof. P. Kannan, Davangere University, Karnataka

Dr. Subash Ch. Rout, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Prof. Neeraj Kumar, Magadha University, Bodh Gaya, Bihar

Prof. Pinaki Roy, Raiganj University, Uttar Dinajpur, W. B.



Dt. 12.09.2018

Peer-reviewed Journals are at par with UGC Approved Journals

In a bid to make it easier for university and college teachers to earn points to enhance their research score for recruitment and promotion, the University Grants Commission has decided to treat all peer-reviewed journals at par with its own list of approved journals.

The recently-notified UGC minimum qualifications regulations make the point amply clear. The methodology for calculating academic/research score offers points for "research papers in peer reviewed or UGC listed journals". For each paper in languages, humanities, arts, social sciences, library, education, physical education, commerce, management and other related disciplines, teacher will earn 10 points.

The regulations say: "Assessment must be based on evidence produced by the teacher such as copy of publications..." This step has been taken to make recruitment and career growth easier for college and university teachers.