ROCK PEBBLES

(The 1st English Literary Journal of Odisha)

SEPTEMBER - 2025 • Vol. XXIX • No. III

A Peer-Reviewed Journal of Arts & Humanities

Our Guest - Referees

Prof. Basudeb Chakrabarti (retd), Kalyani University,W. B.

Prof. Bishnu Charan Dash, Meghalaya University of Science and Technology

Prof. Hitesh D. Raviya, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

Prof. K. Muthuraman, Annamalai University

Prof. Mukta Mahajan, North Maharashtra University

Prof. S. Chelliah, Madurai Kamaraj University

Prof. Kalpana Purohit, J N V University, Jodhpur

Prof. Prasanna Sree, Vice-Chancellor, Adikavi Nannya University

Prof. Pradip Kumar Patra, Bodoland University

Prof. Nigamananda Das, Nagaland University

Prof. Mallikarjun Patil, Karnataka University

Prof. Aparajita Hazra, SKB University, Purulia

Prof. Tanu Gupta, Central University of Haryana

Prof. Rajesh V. Basiya, HoD(English), KSKV Kachchh University

Dr. Vandana Rajoriya, Dr HS Gour University, Sagar

Prof. Krushna Chandra Mishra, Rajiv Gandhi University, Itanagar

Dr. Prasenjit Panda, Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur

Dr. Khem Raj Sharma, The Central University of Himachal Pradesh

Dr. Rosy Chamling, Sikkim University

Dr. Saugata Kumar Nath, Assam University, Silchar

Dr. Keshab Sigdel, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Dr. Snehaprava Das, retd. prof. of English, BBSR, Odisha

Dr. Sanjib Kr. Sarma, HoD, English, Dispur college, Guwahati, Assam

Dr. Pramoda Kr. Mahapatra, HoD, English, Bhairabi Degree College, Purunakatak, Dist Boudh, Odisha

Prof. Nalini Shyam Kamil, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi, U.P.

Prof. Balkrishna Anjana, Vikram University, Ujjain, M.P.

ROCK PEBBLES

(The 1st English Literary Magazine of Odisha)
A Peer-Reviewed Journal of Arts & Humanities
R.N.I. No. 48173/89 ✸ ISSN : 0975-0509 ✸ E-ISSN : 2230-8954
September - 2025 ✸ Vol. XXIX No. III
Impact Factor - 2.11 (Google Scholar)

Cover Photo

Chief Editor Dr. Udaya N. Majhi with His Excellency
Prof Ganeshi Lal, the Governor of Odisha at Raj Bhawan, Bhubaneswar

Correspondence Address

Head Office : NARANPUR, Post: KODANDAPUR, Via: DEVIDWAR
Dist.: JAJPUR, ODISHA, INDIA, PIN Code-755007
Regd. Office: Plot No: 2642/3054/3130, Lane-7, Bhuasuni Nagar, Post - Janla, Dist: Khordha, Odisha-752054
e-mail : rockpebbles2007@rediffmail.com / rockpebbles2010@gmail.com
http:// www.rockpebblesindia.in
Cell - 9437009135 / 9437449490, WhatsApp-9861012630

about the Journal
ROCK PEBBLES
R.N.I. No: 48173/89
ISSN: 0975-0509, E-ISSN: 2230-8954
is published monthly.
Editorial office at - Naranpur,
Post: Kodandapur, Via: Devidwar
Dist - JAJPUR, Odisha, India - 755007
e-mail: rockpebbles2007@rediffmail.com
rockpebbles2010@gmail.com
website : http://www.rockpebblesindia.in

Subscription Fees

Annual - Rs. 1200/-
Lifetime - Rs. 10,000/-, (12 years)
Subscription fees should be deposited through NEFT or online in the following SB Accounts of ROCK PEBBLES:- **Canara Bank**, Rambagh Branch, A/c No: 1676101011729, IFSC - CNRB0001676. **Bank of India**, JAJPUR Town Branch A/c No. 512010110000396, IFSC - BKID0005120.

We also accept Bank Draft in favour of ROCK PEBBLES payable at State Bank of India, JAJPUR Town Branch, IFSC - SBIN 0000094. Out-station cheque in favour of ROCK PEBBLES to be added with Rs. 100/- extra towards Bank Collection Charges. Foreign subscribers are requested to remit subscription fees by International Money order to the Managing Editor. We receive research papers prepared as per latest version of MLA guidelines. Deadlines for submission of papers:- for January, February & March issue - 1st January to 10th January. For April, May, June issue - `1st April to 10th April. For July August, Sept issue - 1st July to 10th July. For October, November, December issue - 1st October to 10th October. On principle, we don't publish any writer consecutively. A Literary Journal has no funds of its own. Hence, all contributors are requested to subscribe the Journal for its survival. The pages in Rock Pebbles are forums for the authors, who write without editorial interference. The Editors are grateful for the opportunity to consider unsolicited research papers. ■

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 September - 2025 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

CONTENTS

CRITICISM

Mirrored Desires: The Distorted Quest for Self in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

Prakash Bhadury
Alok Kumar
Kusum Sharma

This study examines Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye through the lens of mirrored desires, exploring how alien standards of beauty and societal ideals distort the quest for self within the Black community. Morrison's novels, rich with the lore, humours, language, values, and beliefs of Black culture, serve as a backdrop against which she dissects major threats that compel Black individuals to distance themselves from their ethnic heritage. These threats, including externally imposed beauty standards, materialism, and the pervasive legacy of slavery, fundamentally challenge the development of an authentic existential selfhood. This abstract posits that Morrison's penetrating analysis of these issues, particularly Pecola Breedlove's tragic pursuit of whiteness, offers a provocative commentary on how such distorted resolutions ultimately defeat intrinsic community values, rather than affirming them.

Keywords: Beauty, Internalised Racism,Perception,StandardIdentity, Trauma.

Introduction*:* Toni Morrison's seminal debut novel, *The Bluest Eye*, stands as a profound exploration of the arduous journey to establish self-worth within a society relentlessly shaped by the twin forces of racism and classism. Through the innocent yet keenly observant eyes of nine-year-old Claudia McTeer, the narrative intricately weaves the lives of three young girls and their families, illuminating their desperate struggles—and often their heartbreaking defeats—in the battle for self-affirmation. From the seemingly innocuous school primers and cherished dolls to the pervasive imagery of Hollywood films, these characters are ceaselessly bombarded with Anglo-Saxon standards of physical beauty and a middle-class lifestyle, norms that fundamentally deny the inherent beauty and validity of their existence. At its heart, the novel presents a deceptively simple theme, yet it chronicles the tragically torn lives of the impoverished Breedlove family—Pauline, Cholly, Sam, and Pecola. Unlovely and profoundly unloved, Pecola becomes the poignant embodiment of this societal cruelty, her nightly prayers for blue eyes, like those of her privileged blonde schoolmates, serving as a desperate plea for acceptance.

As the narrative unfolds towards its savage yet deeply poignant resolution, Pecola becomes the tragic focal point of a complex web of mingled love and hatred, born from her family's profound frailty and the world's unrelenting harshness. John Leonard, thus, writes on the blurb of the novel *The Bluest Eye*. The view has been taken from his criticism published in the New York Times*:* "*The Bluest Eye* is an enquiry into the reasons why beauty gets wasted in this country. The beauty in this case is black, the wasting is done by a cultural engine that seems to have been designed to murder possibilities".

The core of *The Bluest Eye* is a sad tale about a young Black girl's painful wish for blue eyes, which represents her belief that having them would make her beautiful, good, and bring her joy.While this thematic statement might appear straightforward, it profoundly undercuts the intricate and devastating complexities inherent in such a longing. Within her inaugural novel, Morrison masterfully illuminates how blue eyes, blonde hair, and fair skin have been enshrined as the quintessential symbols of beauty in the Western world, relentlessly propagated through romantic novels, films, billboards, dolls, and the collective societal reverence for such "golden" ideals. The novel delves into a profound myth and the damaging assumptions it perpetuates. The tragic desire of a young Black girl for blue eyes in the novel is more than a simple plot point. It's a powerful metaphor for the deep-seated cultural conflict between Anglo-American and Afro-American societies, representing a clash over what is considered beautiful and good. This tension between the two cultures is a central theme of the story.The story of a young Black girl's frantic desire for blue eyes is not just a literal plot point; it's a powerful symbol of the clash between two cultures' definitions of what is considered 'good' and 'beautiful.' This very quest lies at the core of the enduring tension between Anglo-American and Afro-American cultures. As Morrison herself powerfully asserts, "The concept of physical beauty as a virtue is one of the dumbest, most pernicious and destructive ideas of the western world" (89).

The protagonist, Pecola, yearns for blue eyes that transcendher mere personal wish; it is a desire deeply entrenched in three centuries of fraught interactions between Black and white cultures. This longing serves as a critical lens through which to examine how the pervasive ideologies, disseminated by institutions controlled by the dominant white group, profoundly shape the self-perception of Black women. As Elizabeth astutely observes: "Morrison's remarkable insight lays bare the severe emotional turmoil that arises from living in a world where white ideals and aspirations are presented to Black individuals as uniquely significant, yet simultaneously remain agonizingly out of reach" (383).Pecola's parents, Pauline and Cholly Breedlove, are themselves consumed by self-loathing, internalising a sense of unworthiness that manifests as perceived ugliness, particularly for the women in their family. Pauline, who works as a domestic in a pristine white home, harbours a deep resentment for the squalor of her own house, the perceived unattractiveness of her daughter, and the overall state of her family. Worse still, she attributes her feelings of inadequacy directly to her Blackness and poverty. Like countless other Black children,

Pecola has been taught that blonde hair, blue eyes, and fair skin are not only the epitome of beauty but also the outward signs of the most divinely and naturally perfect character. Consequently, Pecola, who has never considered herself beautiful, fixates on the eyes of white people, longing for a miraculous transformation that would grant her such features.

During her parents' frequent and violent arguments, Pecola becomes so overwhelmed by her family's desperate circumstances that she silently wishes to disappear. She squeezes her eyes shut, wishing her body would disappear bit by bit. She imagines her limbs, torso, and neck all fading away, yet her eyes always remain present. They are a constant reminder of what she sees as her 'ugliness,' and she feels trapped by it. For hours, she stands before the mirror, searching for the reason and remedy of this ugliness—the reason she is shunned by everyone at school.Pecola's profound yearning for blue eyes transcends a mere personal wish; it is a desire deeply entrenched in three centuries of fraught interactions between Black and white cultures. This longing serves as a critical lens through which to examine how the pervasive ideologies, disseminated by institutions controlled by the dominant white group, profoundly shape the self-perception of Black women. As Elizabeth astutely observes:"Morrison's remarkable insight lays bare the severe emotional turmoil that arises from living in a world where white ideals and aspirations are presented to Black individuals as uniquely significant, yet simultaneously remain agonizingly out of reach (383).

Pecola's parents, Pauline and Cholly Breedlove, are themselves consumed by self-loathing, internalising a sense of unworthiness that manifests as perceived ugliness, particularly for the women in their family. Pauline, who works as a domestic in a pristine white home, harbours a deep resentment for the squalor of her own house, the perceived unattractiveness of her daughter, and the overall state of her family. Worse still, she attributes her feelings of inadequacy directly to her Blackness and poverty. Like countless other Black children, Pecola has been taught that blonde hair, blue eyes, and fair skin are not only the epitome of beauty but also the outward signs of the most divinely and naturally perfect character. Consequently, Pecola, who has never considered herself beautiful, fixates on the eyes of white people, longing for a miraculous transformation that would grant her such features.

During her parents' frequent and violent arguments, Pecola becomes so overwhelmed by her family's desperate circumstances that she silently wishes to disappear. She tightly squeezes her eyes shut, imagining her body slowly fading away—her fingers, then her arms up to the elbows, her feet and legs vanishing simultaneously, followed by her stomach, chest, and neck. Yet, no matter how hard she tries, her eyes remain. They are her inescapable reality, and as long as she looks the way she does—as long as she is "ugly"—she feels condemned to her current existence. For hours, she sits before the mirror, meticulously scrutinising her reflection, desperately trying to uncover the elusive secret of her ugliness, the very quality that causes her to be ignored and scorned by both teachers and classmates at school.

The thought crosses Pecola's mind that she would be a different, better person if only her eyes were beautiful. She takes a small amount of comfort from the fact that she has nice teeth and a nose that isn't as flat as her neighbours'.It is taken that if her appearance changed, Cholly would be different and Mrs. Breedlove too. Perhaps they would say: "Why look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We must not do bad things in front of those pretty eyes." (34) This desperate hope fuels her nightly prayers, as the text further states: "Each night without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently for a year, she had prayed. Although somewhat discouraged, she was not without hope of having something as wonderful as would take a long time." (35)

Pecola never realises that she has been under the spell of white cultural domination. All that she experiences is repeated rejection and brutalisation. Even more chillingly, her parents, who have never experienced love and its nurturing qualities, do not know how to love. Consequently, they cannot instil a sense of worth in their children. In their world, black represents the "shadows of evil, the devil's aspects, night, separation, loneliness, sin, dirt, excrement", while white signifies "the mark of good, token of innocence, purity, cleanliness, spirituality, virtue and hope." Morrison powerfully critiques this destructive paradigm, stating: "When the strength depends on its beauty, when the focus is turned to know one looks as opposed to what one is, we are in trouble..." (90)

The question of whether this story belongs solely to Pecola is a critical one. This is where Morrison's brilliance shines through, as she uses Claudia's perspective to narrate Pecola's tragic spiral into madness. Pecola herself lacks the emotional and intellectual distance to grasp her suffering; her descent into insanity prevents her from understanding her own story. Claudia, on the other hand, can articulate Pecola's experiences and find meaning in them throughout the novel. Furthermore, as noted by Christian, the narrative is equally Claudia's. Although Claudia doesn't suffer from the "myth of beauty"(141) as severely as Pecola, she is still deeply aware that blue eyes and blond hair are highly valued, and she lacks both. Objects like the Christmas dolls and a Shirley Temple mug constantly remind her of her own perceived inferiority. While her sister Frieda and Pecola discuss dolls at length, Claudia's disdain for Shirley Temple prevents her from joining in.

Pauline's deeply ingrained prejudices are clear from her initial reaction to her daughter's birth. Her chilling words upon first seeing Pecola, "Eyes are all soft and wet. A cross between a puppy and a dying man, but I know she was ugly. Head full of pretty hair but lord she was ugly," (98) reveal a disturbing bias. This comment, which Pecola later overhears, causes her immense shock and pain, contributing to the ultimate destruction of their relationship and Pecola's well-being.After being relegated to the lowest rung of society's beauty standards, Pecola, in her desperation, seeks out Soaphead Church, a man who claims to have supernatural abilities. On a hot afternoon, she arrives at his door. He asks her what she needs, and she responds, "Maybe, maybe, you can do it for me." When he presses for

more information, she simply says, “My eyes.” He then asks what about her eyes, and she clarifies, “I want them blue” (138). This encounter highlights the depth of Pecola’s anguish and her belief that changing her eyes is the only way to escape her reality.

Pecola’s profound yearning for blue eyes transcends a mere personal wish; it is a desire deeply entrenched in three centuries of fraught interactions between Black and white cultures. This longing serves as a critical lens through which to examine how the pervasive ideologies, disseminated by institutions controlled by the dominant white group, profoundly shape the self-perception of Black women. As Elizabeth astutely observes, Morrison’s remarkable insight lays bare the severe emotional turmoil that arises from living in a world where white ideals and aspirations are presented to Black individuals as uniquely significant, yet simultaneously remain agonizingly out of reach (383).

Pecola’s parents, Pauline and Cholly Breedlove, are themselves consumed by self-loathing, internalising a sense of unworthiness that manifests as perceived ugliness, particularly for the women in their family. Pauline, who works as a domestic in a pristine white home, harbours a deep resentment for the squalor of her own house, the perceived unattractiveness of her daughter, and the overall state of her family. Worse still, she attributes her feelings of inadequacy directly to her Blackness and poverty. Like countless other Black children, Pecola has been taught that blonde hair, blue eyes, and fair skin are not only the epitome of beauty but also the outward signs of the most divinely and naturally perfect character. Consequently, Pecola, who has never considered herself beautiful, fixates on the eyes of white people, longing for a miraculous transformation that would grant her such features.

When her parents fight, Pecola feels so hopeless about her family’s situation that she wishes she could just disappear. She shuts her eyes tightly and pictures her body fading away: first her fingers and forearms, then her legs and feet, followed by her stomach, chest, and neck. Yet, no matter how hard she tries, her eyes remain. They are her inescapable reality, and as long as she looks the way she does—as long as she is ‘ugly’—Feeling trapped in her life, she spends hours staring into the mirror, meticulously examining her reflection. She’s desperate to understand the “secret” of her ugliness, the trait that leads her teachers and classmates to ignore and scorn her.

Pecola occasionally thinks that if her eyes were beautiful, she would become beautiful herself. She observes that her teeth are fine and her nose isn’t overly large or flat like others she knows. She is convinced that if she looked different, Cholly and Mrs. Breedlove would also treat her differently.Perhaps they would say: “Why look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We must not do bad things in front of those pretty eyes.” (34) This desperate hope fuels her nightly prayers, as the text further states: “Each night without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently for a year, she had prayed. Although somewhat discouraged, she was not without hope of having something as wonderful as would take a long time.” (35)

Pecola remains unaware that she is a victim of a dominant white culture. All she knows is constant rejection and abuse. What's even more heartbreaking is that her parents, who never learned how to love themselves, are incapable of teaching their children self-worth. In their minds, blackness is associated with "evil, filth, and loneliness," while whiteness represents "goodness, purity, and hope."Morrison powerfully critiques this destructive paradigm, stating: "When the strength depends on its beauty, when the focus is turned to know one looks as opposed to what one is, we are in trouble..." (90).

Pecola's tragic descent into madness leaves her without the necessary distance or clarity to understand and narrate her own experiences. By the end of the novel, she has completely lost her grasp on reality. Claudia serves as the novel's narrator, an empathetic witness who tries to make sense of Pecola's tragedy. She provides the crucial context and emotional insight that Pecola herself cannot. Morrison's brilliant stroke lies in using Claudia as the child narrator of Pecola's descent into madness. Pecola herself does not have the necessary distance, perspective, or mental capacity to comprehend what is happening to her; she cannot look at her own story because she goes mad. Claudia, however, tells Pecola's story and makes some sense of it throughout the book. Even more dramatically, as Christian notes:

> "The story is also Claudia's story. She does not experience the gravest effect of the myth of beauty as Pecola does. She is not seen as the ugliest of the ugly, but she does know that blue eyes and blond hair are admired by all, and she does not possess them," (140-41).

The Christmas dolls she receives, the Shirley Temple mug, and similar items serve as constant measures of her own perceived lack of desirability. While Frieda and Pecola engage in lengthy conversations about dolls, Claudia does not join them because she hates Shirley.

Both Cholly and Pauline are ultimately responsible for their daughter's tragic end. Pauline's harsh judgment of her newborn daughter reveals her deep-seated prejudice from the very beginning: "Eyes are all soft and wet. A cross between a puppy and dying man but I knower she was ugly. Head full of pretty hair but lord she was ugly" (98). When Pecola overhears this comment from her mother years later, she is deeply shocked and wounded. This moment essentially seals her fate, placing her and, by extension, her future child, at the very bottom of society's strict beauty hierarchy. In her resulting despair, Pecola seeks out a self-proclaimed supernatural reader and dream interpreter, Soaphead Church. During a late hot afternoon, he answers a knock at his door to find a twelve-year-old Black girl. When he asks, "What can I do for you, my child?" she replies, "Maybe, maybe, you can do it for me." When he presses further, "Do what for you?" she simply says, "My eyes" (87).

In a moment of desperation, Saphead Church wishes he could perform a miracle for Pecola. Feeling a strange, divine inspiration, he "grants" her wish for blue eyes. The

grim nature of his act is revealed in a letter to God, where he writes, "I have caused a miracle. I gave her blue eyes... No one else will see her blue eyes. But she will. And she will live happily ever after." However, the harm is already done. Pecola loses her sanity, and her madness becomes a kind of shield from the world. She spends her days mimicking a bird, with her "elbows bent, hands on shoulders," in a "futile effort to fly." Like a "winged but grounded bird," she beats the air, focused on a "blue void" she can't reach but which has consumed her mind.Morrison's novel examines how the damaging impact of Western beauty standards and the ideal of romantic love can corrupt a whole culture's natural order, especially when it's imposed on a vulnerable Black girl. Pecola is essentially made a scapegoat for society's disdain. As scholar Dorothy Allison notes, "The Bluest Eye, Morrison's first novel, presents a failed quest culminating in madness" (Allison, 201). The young Pecola Breedlove searches painfully for self-esteem as a means of improving order in the chaos of her world. Because a sense of self-worth and the correlative order that would accompany it are unavailable to her, in the familiar or wider environment, she retreats into the subjective world of fantasy." (346).

Conclusion:

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* powerfully critiques how external "mirrored desires"—Western beauty ideals—distort the Black community's quest for authentic selfhood. Pecola Breedlove's tragic journey reveals the immense psychological cost when society imposes unattainable standards on marginalised groups. Her yearning for blue eyes symbolises not just personal failure, but the deep, systemic harm from centuries of racial oppression.The novel demonstrates how cultural institutions, meant to shape identity, instead erase it, fostering unworthiness. Pecola's parents, themselves victims of this warped worldview, tragically perpetuate neglect, unable to provide the love their daughter craves. Pecola's eventual madness, while devastating, becomes a desperate, albeit destructive, form of self-preservation. Claudia McTeer's narration is vital, framing Pecola's suffering within a larger societal critique, highlighting the insidious collective impact of these mirrored desires.

Ultimately, *The Bluest Eye* offers a timeless commentary on the dangers of defining human worth by superficial, external metrics. Morrison's exploration of Pecola's "distorted quest for self" forces readers to confront racism's enduring legacy and how cultural narratives can warp identity, emphasising the critical need for self-acceptance and the reclamation of inherent beauty and value. ■

Works Cited

Christian, Barbara. *The Contemporary Fables of Toni Morrison: Black Women Novelists*. Paramount, 1985.

Jane, Elizabeth. *Women's Literature*. Hoffman, 1979.

Lee, Dorothy H. "The Quest for Self: Triumph and Failure in the Works of Toni Morrison." *Black Women Writers (1950-1980): A Critical Evaluation*, edited by Mari Evans, Anchor Press, 1984.

Morrison, Toni. "Behind the Making of the Black Book." *Black World*, 23 Feb. 1974.

—. *The Bluest Eye*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.

Parker, Betty. "Complexity, Toni Morrison's Woman: An Interview Essay." *Black Bridges: Visions of Black Women in Literature*, Doubleday, 1979.

Smith, Barbara. *Towards a Black Feminist Criticism: Black Women Studies*. Feminist Press, 1982.

Dr. Prakash Bhadury, Professor, English&Editorial Board Member, Rock Pebbles, email: prakashbhadury@gmail.com

Dr. Alok Kumar, Registrar, Sangam University, Bhilwara, Rajasthan.

Dr. Kusum Sharma, Assistant Professor, English, IIMT University, Meerut, U.P.

The Expedition of E L T and Pedagogy from Colonisation to Decolonisation

Gauri Shankar Jha

English is an international language and it familiarises people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to a common platform, and hence, it works, definitely, as a uniting force. No doubt, it has its colonial history and circumstantial gravity. Consequently, it is natural to question whether this language has been fully adopted and its pedagogy made inherent in the present educational system today. E L T is, otherwise, termed as a colonised entity, and the shift of E L T and pedagogy needs serious deliberation. Here, the diversity of learners and their cultural backgrounds matters, as teaching practices are deeply rooted in cultures and languages that may be considered local. The present paper seeks to examine the designs of the shift, its accessible consequences, and the possible future fallout.

Keywords: Culture, Education, Language,Teaching, Pedagogy, Shift.

Introduction

English, as a language, has a colonial identity, no doubt. However, its present status is that of a decolonised entity, because of various geopolitical factors, seen or unseen. If we go by the definition of Pedagogy, which involves the knowledge of teaching and learning methods, required strategies and followed practices. As explained in Wikipedia:

> "Pedagogy, most commonly understood as the approach to teaching, is the theory and practice of learning, and how this process influences, and is influenced by, the social, political, and psychologicaldevelopment of learners. Pedagogy, taken as an academic discipline, is the study of how knowledge and skills are imparted in an educational context, and it considers the interactions that take place during learning. Both the theory and practice of pedagogy vary greatly as they reflect different social, political, and cultural contexts."

It also includes the understanding of how people learn how to design effective learning environments and create learning experiences. Not only that, it encompasses a wide range of educational approaches, including the use of technology, collaborative learning and experimental learning. So, the pedagogy of English language teaching is a serious business to be discussed and contemplated widely and thoroughly. As highlighted by Paula Rice:

> "The global spread of English and English language teaching (ELT) is rooted in colonialism. English is often promoted as a de-territorialized language and a decolonizing tool. However, literature shows that ELT still maintains traces of colonialism, despite writers addressing this over several decades. Recent literature demonstrates that English is still negatively associated with colonial history in some parts of the world, and that teaching focuses on standard forms of English from White anglonormative countries such as the UK and the US." (JUICE, 23rd November 2021).

In the decolonisation of pedagogies, we recognise and review structures of power allied with colonisation, to accommodate and legitimise the local and indigenous elements. At the same time, decolonisation of education targetsthe demolition of colonial impacts that has pervaded the Indian education system as curriculum reforms. It is to be achieved through various tools, related to cultural, psychological, and economic freedom and involves indigenous people.According to Walter Mignolo, in the field of education, decolonisation implies:

> "Decolonial education, is an expression of the changing geopolitics of knowledge whereby the modern epistemological framework for knowing and understanding the world is no longer interpreted as universal and unbound by geohistorical and bio-graphical contexts."

Arguments

Our chief concern is to investigate the tenets of English, both as a language and as an important ingredient of the education system; at the same time, it is also a learning and teaching object that initiates the discussion on the pedagogy. It involves the intricacies of both the learner and instructor. Hence, a competent pedagogyseeks a better understanding of the learner, whose content is taught and explained by the instructor. It involves the intentional use of teaching methods and strategiesthat facilitate learning and promote critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. Truly speaking, pedagogy is essential for creating meaningful and transformative educational experience that prepares learners for success in the twenty-first century. The conventional pedagogy focuses on learners' holistic development and promotes critical thinking, creativity and collaboration. We have a holistic approach better than that of Western pedagogies, as it encourages themultilingual approach, including the mother tongue. Regarding mother tongue, we know that the mother tongue and English are different, but they can correlate meaningfully. It is the first language that one learnsand it influences English acquisition and articulation, especially during the early phase. Both are important: English as a global lingua franca and the mother tongue as cultural identity. However, the adaptation of English language teaching results in marginalisation of the mother tongue or the local language and thereby the culture. On the other hand, it strengthens the concept of identityin the learners. This results in the movement of decolonisation of English language teaching at the primary level of schools. In fact, in

decolonisation, theexisting structures and ideologies are to be demolishedandcolonialism discouraged. Hence, we can safely infer that traditional pedagogies are connected to indigenous languages and cultures. Askari Jaffer observes in Hans News Service on 21 Feb 2025 (8:30 AM IST HIGHLIGHTS) on International Mother Language Day 2025:

> "——-the importance of preserving native languages and promoting their usage worldwide —- honours linguistic diversity, cultural heritage, and the role of language in shaping identities. More than just a means of communication, a mother tongue carries traditions, history, and emotions, connecting generations and strengthening communities.
>
> By embracing and respecting various languages, we celebrate human expression's richness and foster inclusivity."

In the book *English Language Teaching: Approaches, Methods,Techniques,* Geetha Nagaraj has discussed in detail different methods, approaches and techniques of English language teaching. He aims to educate teacher – participants / teachers so that his / her potential can be fully developed and utilized, professionally. In the process of approaching the language and its pedagogy a sound relationship between the teacher and learner is essential. He discusses Grammar – Translation Method, the Structural – Oral – Situational Approach, Modern Approaches and other methods. Under Modern Approaches, he discusses the notional – functional syllabus and the communicative approach; under Humanistic Approaches, he discusses the silent way, Communicative Language Learning (C L L),. He discusses techniques of teaching English and Teaching Aids in the subsequent chapters.

Characteristics of English language teaching and pedagogy:

Characteristics of English language teaching and pedagogy may be summed up as below:

- Communicative Approach: In this approach use of the English language is as communication.
- Contextualised Learning: Here, we are acquainted with the fact that E L T is most effective in meaningful contexts and not through isolated exercises.
- Multimodal Instructions: It emphasises the use of a variety of cultural backgrounds.
- Culturally Responsive Teaching: It acknowledges the diversity of cultural backgrounds.

Decolonisation of E L T and Pedagogy:

While deliberating over the decolonisation of E L T and pedagogy, we must take care of certain essential parameters which may be summarised as below:

- It requires a fundamental shift in perspective, from a Western–centric approach to one that is more inclusive, culturally responsive and unbiased.

- It involves the identification of the diversity of learners and their cultural backgrounds.
- It embraces teaching practices that are rooted in the local culture and language.

Now the question is how to achieve decolonisation; mostly, a common consensus is reached over the fact that by following the steps given below, decolonisation may be achieved:

- By recognising the colonial legacy
- By embracing multilingualism
- By incorporating traditional pedagogy
- By promoting cultural diversity and inclusivity
- By challenging the power imbalances

However, for more inclusion in E L T and pedagogy, we should also take care of the following facts:

- We should promote linguistic diversity
- We should centre the experience of marginalized learners
- We should adopt learner – centric approach
- We should engage in critical reflections

Yet, there are certain challenges that we may face in the process of decolonization. In fact, English as a language has a strong legacy of colonialism so the first complicacy is related to its colonial structure and we need to identify and demolish such design of E L T to save the education system of India. To achieve this target, we need to encourage linguistic diversity, cultural nuances as per the Indian Curriculum and Pedagogy. To make it more inclusive we must adhere to traditional norms, that is, indigenous knowledge systems, philosophies, and narratives, to suit the present fashion of multiculturalism and multilingualism. In the paper titled "Decolonisation as pedagogy: a praxis of 'becoming' in ELT", *Suresh Canagarajah* mentions:

> "'Decolonising ELT' defines pedagogy as expanding beyond the classroom and knowledge concerns to accommodate embodied affective, social, and cultural learning that draws from and transforms environmental and geopolitical spaces. It defines pedagogy as a 'praxis', involving the reflexivity of action, reflection, and relearning, thus challenging the condescending view of 'practice' as secondary to research, policy, and scholarship. This perspective enhances the political stakes in pedagogy by contesting the micro/macro binary that relegates pedagogic resistance to ineffectual local changes. Reviewing constructs from Southern epistemologies, such as non-duality, relationality, becoming, coexistence, ethical values, and non-representational dispositions, this introduction outlines a decolonial ELT. A decolonial pedagogy focuses on developing the ethical, relational, and critical dispositions that will help students negotiate very diverse and unpredictable communicative contexts for meaningful and inclusive communication, drawing from

all the semiotic resources in the environment. Rather than 'transferable' norms and rules, it focuses on 'adaptive' dispositions that help negotiate unpredictable communicative interactions————

of accommodating diverse resources in the learning space as relevant beyond the prescribed readings——, and a dialogical pedagogy in which student and teacher interactions develop stances against dominant language ideologies————-A decolonial pedagogy focuses on developing the ethical, relational, and critical dispositions that will help students negotiate very diverse and unpredictable ..."

Conclusion

The above deliberation helps us to come to the inference that English is the most widely spoken language in the world, and hence it plays a vital role in connecting people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Not only that, by embracing inclusive pedagogy and promoting cultural diversity, educators can create a more conducive environment for learners. This endeavour will result in a more inclusive and unbiased society. Hence, the journey of E L T and pedagogy from colonialisation to decolonisation is the demand of time, and in the process of decolonisation, both learner and instructor have to play a vital role, keeping in view the cultural, linguistic and local factors in mind. ■

Works Cited:

Canagarajah, Suresh. "Decolonisation as pedagogy: a praxis of 'becoming' in ELT." *ELT Journal*, advance article, 23 Apr. 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccad017. Accessed 23 Apr. 2023.

Harmer, J. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Longman, 1983.

Jaffer, Askari. "International Mother Language Day 2025." *Hans News Service*, 21 Feb. 2025, 8:30 a.m. IST, www.thehansindia.com/life-style/international-mother-language-day-2025-wishes-messages-quotes-and-status-to-share-947651.

Mignolo, Walter, and Catherine E. Walsh. *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. Duke University Press, 2018.

Nagaraj, Geetha. *English Language Teaching: Approaches, Methods, Techniques*. Orient Longman, 2006.

"Pedagogy." *Wikipedia*, 19 June 2025, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedagogy. Accessed 2 July 2025.

Rice, Paula. "Decolonising English Language Teaching Pedagogy." *JUICE*, 23 Nov. 2021.

Dr. Gauri Shankar Jha, former Professor & Head, University Department of English, Ranchi University, Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Contestation and Negotiation of Woman Space: A Reading of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and Mamoni Raisom Goswami's *Datal Hatir Uye Khowa Haoda*

Gunajeet Mazumdar

In my paper, an attempt has been made to study two narratives of two prominent woman writers of the world- American writer Kate Chopin's *The Awakening(1899)* and Indian Assamese writer Mamoni Raisom Goswami's *Datal HatirUyekhowaHaoda* (1988). Despite their belonging to two different sets of society and culture, the questions of woman's identity, they raise in their novels are the same. The paper proposes to show how these two narratives negotiate the serious questions of the space of women in society. What is more prominent in my paper is to focus on how these two narratives can justify women's 'space', thereby fighting against the notion of 'Other' constructed by patriarchal hegemony. While upholding the argument of my paper, an attempt will be made to analyse the paper from the standpoint of some of the important notions of feminist criticism as well as postcolonial theories.

Keywords: other, patriarchy, resistancespace, self

Introduction:

All kinds of women's writings are strong weapons for underpinning the issues of women's space. Literary writing is not exceptional in this case. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One'sOwn (1929)*also argues in favour of creating women's space through their writings. In my paper, I have selected to study two prominent literary texts of the world-Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) and Mamoni Raisom Goswami's *Datal Hatir UyeKhowaHaoda* (1988). Kate Chopin is a modern American woman novelist whose *The Awakening* marks a startling response in the world. Similarly, Dr. Mamoni Raisom Goswami is a noted Assamese writer whose Datal Hatir *UyeKhowaHaoda* also marks a brilliant response among the readers. Here, it is important to note that despite the writers' belonging to two different sets of society and culture, the questions about women's identity they raise in their novels are more or less the same. However, my paper proposes to show how these two narratives negotiate the serious questions of the space of women in society. What is more prominent in my paper is to focus on how these two narratives can justify the woman's 'space', thereby

fighting against the notion of the other constructed by patriarchal hegemony. In order to uphold the argument of my paper, an attempt will be made to interpret the present narratives from the standpoint of some of the important feminist theories of Virginia Woolf, Simon De Beauvoir, Helene Cixous, and Luce Irigaray. Again, Postcolonial theorist Edward Said's theory of 'Other' will also be brought to the discussion to interpret the present narratives.

The Awakening of Kate Chopin is a significant contribution to the field of world literature. The novel is set against the backdrop of an American Creole Society. The narrative revolves around an American Creole woman, Edna Pontellier. In the narrative, it is seen that Edna lives as a housewife with her husband and children. As a housewife, she must take the responsibilities of her husband and children. But the narrative explores that Edna's individual feelings are not understood by her husband. As the novel progresses, it is seen that Edna has extramarital relationships with Robert at first and later with Arobin to satisfy her needs without caring about the contemporary social norms. Towards the end of the novel, we can see that Edna is left by both Robert and Arobin. The ending of the novel is quite startling, as in the end, it is seen that Edna is going into the depths of the sea and drowning. Thus, the novel concludes with the suicide of Edna.

In the same way, Mamoni Raisom Goswami's *Datal Hatir UyeKhowaHaoda* is also a significant contribution to world literature. The novel is written in the Assamese language and also in the backdrop of an Assamese Brahmin society. The setting of the novel is especially set in the backdrop of the Brahmanical society of AmrangaXatra, in the south Kamrup area of Assam. The narrative of the novel is set in the time of British imperialism, that is, in the pre-independence era. The narrative revolves around some of the important characters like Giribala, Indranath, Elimon, Mahidhar, and so on. In the narrative, we can see that Durga, Giribala, and Saru Gokhani are Brahmin widows, and they have to obey the traditional rules and regulations of Brahmin society. They have to come back to their father's home. The character Durga is ready to bear with the exploitation of her husband and also the rules and regulations of patriarchal society after becoming a widow.

The widow Saru Gokhanihas to suppress her feelings for Mahidhar Bapu because of the norms of society. Indranath Das is to give up her love for the Brahmin girl Elimon due to the societal norms,despite his inner revolution against these norms. The character of Giribala is a bold portrayal of the novelist who is seen revolting against the patriarchal societal norms, unlike her widowed aunt Durga. Despite her widowhood, Giribala is bold enough to make a relationship with Mark Chahaband also to eat meat. The conclusion of the novel is more notable as, while going to confess at the order of the priest, instead of confessing, she burns herself and dies. The death of Giribala suggests that she is not ready to obey the so-called patriarchal norms.

Let us have a brief analysis of these two narratives in order to uphold the argument of my paper. The narrative *The Awakening* explores the question of women's space in society. Edna is a housewife taking the responsibilities of both her husband and children. But despite

havinga husband and children, it is seen that Edna feels terrible loneliness. It is because, while performing the role of wife and mother, she is somehow missing her selfhood. The narrative explores that Edna is living in a society that is dominated by patriarchal ideology. In other words, the selfhood of Edna as an individual being is marginalized and subjugated by the dominant patriarchal ideology. The patriarchal societal norms define Edna as a wife and mother, but not as an individual being. Thus, the meaning of Edna in the society is not independent, rather relative, suppressing individual aspirations of Edna's 'self', thereby defining her as an object of male 'gaze'. The story of Edna is not only a tragic story of an American Creole woman, but the story is also a type that represents the story of large sections of women in the world who do not have their selfhood while performing the responsibilities of patriarchal norms.

What is more prominent in Chopin's *The Awakening* is that the narrative simply does not present a story of a marginalised space of a woman in society, but it also makes a bold attempt to retainthe woman's self, thereby breaking the patriarchal 'gaze'. For instance, in the narrative, we can see that Edna is trying to fulfil her aspirations without caring about the norms of patriarchal society. Edna's bold attempts tofulfill her emotional and sexual desire with Robert and Arobin are enough examples of her defining 'self'. She is not ready simply to fulfill the norms of patriarchal society; rather, she is always challenging these so-called norms. As once in the narrative, she says Madame Ratignolle, "I would give up my life for my children; but I would not give up myself" (251). Of course, Edna cannot sustain her aspirations with both Robert(imagination) and Arobin (flesh), as they have left her. Thus, she once again becomes the victim of male subjugation. But more interesting is that Edna is not weak enough to bear with the male 'gaze'. Having resolved ''never again to belong to another than herself", she tells Robert: "I am no longer one of Mr. Pontellier's possessions to dispose of or not. I give myself where I choose. If he were to say Here, Robert, take her and be happy; she is yours; I should laugh at you both'' (251). Thus, it is evident that Edna is bold enough to throw out the subjection of patriarchy to identify her space. In fact, at the end of the narrative, it is seen that she embraces herself with the infinity of the sea. While approaching the text from the standpoint of a feminist and existentialist perspective, it is seen that Edna's death is motivated by an uncompromising desire for "spiritual emancipation." Thus, Edna's suicide cannot be taken as a negative attempt; rather, as a positive attempt that is made by Edna to free herself from the subjugation of patriarchal ideology. We cannot think that suicide is the solution towomen's emancipation. We cannot simply define Edna's attempt as a suicide, but we have to argue that Edna does not find any other way to justify her selfhood and therefore, at last, she embraces the infinity of the sea to awaken her 'self' against patriarchal male 'gaze'. Thus, Edna's death is a kind of awakening of her 'self' and that justifies the title of the novel. Thus, it is evident that Kate Chopin's The Awakening questions the space of women in a patriarchal society. Though the resistance of Edna against the patriarchal male 'gaze', the narrative also justifies the ways for women's empowerment.

Mamoni Raisom Goswami's Assamese narrative *Datal Hatir UyeKhowaHaoda* also speaks of the question of women's space in the patriarchal society. In the narrative, we can observe stern patriarchal hegemony in the Brahmin society. The narrative explores different woman characters who are subjugated by the patriarchal male 'gaze'. Durga, Giribala, Elimon, and Saru Gokhani are some of the important woman characters who become the victims of a male-defined Brahmin society. In this society, woman finds their meaning only in relative terms with men but lack independent meaning in their 'self.' In the narrative, it is seen that all the decisions in the lives of the female characters are directly or indirectly influenced by the male-imposed rules and regulations of the society. For instance, the character Durga is ready to bear with all types of exploitationby her husband in the name of traditional thinking that a wife should not leave her husband under any circumstances. Again, after becoming a widow, she mustreturnto her father's home and must obey all the rules and regulations of the patriarchal society. Saru Gokhani is another widow who does not like the life of widowhood, where she must give up all her aspirations and feelings. She is a human being, and as a human being, she has aspirations and feelings. Therefore, she wants to fulfil her aspirations and express her feelings. But in the narrative, it is seen that she must suppress her indomitable desire due to the fear of the patriarchal obligations of society. According to the patriarchal law of that society, the Gokhai from the Xatra cannot marry Brahmin girls,and accordingly,Elimon and Indranath are separated. In the present narrative, we also encounter a very important woman character, namely Giribala. In the narrative *Datal Hatir UyeKhowaHaoda*, it is seen that Giribala also becomes a widow at a very young age. She also has to come back to her father's home. Not only that, but also to suppress her flesh and emotions according to the traditions of patriarchal society. These are some instances in the narrative that reflect the misrepresentation of the space of women in the Brahmin society of that period by the decorum of patriarchy. Of course, the stories of these women cannot be confined only to the Brahmin patriarchal society of a particular period. Rather, the narrative of these subjugated women represents the questions of women's 'space' irrespective of time and space.

In my paper, an attempt has been made to highlight that these two narratives underpin a strong resistance against the patriarchy. Raisom's*Datal Hatir Uye Khow Haoda* not only questions the issues of women 'self' (space), but also works as a brilliant example of resistance against patriarchal hegemony. Of course, all woman characters cannot fight against the existing societal norms despite their indomitable feelingsand desires. But the character of Giribala is exceptional. In the narrative, it is seen that she has made a bold attempt to identify her 'self', challenging the so-called patriarchal ideology. As in the narrative, it is seen that Giribala, despite her widowhood, loves the British Mark Chahab. She does not hesitate to enter into the room of Mark in a stormy night. Not only that, she also breaks the rules and regulations of patriarchy by eating meat. Most importantly, she does not feel any kind of regret for what she is doing. Once she expressed her feelings before Mark: "SanyashiChahab, tothapimoitahnarkharamatphul-tulokhidibakchesta koro. Aru

durgardorepuauthiahnik … Kintu sanyashiChahabmoi mori bhut hoi jam" (151-152). This expression of Giribala vividly indicates the condition of women in patriarchal society as well as Giribala's indomitable feelings to break the patriarchal system. Hierarchy. Again, Giribala's burning and dying of herself at the end of the novel vividly suggests that Giribala, like Chopin's Edna, prefers to die for emancipation rather than to submit herself as an object of patriarchal impositions. Thus, like Chopin's Edna, we cannot take Giribala's death simply as a suicide, but we must say that she dies in a war of women's emancipation against patriarchy. Hence, it is now evident that through the character of Giribala, the novelist provides a strong resistance against patriarchy to identify the 'space' of women in society, and this is a road to women's empowerment. Accordingly, an attempt has been made to uphold the argument of my paper with the help of some of the feminist and postcolonial theoretical apparatuses.

British Virginia Woolf is one of the pioneering feminist thinkers of the world. Woolf resisted patriarchal ideology when she wrote *A Room of One's Own* by arguing that the space of women is marginalized simply as an 'angel in the house' both in society and in male writing. It is, therefore, Woolf argues, that the woman writing is the only way to represent the woman's space in society. Keeping in mind Woolf's argument, we must say that Chopin's *The Awakening* and Raisom's*Datal Hatir UyeKhowaHaoda* are brilliant efforts of justifying women's 'space' in society.

French materialist feminist Simone de Beauvoir's groundbreaking *The Second Sex*(1949) clearly resisted the patriarchal ideology. According to her, "One is not born a woman; one becomes one." In a patriarchal society, Beauvoir observes, men are considered essential subjects (independent selves with free will), while women are considered contingent beings (dependent selves controlled by men and circumstances) (Cited in Tyson, 96). She also maintains that patriarchy compels women to investigate their meanings of life in their husband and son, not content with their relative meanings, but should find their independent meanings. To analyse Kate Chopin's The Awakening after Beauvoir, we must say that Edna is losing her 'self' as her 'space' in society is defined by her husband and children. Of course, she resists these impositions by eloping with Robert and Arobin, but later she is once again moved by their decisions to leave her. But the positive thing is that Edna does not like to be a 'contingent being' and at last decides that it is better to submit herself to the infinite death than to become a possession of patriarchal male 'gaze'. In the same way, in *Datal HatirUyeKhowaHaoda*, we can see all the woman characters like Durga, Giribala, Elimon, XoruGohkani are 'contingent beings' lacking their independent selves because of the male 'gaze' of the society. Of course, here also Giribala is not ready to content with the male-defined role of the society and fight for her independent self, and, like Edna, in this war against patriarchy, she dies without submitting to the impositions of patriarchy.

Another prominent French feminist, Helen Cixous's theory of "ecritureféminine" (feminine writing) is rightly applicable to both texts. According to Cixous, traditionally,

"the question of sexual difference is treated by coupling it with the position of activity/ passivity (Cited in Tyson, 101). In other words, patriarchal thinking believes that women are born to be passive, while men are born to be active. It is, therefore, according to Cixous, women need a new feminine language that undermines the patriarchal binary thinking that oppresses and silences women. This kind of language, which Cixous believes best expresses itself in writing, is called 'ecritureféminine' (feminine writing) (Cited in Tyson, 100-101). It resists patriarchal modes of thinking and writing. After analysing*The Awakening* and *Datal HatirUye Kowa Haoda*, from the standpoint of Helene Cixous's feminist theory, we find that in both narratives, the woman characters are defined as passive, lacking their selves due to the patriarchal ideology of the society. In the beginning of the novel *The Awakening*, we can observe Edna's loss of her 'self' in the male-defined society. Similarly, all the women characters like Giribala, Durga, Elimon, and so on lack their own space in a male-defined society. Here, it is important to note that we cannot only highlight these two texts from the first argument of Cixous but also the second argument of Cixous, that is, Cixous's argument of resistance against patriarchy. If we analyse the narrative *The Awakening*, then it is evident that the novelist inculcates a strong woman's voice against patriarchy through the character of Edna. In the same way, Raisom also executes a strong voice against patriarchy through the bold character of Giribala. Thus, these voices of women in their two texts vividly reflect Cixous's theory of feminine writing. Reading after Cixous, therefore, we must say that Chopin and Raisom in these two brilliant narratives not only underpin the issues of woman 'space' but also inculcates women's voices against patriarchy to justify their 'space'.

Last but not least, Luce Irigaray is another prominent French feminist. According to Irigaray, in a patriarchal society, much of women's subjugation occurs in the form of psychological repression enacted through the medium of language. In other words, a woman lives in a world in which virtually all meanings are defined by patriarchal language. That is, men have defined femininity in terms of their own needs, fears, and desires. Caught within the web of patriarchy, Irigaray posits, women have only two choices: 1. To keep quiet, 2. To imitate patriarchy's representation (Cited in Tyson, 101). In Chopin's *The Awakening,* we can see at first how the voice of Edna is silenced and compelled to imitate patriarchy by patriarchal language. In fact, in Raisom's*Datal Hatir Uye Kowa Haoda,* we can see more evidently how all the women characters are silenced and compelled to imitate patriarchy by patriarchal language.

Here, it is very needful to referto Irigaray's theory of "Womanspeake": When a woman dares to speak in her way" (Cited in Tyson, 102) to resist the patriarchy. This notion of Irigaray is rightly applicable to both narratives. For instance, in Chopin's *The Awakening*, we can see a strong voice and resistance of the woman character Edna. Her elopement with Robert and Arobin to identify her own 'self' (self-desire) is an example at this point. Similarly, her death at the end of the novel also sounds like a strong voice that is 'woman speak' against patriarchy. In the same way, in Raisom's*Datal Hatir UyeKhowaHaoda*, Giribala's

deviations from the language of patriarchy through loving Mark, eating meat, etc., suggest a strong and sound voice (woman speak) against the patriarchal language. Most importantly, Giribala's death to identify her selfhood is a bold voice of women's language (women speak) against patriarchy.

Now an attempt has also been made to discuss these two narratives,*The Awakening* and *Datal Hatir UyeKhowaHaoda,* from the standpoint of Palestinian postcolonial theorist Edward Said's theory of 'Other' not in political perspective but in a feminist perspective. Said's post-colonial theory of 'Other' basically focuses on the treatment of colonial subjects as 'Other', that is, separating them as inferiors to the colonisers. By taking this theory of 'Other' in feminist perspective, we can say that woman characters like Edna in Chopin's *The Awakening* are treated as 'other',assigned their roles by a patriarchal society. In the same way, in Raisom's*Datal Hatir UyeKhowaHaoda*, we can see that woman characters like Durga are subjugated as 'other' as if they do not have any individual self by the patriarchal hegemony. Thus, here we can say that these two narratives explore the issue that the self of womenismarginalized as 'other' by the male gaze, simply as the colonised subjects are marginalised by the colonial gaze.

Now, an attempt has been made to make a comparative analysis of these two narratives. Kate Chopin's The Awakening is a modern American text that represents women of an American Creole society where whereas Mamoni Raisom's*Datal Hatir UyeKhowaHaoda* is a modern Assamese novel that represents women of an Assamese Brahmin Society. Thus, the two narratives are set in completely different sets of culture, language, and society. But, what is more striking is that despite the writers' belonging to two different sets of cultures, the vital issues of women's 'space' that they represent are the same. No doubt, the cultural and social background of Chopin's 'Edna' and Raisom's 'Giribala' are different, but their bold resistance, especially both of their suicide in the last episode, profoundly signify how serious they are to represent theiridentity (space) as a woman. Thus, we must say that apart from their cultural differences, both the narratives-Kate Chopin's The Awakening and Mamoni Raisom's*Datal Hatir UyeKhowaHaoda,* underpin the same question of the representation of women's 'space' in society.

Conclusion:

To conclude, both Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and Mamoni Raisom Gowsami's *Datal Hatir UyeKhowaHaoda* serve as powerful literary examples that defy the traditional male-centric perspective. By giving voice to the inner lives and societal struggles of their female protagonists, these novels carve out a much-needed spacefor women's experiences. Their shared exploration of female autonomy, identity, and the desire for freedom stands as a compelling testament to the ongoing journey toward women's empowerment, demonstrating how literature itself can be a vital tool in this crucial struggle.American writer Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and Indian Assamese writer Mamoni RaisomGowsami's*Datal HatirUyeKhowaHaoda* are prominent examples at this point. After

analysing these two narratives from different perspectives, it can be argued that both texts profoundly represent the 'space' of women in society, thereby justifying the ways for women's empowerment. ■

Workss Cited:

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Vintage, 2011.

Culley. Margo (Eds.).*The Awakening:* Kate Chopin, A Norton Critical Edition. WW Norton & Company, nd

Dutta, Nandana. *American Literature (Literary Contexts).* Orient Blackswan, 2016.

Goswami, Mamoni Raisom. *Datal Hatir UyekhowHaoda*. Bani Prakakh, 1988

Habib, M.A.R. *A History of Literary Criticism*. Wiley Blackwell, 2007.

Modern Literary Criticism and Theory: A History. Blackwell Publishing, 2005

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism.* Vintage, 1979

Thakur, Nagen.(Eds.). *Akho Basarar Axomiyaupanyakh. Panbajar*: Jyoti Pakakh, 2000

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today*. 2nd Ed.Routledge, 2006

Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One's Own*. Maple Press, 2018.

Dr. Gunajeet Mazumdar, Asst. Prof. in English, Manikpur Anchalik College, Bongaigaon, Assam.

Inscribing the Self under Siege: Acts of Resistance to Power in Klemperer's *I Will Bear Witness*

Sanjukta Samal
Soumya Sangita Sahoo

This article presents a Foucauldian analysis of Victor Klemperer's *I Will Bear Witness*, interpreting the diary not merely as a historical document but as a subversive epistemic intervention within the apparatuses of Nazi power. Drawing on Michel Foucault's concepts of discourse, panopticism, biopolitics, and technologies of the self, the study argues that Klemperer's act of writing constitutes a form of embedded resistance, an ethical and intellectual assertion of subjectivity under a regime's intent on erasure. Through sharp philological observations, Klemperer exposes the ideological transformation of language under National Socialism. His diary also reflects the internalization of surveillance, as his thoughts and actions become increasingly self-regulated in anticipation of being watched. Ultimately, *I Will Bear Witness* emerges as a powerful counter-discourse that reclaims language, dignity, and identity from within the structures of totalitarian power.

Keywords: Holocaust Narrative, Language Control, Power, Surveillance, Diary as resistance

Introduction

Victor Klemperer's *I Will Bear Witness* (1933–1945) stands as one of the most significant personal documents to emerge from the Nazi era. Unlike conventional historical accounts, Klemperer's diary offers a quotidian yet piercingly intellectual record of life under totalitarianism, rendered with the precision of a philologist and the vulnerability of a targeted subject. As a Jewish academic living in Dresden during the rise and consolidation of the Third Reich, Klemperer meticulously chronicled the incremental degradation of civil liberties, the normalization of racial persecution, and the discursive infiltration of fascist ideology into the private and public realms. His diary functions not only as a testimony of survival but also as a unique document of resistance—linguistic, psychological, and epistemological—against a regime intent on erasing individuality and dissent.This paper proposes a Foucauldian reading of Klemperer's *I Will Bear Witness*, arguing that the diary operates as both a record of and a response to the technologies of power embedded in Nazi governance.

Michel Foucault's theoretical frameworkparticularly his notions of power/knowledge, panopticism, biopolitics, and technologies of the self, provides a compelling lens through which to examine how power functions not solely through violent repression, but through discourse, surveillance, and the regulation of life itself. Klemperer's attention to linguistic shifts under the Nazi regime directly aligns with Foucault's assertion that discourse is a site of power, shaping what is thinkable, sayable, and knowable in any given historical moment.Furthermore, the diary offers rich insights into the workings of panoptic surveillance and the internalization of control. Klemperer's lived experience as a marginalized subject under a totalitarian regime exemplifies Foucault's claim that modern power operates less through spectacle and more through the invisible mechanisms of normalization and self-regulation. At the same time, the act of diary-writing itself, undertaken in secret, often at great personal risk, constitutes what Foucault terms a "technology of the self": a means by which individuals resist domination by cultivating ethical self-awareness and preserving their interior freedom.In foregrounding these intersections between Klemperer's narrative and Foucauldian theory, this study seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how oppressive regimes exert and maintain power over individual lives, and how the very act of bearing witness becomes a radical form of intellectual and existential defiance.

Literature Review

The existing scholarship on *I Will Bear Witness* has primarily emphasized its significance as a historical and autobiographical account that captures the lived experiences of Jews under National Socialism, with Victor Klemperer's dual role as both a witness and a linguist drawing attention to the Nazi regime's manipulation of language, a theme he later elaborated in *LTI: The Language of the Third Reich*. Scholars such as Saul Friedländer, Marion Kaplan, and Ruth Klüger have underscored the diary's importance in documenting the gradual erosion of civil liberties and the psychological impact of systemic persecution. However, despite this extensive attention to its historical and testimonial value, the text's theoretical potential, especially within the framework of Michel Foucault's ideas, remains relatively underexplored. Few studies have applied Foucauldian concepts such as discourse, panopticism, surveillance, and biopolitics in a sustained analysis of the diary, even though Klemperer's narrative resonates deeply with these ideas. His account reveals a subject both shaped by and resisting mechanisms of control, and his insights into language, observation, and self-censorship mirror Foucauldian understandings of power/knowledge and technologies of the self. This study, therefore, aims to fill this gap by offering a Foucauldian reading of *I Will Bear Witness*, interpreting the diary not only as a document of survival but as a subversive epistemic intervention that challenges the very foundations of totalitarian authority through witness, intellectual autonomy, and the ethics of self-writing.

Situating the Siege: Historical and Textual Groundwork

Victor Klemperer's *I Will Bear Witness* is not merely a diary but a courageous act of historical resistance and intellectual defiance against Nazi totalitarianism. Spanning from

1933 to 1945, the diary chronicles the lived reality of persecution, surveillance, and ideological control, offering a rare insider's perspective from within German society. Despite his Protestant faith and strong German identity, Klemperer was racialized as a "full Jew" under the Nuremberg Laws, stripped of his academic position, and subjected to mounting restrictions. Protected from deportation by his non-Jewish wife, he continued to document daily life in Nazi Germany, often writing in secret and under threat of arrest. His diary evolves from analytical observation to emotional urgency, yet it consistently interrogates how language, law, and fear reshape individual identity and social relations. By insisting on writing in German, Klemperer asserts his cultural belonging while resisting the regime's discursive control. The diary thus functions both as a personal testament and a political counter-discourse, aligning closely with Foucauldian concepts of surveillance, biopolitics, and the production of subjectivity. It powerfully illustrates how modern power operates not only through violence but through slow, bureaucratic exclusion and the shaping of identity—making Klemperer's work a vital resource for Foucauldian analysis.

Memory, Historicity, and the Ethics of Witnessing

In writing the diary, Klemperer assumes a role that is both historian and moral witness. His entries are not written with the benefit of hindsight or narrative closure, they are instead raw, present-tense responses to events as they unfold. Unlike memoirs that offer resolution or redemptive meaning, *I Will Bear Witness* immerses the reader in the uncertainty, fear, and confusion of its moment.Yet Klemperer's writing is not chaotic; it is methodical, structured, and deeply reflective. He observes not only his own condition but also that of others—Jewish and non-Jewish alike. He notes the complicity of ordinary Germans, the silence of intellectuals, the resignation of his neighbors. His ethical impulse to bear witness is grounded in a belief that history must be recorded not only by victors but by those whom history seeks to erase.In this way, Klemperer's diary participates in what Foucault would call the genealogy of truth, the tracing of how power shapes memory, history, and knowledge. By preserving an unofficial, counter-hegemonic narrative of Nazi Germany, Klemperer challenges the state's attempt to control both the present and the future. His diary anticipates the postwar contest over memory, culpability, and representation, and it asserts the right of the silenced to speak back, even if only from the margins.

Language as a Tool of Power

One of the most remarkable and theoretically potent dimensions of Victor Klemperer's *I Will Bear Witness* lies in his acute attention to the political transformation of language under the Nazi regime. As a trained philologist and professor of Romance languages, Klemperer brings to his diary not only a witness's testimony but a linguist's forensic sensibility. He does not merely observe what happens; he listens to how it is said: what words are used, what metaphors become naturalized, what idioms proliferate, and how language shifts from being a medium of communication to a weapon of coercion and control. This attention makes his diary not only a historical document but also an unparalleled study

in discursive power, one that aligns uncannily with Michel Foucault's conception of language as a domain of domination.

Foucault's theory of discourse asserts that language is not merely a vehicle for expressing reality but is instrumental in producing it. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argues that discourse constitutes knowledge, defines the limits of what can be said, and thereby shapes the construction of truth itself. Under totalitarian regimes, discourse becomes tightly controlled, and through the regulation of speech, regimes can delimit thought, identity, and permissible behavior. As Foucault notes, "Power produces knowledge… [and] power and knowledge directly imply one another." In Klemperer's diary, this Foucauldian principle is not an abstraction, it is lived, observed, and documented with haunting clarity.

Klemperer repeatedly points out the invasion of everyday language by National Socialist terminology, a process he would later formalize in *LTI: Lingua TertiiImperii* (The Language of the Third Reich). In his diary, he describes how Nazi rhetoric crept into common parlance, turning once-neutral words into ideological instruments. Words like Führer ceased to denote a general "leader" and became the deified signifier of Hitler himself. The word Volk (people) was weaponized to construct a racially homogeneous collective identity, excluding Jews, Roma, and others from the national body. Even adjectives like fanatisch (fanatical) gained positive connotations, signifying ideal loyalty to the regime, while formerly virtuous terms like kritisch (critical) became pejorative, equated with disloyalty or subversion.Klemperer writes:

> "Nazism permeated the flesh and blood of the people through single words, idioms, and sentence structures which were imposed on them in a million repetitions and taken on board mechanically and unconsciously."(Klemperer 15)

This statement directly reflects Foucault's view that power does not merely repress; it conditions and normalizes. The repetition of ideological language in newspapers, radio broadcasts, street banners, school curricula, and even casual conversation created what Foucault would call a regime of truth, a system in which certain statements are accepted as self-evident and others rendered unthinkable. Under such a regime, linguistic conformity becomes a form of political complicity, even when unintentional. Language is no longer descriptive; it becomes performative, constituting allegiance or treason, inclusion or exclusion.Klemperer's diary also highlights the discursive construction of the "Untermensch" (subhuman)—a term used to dehumanize Jews, Slavs, and other marginalized groups. By encoding racial ideology into language, the Nazi regime did not need to argue for genocide explicitly; it was linguistically pre-inscribed. The word "Untermensch" itself, appearing in propaganda, textbooks, and speeches, made it possible to speak of entire populations as biologically inferior, morally degenerate, and politically expendable. Foucault's insight that language is a site of power that precedes violence is vividly borne out in Klemperer's account of how this lexicon prepared the population for mass exclusion and extermination.

Moreover, Klemperer emphasizes the psychological impact of language saturation. He notes how even he, a trained scholar and critic of Nazism, sometimes found himself using Nazi idioms involuntarily, evidence of what Foucault might term the microphysics of power, wherein the subject internalizes dominant discourse to the point of self-regulation. The ideological shift, then, is not imposed from above but diffused through linguistic practice, until resistance becomes cognitively and emotionally difficult. The diary becomes not only an archive of linguistic corruption but also a reflexive struggle to maintain clarity, to protect meaning, and to preserve individual thought in a society bent on dissolving both.

The Nazi Gaze and the Anatomy of Fear

One of the most unsettling aspects of Victor Klemperer's diary is the atmosphere of ambient fear and vigilance that permeates his daily life. In Nazi Germany, surveillance extended beyond the mechanisms of formal policing and censorship into the realm of the intimate, the domestic, and the routine. While Gestapo agents were a known force, the more insidious form of surveillance was social and neighbors, colleagues, acquaintances, and even friends acting as informants for the regime. Klemperer's entries often reflect a profound mistrust of those around him, born not out of paranoia but out of empirical observation and lived experience. He writes:

> "One never knows who is listening—on the tram, in the queue, even in one's own home."(Klemperer 16)

This climate of suspicion aligns precisely with Michel Foucault's theory of panopticism, developed in *Discipline and Punish,* where the model of the panopticon, an architectural design in which inmates never know when they are being watchedbecomes a metaphor for how modern societies discipline individuals. Power in such a system is not only exercised from above but is internalized by subjects who begin to self-monitor in anticipation of observation. In Klemperer's world, this is a lived reality. He begins to police his own speech, censors his private thoughts, and avoids writing openly in his diary until late at night or in absolute solitude.Importantly, the fear of being overheard was not confined to public spaces. Even within his home, Klemperer worries about the thinness of the walls, the attentiveness of neighbors, and the betrayal of inadvertent remarks. He notes how his Christian wife, Eva, also adopts these silent codes, speaking in hushed tones or using euphemisms to discuss forbidden topics. Their shared life becomes an exercise in strategic invisibility, marked by silence, concealment, and discretion. This privatization of fear, where even one's thoughts and bodily movements are regulated, illustrates Foucault's argument that disciplinary power is productive: it produces obedient, self-governing subjects rather than simply punishing deviants.

Klemperer's entries also demonstrate that power in Nazi Germany was not always visible or traceable. While the Gestapo loomed large, the most effective form of control often came from one's immediate environment: from whispered warnings, evasive glances, and the sudden withdrawal of acquaintances. The diffuse, invisible nature of this power is

precisely what makes it so effective. Foucault writes, "Power is everywhere... because it comes from everywhere (Foucault 93)." In this light, surveillance is not a centralized system but a network of relational gazes, constantly circulating and reinforcing conformity.Moreover, this constant gaze did not only impose silence; it reshaped identity. Over time, Klemperer begins to question his own sense of self, not in terms of personal belief, but in terms of how he is perceived. He must recalibrate every word and gesture, mindful of how others may interpret them. His diary thus reveals the profound ontological insecurity produced by surveillance: one no longer lives simply as oneself, but as a subject always potentially under judgment, always existing in the shadow of the other's gaze. This, for Foucault, is the triumph of disciplinary modernity, where power does not rely on violence alone but thrives on its capacity to induce individuals to conform in anticipation of repression.Klemperer's daily life is thus a haunting realization of panopticism: he lives not in a prison, but in a society where every space becomes carceral, and every citizen a potential warden.

Biopower and the Jewish Body in Nazi Germany

Alongside surveillance, Klemperer's diary offers a detailed record of another central Foucauldian concept "biopolitics". In *The History of Sexuality*,Vol. 1, Foucault describes how modern power is exercised not simply through the right to kill, but through the regulation of life, what he famously calls the shift from sovereign power ("the right to take life or let live") to biopower ("the power to make live and let die"). The state, in this model, concerns itself with managing populations, optimizing health, controlling reproduction, and regulating bodies through bureaucratic, legal, and medical mechanisms.In Nazi Germany, the Jewish population was subjected to a biopolitical regime of exclusion, wherein their very existence was monitored, documented, restricted, and, eventually, targeted for annihilation. Klemperer's diary is an unparalleled chronicle of this gradual erasure, not through sudden acts of violence, but through methodical social, legal, and economic marginalization. He records how Jews were removed from their jobs, evicted from their homes, denied access to public transportation, libraries, parks, and shops. Even their right to own pets or typewriters was revoked.Klemperer describes this process with bitter irony: "I am not allowed to buy flowers. I am not allowed to sit on a bench. I am not allowed to walk on the same side of the street as a 'German.'

Such policies demonstrate how the Nazi regime administered Jewish life into non-life, gradually stripping it of rights, agency, and visibility. The fact that these measures were often carried out through bureaucratic procedures: official forms, public notices, and administrative protocolsemphasizes Foucault's point that power in modernity is rationalized, procedural, and impersonal, no longer reliant on spectacle but on efficiency. One of the most harrowing biopolitical tools used was the requirement for Jews to wear the yellow Star of David badge. This marker functioned as a state-imposed visibility, branding bodies for surveillance, humiliation, and exclusion. It was a Foucauldian apparatus par excellence: a visible signifier that rendered subjects instantly legible to power, reducing individuals to biological identity and legal status. Through such mechanisms, the state exerted control not

only over what Jews could do, but over how they were seen, where they could exist, and eventually whether they could live at all.In his later years under the regime, Klemperer is moved into a Judenhaus (a designated Jewish ghetto-house) and subjected to forced labor. Even his meals are rationed by race. These moments vividly reflect Foucault's notion of the body as a target of powerno longer an individual with rights, but a statistic in a racial calculus, a life to be managed, reduced, and ultimately erased. Biopolitics, in this sense, becomes the precondition for genocide: it is the regime's ability to differentiate which lives are worth living and which are disposable.

Writing Against Oppression: The Diary as Counter-Discourse

In the totalitarian context of Nazi Germany, where every utterance was policed and every deviation marked for punishment, the act of writing a diary was a radical defiance. Victor Klemperer's *I WillBear Witness* is not simply a chronicle of events; it is an act of intellectual insubordination. To record truth in an environment saturated with propaganda is to reclaim narrative agency from the state. The diary, therefore, becomes what Foucault would call a counter-discourse, a form of speech that emerges from within dominant structures but works against them.

Klemperer wrote with full awareness of the consequences. To maintain a diary as a "non-Aryan" was illegal, potentially fatal. Yet he persisted, often hiding his pages between the folds of furniture or within books. His writing was not merely therapeutic, it was political. It constituted a refusal to be silenced, a refusal to allow reality to be overwritten by the sanctioned lies of the Reich. The diary becomes a form of counter-memory, to use Foucault's term, an intervention into what is remembered, how it is remembered, and who controls the archive of the past.

Foucault reminds us that resistance is always coextensive with power; it arises not outside but within the very networks it seeks to challenge. Klemperer does not escape the regime, he lives within it, under its gazeand yet, through writing, he reclaims a space of autonomous subjectivity, however precarious. The diary, then, becomes both a witness to oppression and a site of its negation.

Self-Formation under Oppression

In Foucault's later work, particularly *The Care of the Self and The Use of Pleasure*, he explores how individuals cultivate ethical subjectivity through what he terms technologies of the self—practices by which people shape their conduct and maintain integrity in relation to power. Klemperer's diary serves precisely this function. It is not only a record of the external world but a practice of internal survival, a space where the self is maintained, reflected upon, and ethically preserved.Amid systemic degradation, job loss, racial laws, surveillance, and hunger, Klemperer turns to writing as a spiritual and intellectual discipline. He documents not only what happens to him, but how he experiences it: his fears, moments of shame, small acts of kindness, and his continual efforts to think clearly. Even as the

regime attempts to erase his identity, he asserts: "I am German. I write in German. I claim my language, my culture, my mind." This is more than pride; it is an exercise in ethical self-constitution. He refuses to let the regime dictate who he iseven when it controls everything else.The diary becomes, in Foucauldian terms, a site of subject formationa deliberate act of sustaining one's humanity within dehumanizing conditions. Klemperer's capacity for reflection, his intellectual rigor, and his moral clarity are all acts of resistance, not in the form of rebellion, but through a daily, disciplined struggle to remain human in an inhuman world.

Conclusion

Victor Klemperer's *I Will Bear Witness* is not merely a diary; it is an epistemological act of resistance, a document that challenges the erasure of individual experience within the machinery of totalitarian power. Through the lens of Michel Foucault's theorieson discourse, surveillance, biopolitics, and the technologies of the self. This study has sought to illuminate how Klemperer's daily writing performs both a critique of and a defiance against the Nazi regime's attempt to dominate not only bodies and spaces but language, memory, and subjectivity.What emerges from Klemperer's diary is a portrait of power not as a static force but as a dynamic, diffuse system that infiltrates thought, disciplines behavior, and regulates life itself. Yet within these same circuits of control, Foucault reminds us, lie the possibilities of resistance. Klemperer's act of writing—despite surveillance, fear, and legal precarityconstitutes an embodied form of counter-discourse. It refuses to allow the state to monopolize truth, to define identity, or to obliterate dissent. In bearing witness, Klemperer claims authorship of his own history, confronting a regime that sought to narrate him out of existence.Moreover, his diary exemplifies how the self can be ethically preserved within regimes designed to fragment and erase it. In his reflections, linguistic precision, and moral clarity, Klemperer enacts what Foucault would describe as a care of the self—an ongoing, recursive practice of subject formation in conditions where agency is relentlessly curtailed. In documenting the minute violences of everyday life alongside acts of courage, ambivalence, and doubt, he not only survives but asserts a radically human presence in a dehumanized world.

Thus, *I Will Bear Witness* stands as both a historical record and a theoretical exemplar, a site where lived experience and philosophical insight converge. To read Klemperer through Foucault is not to impose theory upon text, but to uncover in the text itself a profound understanding of how modern power operates, and how, even in its darkest manifestations, it is never absolute. In the silence between laws and in the margins of language, resistance continues to write itself into history. ■

Works Cited

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1995.

———. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith, Pantheon Books, 1972.

———. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Vintage Books, 1990.

———. *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii*. Translated by Martin Brady, Bloomsbury, 2006.

Klemperer, Victor. *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933–1941*. Translated by Martin Chalmers, Modern Library, 2001.

Sanjukta Samal, Asst. Prof. in English, Fakir Mohan Autonomous College, Balasore, Odisha.

Dr. Soumya Sangita Sahoo, Asst. Prof in English, Fakir Mohan University, Balasore, Odisha.

Release of ROCK PEBBLES special issue at JAJPUR Town, Odisha

Quest for Meaning in Sri Aurobindo's Revelatory Epic *Savitri:* A Feminine Perspective

Dinesh Singh
Anupama Tewari

Sri Aurobindo's Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol transcends conventional literary genres by combining elements of epic narrative, spiritual philosophy, and metaphysical inquiry. Central to its power is the portrayal of Savitri not merely as a mythic heroine, but as a conscious embodiment of divine Shakti, a luminous force who rewrites the destiny of man through spiritual mastery rather than emotional devotion alone. This paper explores the inner quest of Savitri from a feminine lens, viewing her confrontation with Death as a journey of transformative resistance rather than romantic perseverance. In doing so, Sri Aurobindo redefines womanhood, not as a passive receptacle but as an active redeemer and spiritual equal. By engaging with ancient symbolism, yogic philosophy, and poetic revelation, this paper positions Savitri as a foundational text of spiritual feminism with global contemporary resonance.

Keywords: Feminine Consciousness, Shakti, Spiritual Feminism, Yogic Evolution, Metaphysical.

1. Introduction: Revisiting Epic through Feminine Consciousness

Sri Aurobindo's Savitri may be rooted in the Puranic episode from the Mahabharata, but its interpretive structure reveals a transhistorical depth. Rather than retell a legend of marital devotion, Sri Aurobindo reconstructs the tale as a vast metaphysical drama where the feminine becomes the axis of divine transformation. Savitri serves as a spiritual autobiography of the soul's ascent, filtered through the luminous agency of a woman's inner quest.

This poetic work operates on multiple planes: mythological, psychological, and cosmic. It reveals Savitri not only as the archetypal devoted wife but also as a yogic power, a divine feminine avatar who embraces burdens of mortality in order to consciously transfigure them. With grace and resolve, her adventure ultimately becomes the adventure of all seeking souls returning to the source.

2. Feminine Archetypes and the Reclamation of Shakti

In classical Indian cosmology, the feminine principle or Shakti is the dynamic power of creation, preservation, and transformation. It represents the feminine principle within classical Indian cosmology. She is of the cosmos, the womb, dissolving as nourishing of both. Savitri appears as a liberating restatement of womanly strength, while Sita or Draupadi represent duty and pain under male dominance. Savitri's assertion,

"A branch of heaven transplanted to human soil;
Nature shall overleap her mortal step;
Fate shall be changed by an unchanging will."
(Sri Aurobindo 346, Savitri, Book 3, Canto 4)

Positions her not as a victim of fate but as its spiritual redeemer. Her steadfastness does not arise only from duty but from divine knowledge and from her self-awareness. The vision of Sri Aurobindo stands out because of how the feminine transforms. It shifts from inactive to active, and from compliant to dominant. Poetic consciousness lets him place her as life's and spiritual destiny's bearer. As Reddy affirms,"Savitri reclaims womanhood through transcendence instead of rebellion. She becomes a symbol of feminine consciousness manifesting spiritual force resisting erasure" (Reddy 86).

3. Savitri as Divine Shakti: from Devotion to Cosmic Mission

Unlike many mythological women who fulfil roles defined by relational identity, mother, wife, or daughter, Savitri steps into a metaphysical function. She is the Supreme Mother incarnate, descending into the terrestrial world not for personal gain but for planetary upliftment and appealing to human beings for ascending toward higher divine transformation. Her journey, narrated with precision and luminous imagery, presents her not merely as a seeker but as a sovereign redeemer:

"A mailed battalion marching to its doom,
The last long days went by with heavy tread…"
(Sri Aurobindo, Savitri, Book 1, Canto 2)

Here, the martial imagery is not masculine; it is the force of spiritual courage cloaked in feminine silence. Her strength is calm, not violent; her action is inward, not external. As Heehs notes in his biography, Sri Aurobindo saw the future of humanity in terms of a divine evolution, where woman, as Shakti, would lead the world into supramental light (Heehs 154). Savitri's confrontation with Death is not just an act of personal loyalty but a metaphysical assertion of the divine feminine power to reverse ignorance. She becomes the archetype of spiritual warriorhood: receptive yet assertive, silent yet commanding.

4. The Inner Quest: Voice of the Feminine Divine

A transformative spiritual journey undertaken by a woman, Savitri, who embodies not only human love and devotion but also the Divine Feminine in her fullest spiritual

potential. Through her voice and action, the poem gives expression to what can be called the Feminine Divine, a force that is not passive or secondary but active, transformative, and central to the evolution of consciousness. The inner quest in Savitri is marked by Savitri's passage from ignorance to knowledge, from human love to divine union, from the personal to the cosmic. This is a journey inward, but also upward, through the layers of being. Savitri does not merely follow a path laid out by tradition; instead, she becomes the voice of divine will, navigating her own way through suffering, loss, and death. Her strength lies not in outward rebellion but in profound inward silence, resolve, and spiritual force. As the Divine Feminine, Savitri is not a passive consort but an embodiment of Adya Shakti, the original Creative Power. She represents a consciousness that is inwardly awakened, self-aware, and in communion with the Supreme. Her voice, when confronting Death, is not emotional lamentation but spiritual Truth, an assertion of the soul's eternal nature.

Savitri's quest is deeply symbolic of feminine empowerment through spiritual realisation. Unlike worldly battles or political revolutions, the empowerment shown here is inward,it is the conquest of ignorance, fear, and mortality through divine knowledge and unwavering faith. This inner journey defies conventional gender roles, showing the feminine not as dependent or weak, but as a conscious and decisive agent of transformation. The Feminine Divine is traditionally associated with intuition, nurturing, and receptivity. However, in Savitri, these qualities are harmonised with clarity, strength, and action. Her meditation, her silence, and her choice to follow Satyavan even into the domain of death are not passive acts; they are filled with luminous will. Her silence is not emptiness; it is a womb of divine power, ready to birth a new consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo's vision of the Divine Feminine does not restrict womanhood to roles defined by society. Instead, he elevates women to the cosmic scale, viewing them as essential instruments in the divine manifestation. In his integral philosophy, the evolution of consciousness depends on the full emergence of Shakti, the creative power of the Divine. Savitri's journey is the enactment of that emergence. Savitri, as the Divine Feminine, is that very supramental force personified. She descends into the deepest darkness not to escape it, but to transform it with divine light. Her inner quest becomes symbolic of the larger evolutionary journey of the soul.

Thus, Savitri becomes a scripture of inner transformation, where the Feminine Divine speaks, not just in poetic beauty, but in eternal Truth. At the heart of Savitri lies the feminine soul's aspiration toward divine knowledge. Her journey is not an external adventure but a gradual inward unfolding, an Antar-yatra. Through this, she discovers the hidden spiritual structures beneath existence. Her soul cries not for mere restoration of her husband but for awakening of all life to divine meaning:

"The spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze
And Matter shall reveal the spirit's face."
(Sri Aurobindo, Savitri, Book 1, Canto 4)

Such lines reaffirm the Vedic idea that the divine and material are not oppositional but intertwined, a truth the feminine realises intuitively. Savitri's dialogue with Death is structured not as a confrontation but a revelation. She redefines divinity in relational, compassionate, and integrative terms: Her famous line becomes the defining moment of her inner quest. Here, the Feminine Divine speaks not merely as a wife but as a yogini, a seeress, and a channel of divine power.

"O Death, thou speakest Truth but Truth that slays,
I answer to thee with the Truth that saves".
(Sri Aurobindo 621, Savitri, Book 10, Canto 3)

At this moment, Savitri directly confronts the figure of Death, not just as a physical end, but as a cosmic principle that represents negation, limitation, and the denial of eternal life or divine possibilities. When she says, "thou speakest truth but truth that slays," she acknowledges that what Death says is not false. Death may speak from the perspective of the material reality of human suffering, mortality, and the inevitability of physical decay. These truths are undeniable on the surface of existence, and yet, Savitri sees them as incomplete. She calls it a "truth that slays" because this kind of Truth, though factually accurate, kills hope, denies the soul's immortality, and reinforces bondage to ignorance and fear. It is the Truth of the finite mind and the ego, not of the deeper, eternal consciousness.

Savitri replies not with emotion or resistance but with a greater Truth, one that liberates rather than confines. "I answer to thee with the Truth that saves" signifies her affirmation of a spiritual reality beyond death, a divine truth that transcends suffering and affirms the soul's immortality. Her words reflect a consciousness rooted in the eternal, a vision that sees the divine purpose and evolution even in the face of despair and death. This exchange shows that Savitri is not merely arguing with a cosmic force; she is transforming the very dialogue into a spiritual confrontation between ignorance and enlightenment, between the false finality of death and the endless continuity of divine life In essence, the statement is a symbolic declaration of inner spiritual power over outer fatalism, a core theme of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy where Truth is not just a fact, but a force that can uplift, redeem, and transform existence itself.

5. Sri Aurobindo's Reimagined Vision of Womanhood

Sri Aurobindo, across his prose and poetic corpus, repeatedly emphasises woman as the vessel of divine evolution. In The Human Cycle, he writes that humanity's spiritual progress depends upon the integration of intuitive, emotional, and psychic faculties, qualities traditionally associated with the feminine (Sri Aurobindo, The Human Cycle 237). In Savitri, this vision reaches its poetic zenith:

"Once sepulchred alive in brain and
She had risen from body, mind, and life.
She was no more a Person in the world.

She had escaped into infinity.
(Sri Aurobindo 548, Savitri, Book 7, Canto 5)

Sri Aurobindo describes a moment of profound spiritual transcendence experienced by Savitri. The phrase "sepulchred alive in brain" metaphorically conveys how the soul was previously buried or entombed within the confines of rational thought and intellectual consciousness.

The word "sepulchred" (entombed) evokes an image of imprisonment within the mental structure, suggesting that human consciousness is often trapped in the mechanical processes of the mind, disconnected from deeper spiritual Truth.

The subsequent line, "She had risen from body, mind and life", marks a significant shift in a yogic ascension. Savitri undergoes a spiritual evolution, detaching herself from the limitations of her physical body, her vital desires (life), and her cognitive faculties (mind). This represents an inner liberation, characteristic of the integral yoga that Sri Aurobindo advocates, where the aspirant transcends the surface being to awaken to the divine consciousness within.

She was longer than a person; the dissolution of ego is complete. Savitri no longer identifies herself as an isolated individual subjected to worldly illusions or temporal existence. Her personality as a finite being has merged into a vaster spiritual identity. Finally, the line "She had escaped into infinity" emphasises her union with the eternal, the infinite Divine. She has crossed beyond the dualities of life and death, time and space, entering the supramental plane. Sri Aurobindo envisions a realm of pure, boundless consciousness.

This passage marks the peak of Savitri's spiritual journey, where she embodies the ideal of the awakened feminine, transcending the lower nature and merging with the Supreme. It illustrates not only her yogic mastery but also the essence of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual philosophy, which aims at a transformation of the human into the divine. "The presence of feminine traits in a male does not necessarily indicate a past feminine birth; their formations may come in the general play of forces" (Sri Aurobindo 38, On Women). This statement underscores his non-binary understanding of spiritual attributes, allowing for a broader conception of divine balance.

6. Death and Transcendence: Feminine Agency in Ultimate Confrontation

In epic tradition, the figure of Death is often final and insurmountable. But in Savitri, Death is not an absolute antagonist; it is a mask worn by ignorance, impermanence, and ego. Savitri does not combat Death with force but dismantles it through insight and compassion. Her encounter with Death is the climax of the feminine quest: she stands alone, unarmed, andwithout help, yet sovereign.

"A day shall come when she must stand unhelped
Along with the enormous Silence face to face."
(Sri Aurobindo, Savitri, Book 1, Canto 2)

This moment marks the culmination of feminine solitude not as abandonment, but as self-realisation. Savitri does not need saving; she is the saviour. Through yogic tapasya, she internalises the knowledge that all forms dissolve but spirit persists. In reclaiming her husband from Death, she reclaims life itself for the world. Pandit notes, "Her love is not sentimental attachment; it is a catalytic flame that burns ignorance and resurrects truth" (Pandit 119). Thus, Savitri emerges not just as wife or widow, but as world-mother, the Mahashakti whose womb births a new evolutionary possibility.

7. Conclusion

All through her life, Savitri is not satisfied with her father in the palace, with the ordinary princess, monarchs. Still, in Satyavan she sees the eternal face, she feels that she has reached destination in Satyavan, that's why even after understanding and coming to the truth that he will die within one year of their marriage, she is radially accepting him as her life partner. Dissatisfied with the Ordinary from the very beginning of her life, Savitri is portrayed not as a typical princess content with the luxuries of palace life or material accomplishments. Her restlessness reflects a deep existential yearning:

"All was too little that the world could give:
Its power and knowledge are the gifts of Time
And cannot fill the spirit's sacred thirst." (Savitri, Book IV)

This symbolizes the soul's dissatisfaction with the finite, with the superficial roles assigned by society, such as being a daughter, a princess, or a royal bride. She wants something more authentic, eternal, and spiritually fulfilling. This is the first clue in her quest for meaning — the rejection of the outer life in favour of an inner calling.When Savitri meets Satyavan in the forest, it is not a moment of ordinary romantic attraction. Rather, it is a moment of spiritual recognition:

"A moment passed that was eternity's ray,
An hour began, the matrix of new Time." (Book IV, Canto 1)

She sees in him not just a man, but the "eternal face", the image of the soul's twin, the divine partner, the destined one. In him, Savitri sees Truth, Purity, and Eternal Light; he represents the ideal, the soul's chosen companion in the divine journey.This recognition is a culmination of her inner spiritual seeking. She realizes that the meaning of her existence is not in pleasure, power, or palace life, but in love rooted in spiritual truth and self-giving.

When Narad warns that Satyavan will die within a year, Savitri does not hesitate. She replies:

"Once my heart chose and chooses not again.
The word I have spoken can never be erased,
It is written in the record book of God." (Savitri, Book V, Canto 3)

This is a profound act of spiritual will and divine commitment. She accepts him not to escape sorrow, but to transform sorrow through love and strength. Her choice affirms:The power of love over death, the soul's power to choose destiny, and the feminine strength of spiritual sacrifice.This moment marks her complete surrender to a divine mission. Her meaning is not just in personal happiness, but in fulfilling a cosmic role to conquer death and redeem life through love and devotion.

Savitri's journey symbolizes that true meaning in life is found not in outer success, but inrecognizing the divine in the other (Satyavan as the Eternal), accepting suffering as a path to spiritual growth, and choosing love as a divine force of transformation.Her love is not passive or romantic escapism;it is conscious, sacrificial, and liberating. Through Satyavan, she finds her soul's purpose to confront death, resist it, and bring light into darkness.

Her journey is the journey of the soul, and her love is the shakti (divine feminine power) that liberates both man and the world. In Satyavan, she sees not just a man, but a soul-partner, and in saving him, she is fulfilling her cosmic dharma.Savitri's quest for meaning is fulfilled not through renunciation or mystical retreat, but through engagement with life, deep love, and spiritual action. Thus, Sri Aurobindo portrays meaning as something discovered not in escape, but in conscious choice, self-giving love, and divine realization through action led by a woman who embodies the luminous power of the soul.

Savitri emerges not simply as an epic poem but as a sacred scripture for an age that seeks gender harmony and spiritual integration. In reimagining woman as divine will in action, Sri Aurobindo opens a new paradigm of feminism, not social, but spiritual. Savitri does not rebel against male authority because she does not need to. Her realisation surpasses dichotomies.

She is not equal to a man; she is equal to the divine. The empowerment she represents comes not from external revolution but from inner illumination. As Nandakumar writes, "In Savitri we find a rare convergence of yoga, poetry, and femininity, all rising toward the Absolute" (Nandakumar 103).

In today's context, where gender roles remain contested and empowerment often remains superficial, Savitri offers a transformative model. Here is a woman who does not inherit meaning; she generates it. Her silence speaks. Her patience resists. Her love redeems. In this, Savitri offers a luminous mirror in which womanhood, long fragmented by social constructs, can see itself whole again. It is a testament to the soul's infinite courage, clothed in the dignity of the feminine. ■

Works Cited:

Sri, Aurobindo. *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol.* Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1993.

The Human Cycle: *The Ideal of Human Unity*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1997.

On Women. Compiled by Vijay, Auro Publications, Sri Aurobindo Society, 1978.

Heehs, Peter. *Sri Aurobindo: A Brief Biography*. Oxford UP, 1989.

Nandakumar, Prema. *Savitri: A Spiritual Epic*. Sterling Publishers, 1980.

Pandit, M. P. *Readings in Savitri*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

Reddy, Uma. *"Feminine Consciousness in Savitri."* Sri Aurobindo Circle, vol. 56, 2000, pp. 81–88.

Dinesh Singh, Ph.D. Research Scholar in English.

Prof. Anupama Tewari (Supervisor), Govt. P.G. College, Tanakpur, Champawat, Uttara Khand.

Editor joined a panel discussion on Translation,
arranged by Utkal Literature Festival at Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Mangala as the Upholder of the Cult of Secrecy of Indian Culture in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*

Dipika Bhatt

The Calcutta Chromosome is a lovely piece of Amitav Ghosh's craftmanship. It has science, religion, myth, nihilism, transcendental philosophy, Indian superstitions, logic and rationality. It is an attempt to rewrite the story of Ronald Ross's discovery of the life cycle of Malaria mosquito and how it causes the disease to human beings. Amitav Ghosh narrates the mediocricy of the western mind and tries to establish the superiority of the Indian intellect. In fact, Ghosh uncovers the whole power politics of the west. There exists an artificial hierarchy of knowledge, imposed upon the colonized, that is, whatever was of western discourse is considered as 'good Knowledge' and Indian culture was considered as 'non-knowledge'. Mangala is the upholder of the cult of secrecy and by this weapon she controls Ross, Farley, Grigson, Cunningham and all those so-called white male investigators of the malaria parasite. She tries to find a cure for syphilitic paresis through counter-science or faith. Ross endeavors to solve the mystery of malaria through science. Against this, the power of folk-medicine is ratified by Ghosh. The rustic infiltration into the world of science or knowledge to control 'the ultimate transcendence of Nature' is an attempt to improve the theory of 'migration of the soul'. 'Transposition of personality' is an extension of the Indian concept of the 'transmigration of the soul'. The special contribution that *The Calcutta Chromosome* makes is that it suggests transference of personality traits. In this way it suggests immortality. Silence is always about what remains untold and unspoken. Silence is the truth not seen. In this respect Ghosh with a strong nationalist vein tries in *The Calcutta Chromosome* to establish Indian supremacy in the world of knowledge and science.

Keywords: Deconstruction, cult, rationality, Indian superstitions, immortality, silence, intuition, science, counter-science, God, Indian Philosophy.

Introduction

The Calcutta Chromosome like almost all other works of Amitav Ghosh is an experimental work. *The Calcutta Chromosome* is a lovely piece of his craftmanship. It has science, religion, myth, nihilism, transcendental philosophy, Indian superstitions, logic and rationality. Ghosh digs into one event, one pinpointed happening of the past. He selects an event that he feels very relevant to present times. He establishes connections between two

eras. He uses symbols of past only as tools for the communication of his overall massage or massages.

This book is about Malaria. It is an attempt to rewrite the story of Ronald Ross's discovery of the life cycle of Malaria mosquito and how it causes the disease to human beings. Amitav Ghosh narrates the mediocricy of the western mind and tries to establish the superiority of the Indian intellect. Tantra or re-birth conquer the western psyche through an instrument they heavily rely on a super computer AVA. Amitav Ghosh wants us to accept Coleridge dictum- "Willing suspension of disbelief that constitutes the poetic faith." (Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam 187) Ghosh's fiction has given credibility to an implausible fantasy. 'Willing suspension of disbelief' is a formula for justifying the use of fantastic or non-realistic elements in literature.

Ronald Ross discovered the deadly female mosquito on 20 August 1897 and won the Nobel Prize for it. Ross's progress in his research, experiences of Antar, Murugan's former colleague at New York and some scattered incident at Calcutta are woven into a fictional fabric. The major part of the story takes place in Calcutta in 1995. The novel follows Murugan and his adventures closely. The laboratory of the P.G. hospital of Calcutta is the place where Ronald Ross made the final breakthrough in his research.

In fact, Ghosh uncovers the whole power politics of the west. This book is an attempt to deconstruct western aura. It shows that the western sense of confidence and patronage is misplaced. In *The Calcutta Chromosome* Amitav Ghosh presents to the readers the supremacy of the West over the East. He makes an attempt to explicate that the East or the colonized too has control over the West or the colonizers. He wants to demolish this supremacy that the West has over the East by giving recognition to the unrecognized, that it is the Orient who is in control but is unnoticed as they would prefer to remain so. Amitav Ghosh's all central characters are ordinary people, not nobel ones, as Alu, the orphan in *The Circle of Reason*, the Indian slave Bomma *In an Antique Land*, the orphan Rajkumar in *The Glass Palace*, the fisherman Fokir in *The Hungry Tide*, and the sweeper Mangala in *The Calcutta Chromosome*.

It is a real postcolonial discourse, which is unlike the Eurocentric paradigm; it is also a reversal of the roles, since the novelist focuses more on the oppressed rather than on their oppressors. Ghosh subverts the traditional medical history by giving an alternative narrative of Ross's medical discovery. He presents the alternative through Murugan, who is a specialist in Roland Ross. While in America, Murugan writes an article, *Certain Systematic Discrepancies in Roland Ross's account of Plasmodium B* which receives negative reports in all journals . The second paper, entitled *An Alternative Interpretation of Late 19th Century Malaria Research: is there a Secret History?* proves no better than the first one. Through Murugan, Ghosh confronts the official history of Ross's discovery. Ghosh re-writes the colonial medical history from the postcolonial perspective.

Mangala's cult of secrecy and silence

There exists an artificial hierarchy of knowledge, imposed upon the colonized, that is, whatever was of western discourse is considered as 'good Knowledge' and Indian culture was considered as 'non-knowledge'. Devy points out in all western knowledge was considered superior and all Indian forms of Knowledge were considered as having low value. Murugan believes that Ronald Ross who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1906 for his work on the life cycle of the Malaria vector had been handed the information on a plate. It was not his discovery at all.

Someone else had planted the idea in his head that Malaria parasite could be found in one of the species of mosquitoes. Murugan is convinced that a big conspiracy was played in 1895. Originally Ross was on a completely wrong track. Even Ross's mentor Patrick Manson, the noted Scottish bacteriologist who had written a book on Filaria was on a wrong track. Both Manson and Ross thought that Malaria parasite was transmitted from mosquitoes to human beings orally, probably through drinking water.

But almost overnight Ross changed his track and on August 20th, 1897 he found the connection between Plasmodium Zygotes and Anopheles, Stephensil. Murugan finds it hard to swallow that Ross could be successful in such a short span of time. Keeping the complexities of the research in mind it ought to have taken longer period of time. His curiosity and rationality force him to pursue his search of what actually happened and how it happened. Ghosh goes on to suggest that Ronald Ross had two assistants, Mangala a sweeper woman and Laakhan (Lutchman), who is 'dhooley-bearer.'

In the first phase of the novel we have Antar, an Egyptian computer clerk tries to relocate the adventures of an India born American scientist L. Murugan. In the second level of the story-line is historically true and it revolves around the British scientist Ronald Ross, who discovered the manner in which Malaria is conveyed by the mosquito in 1902, the third level describes the superhuman powers of Mangala and Laakhan.

Mangala is the upholder of the cult of secrecy and by this weapon she controls Ross, Farley, Grigson, Cunningham and all those so-called white male investigators of the malaria parasite. Those who come in the way like Farley are cursorily destroyed. Mangala uses the potent weapon of silence to score intellectuality, over her male counterpart Ross and others. Mangala and Lutchman, as members of secret religious group, believe in the powers of silence and try to conceal their identity. Much unlike the followers of Western science, this mystic group of followers believes the importance of silence, in advancing their mysterious cult, accepting it as their religion.

Mangala is introduced as a servant at Dr. Cunningham laboratory who already knew the cure for malaria but did not reveal it. The prize was the Nobel Prize Award and world recognition, which was completely against their 'silent' system of functioning. Instead

one of the main motives of this woman was something beyond this discovery, finding the cure for syphilis, a sexually transmitted disease. Their research hoped to go even beyond this, by way of transmitting the malaria microbe to the patient through a bird. In short she intended to achieve 'immortality' of human traits in which all information could be transmitted chromosomally from one body to another.

Mangala as a carrier of Indian philosophy of counter-science or faith

She tries to find a cure for syphilitic paresis through counter-science or faith. Ross endeavors to solve the mystery of malaria through science. Against this, the power of folk-medicine is ratified by Ghosh. The rustic infiltration into the world of science or knowledge to control 'the ultimate transcendence of Nature' is an attempt to improve the theory of 'migration of the soul'. 'Transposition of personality' is an extension of the Indian concept of the 'transmigration of the soul'.

Mangala was working on the clue that artificially induced malaria could cure or at least mitigate syphilitic paresis. She had noticed that malaria works on paresis through a different route, the brain. Like syphilis, malaria can cause irreparable damage to the brain, it can even cause hallucination. Ghosh says that is why primitive people thought of malaria as spirit-possession. India has a very deep and long tradition of the occult. People are highly superstitious. In fact spirits (Bhuta-pret) are considered to be as real as the human beings by the uneducated, rural masses of India. The bhuta-pret are said to exist in a half- way house between the human world and the world of ancestral spirits (pitri-lok).

Until they have been judged, have paid their 'karmic' debts and are allowed into the world of ancestral spirits, the 'bhuta-pret' continues to yearn for a human body which they can enter and contrive to make sick through their nefarious activity. These spirits, occupying the lowest rungs in the Hindu hierarchy of supernatural beings, are closest to human state. Whatever the reason, both the 'bhuta-pret' and the 'pitri' are a tangible, living presence for most people. They seem to populate a mental reason that is contiguous and has open borders with the land of ordinary consciousness in which normal everyday life takes place.

Nihilistic activity and religious beliefs of Mangala

Interestingly Ghosh deconstructs and dismantles western sense of superiority by Indian irrationality. These beliefs are said to have no scientific basis, yet their strong presence in India can easily be felt. Deconstruction, in the Derridian context is a nihilistic activity. And yet to perform this nihilistic activity Ghosh uses the tool of blind religious beliefs.

Mangala in the novel had developed a particular kind of malaria that could be induced in pigeons. Mangala is the other name of the great mother Kali who comes in various forms in Indian mythology. She is the archetypal nurturer as well as the terrible mother figure. She is the life giver as well as the annihilator.

Through his novel Ghosh reminds us pigeons are an inseparable part of the famous witchcraft of Bengal. Even today at Kamakhyan temple in Assam, the highest seat of Indian black magic, pigeons are regularly used in various rituals. Murugan who is unearthing Mangala's story also has a significant name. Murugan is the other name of Kartikey, the son of the goddess who is reputed for swift movements in Indian mythology. So approximately speaking, here is a son figure trying to get credit for the mother figure, which she richly deserves.

Mangala had also developed the technique of transferring malaria from a pigeon to a patient of syphilis. Secretly she started treating patients in Cunningham's laboratory. Her treatment produced strange side effects. The patients often developed weird personality disorders. These symptoms in the patients were actually 'randomly assorted personality traits' which the patient imbibed from the malaria donor i.e. the pigeon. Actually this process hinted at the freak chromosome, the unique Calcutta Chromosome. The special contribution that *The Calcutta Chromosome* makes is that it suggests transference of personality traits. In this way it suggests immortality. As Murugan excitedly tells his researcher Antar: "Just think a fresh start: when your body fails you, you leave it, you migrate - you or at least a matching symptomlogy of yourself. You begin all over again, another body, another beginning … a technology that lets you improve on yourself in your next incarnation." (Shubha Tiwari 59) Immortality is an ancient Hindu concept which is based on life after death.

It is also an example of the defeat of the patriarchy and a victory of matriarchy. The search for "immortality" is carried on by Mangala and Lachman. Ghosh has granted them great liberty and decolonized the members of the lowest social strata-the sweeper and the scavenger class. Foucault in the "Order of Discourse" states, "Discourse is the power which is to be seized". (Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam 180) This power is traditionally controlled by patriarchy or colonizer. But in this novel the discourse of silence, typically female in nature, has been handed over to Mangala bi. It is stated in the novel:

> …wouldn't you say that the first principle of a functioning counter-science would have to be secrecy? The way I see it, it wouldn't just have to be secretive about what it did (it couldn't hope to beat the scientists at that game anyway); it would also have to be secretive in what it did. It would have to use secrecy as a technique or procedure. (Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam 180)

The mythological references of names at times make the characters archetypes. Mangala the sweeper woman also appears in different forms. When Murugan comes to Calcutta in 1995 to find about the malaria story, he discovers an esoteric cult of image worshippers. Murugan comes to know that the image is that of Mangala. She is called 'Mangalabibi.' People worship to commemorate her reincarnation. Phulboni does a comprehensive story on this image and its advent into the world. Through this Goddess metaphor, Ghosh insists

on the necessity of coming back to life. No one dies. Nothing ends. Resurrection is a must. The journey of the soul independent of any particular body is an established Hindu concept. The body dies but the soul travels into another body and lives on. Soul is imperishable. The movement of soul from one body to another and its final merger with the super soul is controlled by God. God is the supreme power.

But Mangala, a human being, attempts to master the art of transferring souls. She wants to be the controlling consciousness, the mind that sets things in motion. It hardly needs an explanation now that Mangala also symbolizes the ultimate desire of a human being to become God. In polite terms, it can be described as the wish of a human being to merge in the womb of the supreme mother. We know in 'bhakti marg' where poet, devotee and mystic cries in anguish to become one with mother. Mangala belongs to this path.

The other path is that of tarka or logic and science. Ross follows this path. The two paths may seem contradictory but in reality are not so. They are complementary. In fact, in this book Ghosh ratifies and endorses Mangala's path. Logic without intuition is incomplete. Ross's research has been attributed a secondary place while Mangala's methods have been hailed as perfect. The Indian myth of Ganesh has also been used to explain Indian concept of changing identities. A child with an elephant head is a clear sign of possibility and acceptance of duality of personality.

Mangala and Laakhan both of them are from the very lowest rung of Hindu caste system. Mangala of the sweeper caste is worshipped in blood and flesh as well as years after as an image. Farley, a western scientist watches this scene where Mangala is deified despite her social class;

> …the woman Mangala was seated at the far end of the room, on a low divan, but alone and in an attitude of command, as though enthroned. By her side were several small bamboo cages, each containing a pigeon. They were slumped on the floors of their cages, shivering, evidently near death…on the floor, by the divan, clustered around the woman's feet, were some half-dozen people in various attitudes of supplication, some touching her feet, others lying prostrate. Two or three others were huddled against the wall, wrapped in blankets… they were syphilitics, in the final stages of the terrible disease. (Shubha Tiwari 62)

But this secret knowledge is never revealed to the other characters throughout the novel. Whenever they suspect anything mysterious and begin spying on them, they are harmed or turn insane. The characters Farley, Murugan and Phulboni try to spy on this mysterious group, to reach this knowledge and they finally go mad. Laakhan, another character is the protector of this knowledge. He is the one to keep the outsiders at bay when they try to meddle into their world. He threatens them, and nearly causes accidents to those who try to enter this epistemology of knowledge in which Mangala is the possessor of. Thus we are led to conclude that knowledge of the unknown causes harm, a post-colonial view of the text.

Farley, the western scientist, understands this clearly and wants to warn them not to waste their hopes on whatever quackery it was that the woman offered, to expose the falsehoods that she and her minions had concocted to deceive those simple people. But his curiosity makes him stay where he was unobserved by Mangala and sit through Mangala's performance of rituals. Finally he returns to his own experiment and demands to see the slides the transformation that Laveran described. Only after that he is given the slides smeared with the dying pigeon's blood: "it was then that he saw Laverari's rods appear, hundreds of them, tiny cylindrical things, with their pointed penetrating heads piercing the bloody miasma." (Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam 192) This was to be the future invention of his team- mates. His knowledge proves to be his doom. He is promised by Mangala through the young boy assistant that everything would be revealed. But Elijah Farley never reaches Barich; he disappeared during the journey, never to be seen again. "The police discovered that he had indeed boarded the train at Sealdah, as scheduled, but had disembarked before his destination at a remote, rarely used station called Renupur, in severe monsoon weather. A guard was said to have reported later that a young man had been seen carrying his luggage." (Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam 192) He is denied knowledge. His glimpse into Mangala's knowledge is the cause for his disappearance - death.

A similar event takes place in 1995. It is Sonali who goes looking for Romen Haldar to the old house at Robinson Street which Romen had shown her. Her experience and observation of the rituals are recorded:

> She caught a glimpse of the tops of dozens of heads, some male, some female, young and old, packed in close together. Their faces were obscured by the smoke and flickering firelight…Then there was a stir in the crowd and Sonali forced herself to look down again. A figure had come out of the shadows: it was a woman and she was dressed very plainly – in a crisply starched sari, with a white scarf tied around her hair. Her figure was short and matronly and Sonali took her to be in late middle age…She had a cloth bag slung over one shoulder, an ordinary cotton jhola in her left hand she was carrying a bamboo birdcage. She seated herself by the fire and placed the bag and the birdcage beside her. She took out two scalpels and a pair of glass plates. Then she reached out, placed her hands on whatever it was lying before the fire and smiled. Raising her voice, the woman said to the crowd, in archaic rustic Bengali: 'The time is here, pray that all goes well for our Laakhan, once again…' there was a flash of bright metal and a necklace of blood flew up and fell sizzling on the fire. (Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam 193)

The body on which the rituals are performed is that of Romen Haldar and the woman is Mrs. Aratounian who does not speak, to Sonali's knowledge, Bengali. Romen Haldar who was to meet Sonali that evening, suddenly and inexplicably disappears. The novelist does not explain his death or what he keeps on calling, 'disappearance'. These two events separated

by hundred years add to the mystification of the plot in the novel. The portrayal of some symbols like pigeon, smoke, lantern and fire, draws attention to the significance of magic realism in Indian philosophy.

Transmigration of Souls and Class Superiority

Ghosh seems adamant that the repositories of truth, science and higher knowledge can be a 'dhooley bearer' Laakhan and a sweeper woman Mangala. He demolishes the false concept that class superiority and right to knowledge go together. Here is wishful undoing of Indian caste system and an assertion of the right to knowledge irrespective of class, caste, creed, culture or color. Twice in the course of the novel, Laakhan is shown as a torch bearer; metaphorically a bearer of knowledge. Ghosh further universalizes the theory by making people of all religious background accepting the entire drama. Hindus (Murugan, Sonali, Urmila), Muslims (Saiyad Murad Hussain alias Phulboni, Antar) and Christians (Mrs. Araounian and Countess Pongracz) - all accept the transmigration of souls.

Ghosh has followed the Indian practice of using native words like bibi, dhooli, Addad al-Turab, Iskuti etc. He has not disturbed the syntactic norms of the English language.

In the novel, the two contrasting societies are clearly etched: the society of the colonizer led by Ross and the other culture conducted by Mangala. The irony of the situation is that the so-called masters are mere puppets in the hands of this powerful woman. The colonizers were in search of temporal truths and the colonized natives were motivated by the higher goal of eternity.

The tussle between the western and eastern civilization is highlighted and victory is granted to the extensively oppressed and exploited. The equation of power is not limited to political overtones but is carried on to the world of mechanical and intuitive knowledge. Murugan and later Antar, two computer experts are chosen to be the subsequent Laakhans to the succeeding Mangala that is Urmila and Tara. One comes to know during the course of the novel that Tara is being specifically cultivated to pilot this mysterious cult. The continuity of motivation, action and achievement is never ruptured. The Indian philosophy of the Kalchakra is highlighted and re-established.

The descendents of pigeons at Cunningham's lab in Calcutta travelled as far as America to arrive at the Egyptian Antar's window where a similar experiment is being manipulated by Tara, Maria and Lucky trio. Both Antar and Murugan have their own malarial delirium to cope with. We are made to believe that either Mrs. Anatounian is a re-born Mangala or Mangala-bibi enters her body. The rebirth hunch, if carried further, can be extended to Roman Haldar who is a re-born Laakhan and probably Phulboni is a re-born Grigson and Farely. The attempts on their lives seem to show something of continuity. We are also made to believe that the Urmila, Sonali due have their counterpart in America as Tara and Maria. The Nepali boy seems to be a mysterious character. He bothers Murugan to the point of annoyance. He leaves Sonali's house only to be found at Roman Halder's

building performing tantric rituals. He fetches fish for Urmila and provides clues on Cunningham, Ross through the Xeroxed copy used as fish wrapper enabling Murugan to pick the missing link in the chase and thus draw him into the web.

Ghosh uses the technique of the puppet master. His characters are made to appear-disappear and rise-fall as a part of the narrative technique. There is never a dull moment. The suspense of the quests is never diluted. What seems to be simple quest turns out to be a multiple one. We find that Antar was chasing Murugan, who was busy in chasing research on malaria, Ronald Ross leading us to the game plan hatched by Mangala and Laakhan. The Nepali boy's chase is controlled by Mrs. Aratounian. Urmila and Sonali Di bump into each other in their personal quests of different pursuits.

The chase of 'figurine' comes at last Kalighat where a girl of six informs us, "Today is the last day of the puja of Mangala-bibi. Baba says that tonight Mangala-bibi is going to enter a new body." (*The Calcutta Chromosome* 200) and the body she enters into is that of Mrs. Aratounian.

Conclusion

In *The Calcutta Chromosome*, the unknown is both theme and symbol. It symbolizes the secret and elusive truths many of the book's characters seek. The unknown, then, overlaps with silence. Silence is always about what remains untold and unspoken. Silence is the truth not seen. Phulboni talks about the secrets each city carries. Murugan speaks about unknown influences manipulating the research on malaria that Ross was undertaking in 1895. Laakhan is spoken of many times throughout the story, yet his character always remains elusive, ghost-like, and mainly silent. According to Murugan it's not what we know that counts but what we don't know , that's where the truth lies.

The last pages of the novel are a winding up process to interlink all the episodes with Antar's questioning Murugan: "But people have been looking for you for years, where have you been?" (Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam 204)

He could feel the presence of the characters and their confirmation: "We are with you, you are not alone: we will help you across…" (Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam 204) Indeed *The Calcutta Chromosome* is a new trend. Babli Gupta rightly evaluates: "This is world of mysteries rather than rationality, where Mangala's real talents become those of magician rather than of an artisan. The counter-science may have extra ordinary powers to overturn science but their motives like that of their counterparts are self seeking rather than humane." (Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam 204) He further underlines the very intension of the novelist:

> The desire to escape tyranny of knowledge and yearning to experience the truth beyond knowledge- through intuition, spiritualist séances, or medically engineered dementia, found in full measure in this mystery tale is evidence

of a definite incline towards mysticism, with shades of Neo- Platonism brought in to bind the ancient with the modern. (Indira Bhatt and Indira Nityanandam 204)

The Calcutta Chromosome is a postcolonial novel that challenges and resists the colonial voice through the voiceless characters. In the orthodox society of India people are deeply rooted in their ancient religion, culture, civilization and rituals that they follow them faithfully. They have firm faith in God and his power. This belief seems in their great significance to self-discipline, renunciation, the doctrine of incarnation, law of karma, the mythical stories in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the mantras and tantras contained in scriptures and purans the slokas used in the worship of the deities, temples, priests etc. In this respect Ghosh with a strong nationalist vein tries in *The Calcutta Chromosome* to establish Indian supremacy in the world of knowledge and science. ■

Work Cited

Annabel Rebello and Divya Yogeshwar. Amitav Ghosh's Calcutta Chromosome: A Hegemonic Notion of the West Over The East . Research Horizons.ISSN 2229-385X VOL-5(July 2015)

Bhatt, Indira and Indira Nityanandam. *The Fiction of Amitav Ghosh*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2001.Print.

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Calcutta Chromosome*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2008.Print.

RUDRAMUNI ,M. H. The portrayal of Silence in Amitav Ghosh's The Calcutta Chromosome . Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics, Vol. XXXIII : Nos. : 1-2 : 2010(page 26-28)

Singh ,Seema .Dehierarchicising Colonial History in The Calcutta Chromosome: A Bakhtinian Perspective . KAKATIYA JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES Volume 36/ 2017 ISSN 0971-8877 (page no. 125-135)

Tiwari, Shubha. *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Study.* New Delhi: Atlantic, 2008.Print.

Dr. Dipika Bhatt, Assistant Professor, Department of English, HVM (P.G.) College, Raisi, Haridwar, Uttara Khand

Bama Fustina's SANGATI (events) Quest for Identity and Social Equality : A Portrait of Self Exploration

Kirttika Gupta

In Indian literature, the voices of marginalised women offer a crucial counter-narrative to dominant traditions. The novel 'Sangati' focuses on the lived experiences of Dalit women, who face a unique and severe form of "Triple Marginalisation" at the intersection of caste, class, and gender oppression. Yet, through their stories, they resist erasure and assert their agency, reclaiming dignity for themselves and their community. The text serves as a testament to a significant shift in Dalit literature, moving beyond the simple documentation of oppression to a powerful affirmation of Dalit women's resilience, agency, and collective identity. The women depicted in the book learn to embrace life wholeheartedly, even amid despair and injustice. They emerge as powerful voices for the voiceless, challenging entrenched social taboos and systemic discrimination. 'Sangati' examines how these women quest for identity and demand social equality in a society that seeks to silence them. By exploring their resistance to not only upper-caste prejudice but also internal injustices within their communities, the novel serves as a compelling call for dignity, equality, and recognition, told through the raw, lived experiences of women who fight every day to be heard and seen.

Keywords: Dalit Autobiography, Identity, Patriarchy, Social Equality, Subaltern Theory

Introduction

"Dalit is not a caste but a realisation and is related to the experience of joys and sorrows and struggles of those in the lowest stratum of the society." -Arjun Dangle

Despite India's entry into the twenty-first century and its global image as the world's largest democracy, caste-based discrimination against Dalits and other marginalised communities remains deeply entrenched. The exploitation of the weaker by the stronger is as old as human civilisation itself, and in India, this age-old hierarchy continues to manifest in systemic oppression, social exclusion, and unendurable suffering. In India's caste-structured society, those pushed to the margins and forced to live under centuries of oppression are known as 'Dalits'. The roots of their wretched condition lie in an age-old social hierarchy sanctioned by religious texts and cultural traditions. India, often celebrated as the land of the 'Vedas' and 'Puranas', has long followed the social order described in the

Manusmriti, Atharva Veda, Rigveda, and Vishnusmriti. According to these texts, Hindu society was divided into four varnas—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Those placed at the bottom, the Shudras, were relegated to the most menial and degrading tasks. Over time, the lowest among them came to be identified as 'Dalits' or 'Chaturvarna'.The term "Dalit" originates from the Sanskrit root 'dal', meaning "to split, break, or crack." Symbolically, it refers to something or someone that has been cut, torn apart, and destroyed by systemic injustice. To be Dalit in the twenty-first century is, for many, still to endure social discrimination and daily restrictions. Yet it is also to unceasingly resist to rise, question, and challenge the oppressive structures that seek to confine them.

Dalit women, in particular, bear the compounded burden of caste, gender, and economic marginalization, making their struggles uniquely complex. Their narratives, therefore, become powerful sites of resistance, reclaiming agency and identity from the margins.It is within this context that Tamil Dalit writer Bama Faustina's 'Sangati' translated into English as 'Events' (2005) by Lakshmi Holmstrom—emerges as a vital counter-discourse in Indian literature. The text serves not only as a testimony to the harsh realities of Dalit women's lives but also as a celebration of their resilience, solidarity, and unyielding spirit in the face of persistent injustice. Dalit autobiographies or memoirs have been described as "capsules of agony" and "narratives of pain" and there are a lot of Dalit writers and their Dalit autobiographies developed as narratives of resistance against the caste stranglehold.

Dalit writing first emerged in Gujrati and Marathi but later started emerging in other languages such as Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Hindi etc. like Daya Pawar's Baluta: social claim (1978), Omprakash Valmiki's Jotham (1997), The prison we Broke(2009) Baby tai Kamble, Mohandas Nami stray's Apne Apne Pinjrey, Laxman mane's Upara: the outsider (1980), K.A. Gunasekaran's the scar (2004), Bama's Karukku(1992) and Santagati(1994), Nalini Jameela's The autobiography of a sex worker(2007) etc.

About the Author- Bama (born 1958), also known as Bama Faustina Soosairaj, is a prominent Tamil Dalit feminist, committed teacher, and celebrated novelist. Her works occupy a significant place in Dalit literature, particularly for their unflinching portrayal of caste and gender oppression. She rose to prominence with her autobiographical novel Kahuku (1992), following the success of Karukku she authored two more novels, "Sangati (1994), "Vanmam (2002)She has also published two short story collections: Kusumbukkaran (1996) and Oru Tattvum Erumaiyum (2003). Across her body of work, Bama foregrounds the voices of Dalit women, blending oral storytelling traditions with personal and collective histories.

In Indian English literature, stories from the margins have started to find a stronger voice, and one such powerful voice is that of Bama Faustina. Her novella 'Sangati', published in Tamil and later translated into English, gives us an honest and sometimes painful look into the daily lives of Dalit Christian women. Unlike traditional narratives that focus on a single protagonist, Sangati tells the stories of many women, mothers, daughters, schoolgirls, and neighbours who face injustice not just because of their caste, but also because they are

"women". Through these stories, Bama helps us understand the struggles that shape their identities. What makes Sangati unique is how it speaks directly and boldly, often in the local dialect, without softening the harsh realities of caste discrimination or the control imposed on women's bodies and voices. The book does not follow a typical plot; instead, it unfolds through conversations, memories, and incidents that come together like a patchwork quilt, showing us the strength of women who are often silenced. Bama also raises questions about the role of religion and how even Christianity, which is supposed to be about love and equality, does not fully support these women. And they often exploited in the very name of religion and salvation.

Dalit hood refers to the systemic exploitation, suppression, and marginalisation of Dalit communities by dominant upper castes. The marginalised cannot remain silent forever; once they find their voice, they transform pain into resistance "Only ash knows the experience of burning". Dalit literature, rooted in lived experience, can be read by all but created only by those who have endured caste oppression. For Dalit writers, it is a tool for social change rather than mere art. Emerging in forms such as autobiographies, novels, poetry, and essays, this literature asserts identity and challenges caste hierarchies.

Autobiography, in particular, enables Dalit authors to reclaim dignity, narrate struggles, and dismantle structures of silence. Bama as an insider speaking for the otherwise silenced members of the society. It looks at how the women's presented as characters in the novella questions the dichotomies of caste hierarchy and gender discrimination most frequently.

In Sangati, how Dalit women affirm their identities and derive meaning from their lived experiences stands as a powerful act of resistance against the marginalisation enforced by dominant socio-cultural structures. Bama's own Paraiyar background grants her an insider's perspective, enabling her to portray the realities of caste-oppressed women with authenticity and authority. Dalit critic Raj Gauthaman emphasises that only those born into the Paraiyar or Dalit community possess an inherent right to narrate their stories, as their lived experience forms the foundation of such narratives (1995). This inherited connection shapes Bama's unwavering resolve to challenge entrenched systems of discrimination. Her position as both a Dalit and a woman deepens her empathy for her community, driving her to encourage fellow Paraiyar women to rise with determination and become trailblazers in building a more equitable society (Bama, 2005).

Bama's Sangati confronts issues of caste and gender both within and beyond the Dalit community. As she notes, "all the women in the world are second-class citizens; for Dalit women, the problem is graver" (Bama). Their marginalised identity brings a distinct set of challenges, chief among them the complete absence of social recognition, to the extent that they are often denied basic human dignity. Bama's narratives draw from these lived realities, presenting them without embellishment or dilution. What makes 'Sangati' distinctive is its unapologetic tone and use of the local dialect, which gives voice to experiences often erased from mainstream discourse. Rejecting the conventional structure

of a linear plot, the text unfolds as a series of interconnected anecdotes. In her acknowledgements, Bama explains her intent: her mind brims with stories not only of the suffering and struggles of Dalit women, but also of their spirited defiance, their refusal to be broken by adversity, their capacity to confront hardships with laughter and resilience, and their unwavering self-respect and vitality. She declares her aim "to shout out these stories" so that their voices, often silenced, may be heard.

Thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Simone de Beauvoir have long examined the representation of women in literature. By the 1980s, feminist criticism had become more eclectic, shifting from merely challenging the male-centred worldview to actively exploring female experiences. In the Indian social hierarchy, Dalits occupy the lowest rung, and Dalit feminism highlights a crucial oversight in mainstream Dalit struggles, the neglect of gender perspectives. Dalit women, in particular, endure a triple burden: the oppression of caste-based hierarchy and its hegemonic structures, the constraints of patriarchal norms within their own community, and the hardships of economic marginalisation. This intersection of caste, class, and gender discrimination forms the core of the injustices depicted in much Dalit feminist writing.In Sangati, all thirty-five characters portrayed by Bama are engaged in strenuous manual labour, enduring economic hardship, physical exhaustion, and psychological strain. As Bama notes, "being a Dalit creates a problem; on top of that, being a Dalit woman makes it more difficult" (p 7). The narrative spans several generations of workers, highlighting unequal divisions of labour as a recurring issue. Dalit women often serve as the primary wage earners, shouldering the family's financial responsibilities, while men retain the freedom to spend their earnings as they choose. Bama draws a stark contrast with women from other castes, remarking, "It is not the same for women of the other communities and castes. Our women cannot bear the torment of upper caste masters in the fields and at home, nor can they bear the violence of their husbands" (p.65).

The novel also explores gender discrimination from early childhood. Girls face neglect, sometimes beginning with the preference for male children over female infants. Even in leisure, inequality is evident: boys have a wide range of games such as kabaddi and marbles, while girls are restricted to domestic role-play like cooking, cleaning, and marrying. Bama underscores how Dalit girls' bodies, minds, feelings, words, and actions remain under strict control. She questions, "Why can't we be the same as boys? We are not allowed to talk loudly or laugh noisily; even when we sleep, we can't stretch out on our backs or lie face down on our bellies. We always have to walk with our heads down, gazing at the ground."

This persistent regulation of female agency reveals how caste and gender intersect to enforce systemic subjugation.Bama exposes the dual burden of caste and gender oppression within and beyond the Dalit community, where girls are denied the right to education simply because "it is not what they are supposed to do" (Sangati 43). Dalit women labour in the fields for lower wages than men, endure relentless domestic drudgery, and suffer physical and mental abuse at home. Resistance often invites harsher violence or even death. Through the lives of characters like Thayi and Mariamma, Sangati records the everyday brutality of

this existence. Thayi is beaten daily by her husband, Mariamma is humiliated by her father, assaulted by the landlord, and later tortured by her spouse. Even when falsely accused of misconduct, the truth is silenced; no one dares defend her (Bama 65).

This hypocrisy, where women are declared "polluted" yet remain sexually vulnerable to upper-caste men, finds a chilling parallel in Mulk Raj Anand's "Untouchable". The incident of Sohini, molested by the temple priest while fetching water (Anand 43), mirrors Mariamma's plight. The same hands that claim ritual defilement do not hesitate to violate a Dalit woman's body. In both texts, public discourse on "purity" masks an entrenched system of exploitation: women are barred from speaking in meetings, shamed into submission, whipped, beaten, or ostracised, while their humanity is systematically denied. Such portrayals humanise the Dalit woman's predicament not as abstract victims of caste patriarchy, but as individuals fighting, often in vain, for dignity in spaces that consume their labour and bodies while erasing their voices.

Bama highlights the discrimination faced within the subdivisions of the Dalit community, most of the Parayiyar are converted into Christianity in the name free education would be provided to their children's but the discrimination is there within the conversions, even the priest biases them as on gender and being Dalit and Dalit women's kept on clean and sweep the church. They lick the shoes of the priest while the women of the other castes are on the other side and said "it seems we will gain merit by sweeping the church and that god will bless us specially" (119).

In the first half of Sangati, Bama confronts the layers of oppression, subjugation, and suffering endured by Dalit women within their community. However, the latter half of the text shifts from a narrative of despair to one of resilience, offering a vision of positive identity. Here, Dalit women begin to recognise their own humanity and equality with women from other communities. Bama depicts them as individuals of remarkable inner strength, whose vitality enables them to resist not only the caste system but also the patriarchal dominance in their households. As she writes, when men attempt to assert their physical strength, women retaliate with "the sharpness of their tongue," a verbal defiance that becomes a form of survival. The character of Rakkamma embodies this spirit, unable to overpower men physically, she counters them with fearless speech and unyielding wit.

Despite enduring lives marked by relentless violence and "hellish torment," Dalit women remain steadfast, controlling their emotions like "rocks," awaiting the day of liberation. They carry within them a fierce will to survive, even if it means struggling for their last breath. This resilience aligns with J. M. Waghmare's observation in "Literature of Marginality: "American Blacks as well as Indian Dalits were the sons and daughters of darkness, journeying through untold sorrows and sufferings" (Waghmare 27). In Sangati, this journey is not merely one of survival, but of the gradual reclamation of dignity and self-worth in a world intent on denying both.Bama's vision resonates with the works of other subaltern andmarginalised voices, such as Mahasweta Devi, Baby Kamble, and Black

feministwriters like Alice Walker and Toni Morrison. Across cultural and geographical boundaries, these authors converge in their commitment to equality, social justice, and human rights, while exposing the multiple axes of oppression faced by women at the intersections of caste, class, and gender.

In her narrative, Bama emerges as a representative voice for her community, urging an end to the agony of women through the dismantling of gender-based discrimination from childhood itself. She advocates for treating boys and girls alike, ensuring equal opportunities as they grow into adulthood. As she asserts, "We must never allow our minds to be worn out, damaged, and broken in the belief that this is our fate. Just as we work hard as long as there is strength in our bodies, so too, must we strengthen our hearts and minds to survive. We must be strong. We must show by our resolute lives that we believe ardently in our independence" (Sangati 121). Through such affirmations, Bama's work transcends mere documentation of suffering, transforming into a manifesto for resilience, dignity, and collective empowerment.

As a Dalit feminist writer, Bama's feminism is firmly rooted within the lived realities of her community. She portrays how Dalit women, rendered powerless by systemic oppression, often internalise and accept the patriarchal authority of men in their lives. Deprived of educational opportunities, her women characters remain socially vulnerable and easily targeted by those in positions of power. Through her narrative, Bama draws the reader's attention to the structural inequities in the education system as they affect the Dalit community. She highlights the case of Peechiamma, a woman from the Chakli community, who managed to study up to the fifth class despite the prevailing norm that girls of her caste were not allowed formal schooling. This small yet significant act symbolises the inner strength and determination of Dalit women to shape their own identities, resisting the passive acceptance of roles imposed upon them. In doing so, Bama underscores education not merely as an academic achievement, but as a radical tool for self-definition and empowerment. Through the lens of Dalit Feminism, this shift asserts women's agency against both caste and patriarchal domination, while Subaltern Theory frames such narratives as vital acts of reclaiming voice from structures that have historically silenced them. As Bama writes in Sangati, "If we keep lamenting, who will see the strength we have? It is better to show them we can stand and fight" (Bama 68), underscoring the necessity of narratives that both resist and rejoice.

Conclusion

Through "Sangati" Bama transforms the narrative of Dalit women from isolated accounts of suffering into a collective testament of resilience and defiance. What begins as the story of individual hardship marked by poverty, caste discrimination, and patriarchal violence gradually evolves into the portrait of a community of paraiya women bound together by shared oppression and united in their will to resist. The text becomes a collective autobiography, chronicling not only injustice but also the determination to construct an

identity and assert equality in the face of systemic marginalisation. the narrative transcends the boundaries of literature, becoming a political testament to the possibility of collective empowerment.

Bama's vision of empowerment lies in self-realisation and mutual support. She makes it clear that no external force will deliver liberation; the strength must come from within the community itself. In her words: "We must be strong. We must show by our own resolute lives that we believe ardently in our independence. I told myself that we must never allow our minds to be worn out, damaged, and broken in the belief that this is our fate. Just as we work hard so long as there is strength in our bodies, so too, we must strengthen our hearts and minds to survive" (Bama, 2009).In this rallying call, 'Sangati' becomes more than a literary work it emerges as a manifesto for change, a tool for consciousness-raising, and a reminder that the path to empowerment lies in the solidarity, courage, and unyielding spirit of Dalit women themselves. ■

Works Cited:

Ambedkar, B. R. *Annihilation of Caste*. The Bharat Bhusan Press, 1945.

————————. *The Untouchables: Who Were They? and Why They Became Untouchables*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017.

Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable*. Penguin Classics, 1990.

Bama. *Karukku*. Translated by Lakshmi Holmstrom, Macmillan India, 2005.

————————. *Sangati*. Translated by Lakshmi Holmstrom, OUP, 2005.

Beauvoir, Simon de. *The Second Sex*. Vintage Classic, UK.

Chakravorty, Spivak. *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Macmillan, 2008.

Dangle, Arjun. "Dalit literature, past, present and future." *Wikipedia*, 1992.

Gauthman, Raj. "We have no need for haloes." *India Today*, 1995.

Holmstrom, Lakshmi. "Introduction." *Sangati: Events*, by Bama, translated by Lakshmi Holmstrom, Oxford UP, 2005.

Rege, Sharmila. *Writing Caste/Writing Gender: Writing Dalit Women's Testimonies*. Zubaan, 2006.

Watson, Julia and Sidonie Smith. *Women, Autobiography, Theory: A Reader*. U of Wisconsin P, 1998.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. 1792.

Kirttika Gupta (Independent Research Scholar), MA, UGC-NET(English), Jajpur Road, Jajpur, Odisha..

Nostalgia: A Normative Order in Reading

Bhaskar J Barman
Dhrubajyoti Das

... life must be understood backwards.

- Søren Kierkegaard

Reading is the act of construction of the world in a meaningful way. The human world is filled with continuous stimuli which demand the human mind the attribution of meaning. Throughout history of academics, the act of *reading* meanings into phenomenon has been defined and redefined according to the needs of the times, implications of the 'term' in each context and more often its attributed significations. However, there might be differences in the nature and scope, primary tenets of the act of reading remains constant which involves analysis and interpretation. The attribution of meaning is hitherto considered as an instantaneous process of conception; it becomes essential thus to assess the function of 'time' in the act of meaning making. Stressing further, it not only becomes a phenomenological aspect but also becomes a philosophical one, the grounds of which are set up in the very act of interpreting a phenomenon and trying to attribute meaning to it. In scope of our discussion, we shall try to understand the function of time in rendering meaning into the act of *reading*. We shall take a detour into history, natural philosophy and modern renderings of the act of reading and meaning making, which is chiefly encased with prior experiences of readings, in turn a nostalgic interpretation of phenomenon. During the scope of our discussion, we shall try to establish the aspect of looking back to temporal past to retrieve a relatable similarity to assess phenomenon, by extension we can therefore assert that reading involves active nostalgia.

Keywords: Nostalgia, Reading, Phenomenology, Philosophy, Meaning-Making

I

Transition from a theocratical medieval society to a modern human condition brought about paradigm shifts in human knowledge and worldview. Classical world ascribed set boundaries to interpretation of phenomenon, archetypal models are used and reused to produce the desired effects in various ontological grounds of the human world. The ascription of standard models started with Greek philosopher Plato where he defined the terms of Mimesis or the Theory of Imitation. Where the Physical World is already removed from the Ideal World and an imperfect copy of the Ideal form – art is further removed once from the

Physical world thus being an imperfect copy of the Physical World. Hence, making every phenomenon an imperfect copy of an Ideal existence twice removed from it (copy of a *copy*). Trading among similar lines Aristotle and his terms of prescriptive poetics defined the norms according to which literature had to be produced whereby a strict unity of *action*, *time* and *place* be maintained. These philosophical tenets strictly shaped narrative and interpretation in tight bounds – *readers* were tightly bound to defined norms of *reading*, prescriptive formats bound authors and readers alike within tight formal as well as contextual boundaries. These established conventions found stronghold for centuries until the advent of Nineteenth century Romantics. The Romantic era ushered in an extrapolation of diverging ideas of their contemporary authors who traditionally wrote their own poetics – something they regarded as an escape from traditional canon. Nevertheless, the full exposition of literary models, axioms and theoretical understandings came into light in the Twentieth century where the axioms of literature came under light and rigorous judgement.

II

Nineteenth and Twentieth century literary background brought into consideration a much dormant aspect –the act of reading. One of the fundamental aspects of conception of meaning. A *reader* was seen as a standalone body, separated from the point of creation of the text – but strictly inclusive in the process of meaning-making. In scope of this discussion, we shall address the temporal aspects of the act of *reading*, which has been in the background for most parts in academic scrutiny. To take up the matter from its core, we can consider the propositions of Wolfgang Iser, who claims that –

> "The semantic fulfilment does not take place in the text but in the reader … In brief, the sentences set in motion a process which will lead to the formation of the aesthetic object as a correlative in the mind of the reader." (Iser 110).

What Iser argues is that, reading is directed towards semantic attainment, throughout the process a *reader* must follow the road towards a semantic goal that the text proposes to explore. This line of understandings points us to certain fundamental aspects of *reading*, we can therefore employlogical faculties to derive the principles of such modality in one of two ways –texts open semantic horizons, and each semantic horizon draws its background from its predecessor in that regard, which Iser claims to be 'aesthetic object(s) as correlatives'. Hence, when considered in terms of semantic whole, a text becomes an organism of unlimited precedence of objects as correlatives.

One of the parameters to consider while understanding arrangement of events in a text is that, events are arranged one after another and in some cases, they are occurring together within the central plot. One textual event thus comes after another in a sequence of events within the text. *Time–Text* relationship is fundamentally dependent on chronological progression, and as the text unfolds in a reader's mind and this chronology unfolds in the form of *nostalgia*. We can understand a proposition like this through yet another premise drawn by Wolfgang Iser in *The Act of Reading* (1978), he tries to explain the flow of time in the process of reading as:

> "… throughout the reading past perspective segments must be retained in each present moment. The new moment is not isolated, but stands out against the old, and so the past will remain as a background to the present, exerting influence on it, at the same time, itself being modified in the present." (Iser 114).

To put our faith on such a premise, we need to accept two dimensions of temporal understanding – i.e. *reading* is a continuous dialogue between *past* readings and *present* readings, those two temporal fronts are inherently fused together within a text. And essentially a reader's past readings have significant influence on present readings. Pursuing this line of premises require us to inherently accept the pervasive nature of active nostalgia in*reading*.

III

To confront the paradigms of *nostalgia* as a primordial factor in the process of *reading*, we need to explore its dissection with 'History'. Let us consider the proposition of Martin Heidegger, who claims:

> "History is commonly understood to refer to that which is 'past'. To say that something is historically determined means that it is dependent on something that *has been at an earlier part in time*."(Heidegger 73).

Implications of such proposition lie in the temporal understanding of events – in the past as ascribed, things are predicated with a '*has been*'. Now through course of *reading*, that is brought forward to the 'present' both temporally as well as contextually. When considered *nostalgia* as an active remembrance of the 'past', it aligns with our consideration of 'History' – in the sense that it is a part of a particular '*has been*'; but it is essentially free of historical determinism. The premise to that argument lie in the dynamic nature of *nostalgia*. As we have established it exerts influence and is continuously changing as an underlying pattern in the act of *reading*.

To confront the dynamic nature of *nostalgia* in the process of *reading* we can approach it within two fronts, as it inherently involves simultaneous recollection of the semantic horizons within the text being read which is essentially dynamic as a reader moves between multiple correlatives. Firstly, we can consider the philosophical implications of such *nostalgia* which can be found within the concept of origin of ideas (*ad ovum*) – to explicate further we can borrow the basic structure governing the Theory of Mimesis as proposed by Plato. When considering texts as essentially pieces of art, we can therefore arrive at the point where we can suggest that the *ideas* (objects of mimesis/textual representation) exists in the *ideal plane* (we can consider the external realities/the world) and the artist/authorby giving it a concrete form presents the art/text to the reader. When considered explicitly in terms of *reading* – logic suggests the existence of a duality in the process of reading. The *first* reading happens when the author tries to interpret the *ideal form* and the *second* reading happens when the *reader* interprets the author's interpretation of the ideal form. Since both the processes are significantly dissociated temporally from the

point of origin of the *text*; logic suggests that both are primarily governed by tenets of *nostalgia*. We can further reinforce this philosophical position by considering the stance of T.S. Eliot, who in his 1919 essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" claims thatan author's mind acts as a catalyst, giving shape to the ideas through imagination and memory. Similar line of thoughts can be derived from ideas such as esemplastic imagination as proposed by S.T. Coleridge. All of these philosophical stances allow us to derive the conclusion that *reading* universally adopts *nostalgia* as the process of interpretation of events and ideas are not instantaneous.

IV

Secondly we can consider the phenomenological implications of *nostalgia*in the process of *reading*. When dealing with a text, a reader often finds surrounded by multiple correlations that either widens his semantic horizon of expectation or reduces it – depending upon his expectation of the future events. A positive reinforcement reduces the semantic horizon of expectation and a negative reinforcement widens it. When categorized purely temporally, throughout the journey of correlatives within the text – a reader commonly finds two types of 'past' – the Modifiable past and the Unmodifiable past. The correlatives containing references to emotions, reactions to a particular event, political beliefs of a particular points etc. can be attributed to the category of Modifiable past. When interacting with *nostalgia* during the process of *reading* – modifiable past usually gets strongly influenced – their affinity of being modified in the present correlative is higher. One such instance can be drawn from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1601)–Let us consider Act III, Scene 3 – Hamlet's encounter with King Claudius while he was praying, his contemplation on his revenge and decides against action (revenge). A *reader* going through this correlative is bound to attend to the emotion of revenge spurring through Hamlet, followed by Hamlet's moral consideration outweighing his desire for revenge. Arriving at the conclusion – the *reader* must confront with Hamlet's tragic flaw or hamartia. The *reader*'s horizon of expectation has significantly migrated from one correlative to another effective adding and abetting Hamlet's hamartia.By act of constant modification and adaptation to the changes in concurrent correlatives, a *reader* encounters the 'past' (textual past) as a constant modification of the present correlative.

Another facet to the phenomenological aspect of *nostalgia* in *reading* is the aspect of unmodified past. Usually this type includes aspects matters of historical past, recorded events and facts referred in due course of a text. In contrast to unmodifiable pasts, when interacting with *nostalgia* during the process of reading – unmodifiable pasts usually do not get much influenced. The implications may be better understood as we consider Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). Set during the Revolution of France (1789 – 1799), the novel features the background of the revolution and the revolutionaries like Madame Defarge – Dickens created the character as an archetype of the *gentil revolutionaries*. The violent and vengeful nature is presented as a result of personal tragedy rather than just for the sake of it. Historical facts corroborate with the atrocities towards the French common

class. Now to consider the implication of such historical background in a *reading* of the text align strongly with the facts established in history. Throughout the reading, this fact remains intact. The archetype created in the form of this Character is derived from a standard historical modal which remains strongly uninfluenced during the *reading* of the text. Therefore, the *nostalgia* involves a historical background of the French Revolution as successive correlatives which largely remains identical throughout the reading of the text, where the loss of original attributes of the correlative is minimal.

V

A text carries a string of events chronologically bound to the temporal plane of the text, a *reader* often forms a colloid of interdependent correlatives. The textual horizon of expectation depends on the inherent *nostalgia* which governs the reading such that when the reinforcement is positive, the horizon shrinks and the *reader* is relieved of the anxiety of indeterminancy. Similarly, when the reinforcement is negative, the horizon of expectation widens and with it rises the anxiety of indeterminancy. Throughout the course of our discussion, we have explored the governance of *nostalgia* within the textual horizon of expectation, in natural course of *reading*, behaviour of the text as a series of chronological correlatives provides the ground of events to produce aesthetic fulfilment. ■

Works Cited:

Heidegger, Martin. *The Concept of Time*. Translated by Ingo Farin and Alex Skinner, The Continuum International Publishing Group , 2011.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Bibliography

Dickens, Charles. *A Tale of Two Cities*. James Nisbet & Co., Ltd, 1902.

Eliot, T.S."Tradition and the Individual Talent". *The Egoist*. vol. 6 no.4, Sept. 1919.

Eliot, T.S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent II". *The Egoist*. vol. 6 no. 5, Dec. 1919.

Heidegger, Martin.*Being and Time*. Basil Blackwell Publisher Ltd., 1962.

Heidegger, Martin. *The Concept of Time*. Translated by Ingo Farin and Alex Skinner, The Continuum International Publishing Group , 2011.

Iser, Wolfgang. *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology*. John Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Penguin Classics, 2001.

Bhaskar J Barman, Research Scholar, Dept. of English, Cotton University, Guwahati, Assam.
Dr. Dhrubajyoti Das, Associate Professor, Department of English, Cotton University, Guwahati, Assam.

The Beauty of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Poetry: A Metrical Analysis

Sayeed Abubakar

Literature has many branches. When a writercontributes significantly to several genres but achieves ultimate success in one, he is identified primarily by that specific genre. Thomas Hardy and Jonathan Swift wrote fine poetry, yet they are not remembered as poets but as masters of prose. T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats wrote remarkable plays, but they are not known as dramatists; they are remembered as poets. Similarly, Rabindranath Tagore's contributions to Bengali literature are multifaceted—poetry, short stories, novels, plays, essays, and rhymes—but when people speak of Rabindranath, they call him a poet, not a playwright or short story writer. His identity as a poet overshadows all other identities. In the same way, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee is so firmly established as a novelist that his identities as an essayist, a short story writer and a poet seem minor in comparison. The vast body of his fiction dominates so much that we have almost forgotten that Bankim was also a great poet.

i.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee(1838–1894) is an immortal novelist of Bengali literature. He made significant contributions to both poetry and novels. His first book of poetry was *Lalitaor Manas*. Some of his other notable poems include: Savitri, AdhopatanSangeet, Akanksha, Khadyot, Brishti, Megh, RajarUpar Raja, BhaiBhai, Durgotsav, JolePhule, Akbar ShaheerKhoshRoj, Bayu, Sanyukta, Pushpanatakand so on. Though he is mostly renowned for his novels, his poetic prowess cannot be neglected any way.

The Russian author Boris Pasternak was primarily a poet but gained global fame as a novelist with *Doctor Zhivago,* for which he was conferred the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1958, though he was compelled to decline it due to the opposition ofthe Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). His lifelong goal in poetry was to craft a grand prose-epic like *Doctor Zhivago.* The same words can be said for Bankim Chandra. Though he eventually ceased writing poetry, his novels retain a poetic language—lyrical, fluent, and dynamic—compelling readers to read them from beginning to end without pause. Many great Bengali novelists began their literary careers with poetry. Among those whose poetry met high artistic standards, Bankim Chandra was one.

Perhaps Bankim himself realized that he could not thrive in literature solely through poetry. Before him stood the giant Bengali poet Michael MadhusudanDutt (1824–1873). He mighthave weighed his poetry against Madhusudan's and, finding it lacking, turned to the novel. It is a matter of wonder thatMadhusudan began writing Bengali poetry nearly five years after Bankim's first poetry book had been published. After *Durgeshnandini* (1865), the first successful Bengali novel, Bankim never looked back at poetry. His literary career began in 1852 with the publication of poems in Ishwar Chandra Gupta's newspaper *SambadPrabhakar*. *Lalita or Manas*was published in 1856. His first novel, *Rajmohan's Wife,* was written in English and got published in 1864. Interestingly, just as Madhusudan began his poetry in English, Bankim began his fiction in English. Eventually, they bothabandoned English and returned to their mother language Bengali.

ii.

In his early life, Bankim wrote only poetry. *Lalitaor Manas,* was published in 1856 (Bengali Year 1263) from the press of Baikunthanath Das. The book's cover read: "Lalita. An Ancient Tale. Or, Manas." It was published by the BangiyaSahityaParishat. The work resembled Madhusudan's*The Captive Ladie* (1849), which failed to gain popularity, prompting Madhusudan to abandon English poetry. Similarly, Bankim, perhaps discouraged by the lackluster response to Lalita, also abandoned poetry. Another possible reason may be: Madhusudan's*MeghnadBadhKavya*(1861) and his Bengali sonnets (first composed in 1860, published in 1866) set a high bar. Inspired by Sir Walter Scott, Bankim earned recognition as the first modern Bengali novelist with *Durgeshnandini* in 1865. Perhaps he realized that surpassing Madhusudan in poetry was impossible. Despite his brilliance in rhythm and poetics, he never returned to verse—but the language of his novels remained poetic. His prose sounds like poetry. Whether it is *KrishnaKanta's Will*or *Anandamath*, one often feels as though reading poetic prose.

iii.

Lalita is a narrative poem, recounting a romantic tale between two characters, Lalita and Manmatha. The poem primarily uses the 14-syllable poiyer meter but features various metrical patterns and rhyme schemes that enhance its musicality and lyrical beauty. The poet's use of perfect end-rhymes, variation in meter, and prosodic finesse reveals his mastery over poetic form.

At the beginning of the poem, we find vivid romantic natural imagery:
In the dark of the deep forest,
In the silence of the night,
The moon floats in the clear blue sky,
Serene and bright...
Lines like:
The boat reached the shore so fast,
In no time, hearts became bound—at last.

...reveal rhyming between two- and three-syllable words—a modern poetic technique.

Bankim frequently shifts between meters—8+8, 4+6, 6+6, 10-syllable lines, and even complex stanzaic arrangements. His rhythm often echoes the cadence and musicality found later in Rabindranath Tagore's *Chitra* and *Sonar Tori*.

Bankim first introduced some rhythmic pattern in Bengali which was later followed by Rabindranath Tagore. Actually,Bankim borrowed it from the great Victorian poet Alfred Tennyson. Three examples are given below from three poets:

Dharotabo glass ati,
Jalantobiserbati
Sunotablarchati
Bajekhonkhon.
Nachebibi nana chhando
Sundorkhamiragandho
Gomvirjimutmandro
Hookargarjon.
(AdhopatanSangeet by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee)
Here rhyme scheme is: aaabcccb.
Dhoranahidiledhoribodupai
Ki koritehobebalo se upai
Gharvoridibosonairupai
Buddhijugaotumi.
Ektukufakajekhanejapai
Tomarimurotisekhanechapai
Buddhirchaskonokhanenai
Somostomoruvumi.
(Puroskerby Rabindranath Tagore)

The same rhyme-scheme pattern has been used here. The difference is that Bankimcomposed the poem in Akkhorbritto meter, whereas Rabindranath composed in Matrabritto meter.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
Slide the heavy barges trailed
By slow horses; and unhailed
The shallopflitteth silken-sailed
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?
(The Lady of Shalott by Alfred Tennyson)

iv.

Bankim also introduced the dialogue-poem technique in Bengali poetry first. He used it inhis poem 'Akanksha'. It was a dialogue between Radha and Krishna who expressed through sequential longing and response. In one dialogue, Radha says:

Keno nahoilituijamunarjal,
Re pranoballov!
Kibadiba, kibarati, kuleteanchalpati
Shuitamshunibare tor mridurob,
Re pranoballov!
[Why didn't you become the Jamuna's stream,
My love, my dream!
Day and night
Setting my mat I might
Lie on the shore all all alone
To listen to your sweet tone!]
In response Krishna says:
Keno nahoilituikusum-kanon,
Radhapremadhar!
Na chhutemanyophule, bandhitam tore chule,
Chikonganthia mala poritamhar!
Radhapremadhar!
[Why weren't you a flower from the grove,
My Radha, my love!
No flower I would touch
Getting you sweet a flower such
Making you a garland, my dear,
Onto my neck I would wear.]

The whole poemexhibits structured rhythmic patterns in Bengali this way: 8+6, 6; 8+8, 8+6, 6; and the rhyme scheme: [a+a+ (b+b)+a+a] that makesBankim a master of metrical artistry.

Another significant poem, AdhopatanSangeet, is a biting satire—criticizing Bengali society's blind imitation of Western decadence. Through sharp wit, flawless meter, and structured stanzas (often nine lines, reminiscent of the Spenserian stanza), the poem lashes out at moral decay:

Grab the glass tight, O friend,
Let the poison cup ascend...
Come, let us revel in sin,
The drums and dances begin...
Here,Bankim uses an 8+8+6 metrical pattern.

Bankim's poem 'Savitri'retells the tale of the chaste wife Savitri with rhythmic precision. It uses 6+6 meters, sometimes shifting to 8+6. The emotional depth and poetic technique elevate it.

In 'Akbar ShaheerKhoshRoj', another satirical poem, Bankim mocks society's obsession with superficiality. The stanza patterns— 6+6+6+5—were innovative for the time. Ending a Bengali line with a five-syllable unit was virtually unheard of then.

v.

To compose a poem, a poet must select a form, just as a sculptor selects a mold. Bankim experimented with poetic forms like few of his time. His structural mastery and rhythmic precision make him worthy of the title "magician of meter." Unfortunately, his identity as a poet remains overshadowed by his fame as a novelist. Still, poems like Lalita, Manas, Savitri, and Akanksha will forever preserve the legacy of Bankim Chandra Chatterjeeas a great poet in Bengali literature. ■

Works cited

Durgeshnandini, a novel by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

SambadPrabhakar by Ishwar Chandra Gupta

Rajmohan's Wife, an English novel by Bankim

The Captive Ladieby Michael MadhusudanDutt

KrisnaKanta's Will by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

MeghnadBadhKavya, an epic, by Michael MadhusudanDutt

Lalita or Manasby BankimChandra Chatterjee

Sonar Tori by Rabindranath Tagore

Dr. Sayeed Abubakar, Associate Professor in English, Government Teachers' Training College, Rajshahi, Bangladesh.

Between Voice and Voicelessness: Miss Benare and the Feminist Struggle in Indian Theatre

Purbasha Priyadarshini

Lizashree Priyadarshini Sethy

This paper explores the feminist dimensions of Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session*, focusing on the character of Miss LeelaBenare as a powerful embodiment of resistance against patriarchal oppression. Set against the backdrop of a mock courtroom that gradually reveals real social prejudices, the play interrogates the mechanisms through which women are silenced, judged, and morally condemned in a male-dominated society. Miss Benare, an educated and independent woman, becomes a symbolic figure for the struggle of women in Indian society who defy traditional roles and assert their autonomy. Her trial reflects the broader societal impulse to polish female behaviour and reinforces how institutions such as law, marriage, and morality are weaponised to control women. Through an analysis of dialogue, characterization, and dramatic structure, this paper argues that Tendulkar's play is not only a critique of societal hypocrisy but also a seminal work in Indian feminist theatre. It highlights the tension between voice and silence, agency and subjugation, and ultimately challenges audiences to confront the gendered injustice embedded in everyday life.

Keywords: Feminism, Indian Theatre, New Woman, Resistance, Subjugation

Introduction

Theatre has long served as a mirror to society, a medium that reflects, critiques, and challenges prevailing social norms. In India, post-independence theatre underwent a significant transformation as playwrights began to shift their focus from mythological tales and nationalistic themes to the pressing socio-political issues of everyday life. Among these playwrights, Vijay Tendulkar (1928–2008) emerged as a pioneering voice that used theatre to dissect the entrenched structures of power and expose the inequalities lurking beneath the surface of respectable society. Tendulkar's plays frequently explore themes of violence, gender dynamics, social hypocrisy, and individual resistance. His 1967 Marathi play *Shantata! Court ChaluAahe* (*Silence! The Court is in Session*) stands out as a particularly

bold and unflinching critique of patriarchy and societal double standards, and remains one of the most powerful feminist texts in Indian theatre.

This paper aims to analyse *Silence! The Court is in Session* through a feminist lens, with a special focus on the protagonist Miss LeelaBenare, a character who epitomizes the conflict between personal agency and societal expectations. The title, signifies the play's central tension—Benare's struggle to assert her voice and identity in a world determined to suppress both. Her experience in the mock trial at the centre of the play symbolizes the broader feminist struggle in Indian society, where women who defy traditional roles are often subjected to moral judgment and public humiliation. Benare's character is not only a dramatic construct but also a representation of real women whose lives are governed by patriarchal scrutiny and gendered silencing.

At the heart of *Silence! The Court is in Session* lies a disturbing courtroom drama enacted by a group of amateur theatre actors preparing for a play. What begins as a rehearsal quickly turns sinister when the mock trial—intended to be fictional—starts probing into Benare's personal life. She is accused of an illicit affair and an unwanted pregnancy—offenses not in legal terms, but in moral ones. Through the courtroom setup, Tendulkar metaphorically places society on trial, revealing how legal systems, societal structures, and communal attitudes can collude to suppress female autonomy. The play becomes a chilling exploration of how morality is often a tool of control, and how women like Benare, who attempt to live life on their own terms, are crushed by the weight of judgmental social conventions.

In Benare, Tendulkar creates a character that is bold, educated, economically independent, and emotionally resilient. She represents a new woman who challenges conventional notions of femininity. She openly mocks traditional marriage, speaks her mind without hesitation, and lives outside the framework of a patriarchal household. Yet, it is precisely this independence that threatens her male counterparts. The men in the play—despite being artists and intellectuals—reveal themselves to be deeply patriarchal. They exploit the mock trial to attack Benare personally, exposing their own insecurities and need to reinforce their authority. What is most striking is how the courtroom—ostensibly a space of justice—is used not to protect, but to persecute.

The play's title, *Silence! The Court is in Session*, is deeply ironic. While it suggests an environment of legal formality and discipline, it also points to the forced silencing of women's voices. As the play progresses, Benare's attempts to defend herself are repeatedly interrupted, mocked, or ignored. Her voice, which was initially lively and assertive, becomes increasingly drowned out by the chorus of accusations and laughter. Her eventual silence is not one of submission but of exhaustion—of realizing that in a society structured to condemn her, even the act of speaking becomes futile. Thus, silence itself becomes a powerful form of resistance and commentary.

Tendulkar's work resonates strongly with the goals of feminist theory, particularly the strands that focus on how language, power, and social norms intersect to oppress women. Feminism, at its core, seeks to interrogate the systemic inequalities that prevent women from fully realizing their autonomy—whether in the realms of family, law, religion, or culture. In this context, *Silence! The Court is in Session* is a rich text that explores how personal lives are politicized, how female bodies are sites of control, and how patriarchal norms are maintained under the guise of tradition and morality. Benare's story mirrors the lived realities of countless women in India and beyond, making the play a critical contribution to feminist discourse in literature and performance. "No allowances must be made because the accused is a woman. Woman bears the grave responsibility of building up the high values of society. Woman is not fit for independence" (Tendulkar 64)

Moreover, the play is significant not just for its content but for its form. The use of the "play within a play" technique allows Tendulkar to comment on the performative nature of both theatre and social roles. The mock trial format enables the characters to shed their real-life personas and reveal their true beliefs, thus highlighting how gendered ideologies are internalized and enacted. The blurring of boundaries between rehearsal and reality also suggests that the oppression faced by women is not confined to the stage—it reflects real-life attitudes and systems. Through this meta-theatrical structure, the audience is invited to question their own complicity in sustaining these norms.

Furthermore, *Silence! The Court is in Session* critiques not only male-dominated systems but also examines the role of women in upholding patriarchal values. Characters like Mrs. Kashikar represent how women themselves, when conditioned by conservative norms, can become instruments of patriarchy."MRS KASHIKAR. […] That's what happens these days when you get everything without marrying. They just want comfort. They couldn't care less about responsibility! […] It's the sly new fashion of women earning that makes everything go wrong. That's how promiscuity has spread throughout our society" (Tendulkar 99–100). Her constant interference, her superficial concern for Benare, and her blind loyalty to her husband underscore the tragic fact that patriarchy often survives with the aid of those it marginalizes.

In contrast, Benare becomes the lone feminist voice—isolated, ridiculed, and ultimately silenced."My life was a burden to me. …There's a great joy in a suicide that's failed. …I cried inside, and I made them laugh. I was cracking up with despair, and I taught them hope" (Tendulkar 116). In this monologue, Miss Benare reveals the depth of her inner suffering and resilience. Her failed suicide symbolizes not weakness but the painful strength required to keep living in a world that denies her dignity. Her emotional labour—hiding her despair while offering hope to others—highlights the silent burden women often bear. Rather than a morally fallen figure, Benare emerges here as a tragic symbol of suppressed female agency and quiet resistance.

The play also offers insight into the intersectionality of gender with other social structures such as class, education, and respectability. Benare's profession as a schoolteacher is both empowering and limiting—while it gives her financial independence, it also subjects her to higher moral expectations. Society expects teachers, especially female ones, to embody ideals of virtue and sacrifice. Any deviation from this ideal is harshly punished, as seen in the relentless questioning of Benare's character. The fact that her personal life becomes public spectacle is a commentary on how women's privacy is often violated under the pretext of maintaining social order.

Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session* is not merely a play about one woman's trial—it is a powerful feminist critique of Indian society that continues to hold relevance today. Through the character of Miss Benare and the structure of the mock courtroom, Tendulkar exposes the mechanisms through which patriarchy functions and silences dissent. This paper argues that Benare's experience is emblematic of the broader feminist struggle for voice, recognition, and justice. Her journey from speech to silence is a metaphor for the challenges faced by women who dare to live freely in a world that constantly seeks to define and confine them. By analysing the play within the framework of feminist theory and Indian socio-cultural context, this study hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of gender, power, and resistance in modern Indian theatre.

Literature Review

The feminist discourse in Indian drama has witnessed a gradual evolution, with playwrights like Vijay Tendulkar paving the way for socially conscious theatre that interrogates gender norms and power structures. *Silence! The Court is in Session* has been the subject of considerable critical analysis, especially within feminist literary studies. Scholars have explored the play's thematic richness, psychological depth, and socio-political commentary, establishing it as a landmark text in feminist theatre in India.

Shoma A. Chatterji sees Tendulkar's play as a critique of middle-class morality that punishes women like Miss Benare for defying patriarchal norms. As an unmarried mother and schoolteacher, Benare asserts sexual autonomy, which society condemns by making her a scapegoat for its anxieties around female independence. (68)

UshaBande situates *Silence! The Court is in Session* within Indian feminist resistance theatre. She argues that the "play within a play" and courtroom metaphor reveal how women are judged for moral, not legal, transgressions. The mock trial exposes the performative and ideological control of gender roles. (94)

Nina Mukherjee reads Benare's breakdown as a result of psychological violence inflicted by patriarchy. Her forced silence symbolizes the systemic erasure of female voice, aligning with the feminist concept of the "muted group". (112)

AsimDasgupta views the play as a reflection of post-independence India's tension between modernity and tradition. Benare, as an educated and independent woman, is punished

for defying conservative gender norms. (57)These critical perspectives show that *Silence! The Court is in Session* is more than Benare's story—it is a powerful critique of gender politics, social hypocrisy, and systemic silencing. Its continued relevance affirms its place as a key feminist text in Indian theatre.

Analysis

Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session* (*Shantata! Court ChaluAahe*, 1967) represents a pivotal moment in the development of modern Indian theatre. Known for his unflinching exploration of power dynamics, social norms, and human psychology, Tendulkar crafts a play that is as politically charged as it is emotionally harrowing. Set within the frame of a mock courtroom drama staged by amateur actors, the play gradually unravels into a disturbing commentary on the moral policing, gender inequality, and social hypocrisies embedded in the fabric of post-independence Indian society. At the core of this narrative is Miss LeelaBenare—a vibrant, independent schoolteacher—who becomes the focal point of a symbolic but deeply personal inquisition. Her character stands as a complex representation of the feminist struggle in a society that prefers women to be silent, submissive, and morally 'respectable.'

Miss Benare defies the traditional gender roles assigned to women in Indian society. She is unmarried, self-sufficient, and unashamed of her choices, particularly her rejection of marriage and her unapologetic love for a married man. In presenting such a character, Tendulkar challenges the normative cultural framework that seeks to confine women within roles of wife, mother, and caregiver. Benare lives on her own terms, an anomaly in a society where women's autonomy—especially sexual autonomy—is considered a threat to the social order. Her characterization aligns with Simone de Beauvoir's assertion in *The Second Sex* that woman is historically constructed as "The Other," whose primary function is to define and serve man. Benare, by asserting her own desires and refusing victimhood, disrupts this framework and asserts her subjectivity.

The structure of the play—where a fictional court session morphs into a real emotional trial—mirrors the transformation of seemingly benign social interactions into cruel enactments of control. What begins as an innocent rehearsal soon descends into a calculated assault on Benare's dignity and identity. The courtroom becomes a metaphorical space where the collective conscience of a patriarchal society judges and condemns a woman not for breaking the law but for breaking the rules of prescribed morality. This mock trial serves as an example of Michel Foucault's concept of the panopticon, in which societal norms are maintained through constant surveillance and judgment. The disciplinary mechanism is internalized by the characters, which polished Benare not through formal law but through collective moral authority.

Benare's voice, which initially dominates the stage with wit, warmth, and intelligence, is systematically stripped away as the play progresses. Her attempts to defend herself are drowned by the false authority of the courtroom and the jeering of her colleagues.

The silencing of Benare is not merely theatrical—it is symbolic of the broader cultural silencing of women who do not abide by societal norms. Her growing inability to express herself reflects how patriarchal discourse excludes female subjectivity and denies women a platform to narrate their own lives. GayatriChakravortySpivak's seminal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is particularly relevant here; Benare is emblematic of the subaltern woman whose voice is either unheard or actively suppressed by dominant discourses.

This theatrical silencing also resonates with Judith Butler's Theory of Gender Performativity. Butler argues that gender is not a stable identity but rather a series of repeated acts and performances that conform to societal expectations. Benare's deviation from the script of ideal womanhood—her refusal to marry, her sexual freedom, her independence—threatens the stability of the gender binary. The mock trial becomes an effort to discipline her into conformity, to reassert normative femininity by publicly punishing her transgressions."Her conduct has blackened all social and moral values. The accused is public enemy number one. If such socially destructive tendencies are encouraged to flourish, this country and its culture will be totally destroyed". (Tendulkar 114–115)By labelling Benare a "public enemy," he equates her personal choices with national and cultural decay, revealing how female autonomy is framed as a threat to societal stability. This hyperbolic condemnation exposes how patriarchy weaponizes morality to silence and shame women. Her ultimate silencing functions as a re-inscription of these gender norms, warning other women of the consequences of non-conformity.

Equally significant is Tendulkar's use of the courtroom setting. It is a space that traditionally connotes fairness, rationality, and justice. Yet in this play, it becomes a tool for humiliation and repression. The audience witnesses how language—usually the instrument of reason and dialogue—is twisted into an instrument of cruelty. The characters hide behind roles, legal jargon, and dramatic conventions to voice their deeply embedded prejudices. The courtroom's formality masks the violence it enables. The trial is not about uncovering the truth, but about reinforcing gender hierarchies under the guise of morality.

Tendulkar does not exempt women from participating in this cruelty. Mrs. Kashikar, the only other woman in the play, is a symbol of how patriarchy is internalized and perpetuated by women as well. Her actions reflect her subservience to her husband and her belief in the righteousness of the social norms that condemn Benare. This supports Bell Hooks' argument that patriarchy is not upheld by men alone, but also by women who have internalized its values and become its defenders. Mrs. Kashikar's passive aggression makes her an enabler of Benare's suffering.

Benare's eventual silence raises profound questions. Is her silence a sign of defeat, or is it a form of resistance? By refusing to plead, justify, or argue, Benare may be rejecting the very system that has condemned her. She denies her oppressors the satisfaction of a reaction. Her silence becomes a powerful, though tragic, statement. It is a performance of refusal—an act that forces the audience to confront the discomfort of what has just

unfolded. In this sense, her silence is more eloquent than any speech could be. Hélène Cixous' notion of "écritureféminine" or "women's writing" becomes relevant here; Benare's silence can be interpreted as a non-verbal mode of feminine expression that resists patriarchal discourse.

Tendulkar's critique extends beyond gender; it encompasses the entire moral architecture of middle-class Indian society. The play reflects the contradictions of a nation that, despite its democratic ideals and modernizing ambitions, continues to cling to conservative notions of honour, purity, and respectability—particularly for women. In this context, Benare's trial represents not just the judgment of an individual, but a trial of progress itself. Her independence, education, and assertiveness become threats, not because they are wrong, but because they symbolize a change that society is not ready to accept.

Placed within the broader framework of Indian theatre, *Silence! The Court is in Session* marks a critical transition from mythological and nationalist themes to plays concerned with social realism and psychological depth. Alongside the works of Mohan Rakesh and BadalSircar, Tendulkar's plays helped usher in a new wave of Indian drama that was urban, introspective, and politically engaged. Yet, what sets *Silence!*Apart is its feminist resonance. Few Indian plays at the time gave such centrality to a woman's interior life, her desires, and her moral complexity.

The play also holds a foundational place in feminist literary criticism in India. Through Benare, Tendulkar not only portrays the struggle of a woman against patriarchal norms but also critiques the very structures that claim to uphold virtue and justice. Her character continues to resonate with contemporary audiences because the issues she embodies—control over female bodies, societal judgment, and the denial of voice—remain disturbingly relevant.

Scholars have approached the play through various theoretical lenses. Some see Benare as a victim of a deeply misogynistic society, others view her as a symbol of resistance. Feminist readings often highlight how Tendulkar uses theatricality to expose real-world injustices, and how Benare's silencing mirrors the erasure of women's voices from cultural narratives. Psychological readings examine her trauma and resilience, while sociological interpretations place her within the context of post-independence India's gender politics.

The richness of the play lies in its refusal to offer easy resolutions. There is no justice, no redemption, and no catharsis. Instead, the audience is left with silence—a silence that accuses, mourns, and resists. Tendulkar does not provide answers; he demands reflection. His message is not just about one woman, but about the countless women like Benare who are silenced by the invisible hand of tradition, morality, and social expectation.

Silence! The Court is in Session is a deeply unsettling, profoundly moving exploration of gendered injustice. Through the trial of Miss Benare, Vijay Tendulkar crafts

a narrative that exposes the violence hidden within the language of morality and the institutions of justice. The play remains a cornerstone of Indian feminist theatre—not only for its dramatic strength but for its unwavering commitment to truth. Miss Benare's fall from voice to silence is not just a personal tragedy; it is a universal one, echoing across time and space wherever women's voices are denied and their truths dismissed.

Conclusion

Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court is in Session* represents a turning point in Indian theatre, exploring the intersections of gender, power, and morality. Through the character of Miss LeelaBenare—a spirited, independent schoolteacher—Tendulkar critiques the oppressive social structures that seek to silence women who defy patriarchal norms. Set within the frame of a mock courtroom trial, the play transforms into a space of real emotional violence, exposing how institutions masquerading as just can become tools of humiliation and control.

Benare's refusal to conform—her unmarried status, her autonomy, and her unapologetic choices—positions her as a threat to a society intent on regulating female behaviour. Her character disrupts the roles traditionally assigned to women, aligning with Simone de Beauvoir's theory of woman as "the Other," and echoing Judith Butler's concept of gender as performative. Her eventual silencing, emblematic of GayatriSpivak's "subaltern," underscores the systemic erasure of women's voices from dominant narratives.

Tendulkar's play is not only a critique of gender roles but a mirror to the contradictions within post-independence Indian society. Despite embracing modernity, the society depicted clings to conservative values, especially regarding women's roles and sexuality. Benare's symbolic trial is, in essence, a trial of progress itself—one that reveals the discomfort society feels when faced with female agency.

In reflecting on *Silence! The Court is in Session*, what becomes clear is its enduring capacity to evoke discomfort and provoke thought. Tendulkar does not allow his audience the comfort of distance or neutrality; he compels them to reckon with the invisible forces that marginalize women and to interrogate the norms they may unknowingly uphold. Benare's journey is a poignant reminder of the cost of speaking out, and the deeper cost of being silenced. As long as institutions continue to echo with unspoken truths, and as long as women are judged for their independence rather than celebrated for it, the play retains its relevance.

The silence that concludes the play is not an absence but a presence—loaded with meaning, protest, and unresolved tension. It is a silence that asks questions rather than answers them. It challenges the audience to consider whose voices are heard, whose are denied, and what that denial signifies. In this way, *Silence! The Court is in Session* is not merely a play from the past; it is an urgent call for awareness in the present. ■

Works Cited

Bande, Usha. *Woman in Indian Short Stories: Feminist Perspective*. Prestige Books, 2003.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, Vintage Books, 2011.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 2006.

Chatterji, Shoma A. *Subject: Cinema, Object: Women: A Study of the Portrayal of Women in Indian Cinema*. Parumita Publications, 1998.

Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1976, pp. 875–893. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/3173239.

Dasgupta, Asim. *Modern Indian Drama: Forms and Concerns*. SahityaAkademi, 2003.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1995.

Mukherjee, Nina. *Plays of Protest: A Study in Indian Theatre*. Atlantic Publishers, 2006.

Hooks, Bell. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Routledge, 2015.

Spivak, GayatriChakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993, pp. 66–111.

Tendulkar, Vijay. *Silence! The Court is in Session*. Translated by PriyaAdarkar, Oxford University Press, 1978.

Dr.Purbasha Priyadarshini, Lecturer and Head, Deptt. of English, Kendrapara Autonomous College, Kendrapara, Odisha.

Ms Lizashree Priyadarshini Sethy, Lect. in English, Kendrapara Autonomous College, Kendrapara, Odisha.

Protective Instinct for Mutual Survival in Emma Donoghue's *Room*

Miti Sharma

B. K. Anjana

Food, shelter, and clothing have always been considered as the basic needs for survival of mankind. But apart from these three factors, there are certain emotional aspects which share their part in the survival of human beings. One of such determinants is hope, as it sustains life. Since ages, literature has been acknowledged for delineating various sensitive and emotional factors associated with human beings in a skilful way, and this rich legacy has been more enriched by Internationally acclaimed Canadian novelist, Emma Donoghue (1969-), in her monumental work *Room* (2010). At the surface, the novel portrays the story of a kidnapped mother who was compelled to live with her child for seven years in an eleven-by-eleven-foot room. However, it gives an account of her existence in a restricted space. The present paper aims to put forward the strong motive of a mother to protect her child, which in turn instilled a hope for survival within her. The paper presents a strong-willed mother and the struggles which she faced in nurturing a child in a confined environment. It also highlights the extent to which a mother could go when it comes to the protection and well-being of her child.

Keywords: Survival, hope, protection, mother, child, kidnapping

Literature, being the mirror of the society, has always served as the medium through which a writer expresses various emotions, sentiments, and feelings.Through their creative outputs, authors often project relationship between thecharacters, bounded by love and affection. Of all the relationships portrayed in literature, the delineation of parent-child relationship is widely significant and noteworthy.Geetanjali Shree (1957-), the winner of International Booker Prize (2022), in her novel *Tomb of Sand* (2021),significantly remarks: "The love between a parent and a child can make God fade in the background" (Shree40). Thus, it is a relationship that comprises of a broad spectrum of emotions consisted of love, warmth, and mutual understanding.

When one closelyexamines the nature of the filial relationship in general, and mother-child relationship in particular, then without an iota of doubt, it can be asserted thatthe bond between a mother and child is something which surpasses everything.This relationship is

indefinable, as it is overloaded with emotions and feelings.These emotions can never be expressed, only experienced. The epithets, selfless and unconditional, used to characterise this relationshipclearly states thatittranscends all the geographical, social, and cultural boundaries.Considering its universal nature, this sacred bond finds expression across civilisations, religions, and literatures, often being revered as the purest form of love. It is a relationship woven with threads of empathy, resilience, and undying affection—a bond that no force of time or circumstance can sever.

English literature has a long history of giving a distinguished place to the notion of mother-child relationship.Since the times of Chaucer till today, authors, in one way or the other, have profoundly presented this relationshipthrough their creative faculties.Chaucer's Published in 2010, *Room* brought international recognition to Donoghue. The novel won Commonwealth Writers' Prize (2011) and was also short-listed for Man Booker Prize (2010) and Orange Prize for Fiction (2011). The novel was inspired from theFritzl case of Austria, in whichJosef Fritzl imprisoned his daughter, Elisabeth, in a basement for twenty-four years.She was subjected to repeated sexual abuse and physical assault—all while concealing the crime from the outside world.

Divided into five parts, andnarrated from the perspective of a five-year-old boy, Jack, *Room* depicts the terrible story of a helpless mother (Ma), who was kidnapped and held captive in a small room of eleven-by-eleven foot for seven years. She was abducted by the captor, Old Nick,at the age of nineteen, when she was not even mature enough to understand the pains and sufferings which can occur as the result of captivity. Ma spends the initial two years of her confinement alone, during which Old Nick repeatedly assaulted her. Two years after her captivity, she gave birth to a son, whom she names Jack. Old Nick frequently visited in nights to provide necessary articles to them. When Jack turns five, Ma decides to reveal her past to him so that they can devise a plan to escape from that place. Although Jack initially resists, Ma eventually persuades him to help. Her first plan involves Jack pretending to be seriously ill with diarrhoea so that Old Nick might take him to a hospital, where he could alert the authorities.However, Old Nick was not a person who could easily be swindled. Being suspicious of Ma's actions, he refuses to take Jack to the hospital and instead offers to bring the required medicines the next day. Their plan fails, but Ma remains resolute, and therefore she comes up with hermaster plan. Jack feigns death. Old Nick, believing the child has died, wraps him in a rug and takes him out to bury him. Once outside, Jack manages to escape and inform the police about their confinement. Ma is soon rescued and reunited with Jack after seven traumatic years in captivity. Both are admitted to a mental hospital to begin the slow process of healing. Ma also reunites with her family. The rest of the novel deals with the problems which both Ma and Jack encounter in adapting themselves to the realworld. Thus, the novel highlights the helplessness and mental agonies of a mother who tried to provide a healthy atmosphere to her child even in an unhealthy environment.

An eye-opener on kidnapping, sexual assault, confinement, and liberation, and acclaimed by critics as a psychological and traumatic narrative, the novel also depicts certain sensitive and delicate aspects. The novel"highlights certain paradigms of human existence," asDonoghue has tried to bring forth the mother-child relationship in quite a sensible way (Das and Singh 787). The experiences of kidnapping and confinement presented in novel could be devastating for anyone, and same is the case with Ma. But the birth of Jackinstilled a ray of hope within her.Thishelped her to survive even in undesirable circumstances. Jack gave her a reason to live, andhis protection was her sole motive.

The very beginning of the novel throws thelight upon the emotional and psychologicalconditionof Ma before Jack's birth. She admits her pathetic condition to her son:"'I cried till I didn't have any tears left,' she tells me. 'I just lay here counting the seconds'" (Donoghue3). These words poignantly reflect the depth of her misery and despair during the initial years of her captivity. Isolated and subjected to repeated abuse, Ma spent two agonising years in solitude. But Jack's birth brought tremendous changes in her life.Despite the traumatic circumstances of his conception, Ma embraces motherhood with unwavering devotion. Jackwas the result of one of the many rapes inflicted upon her by Old Nick. However,she chooses to let go of the pain of her past and immerses herself fully in nurturing him. He becomes the very centre of her existence and the source of her emotional strength.

Ma tried her level best to give normal upbringing to Jack even at a place where there is a little scope for healthy environment. She carefully structured their daily life around a routine—or a schedule, as Jack refers to it—which they followed with discipline and consistency.Aware of the fact that Jack could never step outside the room, Ma included physical exercises in their routine to ensure his bodily development. Deprived of access to formal education, she relied on television programs and story-books as tools for teaching. As a result, Jack developed a tremendous vocabulary like any other child raised in a normal environment. Their daily schedule included all day-to-day activities like breakfast, bath, lunch, sleeping hours, hair wash, laundry days, dinner, watching television, prayer etc. To cope with the boredom, the schedule even had a place for games and entertainment. Thus, even in a soundproofed cell, which was more like a hell, Ma provided a homely environment to Jack.Her efforts stand as a powerful testament to maternal resilience and the will to nurture even under the most oppressive circumstances.

In adverse circumstances, motherhood often requires immense strength. In *Room,* despite enduring immense physical and emotional hardship, Ma remained resilient and found renewed hope after Jack's birth. His birth gave her a sense of purpose and a reason to survive within the confines of captivity. She devoted herself entirely to his upbringing.Shecared for him with unwavering love and dedication. She regularly played with Jack, narrated stories, and ensured he felt safe and nurtured—just like every loving mother. Even when she was exhausted or unwell, she continued to engage with him through

storytelling and play. It helped them increating moments of joy and connection in an otherwise bleak environment. Jack's presence not only transformed Ma's perception of her own suffering but also became the source of her emotional endurance and will to live.

A mother's instinct to protect her child often transcends logic in circumstances of extreme danger and trauma. Ma's fierce protectiveness over Jack is evident in the ways in which she shields him from any interaction with their captor. She avoids speaking about him and deflects Jack's questions regarding his identity and frequent nighttime visits. She was so much concerned for Jack's safety and innocence that she does not want even the shadow of Old Nick to fall upon him. Each night, before the clock strikes nine—the time of Old Nick's arrival—Ma ensures that Jack is safely hidden in the wardrobe. When Jack asks why he must hide, Ma is left speechless and finds herself unable to offer a reason. Though Jack is too young to grasp the horrors of the captivity, Ma's sole priority is his protection. As she declares: "I just don't want him looking at you. Even when you were a baby, I always wrapped you up in Blanket before he came in" (Donoghue32).

Under conditions of trauma and captivity, maternal instinct manifests as heightened protectiveness and control. In *Room*, Ma's behaviour reflects an uncompromising commitment to safeguarding Jack's innocence and safety. This is evident when she does not inform Old Nick about Jack's birthday or his ability to speak.Instead, she chooses to keep Jack's presence hidden. Her refusal to acknowledge Jack in the presence of Old Nick signifies a conscious boundary which is aimed at preventing any psychological or physical influence from the captor.Even when Old Nick expresses a desire to see Jack, Ma resists aggressively. Her declaration that all her demands are solely for Jack proves that she is exclusively focusedupon her child's well-being. Old Nick's frustration leads him to retaliate by cutting off the power supply. However, Ma endures this hardship, including the cold and darkness, without complaint. This showcases how mothers prioritise their children's emotional and physical protection over their own comfort. Ma's resistance indicates not only her maternal resilience but also her refusal to allow the captor to assert power over her role as a mother. Old Nicksymbolises a threat to Jack's psychological safety. Thus, Jack becomes the very force that sustains her; his existence gave meaning to her life and serves as the only motivation for enduring the horrors of confinement.

A mother's protective instinct often compels her to shield her child not only from physical harm but also from psychological realities that may be too overwhelming to process. In *Room*, Ma exercises this instinct by constructing a carefully controlled version of reality for Jack.The confined space of the room constitutes the entire world. For Jack, everything he sees on television is perceived as part of that world, not as fiction but as literal truth. Ma initially allows this illusion to persist.However, as Jack grows older, his increasing awareness and curiosity begin to challenge Ma's constructed reality. His confusion when he sees a familiar medicine bottle in a television advertisement is the best illustration of the crumbling boundaries between illusion and truth. Ma finds it increasingly difficult to explain the

existence of a world beyond the room without jeopardizing the emotional safety she has worked so hard to preserve. Her response—"I can't think of the right words to explain"—reveals her emotional exhaustion and the impossibility of balancing truth with protection in such circumstances (Donoghue 74).Even when Jack overhears conversations between Ma and Old Nick, she instinctively avoids his questions. Her evasiveness is not a sign of dishonesty but a reflection of her commitment to preserving his innocence for as long as possible. Ma's reluctance to expose Jack to the horrors of their situation underscores her belief that psychological harm can be as devastating as physical danger. In shielding Jack from the full extent of their reality, Ma asserts control over the only domain left to her: the inner world of her child's mind.

In situations of extreme captivity, a mother's instinct to protect her child can compel her to make sacrifices. *Room* presents a powerful exploration of maternal endurance through Ma.She silently bears the trauma of sexual assault at the hands of Old Nick, not out of submission, but as a desperate strategy to keep her child safe. Her body becomes the site of negotiation for survival. She accepts continued violence to ensure her son's existence. This silent suffering reflects the unacknowledged burden that mothers carry in the face of systemic powerlessness and sexual violence. Furthermore, she consciously conceals the truth from Jack until she believes he is mature enough to comprehend it. The bruises on her face provoke Jack's confusion and frustration, but they are never explained in detail by Ma. Her silence is not avoidance but a form of psychological shielding. It is a deliberate effort to preserve Jack's emotional innocence. It is only when Jack turns five that Ma begins to reveal her past. She tells him how she once lived a happy life with her family before being deceived and kidnapped by Old Nick. Through this partial revelation, Donoghue portrays the psychological burden of a survivor of sexual abuse, whose trauma is intensified by confinement and helplessness.

Ma's narration outlines her early attempts to escape; she scraped the skylight, resisted Old Nick, and threatened him to give the exit code. But all her efforts ended in failure. Her deteriorating mental and physical condition is reflected in her description: "my head ached all the time, my eyes were scratchy. The smell of the cork tiles made me sick" (Donoghue118). These lines reveal the sensory and psychological toll of prolonged captivity. However, the birth of Jack marks a psychological turning point.Jack becomes her emotional anchor, her reason to live and endure.

In conditions of prolonged captivity and uncertainty, a mother's protective instinct often prompts her to act for the future of her child. The fear of an unpredictable future compels a mother to take risks for her the well-being of her child. In *Room*, this instinct reaches a critical point when Old Nick reveals that he has been unemployed for six months. Ma immediately senses the instability of their already precarious situation. Her maternal intuition alerts her that their confinement could become even more dangerous, possibly permanent. She realises that escape is no longer an option but a necessity. Her desire is not simply to secure freedom for herself, but to prevent Jack from leading a deprived life. Her

entire hope is projected onto him. Jack becomes both her emotional sustenance and the embodiment of her aspirations.

It is in this context that Ma devises the "Great Escape" (Donoghue119). Her plan is not only a means of physical liberation but also an attempt to introduce Jack to a world he has never known. She wants to acquaint Jack with family, nature, and freedom. When Jack resists, she gently tries to persuade him: "You need more room. Grass. I thought you wanted to meet Grandma and Grandpa and Uncle Paul, go on the swings at the playground, eat ice-cream" (141). These wordshighlight the poignancy of Ma's efforts to provide her child with the ordinary joys of childhood. Her determination to escapeis driven by the deeply maternal impulse to offer Jack a life worth living.

In extreme harrowing conditions, the presence of a child can serve as both emotional anchor and psychological catalyst for a mother. It might be possible that if Jack would not have been born, Ma would have remained trapped in room or died quite early. Thus, Jack becomes not only the centre of her emotional world but also the reason for her strategic and courageous attempt to escape. The risky, but meticulously crafted planreflects a mother's unwavering commitment to securing a better future for her child.Although the plan hinges on Jack's ability to perform under pressure, Ma's decision to entrust him with such responsibility is rooted in her belief in his resilience and their mutual dependence. The success of the plan is a shared triumph, and Ma's proud exclamation, "We did it," underscores not only their physical liberation but also the deep partnership between mother and child (Donoghue 192).

The aftermath of prolonged captivity often leaves survivors with a heightened sense of vigilance and control. Ma's psychological response to freedom is shaped by the deeply internalised responsibility she bore as Jack's sole caregiver during their years in confinement. Her inability to physically separate from him, even in the safety of a hospital, reveals the enduring effects of trauma on her maternal instincts. When Dr. Clay requests her to undergo medical tests, she refuses to do it without Jack. Her insistence that he remainswith her reflects a compulsive need to maintain proximity, a coping mechanism developed during captivity where any separation implied danger.

The interview scene in *Room* underscores the depth of Ma's protective instincts toward Jack. Even under the scrutiny of probing and insensitive questions, she remains unwavering in her role as protector. The interviewer asks questions which are reflective of societal bias. Butshe makes it clear that Jack was never a burden but the very centre of her life. Her protective nature is evident in her admission that every decision she made, including her calculated civility toward Old Nick, was solely intended to keep Jack safe.Her assertion that"Neither of us were alone for a minute" further reflects the vigilance and constant presence she maintained to ensure Jack's well-being (Donoghue 292). The phrase is not merely a statement of physical proximity but a testament to her continual emotional and psychological guardianship.

Thus, Emma Donoghue in her novel*Room*gave a different angle to the concept of mother-child relationship, and took it to a new height.Ma, in the novel, is presented as an epitome of love and compassion.Jack providedthe necessaryimpetusto her for survival.Through her artistic narration, the novelisttakes the reader into a world where he/she could easily visualise the degree to which a mother could go whenthe protection, care, andsafety of her childcomes to the forefront. ■

Works Cited:

Das, Ankita, and Rajni Singh. "Contesting Captive Spaces: A Reading of Emma Donoghue'sRoom." *Journal of English Language and Literature*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2016, pp 786-93.

Donoghue, Emma. *Room*. Picador, 2011.

Shree, Geetanjali. *Tomb of Sand*. Translated by Daisy Rockwell, Penguin Books, 2022.

Miti Sharma, SRF and Research Scholar, School of Studies in English, Vikram University, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.

Dr. B. K. Anjana, Professor, School of Studies in English, Vikram University, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.

Hindu Influencers and the New Age of Spiritual Discourse

Aiswarya S. Nair

With the proliferation of cheap internet, smartphones and government funded digital initiatives, social media platforms have emerged as powerful areas for disseminating ideological as well as religious content. Hindu spiritual leaders, like Sadhguru, Devdutt Pattanaik and Gaur Gopal Das have capitalized these platforms to propagate the Hindu philosophy in a renewed form which intertwines self-help narratives and spiritual discourse. These "Hindu" influencers claim to democratize spiritual knowledge and offer accessible wisdom but their digital presence simultaneously raises critical concerns regarding the commercialization of faith, algorithmic amplification of ideology and the erasure of caste, gender and class inequalities. This paper examines how these digital religious figures utilize social media to cultivate charismatic authority, build unidirectional relationships and monetize spiritual content. It debriefs the implications of such trends for pluralism, religious identity and public discourse in India.

Keywords: Digital Hinduism, Religious Influencers, Spiritual Branding

Introduction

The digital revolution has drastically altered how religion is communicated, consumed and contested with the people. For Hinduism, this shift is pronounced and stands out in particular. Traditionally the spiritual discourse or the spiritual teachings were shared through temple rituals, social or personal interactions with gurus or even through oral story telling. However, today that dynamics has shifted towards digital spaces and social media platforms. Spiritual messages are carried to the millions through Instagram reels, YouTube, short and long video formats and twitter. This kind of an access was unimaginable. However it raises certain pressing questions about authenticity and authority.What does it mean for religious authority when anyone can preach online? How does ideology play out when algorithms decide what content goes viral? These are some of the tensions that define religion's digital turn.

Historically, Hinduism has long shown adaptive resilience to changing modes of communication. Its traditions have moved from oral storytelling and epic poetry to printed that played a role in anti-colonial movements, and later to televised renditions of the

Ramayana and Mahabharata that captivated audiences across India. However, what distinguishes the digital era apart is not just the medium itself but the pace, scale and interactive nature of the content circulation. And unlike the earlier technologies, the digital algorithms are not mere medium of propagation but they are the one shaping the content circulation. They promote the materials that drive clicks, likes and shared. They tend to favour emotionally charged contents over theological nuance. This study centres on three prominent voices in the digital landscape of contemporary Hindu spirituality: Sadhguru (Jaggi Vasudev), Devdutt Pattanaik, and Gaur Gopal Das. Though their styles and areas of focus differ, they are united by a common strategy of leveraging digital platforms to expand their reach and cultivate influence among a largely urban, middle-class audience. Their messaging blends elements of ancient Hindu texts with the language of self-improvement and the values of modern consumer culture. In doing so, they appeal to individuals who are often seeking comfort and clarity in the face of modern-day struggles such as emotional burnout, social disconnection, and personal uncertainty.

This paper explores the way in which these digital Hindu influencers shape their public authority, develop accessible spiritual narratives and contribute to emerging forms of cultural nationalism and collective identity. Drawing from interdisciplinary perspectives in media studies, religious studies and cultural theory, the study positions these trends within a global landscape where religious influence is being increasingly mediated through individual personalities rather than institutional structures.

Algorithmic Curation and the Digital Shaping of Hindu Narratives

Content about Hinduism tends to stand out on social media, especially when it connects spiritual themes with national pride or cultural uniqueness. These kinds of posts often spread faster and reach more people, not because they offer deep insight but because they trigger a strong emotional response. A report from the Asia Pacific Foundation points out that when spiritual messages carry subtle ideological tones, they often gain more visibility online (Asia Pacific Foundation 219). This calls into question the idea that social media naturally supports a wide range of spiritual perspectives. In reality, it often does the opposite. The content people see is filtered and shaped by the platform's own priorities which mean some voices, especially those that challenge dominant views end up pushed aside or barely seen at all.

This growing entanglement between spiritual messaging and algorithm brings to light deeper questions about the direction in which digital Hinduism is heading. As more content is shaped to suit platform dynamics, the space for critical inquiry begins to shrink. Discussions around social issues such as caste-based discrimination, gender imbalances, or systemic injustice are frequently drowned out by feel-good content like motivational quotes, or simplified life advice. These formats are easy to share and emotionally engaging, which contributes in making a streamlined version of Hindu spirituality which is polished, palatable, and carefully curated for mainstream attraction. Over time, this version may seem less about provoking thought and more about feeding consumption.

Figures like Sadhguru, Devdutt Pattanaik, and Gaur Gopal Das have found considerable success within these algorithm-driven spaces. Once a user shows interest in their material by watching a video or liking a post or clicking through a link the recommendation engines of platforms like YouTube and Instagram continue to feed similar content, effectively curating a tailored stream of content. Such ecosystems reinforce pre-existing worldviews and reduce exposure to dissenting or alternative theological interpretations creating a digital echo chamber. As Vince Carducci points out, these "bespoke realities" are shaped less by open inquiry and more by algorithms designed to serve user preferences and keep engagement high (Carducci 61).

Branding the Digital Guru: Influencer Personas and Audience Engagement

Hindu digital influencers have adapted themselves with the pace of online platforms. They are consciously shaping their reputation, brand, appearance, impression and perception to appeal to a diverse as well as fast-scrolling audience. Sadhguru, for example, has forged an identity that combines traditional yogic wisdom along modern self-help messages. His social media presence is carefully curated with crisp visuals and sharp advices. Whether he is speaking about inner engineering or appearing on international talk shows, he comes across not just as a spiritual guide, but as someone fluent in the aesthetics and tempo of digital media. His "Save Soil" campaign, promoted through a high-profile motorcycle journey across continents, is a clear case of how spiritual leadership today is packaged for visibility and virality.

Gaur Gopal Das approaches things a little different but no less strategically. He merges humour with introspective storytelling, often using short, digestible videos to talk about sufferings, trauma, relationships or purpose. His background in engineering and his affiliation with ISKCON acts as a credible qualification among both spiritual seekers and young professionals. He makes his content stand out by sounding as a thoughtful elder brother or a compassionate mentor. His appeal lies in that mix of simplicity and warmth and not from speaking from a pedestal.

Devdutt Pattanaik takes on the role of a public thinker who brings in mythology, corporate logic, and cultural commentary. He weaves them into narratives that explain Hindu symbols and stories in a modern light. His background in the corporate world helps him draw parallels that resonate with urban audiences. But his interpretations, especially on caste and gender have stirred pushback. He's been both celebrated and challenged online, and that tension reflects how digital spiritual discourse isn't always harmonious or uncritical.

Across the board, these figures rely on the tools of the influencer age of bite-sized content, eye-catching design, and direct audience interaction. But more importantly, they each show how spiritual messaging today doesn't just travel through new mediums, but it takes new shapes entirely. What they offer is not only guidance but identity which is packaged, branded, and delivered in the same formats as lifestyle advice or wellness tips. It is a reminder that in the age of reels and retweets, even the sacred must perform.

The Commercialization of Hindu Spirituality Online

There is no denying that spirituality online is now an industry. What may have once been quiet, intimate exchanges between teacher and student have, on digital platforms, been transformed into marketable products. Sadhguru's "Inner Engineering" is a striking example. On the surface, it is a spiritual course. But in structure and tone, it often resembles the kind of lifestyle coaching that has become popular across wellness communities worldwide. There is a polished website, structured modules, and optional retreats, all with a price tag. For many, this is not a problem. They see it as a way to scale spiritual wisdom and reach people who might never step into an ashram. But others raise an eyebrow. Does putting a price on spiritual growth turn it into a commodity? Can you truly sell inner transformation without altering what it means?

Devdutt Pattanaikhas found a niche that blends the sacred and the professional. His storytelling sessions and corporate workshops use mythology to explain leadership, culture, and teamwork. It's creative and unusual, and clearly in demand. Gaur Gopal Das follows a different path, more rooted in Bhakti traditions, but even he has found a global audience through books, interviews, and public talks. His messages, too, are packaged in ways that fit the modern marketplace along with titles, slogans, and carefully timed drops.

All of this raises tough questions. As more money flows into these ecosystems, it becomes harder to ignore the imbalance. Most of this content which includes the courses, the books, the talks etc are designed for people with internet access, education and disposable income. What happens to the rest? Where do the voices go that challenge the system, rather than fit neatly into it?This is not to say that commerce and spirituality must always be in conflict. But the tension is real. When religious content becomes a product, it begins to obey the rules of the market attention, branding, profit. And in doing so, it risks flattening out complexity in favour of what sells. But this relationship between commerce and spirituality does not just end with market logic of selling things like retreat or online courses. The same tools that is used to market spiritual contents also decides which content should get popularised. Over time, certain themeslike national pride or cultural revivalstart surfacing more often, not just because they reflect spiritual values, but because they work well in the algorithm. And that is where things get complicated. What starts as religious content slowly picks up political meaning.

Social Media, Ideology and Religious Identity

Social media has shifted Hinduism from the status of a religion to a national identity. Especially on Instagram and YouTube many influencers present Hinduism as a civilizational force which is ancient, wise and uniquely Indian. This framing along with creating a larger narrative of cultural pride also taps spiritual discourse in to political terrain. Sadhguru regularly speaks about India's "spiritual wealth" and its role as the "mother of yogic science." These statements, though framed as historical or cultural reflections, often echo themes found in revivalist or nationalist rhetoric.While categorizing the entire influencers as pushing

political agenda is not right, we are sure that the lines are often blurred. The language of tradition, religion and identity are often blended easily with messages of self-empowerment, especially when wrapped in talk of "ancient wisdom" or "Bharatiya values." But this mix can quietly reinforce ideological positions, especially those aligned with the broader goals of Hindutva or cultural nationalism.

Meanwhile, digital spaces more explicitly tied to right-wing Hindu groups have been even more direct. Pages and channels aligned with Hindutva ideologies use religious contentbhajans, quotes from the Gita, temple visualsto build emotional narratives that support political aims. It is not always inflammatory. Sometimes it is just repetition, familiarity, or pride. But over time, this shapes what people associate with being Hindu: not just prayer or philosophy, but allegiance.Scholars have begun warning about what is at stake here. The more spiritual identity gets fused with political messaging, the more pluralistic traditions within Hinduism are put at risk. What is forgotten in these loud online spaces are the quieter, humbler versions of Hindu lifethe syncretic practices, the local gods, the small rituals, the everyday philosophy that is not built for a viral reel.

Social Justice and Caste in the Digital Hindu Sphere

For all the talk about how social media opens doors, there's one conversation that digital Hinduism often seems hesitant to fully engage: caste. Often what we see is that while the platforms offer new ways to spread spiritual ideas, they also tend to echo old patterns of silence, especially when it comes to inequality and exclusion.

If we analyse the social media language of most prominent Hindu influencers we can see that they lean heavily on the language of oneness and spiritual equality. Posts about "we are all the same soul" or "atman is beyond birth" are repeated often, and while they may sound inclusive on the surface, they can also serve as a quiet deflection. By jumping straight to metaphysical unity, these narratives often skip over the reality of structural discrimination—particularly the deeply embedded hierarchies of caste.

This kind of omission has not gone unnoticed. Dalit writers, scholars, and activists have pointed out that digital Hinduism, in many cases, speaks most clearly to those who already occupy positions of social privilege: urban, upper-caste, English-speaking audiences who see spiritual growth as personal development, not political resistance. The platforms may be open, but the conversation is not always welcoming.

When caste is mentioned, the results are often tense. Devdutt Pattanaik once sparked backlash by comparing social distancing during the pandemic to the historical practice of untouchability. Many found the analogy deeply inappropriate, and it opened a flood of criticism online. His intent may have been metaphorical, but it revealed just how sensitive and how misrepresented these issues can be in mainstream spiritual discourse. Sadhguru when asked about caste discrimination in one of his videos responded by saying "Caste was not meant to be about birth. It was about the type of work you do. Unfortunately, society

distorted it. But let's not throw away the whole system just because some people misused it." This idea mostly aligns with the savarna comfort zone of considering caste as a "good idea gone wrong", avoiding the lived reality of caste discrimination, untouchability, violence against Dalits, or reservation debates. He never critiques Brahmanical domain instead focusses on a superficial, and revisionist stance.

At the same time, an entirely different movement is growing in parallel. Dalit voices have been carving out their own spaces online to document everyday caste injustice, call out microaggressions, and share narratives that do not fit into the sanitized version of Hinduism. These digital activists are not asking to be included; they are creating their own narrative arcs, grounded in lived experience rather than inherited authority. Pages like "Dalit Camera", Equality labs, The Dalit Diva by Thenmozhi Soundararajan are actively documenting caste-based atrocities. They are vocal about how their spiritual practices emerges from subaltern traditions like Ambedkarite Buddhism, Bhakthi poetry, Tamil Siddha traditions etc.

Sumeet Samos, the rapper from Odisha uses his lyrics to directly confront Savarna spiritual leaders for ignoring caste, while claiming to talk about "oneness" and "truth" What this tells us is that while the digital world has potential for inclusion, it does not guarantee it. Spirituality alone won't dismantle caste unless it is willing to name it, interrogate it, and challenge the comfort of those who benefit from its invisibility. In his song "Jaati," Odia-born rapper and activist Sumeet Samos directly confronts the hypocrisy he sees in India's public discourse—pointing out how many voices that quickly supported movements like Black Lives Matter remain silent when Dalits face violence. He calls the situation out bluntly, saying, "Jatijati hi nahihai" ("Caste simply hasn't ended"), to stress how caste discrimination continues to shape everyday life in India

Conclusion

It is clear that Hindu spirituality has taken on a new shape in the digital world. The kind of content that travels fastest online is usually short, feel-good and easy to take in. That is great for visibility but it does not leave much space for more uncomfortable or complex conversations. Topics like caste discrimination, gender inequality or how religion is informing day to day politics rarely make it to the forefront. When they are left out, what we are left with is a version of spirituality that looks appealing on the surface but often lacks the weight it should carry. Here the bigger concern is not technology itself, it is also about what we choose to say through it and what we choose to ignore. When religious content starts to look and sound like any other online product, we need to ask: What are we losing in the process ■

Works Cited:

Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada. *Exploring Growing Hindu Nationalism in India: A Social Media Analysis of the Nupur Sharma Controversy*. 2022.

Bhatia, Hrnoor. "Social Media and Rise of Spirituality in India: A McLuhan's Approach." *ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2024, pp. 47–63.

Carducci, Vince. "The Religiously 'Unaffiliated' in an Age of Bespoke Realities on Social Media." *Vital Signs and Statistics*, 2024, pp. 53–67.

Kapadia, Karin. *Gender, Sexuality and the State in India: Rights and Discourses*. Taylor & Francis, 2005.

Misra, Shubhangi. "Mid-Life Crisis and Devdutt Pattanaik's Twitter Timeline." *The Print*, 15 Mar. 2020.

Pauwels, Heidi R.M. *Erotic Spirituality: The Discourse of Female Devotion in Seventeenth-Century India*. Oxford UP, 2008.

Silver, Eliana. "The Double Standard of Religious Misogyny on Social Media." *The Freethinker*, 8 Nov. 2024, www.freethinker.co.uk.

Singh, Abhinav Prakash. "Social Media and Caste Mobilization in India." *Hindustan Times*, 18 Nov. 2019.

Zaid, Bouziane, et al. "Digital Islam and Muslim Millennials: Reimagining Religious Authority." *Religions*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2022, pp. 534–592.

Aiswarya S. Nair, Senior Research Fellow, Deptt. of English, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

Shaping Silence: How "Absence has a Grammar" Captures Longing through Language

S.P.M. Kanimozhi

In the field of literature, we have many types of genres but eventually poetry is the crown of all types. In this world, linguistic chauvinism is competed everywhere perhaps, every language has its own pride and predominant quality in creating new and something beyond reality. Such a way, "Absence Has a Grammar" by Fiona Larkin highlights the various approaches of absence through linguistic structure. The aim of this article is to show the power of absence because the vacuum can give different interpretations and provide way to fill with anything that one wants to add.

Keywords: absence, interpretations, silence, vacuum, powerful

Poetry helps us to live in tranquility. It is the queen of literature which decorates crown with fine gems. Poetry has various forms and type which can be narrative, dramatic or lyrical. "Absence has a Grammar" is a poignant poem by British poet Fiona Larkin, which won the 2024 National Poetry Competition.

The judges of the National Poetry Competition praised "Absence has a Grammar" as "impressive, ingenious and affecting," highlighting its innovative approach in depicting absence through linguistic structures. Fiona Larkin's body of work includes her debut collection "Rope of Sand" (Pindrop Press, 2023), which received commendation in the Forward Prizes. She has also published pamphlets such as "Vital Capacity" (Broken Sleep Books, 2022) and "A Dovetail of Breath" (Rack Press, 2020). Beyond her writing, Larkin manages projects with Corrupted Poetry and served as the poetry prize judge for the Society of Women Writers and Journalists in 2024. She was born in London to Irish parents, her works often intertwine personal narratives with explorations of language and identity.

Through this poem, one could understand that the absence or vacuum can give different interpretations and analysis as Keats said "heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter" in his epoch making poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn". In such way, an absence of something or someone will convey many of our ideas and thoughts into our own situation. In this poem the poet wants to explore themes of parental love, longing, and the unique incorporation of the Finnish language in poetry. The poem delves into Larkin's

emotional journey of missing her son in Australia and the profound impact of longing for love and missing of her son. The significance of language of the poem is expressing absence.

"Absence Has a Grammar" suggests that, absence itself functions as a structured language. Just as silence can convey meaning in speech, the poem uses gaps and omissions effectively. The idea that absence follows a "grammar" implies it has recognizable patterns. Negative space in poetry plays a crucial role in shaping meaning, similar to visual art. It conveys positive and negative thoughts of the reader who are supposed to be in the state of mind. Emily Dickinson's use of dashes and abrupt pauses is comparable to Larkin's structural choices.The poem invites the readers to engage with what is left unsaid rather than explicitly stated. Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theory supports the idea that meaning comes from differences, including what is missing.The poem creates an interpretative space where the reader must fill in emotional and narrative gaps. Unspoken elements in the poem are as powerful as the words present on the page. "Absence Has a Grammar" transforms silence from a void into an active force of communication.

The poem reflects emotional and psychological dimensions of loss and longing. Absence is not only about physical separation but also about emotional detachment. It resonates with Freud's theory of melancholia, where unresolved grief lingers. The fragmented nature of the poem mirrors how the mind processes loss in pieces. Jacques Derrida's "hauntology" concept suggests that, absence shapes presence, similar to Larkin's approach. The poem engages with themes of nostalgia and emotional distance. Just as Anne Carson's *Nox* uses fragmented storytelling to depict grief, Larkin employs similar techniques. The syntax and structure of the poem reflect the instability of longing and absence. The reader experiences a sense of incompleteness, mirroring real-life experiences of loss. The poem's structure forces an active emotional engagement from the reader.

Silence is an essential poetic device, shaping the emotional depth of a poem. Larkin's "Absence Has a Grammar" uses silence as presence rather than absence. Rainer Maria Rilke explored how silence holds deeper meaning in *Duino Elegies*. The poem's structure incorporates pauses and line breaks to amplify emotional impact. Silence in poetry is similar to musical pauses—both create tension and rhythm. The poet Philip Larkin (no relation) also used sparse language to convey deep meaning. The poem's silences act as moments of reflection for both the speaker and the reader. Absence in sound mirrors the absence of a person, object, or feeling in reality. The language and rhythm of the poem create an immersive experience of loss.The nightingale's song in Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" also serves as an analogy—something eternal beyond human reach.

Absence is a universal human experience, making Larkin's poem widely relatable. Grief, nostalgia, and longing are emotions that transcend personal contexts. Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18" deals with absence through the fear of time erasing love. In this sonnet, the poet expresses his true love for his friend who was not aware of the poet's longing. Tennyson's "In Memoriam" reflects on absence through prolonged grief and remembrance.

Contemporary poets like Ocean Vuong explore loss and cultural displacement similarly. Warsan Shire's poetry on exile and migration shares themes of belonging and absence. Larkin modernizes these ideas by embedding absence into the poem's very structure. The poem captures how absence is not a clean break but a lingering presence. Readers interpret the poem through their own experiences of missing people or places. The interplay of memory, time, and silence deepens the poem's emotional resonance. It explores the concept of absence as inevitability and universal quality of human life. Absence in human life may also lead to the presence of something or someone to somewhere else. It reveals that absence conveys the presence everywhere.

Larkin's poem highlights the inexpressibility of loss through structured absence. It places absence as an active force rather than a passive void. The poem's engagement with silence, fragmentation, and longing makes it powerful. It aligns with major literary themes from both classical and contemporary poetry. By using the "grammar" of absence, it reshapes our understanding of longing. It challenges the idea that, poetry must express everything directly. The poem suggests that, absence, rather than erasing meaning, enhances it. It invites readers to find personal meaning in what is left unsaid. "Absence Has a Grammar" is a significant contribution to modern poetic discourse. Ultimately, the poem redefines how we perceive silence, memory, and loss in language.

To conclude, every art of work has it own theme and ideology which dominates the entire creation and decides its structure. But here the poem, constantly argues that, nothingness is also a matter that helps to develop or add anything as per the reader's mind. At the same time, through this poem, the poet gives more space to readers to shape the silence into their own understanding and correlation. With this poem, it is clearly visible that the poet offers complete liberation to the readers who could fill their own concept and condition on it. ■

Works Cited:

The Poetry Society, poetrysociety.org.uk/poems/absence-has-a-grammar. Accessed 28 Aug. 2025.

"'impressive, Ingenious and Affecting' Poem about Missing an Absent Son Wins National Poetry Competition." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 24 Mar. 2025, www.theguardian.com/books/2025/mar/24/impressive-ingenious-and-affecting-poem-about-missing-an-absent-son-wins-national-poetry-competition.

"John Keats: 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' | The Poetry Foundation." *Poetry Foundation*, 20 Dec. 2017, www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/145240/john-keats-ode-on-a-grecian-urn.

Culler, Jonathan. *Ferdinand de Saussure*. Penguin Books Ltd, 1976.

Knutsen, Tormod. "The Dynamics of Grief and Melancholia." *Tidsskrift for Den Norske Legeforening*, 30 Mar. 2020, tidsskriftet.no/en/2020/03/essay/dynamics-grief-and-melancholia#literature.

"Hauntology." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 10 July 2025, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hauntology.

Baldwin, Emma. "Dark House, by Which Once More I Stand by Alfred Lord Tennyson." *Poem Analysis*, 14 Mar. 2025, poemanalysis.com/alfred-tennyson/dark-house-by-which-once-more-i-stand/.

Dr. S.P.M. Kanimozhi, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Alagappa University, Karaikudi. Tamil Nadu

Ms Namita Sutar, managing editor, receiving Felicitations on Teachers' Day at JAJPUR Town, Odisha

An Analysis of Motherhood in Amulya Malladi's *A House for Happy Mothers*

K. Jaya Ramya
P. Madhan

Amulya Malladi is an eminent writer. She was well known for herdiasporic writings. In her novels, she highlights many issues,particularlywomen's struggles. The story of two families, one from India and the other from abroadis presented in her novel, "*A House for Happy Mothers*". This paper explores the motherly love of the two protagonists, Priya and Asha. The protagonist Priya wants to have herbaby with the help of surrogacy because of her health issues. Asha, another protagonist, agrees to become a surrogate to provide her son with a proper education. Even though the two mothers come from different backgrounds, they learn to trust each other. In*A House for Happy Mothers*, Amulya Malladi presents two mothers who make several sacrifices for their children. A mother is an important person in the family, and her love is always wholehearted. She does everything for the welfare of her family, and she never gives importance to herself, instead, she focuses only on making her family happy. Likewise, the protagonists Priya and Asha show their deep affection for their families.

Keywords: Women, Motherhood, Surrogacy, Family, Social construct, Society.

The mother is the one who gives everything to her family, but she never expects anything in return. A mother's love is always unique, and she will do anything for her family. Amulya Malladi's *A House for Happy Mothers* examinesmotherhood of the two protagonists, Priya and Asha. In this novel, Priyawants to create her family, while Asha wants to protect her family. Due to some health problems, Priya is unable to become a mother. Her desire to become a motherleads her to look for another way to fulfil her dream. Therefore, she makes the decision to use surrogacy. In surrogacy, a woman agrees to give birth to a baby for another person, and once the baby is delivered, the surrogateshifts all rights to the biological parents. Many people still struggleto find ways to provide essential for their families, and as a result, they will do anything for their families. Likewise, Asha becomes a surrogate mother to earn money to support her son's education. Mainly, her maternal instinct only supportsher to do anything for her children. Finally, motherhood brings both protagonists together.

A House for Happy Mothers covers the lives of two families, one from India and another from America. In this novel, Amulya Malladi explains the two protagonists' sufferings and feelings. The protagonist Priya is half – Indian and half – American. She has everything in her life except a baby. Because of her health problems, she is unable to give birth to a baby. She loves babies very much and she tried many ways to have a baby. Priya's husband, Madhu was very supportive. He also likes babies, but he loves Priya even more than that. They had lots of arguments about the baby. After adiscussion, they chose to use surrogacy. The other protagonist, Asha is twenty – five years old. She is from an Indian family. Her husband, Pratap is a painter, and they have two children, Manoj and Mohini. Manoj is five years old, and he is a very smart boy. Asha wishes to provide quality education for her son, but they belong to a poor family. Pratap's earnings are not enough to manage all their needs, including Manoj's education. So, Asha's family wants her to become a surrogate,and she also accepts it. Amulya Malladi shows how Surrogacy brings both the protagonists and their familiestogether.

The novel starts with Priya, who worries about the baby. She needs to have her own baby to satisfy her surroundings. Her husband's family supports her through this entire situation, butsociety treats her poorly. A woman is considered complete only after having a baby, and society given this thoughtto Priya. Even though she also wants to become a mother, but her situation never gave her the chance. In America, Priya lives with her husband Madhu, and they try to find a surrogateto have a baby for them. Because of Priya's issues,they are looking for a surrogate in India. Priya and Madhu come across Doctor Swati, who is the owner of the clinic. She was the one who helps Priya and Madhu to select their surrogate. After that, theytravel to the clinic to see their surrogate, and then, they visit Madhu's parent's house and there they stay throughouttheir surrogacy journey.

Ashabecame a surrogatefor the first time. Raman, Pratap's younger brother had recommended surrogacy to Asha and Pratap because Raman's wife, Kaveri had already given birth to a baby for a British couple through surrogacy. At first, Asha did not want to carry someone else's baby, but she has no choice, because she wanted to give quality education to her son. So, she decided to carry a baby, her whole family supported Asha, so she agreed to do this. Then, Doctor Swati started the procedure. Following that, Asha and Pratap travelled to the clinic to see Doctor Swati to confirm Asha's pregnancy. After a few check – ups, Doctor Swati announced that Asha was pregnant.

After the confirmation, Asha and Pratap moved to Pratap's brother's house. They planned to stay there for the rest of their surrogacy journey, because Asha and Pratap lived in a village. If they wanted to visit the clinic, its distance was too far, sothey decided to stay with Raman's family. Itwouldbe easier for them to reach the clinic quicklywhenever they needed. Asha was not under anyone's pressure to become a surrogate, but her situation had forced her to do this. She knew that being a surrogate mother for money was not the right thing, and she wasalsoaware of that. Still, she accepted this was the only right way to earn

money in her situation. Asha and Pratap did not want to ask anyone for money,because of Pratap's father's bitter experiences. Instead, they chose this way to earn money for their son's education. Additionally, this money would help them to have a better life. In the end, Asha chose to rent her womb for the betterment of her family. She was ready to sacrifice anything for her children, and she felts that because of this everything in their lives would change in a positive way.

Priya and Madhu, after hearing the news that their surrogate is pregnant. They felt veryemotional, and they were filled with pleasure. Priya clarified all her doubts with Doctor Swati, and she also thanked her surrogateand the surrogate's husband. Subsequently, she returned to America, and she always thought about the baby and Asha. Priya likes to get in touch with Asha, and she wanted to know more about her. Some parents didn't like to build a relationship with surrogate, but Priya wished tohave a relationship with Asha. Every month, several parents gave packages of necessities for the baby and the surrogate. Likewise, Asha and her family members received a gift box from Priya. While being a stranger at first, Asha began to become an important part of Priya's life. Because of Asha, Priya's dream cametrue.

Asha properly followed her regular check-ups and every time, Doctor Swati examined Asha and gave instructions to her. There is a rule for surrogates, that is, at the time of their sixth month, they muststay in the Happy mother's house, it is a house for surrogate. In the examination, unexpectedly, Asha had a bleeding problem. Then, Doctor Swatianalysed Asha, and she treatedher bleeding issue. After that, there were no serious issues, but still, Doctor Swati insisted that Asha should stay in the Happy Mother's House. Initially, Asha didn't want to stay there with the other surrogates. Finally, she adjusted to the environment. She felt very lonely because she was separated from herfamily. Every dayat around four in the evening, her husband and children came to visit the Happy Mother's House. Asha kept trying to tell herself repeatedly that the baby was not hers, she wanted to keep distance towards the baby in her womb. She struggled a lot between being a mother and being a surrogate.

In America, Priya came to know about Asha's bleeding issue through Doctor Swati. She was very afraid about the baby, because in her previous pregnancy, she had also faced the same issue. Consequently, she had miscarriages, sonow she became nervous. Later than Doctor Swati informed Priya that the baby and the surrogate were safe. Priya worried about the baby and Asha throughout this journey. She wanted to carry her own baby in her womb, but the situation was against her. In every check-up, Doctor Swati updated Priya about Asha's health conditions. Afterwards, Doctor Swatialso revealed the baby's gender. Both Priya and Madhu feltjoyfulness, they always liked the ideaof having a daughter. Now, they would soon have a daughter.

The days moved with happiness for Priya. Unexpectedly, she lost her job. At first, she became worried. After, Madhu comforted her, she began to think positively. Now, she

has time to prepare for the arrival of the baby. Therefore, she was arranging many things for the baby. Priya wants to visit India for the baby, and she also wants a connection with Asha. At the beginning, Madhu did not agree. Afterthat, he accepted because he always respects her decisions.Priya's mother, Sushila also had a business trip in India, due to Priya's father's suggestion, Priya and her mother travelled together. Finally, Priya andSushilareached India, Vikas, who was the son of General Parikshit, came to the airport to pick upthem. General Parikshit's family were friends of Sushila. Then they moved to Vikas's home and met his mother and his wife, Mona.

Then Priya and Sushila spent their time with Vikas's family, and they stayed there. Thereafter, they visited Asha at Happy Mother's House. Priya gave gifts to Asha and her family members. They talked generally, and then they discussed Manoj's school. Later, Priya and Sushila came to know about Doctor Swati, who was searching for a school for Manoj. Asha informed Priya that Doctor Swati had recommended some schools. But Manoj had to wait for next year's admission. According to Sushila, these schools were very costly. She was suspicious about Doctor Swati and then she thought a scholarship would help with Manoj's education.

Sushila and Priya searched for help for Manoj's education. They came to know that Parikshit's family was helpingmany students, sothey thought Parikshit's family would also help with Manoj's education. Because they offered scholarships to intelligent students. Priya was worried that if the scholarship does not work. Then, she was ready to give money for Manoj's education. During a conversation with Mona, Priya and Sushila enquired about the scholarship. Immediately, Mona tested Manoj's IQ, and then Manoj was selected for the scholarship. Asha and Priya had no relationship other than the baby in Asha's womb. Asha wanted to take the baby with herbecause of her motherhood feelings, but she fought to overcome her emotions. Since Priya and Sushila were helpingwith Manoj's education,Asha changed her mind for them. During the delivery, to avoid the difficult situation, she shut her eyes tightly.

Asha's first impression of Priya was negative. But later, she realised that Priya was a nice person, andshe was an excellent mother just like her. Priya and Asha had their own set of issues, hopesand beliefs, at first, they were not close to each other, but after that, they became friends. Their motherhood feelings had no boundaries. Priya and Asha always had desires to secure the happiness of their family.They had faith in one another, and they became connected without any restrictions. Priya fulfilled Asha's dreams, while Asha fulfilled Priya's. Like that, they supported each other and moved together on their surrogacy journey. Both mothers expressed gratitude to each other, even though they came from different universes.Finally, Priya and Asha crossed all the boundaries and succeeded together. Throughout the novel, Amulya Malladi shows both protagonists perspectives. Shebeautifullyexplained the feelings of motherhood in this novel. ■

Works Cited:

Adair, Patricia. *A Surrogate Mother's Story*. Loiry Publishing House, 1987.

Malladi, Amulya. *A House for Happy Mothers*. Lake Union Publishing,2016.

Nanci, M. H. "*Review of A House for Happy Mothers"*. Booklist, 2017.

Ragone, Helena. *Surrogate Motherhood: Conception in the Heart*. BoulderandOxford: Westview Press/Basic Books, 1994.

Sen, Sanjay, and Kushal Pegu. *Feminism: Theory and Practice*. Mahaveer Publications, 2019.

Shahi, Akriti. *Surrogacy and Legal Framework in India*. Notion Press, 2020.

K. Jaya Ramya, Ph.D. Research Scholar**,** Department of English and Foreign Languages**,** Alagappa University**,** Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu.

Dr. P. Madhan**,** Professor and Head**,** Department of English and Foreign Languages**,** Alagappa University**,** Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu.

Noted Indian - English poet Jayanta Mohapatra in a leisurely mood with Editor

The Sea of Faith and the Victorian Dilemma: Arnold's Social Criticism in *Dover Beach*

Satya Sundar Samanta

-

Matthew Arnold has critically presented the changing social trends of England in the Victorian era in his poem "Dover Beach". He expresses his grief for the loss of public faith in God and in religion. Previously countrymen had deep faith in all their creeds. So, their life was filled with peace, stability and happiness. But the Victorian British people after losing religious faith suffered from many psychological diseases like faithlessness, lovelessness, doubt, peacelessness and helplessness. People of his generation are not happy and hopeful. So, the poet critically searches to discover the actual reason of that great confusion and miserable social condition. With his critical insight the poet thinks that love can be antidote to the general malady. He wants to help people to live happily and peacefully after giving them solution. He advises them to be sincere and devoted to religion and to society. Indeed, the poet Arnold works for the society.

Keywords: faithlessness, criticism, society, helplessness, pictorial

After Tennyson and Browning, Arnold appeared as a great poet and critic in the Victorian era. The troubled spirit of the Victorian age gets deeper kinship with Arnold. As a poet he has composed a bunch of poems with high literary merits like 'The Strayed Reveller', 'The Scholar Gipsy', 'Dover Beach', 'Thyrsis' and 'Sohrab and Rustum'. His best critical works include 'Essays in Criticism', 'Culture and Anarchy', and 'Literature and Dogma'. His works are classical, scholarly, critical and full of measured judgment. Arnold deals with cultural, political and social themes. According to Edward Albert, 'his judgment, usually admirably sane and measured, is sometimes distorted a little by his views on life and politics.'

Arnold thinks that poetry from the beginning to the end criticizes life. Most of his poems reveal a keen sensitivity to the demands of society and a reflective vision of life's deeper meanings. A great poet should focus light on life around. According to Arnold, the word 'criticism' refers to the interpretation of life as it is compared with life. He compares the miserable condition of his own world to the ideal life of the past. His criticism involves a sharp contrast between the ideal and the real. The sad people of his contemporary generation may rightly be restored to the harmonious stream of life only by emulating the ideal state of

life of the forefathers. 'Dover Beach' opens with rich and colourful description of landscape with pictorial quality. In a moonlit night upon the quiet English Bay the cliffs glitter. The Moon scatters bright rays on the beach at Dover. The poet observes such marvelous scenes with his beloved.

During the Victorian age, the Industrial Revolution driven by rapid scientific and technological advancements, gave rise to numerous social problems. Victorian people lost religious faith from the beginning of the age. That's why The Oxford Movement took place in 1845 to aware the people of that generation of the forecoming dangers. Matthew Arnold, the great critic, is aware of the social obligations of his times. He has the premonitions of the impending dangers. So, he tries to make the people of his generation conscious of the coming problems in the society. Arnold is the great social thinker that he can feel the future of the society, its good and evils. He intellectually warns the educated persons of his generation and of the next generations that faith and love are related to each other, and both are essential to live peacefully in the world. He also suggests a stable, peaceful, and hopeful society for everyone. He wants to present his devoted love relationship with his wife before the readers in a time when the material people have been undergoing from faithlessness, peacelessness, and uncertainty. The Victorian novelist Charles Dickens has discusses such bad impacts of gross materialism in a very crucial manner. The novelist has presented sorrows, agony and anguish of the Victorian people. Arnold literally paints the Victorian unhappy society for troubled relationship. Arnold realizes that the sad psyche searches for rest and peace. The human beings are floating blindly without knowing right or wrong while psyche is restless and doubtful. Without faith and love they are tremendously confused. As a result, there is no joy, hope, love and sympathy in social relationships. Without faith and love, everything in society is filled with emptiness and deprivation. So, the poet desires to return to the people of the present and of the future the peace of mind that the people of previous generations enjoyed.

The Victorian poet Matthew Arnold's mournful poem 'Dover Beach' is an elegy with its melancholic ruminations on the helpless state of the people of his contemporary era. It is a pensive and contemplative poem that reflects thoughts evoked in the heart of the poet by the sorrowful condition of people of his times. Every line expresses the poet's profound despair. However, the elegy laments over the loss of the Victorian people's religious faith. Beauty and pessimism are the main key notes in Arnold's poetry. According to Profs Roy & Chakraborty, 'Dover Beach expresses poet's sadness at the loss of faith in the modern age.'

Arnold has directly observed the miserable plight of the people of his contemporary society who have been suffering from faithlessness. In this poem the poet and critic has reproduced such worst socio-cultural trends. Faith in God or religion has been shaken by gross materialism. People have become idealless and valueless in their journey through the hazardous ways of life. Without direction and specific goal they are groping in the dark world. Loss of faith is the central reason of their miseries. However, faith in all the creeds

once had a profound influence on human mind, but now it has become the word of the past. As a result, people are now moving on the ways of doubts and helplessness. Without faith and hope the Victorian world is full of emptiness.

The hopelessness and emptiness of the present world make Arnold and other men in the contemporary generation lament in agony. Arnold wrote;

> 'The sea of faith
> Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
> Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd;
>
> But now I only hear
> Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
> Retreating to the breath
> Of the night-wind down the vase edges drear
> And naked shingles of the world.'

Religious faith encircled the whole human world even in the previous generation. But in the times of Matthew Arnold it has become outdated. Though outwardly the world seems to be a peaceful and charming land, but there is no faith. Without faith the human world has really become dark, hopeless, sorrowful, uncertain, and unsympathetic. There is neither light, nor hope, nor love, nor peace, nor help and nor certainty. Extreme confusion and ignorance prevail everywhere in the times of Arnold. The foretold situation may be compared to the dark battlefield where ignorant armies clash without knowing the real cause of the war.

> Arnold writes;
> 'And we are here as on a darkling plain,
> Swept with confused alarms of struggles and flights,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night.'

Matthew Arnold is a great humanist that he feels the sorrows of human beings not only of his generation but of all the generations. He writes in the same poem: 'The eternal note of sadness in.'

Lack of faith, as Arnold thinks, is the central reason of the utter confusion in his contemporary society. Love acts as an antidote to the diseases of mind. Love is the key to all the sweet relationships. So, the poet earnestly requests to his sweetheart to be true, sincere and devoted to their relationship. The poet warns his wife and the readers that love is immediately needed to the contemporary confused and helpless world. Love can serve a foot-hold in such a deplorable situation. He seems to suggest that nothing but love can act as the only panacea to the affected souls.

Arnold uses music to represent melancholic state of mind of people. In this poem music and sadness are mingleted together. 'Dover Beach' is an elegy in which poem colour

and music present the sad state of mind of people of Arnold's contemporary society. According to Akram Hossain, 'The feeling of misery and melancholy throbs practically in every poem of Arnold, and can be traced to the philosophical, religious and social changes brought about by the development of science, utilitarian philosophy in his age, that called for a fresh adjustment of value'.

Matthew Arnold with profound consciousness dreams of a stable and peaceful society in the future. He is a great literary critic and thinker that he gives too importance to society. The great social thinker has discovered the reason of that great turmoil and suggests the solution. Arnold with his intellect and awareness tries to recover his people from the restless state. He tries to make the society peaceful and stable as if he serves society. So, one may think that Arnold works sincerely and truly as the secret agent of society.

The low tremulous tone indicates the eternal note of sorrows in human mind. Arnold brings out the gradual decline of religious faith fromVictoriafrom Victorian society in England. Arnold reminds the redears that the famous Greek playwright Sophocles long before heard the same melancholic tone of Aegian sea and he felt the sorrows of the Grecian society. Such sorrows and melancholic states are brilliantly colored in his tragic plays. Now in the selected poem the social critic presents the bitter conditions of his own society where the people of his generation live without love, peace, hope. certainty, and trust. Without faith there is no joy and peace of mind in any relationship. As a Victorian man Arnold never lacks knowledge of society. With critical insight he observes society. His criticism is healthy and beneficial to all the people of his society and of the coming generations.

The poet with his critical observation finds that people don't find peace and trust of mind. Thus Arnold portrays the diseases of mind. As a true agent of society he directly observes the problems in society in his times, he with profound thinking tries to find the solutions. He wishes that the people of his own society and of the next generations should live with peace, happiness, stability and prosperity. A great artist that he is who loves the people of all generations. He becomes happy finding the happiness of people. Sorrows and sufferings of others make him unhappy. So one may think that the poet being an agent of society works for society. He at first feels and then suggests that love is the only panacea to all the mental diseases.

In the disguise of a poet Matthew Arnold really works for society. What the society needs, he prescribes for the educated readers. He advises and warns the educated mass his present and the following generations of the existing and coming dangers to the healthy living of the people. In the Victorian age religious faith loses its hold over society. People are profoundly influenced by the growing cult of Hedonism. They have no love, respect and faith in God or in any creed of their forefathers.

In such a condition the social critic, Arnold warns his readers to be aware of the social decline. Due to the loss of religious faith, people lose moral ideals, values of society. As a immediate result, they lose mental peace and trust to anyone. Thus, They become

unhappy and hopeless. Realising such melancholic states of people, Arnold become unhappy. He desires to establish love and trust in relationship. That's why he appeals his wife Margaret to be devoted and faithful in their pious relationship to give a positive and hopeful message to society.

As a great poet and social critic, Arnold thinks on the current social changes and he criticises with deep awareness for the benevolence of his countrymen. His main plea is to restore his society, to remove people from evil trends to the proper way. So. one may surmise that Arnold works as an agent of society. ■

Works Cited:

Albert, Edward. *History of English Literature*. Oxfotd University Press, 2004.p-383. Print

Ghosh, Dipankar. *Golden Leaves of English Poetry.* Dove Publishing House, 2022. Print

Hossain, Akram. *A Handful of English Poetry*. Ray Book Concern, 2012. Print

Roy & Chakraborty. *History of English Literature,* Joydurga Library.

Dr. Satya Sundar Samanta, Asst. Prof. in English, Ramnagar College, West Bengal.

Attending a National Workshop on Education at Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Teachers' Perspectives on Mother Tongue Language Textbooks: A Study of the Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh

Linyir Kamki

Amar Kumar Nayak

The third language teachers in Arunachal Pradesh play an important role in preserving and promoting indigenous culture and tradition by imparting knowledge to the younger generation through mother tongue language textbooks. Following the recognition of the Galo language[1] as the third medium of instruction by the government of Arunachal Pradesh in 2008, the Mother tongue language textbooks were implemented in schools of three districts of Galo inhabited areas from class VI to VIII in 2021. The paper focuses on the perspectives of third-language teachers of the West Siang district on the mother tongue textbook. The study is based on data collection through a questionnaire, including semi-structured interviews with 32 third-language teachers from various schools in West Siang. The participant teachers had two to four years of experience teaching the mother tongue language textbook since the implementation of the third language curriculum in 2021.

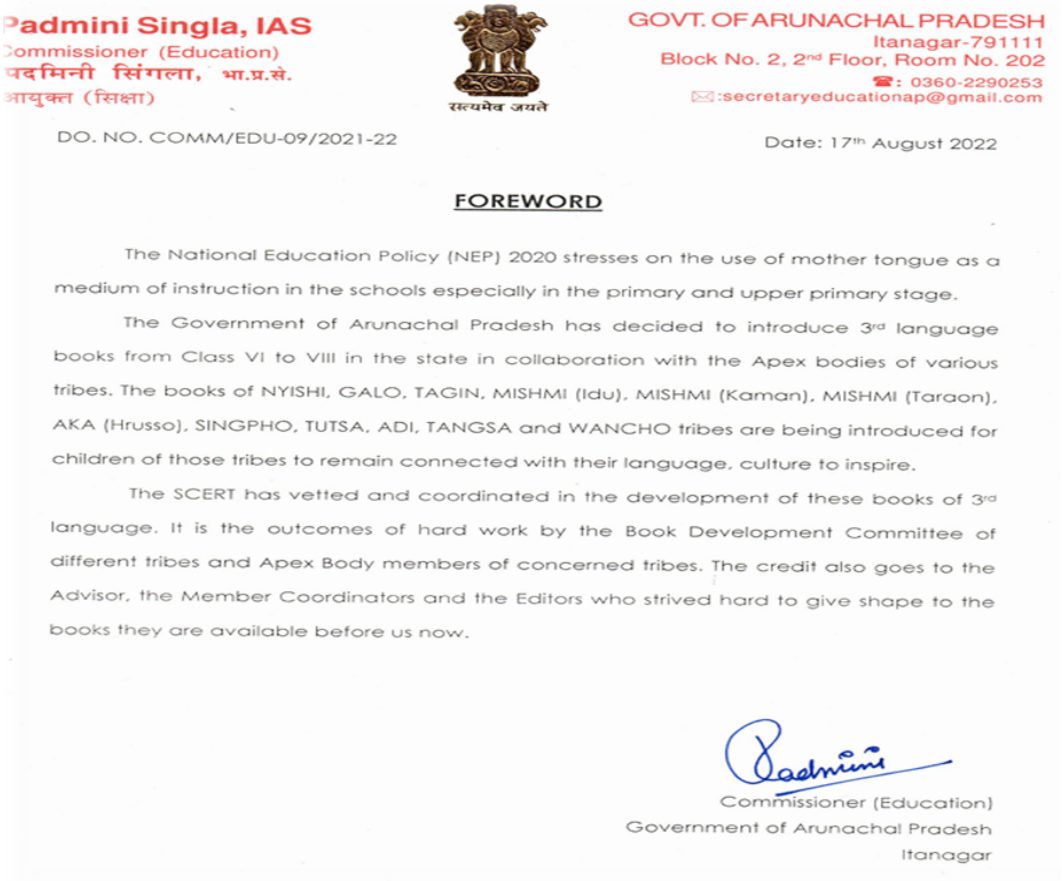
Keywords: Teachers, Mother Tongue, Textbooks, Language, Schools.

Introduction

The teachers' participation in developing the school curriculum plays a key role in the education process. With the emphasis of NEP 2020 on Multilingual Education (MLE), Arunachal Pradesh has introduced a third language as a medium of instruction in government schools at upper primary levels from class VI to VIII. Tribes such as Nyisi, Galo, Tagin, Adi, Apatani, Mishmi, and Singpho have their third-language textbooks (Fig. 1). These textbooks were introduced in various districts corresponding to each tribe in 2021. As a result, the process of appointing teachers and providing orientation and training for third-language teachers has been carried out across the state. Therefore, National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a milestone for the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, enabling them to preserve their traditional and cultural knowledge through textbooks for future generations -

an effort that was once limited to oral storytelling. However, teachers, who serve as facilitators, have different perspectives on the mother tongue language curriculum. The results of the interviews and data collection from the third language teachers highlight the positive and negative aspects of the Mother tongue language curriculum implemented in the West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Fig.1 Official order, Government of Arunachal Pradesh



Padmini Singla, IAS
Commissioner (Education)
पदमिनी सिंगला, भा.प्र.से.
आयुक्त (शिक्षा)

सत्यमेव जयते

GOVT. OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH
Itanagar-791111
Block No. 2, 2nd Floor, Room No. 202
☎: 0360-2290253
✉:secretaryeducationap@gmail.com

DO. NO. COMM/EDU-09/2021-22

Date: 17th August 2022

FOREWORD

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 stresses on the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the schools especially in the primary and upper primary stage.

The Government of Arunachal Pradesh has decided to introduce 3rd language books from Class VI to VIII in the state in collaboration with the Apex bodies of various tribes. The books of NYISHI, GALO, TAGIN, MISHMI (Idu), MISHMI (Kaman), MISHMI (Taraon), AKA (Hrusso), SINGPHO, TUTSA, ADI, TANGSA and WANCHO tribes are being introduced for children of those tribes to remain connected with their language, culture to inspire.

The SCERT has vetted and coordinated in the development of these books of 3rd language. It is the outcomes of hard work by the Book Development Committee of different tribes and Apex Body members of concerned tribes. The credit also goes to the Advisor, the Member Coordinators and the Editors who strived hard to give shape to the books they are available before us now.

Commissioner (Education)
Government of Arunachal Pradesh
Itanagar

(Retrievedfromhttps://scertarunachal.nic.in)

Arunachal Pradesh is a hilly state in the northeastern part of India. It is a land of 26 major tribal communities. Galo is one of the major tribes dominating the districts of West Siang, Lower Siang, and Lepa Rada. The notable population of the Galo tribe is also found in other districts like East Siang and Upper Subansiri. Galo also makes up a significant part of the population in the heart of the state, Itanagar. (kamki 24). Their language was recognized as the third medium of instruction in 2008. In Arunachal Pradesh,when schools were started in the late 1940s, the medium of instruction was Assamese in pre-primary and primary

level. In the year 1974 the medium of instruction was switched to English at all level with Hindi as the second language (Azu 665). Hindi is the "Lingua Franca"[2] used by the different tribes in the absence of a uniform language. It is commonly spoken by the tribes, including the Galo, in the society.

Objective of the study

i) To examine the perspectives of the third language teachers on positive and negative aspects of the mother tongue language curriculum implemented in the West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

ii) To explore the current status of the Mother tongue textbook in the West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Methods

To gather comprehensive data, the study employs a quantitative research method, considering the third-language teachers of government schools as the population. The target sample consisted of 32 teachers having two to four years of experience teaching MTL textbooks —data collected from 32 government schools in West Siang District. Among the participants, there were 31 male and 1 female teachers. They hold either a Bachelor of Education or a master's degree qualification. To supplement the data collected through the questionnaire, various official records were also analyzed. The response of the teachers relies on the self-beliefs and experiences they have gathered overthe years of teaching mother tongue language textbooks.

Fig. 2. List of the 32 Participant Teachers

Sl.no	School	NO. OF STUDENTS	THIRD LANGUAGE CLASS VI TO VIII
1	GHSS KAMBA	100	MODO ROLLEY
2.	GHSS, YOMCHA	52	LUKJAR YINYO
3	GUPS RUYI	12	DUGNYA KARGA
4	GHSS LIROMOBA	116	BIJOM YOMGAM
5	GSS NEW MARKET	147	LEE ETE BAGRA
6	GSS PAKAM	95	LIKAR RALLEN
7	GSS P.I COLONY AALO	49	NIGE PAYUM
8	GSS BENE	24	TUMTO ETE
9	GSS DEGO	89	DUGGUM ADO
10	GSS KOMBO	129	DAKTO LOLLEN

11	GSS DARKA	30	HENJUM ORI
12	GSS BAGRA	33	RETER RUMI
13	GSS POBDI	15	NIMAR LOYA
14	GUPS HIKAR GUMIN	30	KOJOM LOLLEN
15	GUPS PANYA	13	YISEN ETE
16	GUPS AALO TOWN	135	GUMJUM RIME
17	GSS DARAK	17	SYMON POYOM
18	GUPS LOGUM JINI	16	HENGE RIRAM
19	GUPS APP COLONY	18	NYAI RIBA ANGU
20	GUPS NGOMDIR	16	LIGE BAGRA
21	GUPS GUMIN NAGAR	73	TOLI BAM
22	GUPS EYI	06	KARYOM PAKAM
23	GUPS NYORAK	04	DAGJUM ANGO
24	GUPS YIGI KAUM	10	TOBA ORI
25	GUPS KABU	12	LOJEN KAMCHAM
26	GUPS ANGU	24	LUKTO RIME
27	GUPS LIPU BAGRA	17	DEGE LONA
28	GUPS RUYI	14	GAMPEROMIN
29	GUPS KEAK	12	BABA TATO
30	GUPS KAMKI PERI	15	REI KAMKI
31	NSCBAV, DOJI JEKO	22	MARJUM DOJI
32	NSCBAV YOMCHA	22	DIKI LINGO

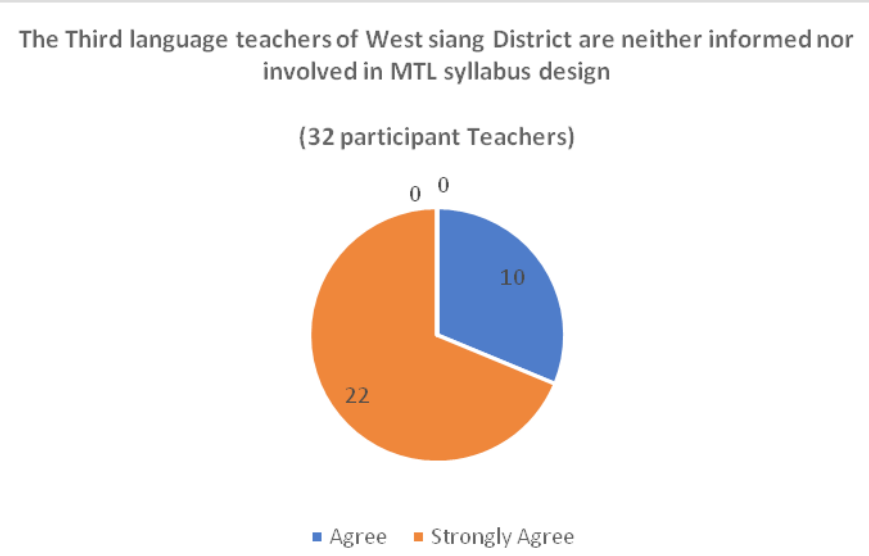
GHSS-Government Higher Secondary School, GSS GSS-Government Secondary School, GUPS-Government Upper Primary School, NSCBAV-Nataji Subash Chandra Bose Avasiya Vidyalaya.

Negative perspectives on Mother Tongue Curriculum

The third language teachers of West Siang have expressed several concerns regarding the Mother tongue language curriculum. Firstly, while sharing their experiences on the current mother tongue language curriculum, the teachers express their concern about the non-involvement of teachers in syllabus design. The syllabus is usually created by higher authorities, educational boards, experts, and community-based organizations like GWS[3]

and GLDC[4], but it offers little to no opportunity for teachers to participate, limiting them to the four walls of the classroom. They are neither informed nor involved in curriculum design; instead, they are simply assigned to teach the textbook with only a one- or two-day orientation, often without prior knowledge of the content. Teachers often feel overshadowed in this process. Identifying problems and finding solutions to improve teaching and learning requires the active participation of both the facilitator, the teacher, and the learner. As the developer and implementer of the curriculum, teachers can achieve effective results in teaching and learning. Non-involvement of teachers in syllabus design leads to many practical and theoretical challenges. According to the third language teachers, "Language instruction has three main goals: 1) to help children become more effective language users; 2) to influence children to speak in socially preferred ways; and 3) to provide children with knowledge and terminology so that they may understand and discuss how language works" *(*Iliev et al. 4986). The achievement of these aims becomes possible with the involvement of the teachers in curriculum design.

Fig.3

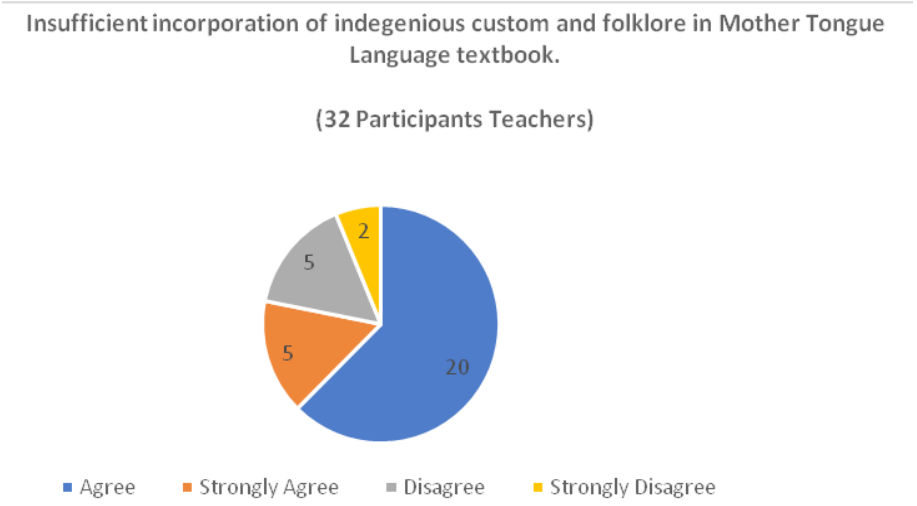


The results of the distributed questionnaire show the views of 32 teachers, of whom 10 respondents agreed that they are neither informed nor involved in curriculum design, and 22 teachers strongly agreed that they have no idea about the framing of the syllabus. They were only introduced to textbooks during the orientation programme held after their appointment.

Furthermore, some expressed concern about the insufficient incorporation of indigenous customs and folklore in mother tongue language textbooks, for example, a textbook of class VI focuses more on Language mechanics of the newly developed script MRS[5] rather than focusing on the cultural and traditional relevance of the Galo society,

followed by the syllabus for class VII concentrates on vocabulary building by using photos and images of the Galo tribe. For example, names of months and weeks, numerical counting, names of animals, birds, traditional beads and ornaments, etc, in the Galo language, with only a few chapters dedicated to prose and fiction. Which ultimately diminishes their potential to engage and inspire students in learning native customs and traditions. The class VIII syllabus lacks organisation of content, with the repetition of the same writer in one textbook. According to teachers, the syllabus should not merely be a collection of writings; instead, it should follow clear goals and principles appropriate for the students' age and grade.

Fig.4

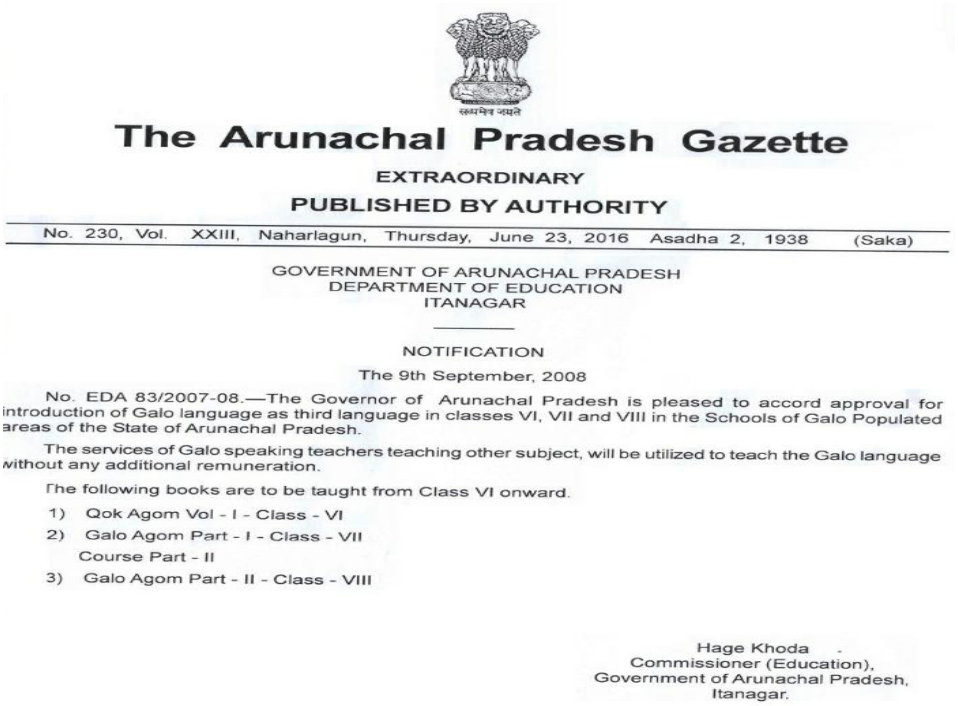


Meanwhile, the third language teachers hold a critical perspective on the gaps between the theoretical and practical implementation of the Mother tongue language curriculum. While students from grades VI to VIII in West Siang are supposed to learn the third language curriculum theoretically, in reality, very few children, only those in government schools, are familiar with it. Most children from both villages and towns attend private schools in the district, where the language curriculum has not yet been implemented. Data shows that 32 participant schools for the present study have enrolled 1367 students from classes VI to VIII.

Additionally, a few teachers voiced their concern about teaching in a heterogeneous classroom with students from different tribal communities speaking various languages. For example, in Aalo, the district headquarters of West Siang, although the majority of students belong to the Galo tribe, a few are from the Nyishi tribe, Apatani tribe, Adi tribe, non-tribal groups, and others. As a result, it becomes a challenge for teachers to include these students in the third language class of the Galo language, and there is no alternative third language subject for non-Galo students. Teachers, therefore, have no options to address such situations. They are neither trained to teach other languages nor supported by policies for teaching

multiple MTL textbooks in their schools. These dilemmas among teachers discourage student attendance in mother tongue language classrooms.

Fig.5: Official order of approval for the introduction of the Galo Language as the third Language.



The Arunachal Pradesh Gazette

EXTRAORDINARY

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

No. 230, Vol. XXIII, Naharlagun, Thursday, June 23, 2016 Asadha 2, 1938 (Saka)

GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ITANAGAR

NOTIFICATION

The 9th September, 2008

No. EDA 83/2007-08.—The Governor of Arunachal Pradesh is pleased to accord approval for introduction of Galo language as third language in classes VI, VII and VIII in the Schools of Galo Populated areas of the State of Arunachal Pradesh.

The services of Galo speaking teachers teaching other subject, will be utilized to teach the Galo language without any additional remuneration.

The following books are to be taught from Class VI onward.

1) Qok Agom Vol - I - Class - VI
2) Galo Agom Part - I - Class - VII
   Course Part - II
3) Galo Agom Part - II - Class - VIII

Hage Khoda
Commissioner (Education),
Government of Arunachal Pradesh,
Itanagar.

Retrievedfromhttps://scertarunachal.nic.in

Positive Perspectives on Mother Tongue Curriculum.

Incorporating the Mother tongue curriculum into Arunachal Pradesh's education system is a promising step. It promotes the sustainability of knowledge. Through third-language textbooks, traditional cultural heritage is preserved for future generations. The content of class VIII textbooks "Galo Agom part II" includes various prose and poetry that highlight the traditional and cultural significance of the tribe. Those willing to learn the Galo language and society can easily do so through these textbooks. The effort to document this is commendable. Furthermore, the teachers express their pride in being part of the mission to preserve their mother tongue, as Galo, since all the third language teachers belong to the Galo Tribe. Including the Mother tongue language in the curriculum empowers tribal students. It strengthens the local community, giving them confidence that their children can learn about their identity without relying on foreign languages.

Secondly, "though the students can communicate easily in their native language, the importance of the textbook cannot be overlooked," said the teachers. The third language

teachers of West Siang are all Galo, capable of teaching the language with their broader skills. However, they consider the textbook to be the most important teaching material, which makes their teaching organized and effective. They also express their desire for a guide book for teachers that will help them to overcome some of the difficulties they might face when teaching a tribal language (Panda, B.K. 2012).

Further, the teachers agreed that the mother tongue curriculum supports learning language 1 and language 2. They believe that students who are proficient in L3 tend to perform better in L1 and L2. Their ability to use and communicate in their native language with teachers builds confidence for first and second language learning in the classroom. The teachers observe that students are showing more confidence in communication and are better able to address their queries with teachers in other subjects, something they rarely did before their introduction to the MTL class.

Conclusion

Hence, the voices of the third language teachers of the West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh reflect their dedication to improving the mother tongue curriculum. Their acknowledgment of the role of the current curriculum in preserving indigenous knowledge among the younger generation, their genuine desire to be included in the process of curriculum design and policy making for MTL education, and their effort to bring a realistic approach in the schools of West Siang district will lead to fruitful outcomes in the field of Mother tongue Education in Arunachal Pradesh.

These perspectives will guide future researchers in exploring effective strategies and policies that will produce positive outcomes for the Mother tongue language education in Arunachal Pradesh. ■

Works Cited:

Al-Kathiri, Fatimah. "The voice of the teacher in syllabus design." *English Language and Literature Studies* 6.1(2016): 87-93.

Azu, Taw. "Impact of multilingualism and multiculturalism on English language education: The case of Arunachal Pradesh, India." Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences 4.11 (2013): 665-670.

Bano, Anjum, Muhammad Ali, and Stephen John. Issues of syllabus design. Practices and quality assurance at higher education level." Global Social Sciences Review (GSSR) 4.4 (2019): 135-145.

Pingel, Falk. UNESCO guidebook on textbook research and textbook revision. UNESCO (2010).

Hoesny, Mariana Ulfah. "From syllabus design to curriculum development." Jurnal Linguistik Terapan (2013): 29-35.

Iliev, Dean, et al. “The content of the mother tongue textbooks–critical and prospective view.” Inted 2017 proceedings. Iated (2017).

Kamki. Linyir. “Challenges and Barriers in Implementing Mother Tongue Language Curriculum: Study of the Galo Tribe in Arunachal Pradesh, India.”IJNRD.ORG 10.3(2025)

Kamki. Linyir& Amar Kumar Nayak. “Collaborative Endeavors of the Tribals of Arunachal Pradesh in Developing Mother Tongue Language Textbooks, Langlit 10.4 (2025)

NAKA, LIKHA. “Saint Francis De Sales College, Aalo.”

Panda, B.K. “Transaction of Teaching Learning Process for the Tribal Children Mother Tongue as the Key for Development.” A Journal of Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India 1 (2012).

Yeseraw, Abebe, Tadesse Melesse, and Asrat Dagnew Kelkay. “Inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the new primary and middle school curriculum of Ethiopia.” Cogent Education 10.1 (2023): 2173884.

Third Language textbooks retrieved from SCERT, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, India. Http://scertarunachal.nic.in

The word language has been used for the dialect of Galo tribe. Recognized as the third language of instruction by the govt. of Arunachal in 2008.

Lingua Franca used among the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh is a mixture of their Native languages and Hindi.

GWS stands for Galo Welfare Society. It is Community Based Organization.

GLDC stands for Galo Language Development Committee. It is a community Based organization, working for the preservation of the Galo Language.

MRS stands for Modified Roman Script The Script of Galo Tribe is Called “Galoo Ennam”. It is a modified Roman Script..

Linyir Kamki, Research Scholar, Dept of English, Arunachal University of Studies, Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh

Prof.Amar Kumar Nayak, Research Supervisor, Dept of English, Arunachal University of Studies, Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh

Subverting Patriarchy and Capitalism: A Feminist and Ecofeminist Study of Peter Carey's Novel *Bliss*

Pooja Bagdi

B. K. Anjana

This research decodes the feminist and ecofeminist aspects in the novel *Bliss,* written by renowned Australian novelist Peter Carey. The author tries to unfold the inherent interpersonal relationship between men and the natural world in his works. Nature plays a crucial role in teaching a lesson to people intoxicated by consumerism. The research paper analyses the backdrop of a materialistic society and its anthropocentric and patriarchal attitude while examining the ecofeminist aspect of the novel *Bliss. Bliss* is a surrealistic, dark comedy that uses magic realism to teach a moral lesson and critique the artificial nature of life. Carey employs magic realism to frighten Harry of the dark capitalist world and awaken his ecological consciousness. The author highlights the growing consumerism that leads to the exploitation of nature and women by patriarchal society. This research examines gender roles and the impact of capitalism on both society and the ecology.

Keywords: Feminism, ecology, capitalism, exploitation, patriarchal society, gender role.

*SRF and Research Scholar, S. S. in English, Vikram University, Ujjain (MP) Email: pooja.bagdi.3007@gmail.com **Professor, S. S. in English, Vikram University, Ujjain (MP) Email: bkanjana14@gmail.com

Peter Carey, a prolific Australian writer, is known for his excellent narrative skills and innovative storytelling technique. Carey amazes his readers with the blend of magic realism, dark comedy, and satire. His creative fiction won him international recognition, twice the Booker Prize, and other international awards. His novels concentrate on issues related to colonialism, settlers-indigenous conflict, identity crisis, ruminating on the decay of moral and ethical values, and ecological consciousness. His notable works include *Oscar and Lucinda* (1988), *True History of the Kelly* (2000), *Theft: A Love Story* (2006), *The Chemistry of Tears* (2012), *Amnesia* (2014), and *A Long Way from Home* (2017).

Bliss brought him instant success and recognition. Carey spent his early years, experiencing pastoral beauty with his grandparents, which helped him in developing a

sensitivity toward nature, leaving an indelible mark on his mind and heart. The novel is a dark comedy that tells the story of the Joy family and satirizes the modern Australian nuclear family model. The author highlights the growing consumerism that leads to the exploitation of nature and women by patriarchal society. This research examines gender roles and the impact of capitalism on both society and the ecology.

Carey won Australia's most prestigious Miles Franklin Award for his debut novel, *Bliss* (1981). This novel is the finest example of pastoral beauty and nature's vengeance. It is a tragedy, deliberately designed to flourish and nurture ecological consciousness in the world of a consumer-driven society. Carey overwhelms his readers with the unspoiled beauty of nature and representation of assertive and ambitious women characters, regardless of whether the character is the protagonist or antagonist of the novel. The lives of women and nature get disrupted due to the evolution of capitalism and culturalism. In this novel, the author also gives a detailed description that contrasts the artificiality of urban life with the soothing and sober life of the forest.

The novel's narrative starts with the nine-minute death of the protagonist Harry Joy, who sees himself dead from the sky. This magical realism brought a new twist to the protagonist's life. In this nine-minute death experience, he had the vision of hell, and during this time, he started to embrace and acknowledge the organic beauty of nature, which he had neglected after entering the corporate world. But because of the sudden death experience, he experiences an epiphany to follow the path of moral righteousness, but soon again gets corrupted by the glamour of materialism. But Harry immediately gets a hard blow from nature when Bettina dies of cancer.

Harry is the owner of an advertising agency. And one of his clients sells carcinogenic products, and Harry's agency helps them to sell these products. His heart attack was nature's revenge against his immoral act of selling cancer-causing products in society, and to awaken his morality. Harry led a joyful life before his heart attack, but after this event, he realised that the life he was living was a real hell. He spies his wife, Bettina, and children, Lucy and David, from a window and finds his wife's infidelity and witnesses his children's incestuous act. This scene shattered his life and encouraged his decision to redeem himself.

Eventually, Harry escapes the capitalist world, followed by his meeting with Honey Barbara, who is a free-spirited woman and doesn't follow the conventions of capitalist society. The novel also illustrates the contaminated air of urbanized society contrasted with the unadulterated natural world. The ecofeminist discourse of the novelprovides a critical insight into the degradation and oppression of ecology and women, and suggests urgency for an eco-friendly and gender neutral environment.

Alo Leopard, John Muir, and Rachel Carson were twentieth-century theorists associated with Ecocriticism. Ecocriticism concerns with the study of connection between literature and ecology. It analyses the cultural representation of nature in literature and the discourse, which is constructed by representation.

Ecofeminism is the branch of ecocriticism that originates from a bio-social context that highlights the outrageous exploitation of nature for urbanisation and uncontrolled consumerism, and pollution. Ecofeminism is an interdisciplinary approach that links feminism and ecology. It concerns the exploitation and oppression of women and nature by patriarchy and capitalist society. This theory understands and celebrates the profound connection of woman and nature (Mother Earth). Nature and the woman share the same quality of nurture and reproduction; therefore are deeply connected. This theory directs attention to how cultural discourse constructs nature and the dynamics associated with it by focusing not only on the textual reading but also emphasising the rhetoric used in the representation of nature and its treatment. Peter Carey meticulously constructs the ecological discourse to awaken the ecological consciousness among the reader. Carey also delineates the hollowness of materialistic life and its consequences. The theory of ecocriticism and ecofeminism condemns the preconceived notion of culture regarding nature and woman. Major thinkers include Vandana Shiva, Karen Warren, and Maria Mies.

Patriarchal society exploits nature to nurture capitalism. To fulfil the desire of accumulation, capitalists overexploit nature. The analysis is grounded in the theories of eminent ecofeminist writer Vandana Shiva. The binary of nature and culture aligns with the binary of woman and man, respectively. Nature is associated with women due to its reproductive and nurturing abilities; conversely, men are linked to culture as both are by-products of patriarchal society. The man believes that he inherits the power to subjugate women and nature. Capitalist society is shaped and manipulated by patriarchy, and in order to flourish, it crushes and perverts both nature and women. The novel reveals the stark reality of capitalist society, which acts as a silent destroyer, undermining the foundations of society. Harry, before his heart attack, was a part of the capitalist world and contributed to the contamination of nature by promoting cancer-causing products. He becomes a part of the contaminated world to meet his and his family's materialistic needs.

In this world, man dominates nature and women for an opulent life. This domination includes contamination, destruction, exploitation, and manipulation of nature. This disaster results in the emergence of ecofeminist theory, which critiques the values, beliefs, and practices constructed by patriarchal society to suppress women and ecology. "Nature and woman have both been defined by male culture as passive, mute, and other." (Griffin 29). The patriarchy always underestimates the contributions and sacrifices of women and nature. The disturbance in ecology in the name of development, urbanisation, globalisation, and aesthetics is the anthropocentric approach to justify their dominance, and that places humans over other beings.

The only character in the novel, Honey Barbara, a hippie, healer, part-time call girl, and a forest dweller, advocates nature over consumerism. She enters to the life of Harry as an angel and helps him in his redemption. She resists capitalism and patriarchy. After the revelation, Harry wants to escape the capitalist world and subsequently abandon his business, which promotes poison. Honey Barbara was a forest inhabitant. She led her life far away

from the corruption of capitalism. She embraces nature and embodies ecofeminism, whereas Bettina belongs to the corrupted world of capitalist hypocrisy. Carey employs these characters to critique the manipulation of capitalism and patriarchy that ultimately led to environmental destruction. Honey Barbara heals Harry and protects him from the corrupted world.

Honey Barbara is an anarchist, a radical who didn't conform to the capitalist mind-set of urban dwellers. She is a beekeeper, pantheist healer, and inhabitant of the forest. Her name symbolises her interconnectedness with nature. She lives in harmony with nature and bees and rejects all kinds of artificiality, chemicals, and even processed food. She believes in organic food and organic life. Barbara is a pure soul, loves nature, and its objects. She lives in the lap of nature along with her forest community and embraces little plants, trees, bees and the fresh air of the forest "she thought about those blossoms which grew through the swaying green umbrellas which made up the roof of the forest, and on which the bees feasted: the stringy bark with its characteristic sharpness, the sarsaparilla which was sweet and heavy and a little dull, and the showy red flowering gums bending in the south-easterly which swept the hill above the valley" (Carey 170). This magnificent description of nature reveals Honey Barbara's dedication to nature. This also signifies her absorption in nature.

She had a profound connection with every tree, plant, and even the smallest bud. She is a simple woman living life in natural surroundings. She does not have a fascination for the glamour of city life. "To Honey Barbara the city was a force, half machine, half human, exuding poisons." (Carey 168) For her, the city life is artificial and materialistic. Carey celebrates nature and culture by illustrating Barbara's forest and her commune. The women characters, Bettina and Honey Barbara, resonate with the feminist and ecofeminist voices, respectively. One is sturdy, ambitious, and rebellious in her demeanour, and the other is a healer, ecophile, and untouched by material wickedness.

Peter Carey tries to unfold the inherent interpersonal relationship between men and the natural world. Nature plays a crucial role in teaching a lesson to people intoxicated by consumerism. The research paper analyses the backdrop of a materialistic society and its anthropocentric and patriarchal attitude while examining the ecofeminist aspect of the novel. *Bliss* is a surrealistic, dark comedy that uses magic realism to teach a moral lesson and critique the artificial nature of life. Carey employs magic realism to frighten Harry of the dark capitalist world and awaken his ecological consciousness.

The nine-minute death experience of Harry detached him from worldly affairs and connected him to nature. He starts to feel embedded in nature, and his subsequent arousal of ecological consciousness, "He felt perfectly calm, and as he rose higher and higher" (Carey 6). "Ecstasy touched him. He found he could slide between the spaces in the air itself. He was stroked by something akin to trees, cool, green, leafy. His nostrils were assailed with the smell of things growing and dying, a sweet fecund smell like the valleys of rain forests" (Carey 6).

This research attempts to reveal the stark reality of modern economic practices, which disrupt the ultimate connection of human beings with nature. The practice of producing more and promoting capitalist industry breaks the connection between humans with nature. Bettina and Harry promote the same capitalist industry while forgetting their natural roots. Nature and the woman are both oppressed and deceived by masculine authority. Because the male-dominated society is of the opinion that women and nature are weak and vulnerable, they need the direction of the masculine authority.

The novel also delineates the role of gender by critiquing Harry's outlook on Bettina's ambition and points towards the feminist aspect of the novel. Feminism advocates the equal rights of women and challenges patriarchal norms and conventional gender roles of society. The novel was set when the second wave feminist movement (1960s-1980s) was at peak which focused on domestic issues, workplace inequality, and reproductive rights. It critiques the subjugation of women, traditional gender roles, and seeks empowerment, access, and autonomy for women in all spheres of life. Major thinkers include Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique.*

Being a woman, Bettina needs to suppress her desire for success because a woman is supposed to look after her child and household chores; therefore, women are made for the home, not for the field. As Alfred lord Tennyson proclaimed in *The Princess,* his poems:

> Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
> Man for the sword and for the needle she:
> Man with the head and woman with the heart:
> Man to command and woman to obey;
> All else confusion. (75).

This poem exemplifies the theory of gender perform ativity introduced by Judith Butler, a celebrated feminist gender studies expert. She argues that gender roles are socially constructed through repeated performance and imitation. Patriarchy governs gender roles and society. But Butler points out that gender is not something biological but a social construction. As Simone de Beauvoir finely suggested, "One is not born but rather becomes, a woman." (273).

As a reader, one can interpret the sibling's disgraceful act as the negligence of their mother. But father is equally responsible for the disregard. Nancy Chodorow, an influential feminist and psychoanalyst, argues in her seminal work, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) that, the father rarely becomes the primary caregiver of the child. In our society, only women have the responsibility of child rearing. Chodorow asserts that a female becomes a mother not because of biological traits but because of patriarchal society and the conditioning of daughters according to the social norms. The daughter internalizes the role of nurturing from her mother because a girl child can identify herself with her mother because of biological similarity.

Harry is the so-called patriarch of the family. His wife, Bettina, is a strong-headed, ambitious woman. Bettina is foil to Honey Barbara, but both of their lives get disrupted by patriarchy. Bettina and Honey Barbara shared little sympathy for each other, which suggests female sensitivity and support for each other. She wants to join Harry's advertising agency, but Harry doesn't entertain her aspiration of becoming a businesswoman as he thinks she is not talented enough. "By this cultural process, the masculine in our culture has come to be widely identified as active, dominating, adventurous, rational, and creative; the feminine, by systematic opposition to such traits, has come to be identified as passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional, and conventional. (Abrams and Harpham 125) When Bettina shared her desire to join Harry's ad-agency, he simply denied it and offered her money to start a "little boutique instead" (Carey 55). Harry thinks making ads and doing business is something masculine, and therefore, he suggested something more feminine to her, like a boutique, in fact, a little boutique, which exhibits his insecurity about Bettina's success and power.

He ignores her capabilities and potential, which results in her rebellion. She manages an affair with Harry's business and takes revenge on him. For Harry, Bettina is always a trophy wife; he doesn't want her to pursue her aspiration. Harry is a "good bloke", but he internalizes the patriarchal norms, which provokes Bettina to develop hatred towards him. Harry is good at making the whole society happy, but fails to make his own wife happy.

Although Bettina doesn't want to lead a domestic life, Harry never cares for his wife's dreams and becomes an obstacle to her aspirations. Bettina is a strong-willed feminist and knows the ways of articulating her voice. She does not want the support of any male figure to patronize her aspiration. But, she is also swayed by the allure of the capitalist industry. To achieve that, she blackmails Harry for assistance in selling the ads for the same carcinogenic product and ultimately becomes a part of this corrupted world. She is the victim of capitalist society. She is a determined woman, but trapped in the allure of capitalist industry, which is managed by patriarchy. After her cancer diagnosis, she realized the harsh reality of a consumer-driven society.

This research also spotlights Marxist environmentalism, which is a part of eco-criticism. Marxist ecologists argue that, nature is exploited and objectified to meet the needs of capitalist society. And the same is depicted in the novel when Harry and Bettina deliberately become part of capitalism to meet their economic needs. Therefore, nature becomes the source of profit to an anthropocentric society. It emphasises the manipulation and deconstruction of nature along with social inequality. Marxist ecologists emphasise gearing the genuine needs of people rather than economic gain and capital accumulation by overexploiting natural resources.

Harry, being a "good bloke", after seeing his wife's infidelity, declares her a "captive" of hell and damned soul, but he himself has the habit of visiting prostitutes. But being a man gives him the right to have multiple affairs and accuse his wife. David, the son of a patriarchal father, sexually exploited his sister, Lucy. Harry, after choosing the path of redemption,

again got stuck in the loop of capitalism, and when Honey Barbara tried to rescue him again, he treated her like a slave and made her realise that she lives on his benevolence and acts as a typical capitalist patriarch.

Even though Bettina is not an endearing character in the story, she ultimately suffers as a casualty of the capitalist society when she receives a positive cancer diagnosis. She decides to end the hypocrisy and ends her life by blowing herself up with her business associates who were involved in the same crime. After the death of Bettina, Harry retired to the "Bog Onion Road" the place of Honey Barbara in the forest, and revived the ancient myth of tree planting. And to apologize sincerely for his past mistakes, he planted hundreds of trees and also died happily in the midst of trees, but now contended without any greed for capitalism.

The well-known binary of nature and culture is considered feminine, whereas culture is considered masculine. Nature is spontaneous, and culture is constructed by patriarchy. The logic is that patriarchy constructs culture in order to direct and manipulate nature and women. The association of women and nature is because of the common thread they share, which is their harmony and interconnectedness. Both women and nature are known for reproduction and nurture. Therefore, nature is attributed as Mother Nature. Women and nature are tortured, suppressed, and crushed by patriarchy. Ecofeminists argue about the roles and conventions imposed by a male-dominated society on women and nature to oppress and govern them. The way Harry dominates the world of Bettina in the novel showcases feminism, contrasts with Honey Barbara's representation of ecofeminism.

Carey's prostitute protagonist, Honey Barbara, is purer than the polluted, civilised society. She disregards patriarchy and even decides to leave Harry when he goes back to the pollution of capitalism. Nature is imbibed in her; she literally adopts the nurturing ability of nature and subsequently sustains Harry's life from the poison of urban society. Barbara regained paradise for Harry. She is in harmony with nature and bees. Although she was once allured by capitalism and subjugated by patriarchy but she manages to maintain her grace. Through the character of Barbara, the author points out that women are close to nature.

For centuries, the contributions and sacrifices of women and nature have been underestimated by men; the relationship between women and nature is more intimate than that of men. Men treat and think of other living creatures as inferiors and think of themselves as superior masters, who are there to rule over them. In the men's world, the concept of biocentrism does not exist, which means all living beings are unique and have equal value and contribute in their own way to the world. Man manipulates woman and natural resources through cultural hegemony, making them feel inferior or less important, and their work, such as child rearing and other domestic chores, is deemed to have lesser significance and thus, neglected. In the same manner, nature is also exploited and regarded as freely available. But the ecofeminists argue that men, women, and nature are interdependent; thus, the

materialist ecofeminism says that men are not independent, but it is women and nature's unappreciated and unrecognised labour that endows all credit to men. Therefore, materialist ecofeminism urges the need for the acknowledgement of women and nature's role.

In the era of patriarchy and consumerist society, where man is the lord of the world, there is an urgency for ecofeminist spirituality, which comes from ancient myth, culture, and religious beliefs in which nature and women are valued, respected, and worshipped. They believe that all human and non-human lives are rooted in nature. Thus, ecofeminism demands reverence for the marginalised, i.e., women and nature. And the harmony must be maintained between humans and nature.

To conclude, Carey portrays a rich and diverse ecology and tries to decipher the significance of nature and its embedded connection with humans. The novel bursts the myth of the capitalist mind-set, which suggests that one should accumulate wealth at any cost and that wealth will ensure security, prosperity, and happy future, but the tragedy of Bettina proves it wrong. Carey also depicts the fallen characters, who were the result of capitalism, but he also emphasises the redemption of characters via nature. Harry's repentance was going back to nature, and Bettina repents by taking her life along with the propagators of capitalism. Honey Barbara is presented as a divine spirit of nature in the novel, who helps other characters to uplift their soul and help them to get rid of their moral decay. The depiction of the condition of nature and women in the novel expresses Carey's deep respect and admiration for women and nature. ■

Works Cited:

Abrams, M. H., and Geoffrey Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* 11th ed., Cengage Learning, 2015.

Carey, Peter. *Bliss*. E-book ed., Faber and Faber, 2010.

De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex.* Translated and edited by H.M. Parshley, Penguin, 1956.

Griffin, Susan. *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her.* Harper & Row, 1978.

Tennyson, Alfred. *The Princess*. E-book Ed., Global Grey, 2021.

Pooja Bagdi, SRF and Research Scholar, School of Studies in English, Vikram University, Ujjain, M.P.

Dr. B.K. Anjana, Professor, School of Studies in English, Vikram University, Ujjain, M.P.

"Conquered Nature"? An Eco-critical Inquiry into Poetic Perspectives on Human-Environmental Interaction.

Sayani Roy

Eco criticism has become a very popular genre in the present scenario when humanshas faced a crisis due to environmental degradation. Like every segment of education, literature has also contributed to eco-critical study. Poetry, novels are full of natural treasure. The poets, authors like Rabindranath Tagore, KajiNajrul Islam, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Marge Piercy, etcetera, have linked their writings with the environment. Human is the child of nature, and he grows up in the lap of nature. So, there is an interlinked connection between Human and nature. The critical thought process of humans inspires them to explore nature but at last they started consuming nature by machinery products. This evolution has been beautifully portrayed in literature. Through some selected poems by the abovementioned writer, this paper delves into the discussion of the evolution of nature and its revolutionary return from the analytical lens. It has touched the ecofeminism aspect also. This paper tries to find out the answer of the question: Has human successfully conquered nature or nature has bounced back horribly?

Keywords: Eco-criticism, Eco-Feminism, Environment, Degradation, Conquered, Human, Nature.

There is a traditional concept that has been carved in human's mind that human is the child of nature and it has been transmitted generation after generation. As nature is fertile, it is usually compared with a feminine figure. In the poem *Christable,* Coleridge writes, "*Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree*…[1]". The term "*Broad-breasted*" can be referred as the nature nourishes the human, rather not only human but the entire living world as her (nature) children. Human has become mesmerised with the beauty, wilderness of the nature.Rabindranath Tagore has written in his poem *NirjhorerSwapnovongo (The Broken dream of a stream)* that

আজি এ প্রভাতে রবির কর
কেমনে পশিল প্রাণের পর
কেমনে পশিল গুহার আঁধারে প্রভাত পাখির গান
নাজানি কেনরে এতদিন পরে জাগিয়া উঠিল প্রাণ . . . . .

"How did the sun's rays/penetrate my heart this morning,/how did the song of the bird/ penetrate the dark cave!/I don't know how/my heart awakened after such a long time![2]"

William Wordsworth was also overwhelmed by the beauty of nature that can be seen in his most of the poems like *Daffodills, Tin turn Abbey, and Lucy Poems etcetera.* In the poem *Composed upon the Westminster Bridge,* he has portrayed that he was attracted by a sunny morning London. The weather in the London, most of the time can be find as smoky, dull and cloudy but that sunny morning was blessed to the poet as he has written, *"Earth has not anything to show more fair:/Dull would he be of soul who could pass by/A sight so touching in its majesty..."(Upon the Westminster Bridge, sept.3, 1802).*The Beauty of nature forces them (human) to explore.

As human starts to explore, they find that nature is full of treasure. Tagore writes in the poem *Sonar Tori*,

ঠাঁইনাই, ঠাঁইনাই ছোটো সে তরী
আমারি সোনার ধানে গিয়েছে ভরি . . .

"No room, no room, the boat is too small./Loaded with my gold paddy, the boat is full.[4]."

This line indicates that the nature is so full with the treasure that after the collection of the huge amount and keeping those on the boat, the human himself cannot find his own place on that.

Now, it is the time to conquer. When they (human) have started to conquer, they have seen the other side of the nature, the disaster, as the poet KaziNajrul Islam writes,

দুর্গম গিরি কান্তার-মরু দুস্তর পারাবার হে
লঙ্ঘিতে হবে রাত্রি নিশীথে যাত্রীরা হুশিয়ার . . .

"*Unscalable mounts, impassable deserts, turbulent seas/These you must conquer in freedom's quest in the dead of night/Sailors, beware![5]"*

Here comes the eco-critical study. Eco-critical study or Eco criticism refers the relation between Environment and Literature. William Rueckert coined and popularised the term Eco- Criticism in his essay *"Literature and Ecology: An experiment in eco-criticism*" in 1978.Cheryll Glotfelty helped to establish the concept through her work: *"The Eco-Criticism Reader: landmarks in literary Ecology"*. This concept has emerged in the late 20th century when people become concern regarding environmental issues. When the ecological degradation, pollution, human activities on earth has started to devastate the nature and human realises its horrible impact on their life, the genre of literary ecology emerges. It is also known as post-Anthropocentric genre which challenges the concept of human value over natural value. This aspect can be connected to Samar Sen's poem *MohuarDesh*[6].After the Industrial revolution, the earth or our nature has got the touch of mechanisation and the extension of urban places is in continuation even now. In this aspect Samar Sen writes,

মহুয়া বনের ধারে কয়লার খনির
গভীর,বিশাল শব্দ,
আর শিশির-ভেজা সবুজ সকালে
অবসন্নমানুষের শরীরে দেখি ধুলোর কলঙ্ক . . .

"By the side of Mahua Forest, the thundering sound of coal mine can be heard/ again in the dew dropped green morning; I see the stigma of dust on 'hollow men'"

The poet Samar Sen wants to portray that the urbanisation or the mechanisation not only consumes nature but also consumes the liveliness, the humanity and makes them '*Hollow Men'* as T.S. Eliot writes, "*We are the hollow men /We are the stuffed men /Leaning together*[8]". Now let's dive into the discussion weather human successfully conquered the nature or not? The writers or poets of Romantic age were too much engaged with nature. This paper proceeds with the exploration of Coleridge's poem *Christable* through the lens of eco-criticism.

Bare Foot on the Grass[9]

Through the poem *christable,* it can be found that Coleridge presents the nature, especially the forest as a magical and spiritual hub, again which can be found in Pagan Religion[10].The place that Coleridge has been presented here is full of mystery, danger and beyond human control. It is dangerous because, it is unknown and yet to be explored. On the other side, this poem presents the nature as mother lap. The '*lovely lady christable'*[11] enters into the forest and goes to the '*broad- breasted oak tree'* to pray for the prince whom she has seen in her dream. This poem cannot be restricted up to this analysis. Christable goes to the forest at the midnight: "*Tis the middle of the night by the castle clock…."*[12].The reason of her going to the forest has been discussed earlier but why she has chosen a chilly night? Here comes eco-feminism, which is also a part of eco-criticism, was first coined by Francoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. Eco- feminism refers that patriarchal structure of society is responsible for the degradation of nature and exploitation of women. As nature is considered as a feminine figure for its fertile nature, the exploitation of nature and women can easily be connected.

The setting of the poem is a medieval woodland castle which is not far from the forest. In that castle, only one male figure can be found and he is sir Lioline, a baron and rich, who is the father of Christable. The poet has confirmed that Sir Lioline loves her daughter by saying, "*Lovely Lady Christable/ Whom her father loves so well."*.If she is too connected to her father, then what forces her to go to the forest at night to pray for her beloved? Can't this image refers that Christable is not comfortable with her father's affection towards her as it seems like an Electra complex[13] and it may haunt her as it can harm the relationship between she and her beloved. The tone of the poem clears that there is no motherly figure in that castle. So Christable finds the mother lap and comfort in the forest and especially to the " *Broad breasted oak tree".* Then why has she chosen the night? May be her father, the patriarchal figure binds her in the day time through his male gaze and that prevents her to go outside the

castle. Night is the perfect time to do any confidential work. So to avoid the gaze of her father, she has chosen the night. One more noticeable point is that, in that castle there is '*one toothless mastiff bitch*[14]*'*. The word "*Bitch*" is again a feminine figure and this animal is not beyond the discussion of both eco-criticism and eco-feminism as all the living being is part of that. The *bitch* is toothless means she is harmless, she cannot protect the castle as well as herself. So, she is basically useless and this is the gaze of patriarchal society towards female. Sir Lioline knows that if Christable steps out the castle, she can lose her innocence and face the horrible reality and that will give her the voice. Thus, Christable secretly goes to the forest at night. Behind the oak tree she finds the "*damsel bright Geraldine*" (Christable, 1802), whom the poet presents apparently as a harmful figure for Christabel but this Geraldine has shown her (Christabel) the reality. Geraldine has been portrayed as harmful because she is a '*damsel bright'* woman and she is roaming in the forest at night. But she is being found in the forest because in the morning she has been chased by '*five warriors'* as written in the poem *"Five warriors seized me yestermorn*".(Christable,1802)

Now, the question arises, how can this poem be connected with the eco-critical concept? It has been discussed earlier that eco-criticism talks about literature and ecology. This poem has been truly engaged with nature and nature has been portrayed here like a shelter giver, mother figure, Goddess, guide, philosopher, mysterious which anthropocentric world or patriarchal machanisation cannot access easily.

What about those natural elements who are not in good circumstances? To discuss this, let's talk about Hilda Doolittle's poem "*The Sea Rose*".

Even the rose's life is not full of rose petals

Usually Rose symbolises beauty, softness, love. H.D. has portrayed here a completely different rose which has not grown up in a garden, with nourishment; it has bloomed with the stormy sea wind. *The Sea Rose*[15] is not traditionally sweet, it is rough as poet says, "*Rose, harsh rose/marred and with stint of petals, meagre flower thin, sparse of leaf*[16]". Even though it is valuable as it has the adaptation power and knows how to survive. If this poem can be seen through eco-critical lens, it can be realised that this poem challenges the idea of artificial beauty of the nature. This poem is against the concept of human defined beauty, rather it portrays that nature has its own wild beauty and to define that nature does not need human approval. This poem also signifies those women who have grown up without nourishment, without recognisation. If it is possible to look at Subodh Sarkar's poem "*I am KrishnakoliMahato",* there can be found some lines as poet writes,

আমি গড়িয়া হাটের মেয়েদের মতো
আরশোলা দেখলে ভয়ে পালিয়ে আসিনা
বোমায় বাঁহাত উড়ে যাওরা বাবা কতবার
আমার বই পুড়িয়ে দিয়েছে,
জঙ্গলে রাত জেগে বই পড়ে
আমি এখানে এসেছি. . . .

"I am not afraid of cockroaches like the ladies of Gariahat/ My father who lost his left hand in a bomb blast, has burnt my books…..I have come here by studying whole night in the forest" .

These lines show that the narrator's life was not easy. She dealt with wild insects as well as with her own father to continue her study.Through the whole night she has studied in the forest that shows the circumstances are not good like the sea rose. Having struggled with this situation, she has made her own identity as she says in the poem, (*I am KrishnakoliMahato. MA, Ph.D*). It signifies that she has won in her own field, challenging the urban modified lifestyle as *The Sea Rose* has challenged those roses which have been grown up in nourishment. Both the poemshas proved that beauty does not rely on human consent.

Now, the question comes up, has humans succeeded in conquering nature?

Finally Conquered?

To discuss this concept, the paper needs to be involved in another poem *A work of Artifice* by Marge Piercy. This poem talks about a bonsai[18] tree which is nine inches long, planted by a gardener in an attractive pot. He daily cuts its branches and prunes it to give it a small and cosy shape as the gardeners utters,

"*It is your nature*
to be small and cozy[19]"

The lines signify that the gardener (human) is imposing his thought of boundaries on that humanly modified, pruned little tree. But if the bonsai tree has grown up on the side of mountain like the *sea rose* without nourishment,it*"could have grown up eighty feet tall*" (Piercy, line 3). The gardener is giving it nourishment, he is giving it an attractive pot like home and instead of that the tree needs to follow gardener's words. So, the tree should believe that it is lucky because if it was grown up on the mountain side and eighty feet tall, it could die by lighting. At least it has got a beautiful pot and food. Thus, it seems like human at last has got some control over nature and he is using the nature to beautify his surroundings. He has colonised over nature's own beauty and imposed their urban modified beauty concept on them. The bonsai tree had the potential to grow long with its wild beauty but alas! The "*son of man*[20]" conquered.

The poet has written another two words to describe cosy and little Bonsai and those two words link this poem with woman condition in the patriarchal society and so, the poem can be seen from the eco-feminism perspective also. The two words are 'domestic and weak'. The poet or the gardener in the poem has defined the bonsai tree as domestic and weak because it has no control over itself and it is bound to follow the gardener's instructions. Similarly, women are given a home which can protect them from societal criticism or male gaze; they are given food and nourishment to stay healthy, etcetera. Instead of that, they (women) only have to do little things; they need to follow the

instructions of patriarchal society. As the gardener has manipulated the bonsai tree by saying,

"how lucky, little tree,
to have a pot to grow in.."(piercy, line 15-16)

the patriarchal society also manipulates women. In this way, the patriarchal society dwarfs the potential growth of the women from the very childhood as the gardener has done it with the bonsai tree. The men bound women's feet, restricted their brain by their lovable touch as the poet writes,

"one must begin very early
to dwarf their growth:
the bound feet,
the crippled brain,
the hair in curlers,
the hands you
love to touch " (piercy, line18-22)

The poem has proven that human conquered the nature, but time flies. There is a Bengali folk song,

আমি কৃষ্ণকলি মাহাতো এম .এ, পি .এইচ .ডি .
আমার হাত বান্ধিবি, পা বান্ধিবি
মন বান্ধিবি কেমনে ?
আমার চোখ বান্ধিবি, মুখ বান্ধিবি
পরাণ বান্ধিবি কেমনে . . .

"You can tie my hands, my feet but cannot my mind/ You can tie my eyes, my voice but not my liveliness.."

The anthropocentric world has conquered the environment but this era is too near to post humanistic era and the nature is ready to bounce back….. "The clocks were striking 13[21]".

The Clock strikes thirteen

People has cut down forest, made urban spaces, mechanised the world, used natural product to survive as well as beautify things. They sang the song of victory being ensured there is no rebellion. But some rebellion comes silently according to James C. Scott. Are the global warming, ozone depletion, drought, sudden flood, increasing of ocean layernot the silent protest? To describe the scenario, this paper owes to T.S. Eliot's Poem "*TheWaste Land*", where the poet writes,

"*where the sun beats,*
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water" (Eliot, 1922)

There is scorching sun, dead trees, dead leaves, and even the insects are not getting relief. There is even a deficiency of drinking water, as Coleridge writes in the poem "The *Rime of the Ancient Mariner"* that

"Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink" (The Rime of Ancient Mariner, 1798)

T. S. Eliot writes at the end of the poem "*The Waste Land*",

"Datta.Dayadhvam.Damyata.
Shantihshantihshantih".

By saying *shantih,* he may keep some optimistic view but in reality there is only thundering and lightning, no rain on dried leaves.

Nature is taking revenge. How? We are dying every day waiting for the rain[2222]This line is inspired by the line of the song "A Thousand Years", sung by Christina Perri : I have died every day waiting for you." (line 8).

Conclusion:

Through the analysis of various poetic voices, this paper reveals the strange but complex kind of relationship between man and nature. Human use nature, exploit nature and also face resistance and revolt. One side, poets celebrate the beauty and calmness of the nature and on the other side, they also portray the terrible face of the nature. Through the lens of ecology and eco-criticism or feminism, poems by Tagore, Nazrul Islam, Hilda Doolittle and others collectively depict how human again and again tried to conquer nature and this attempt leads to the degradation of environment. But, nature is not silent, it bounces back, it gives response subtly and symbolically. This paper concludes with the statement that nature does not tolerate the anthropocentric dominance; it may be controlled in fragments but cannot be fully conquered. ■

Works Cited:

[1]Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *Christable.*1816

[1]Tagore's *NirjhorerSwapnovongo*has been translated and posted by Ranu as "The Broken dream of a Stream".

[2] This line is the English translation of Tagore's *Sonar Tori*. It is translated as "The Golden Boat" by William Radice.

[3]*DurgamGiri, kantar Moru*by KajiNajrul Islam has been translated as Captain! Beware by Monish R. Chatterjee.

[1]Sen, Samar. *MahuarDesh*

[2]Eliot, T.S. *The Hollow Men.*23rd Nov, 1925.

[3]Coleridge, S.T. *Christable.*Line 23.

[1]Coleridge, S.T. *Christable*. Line 1.

[2]Coleridge, S.T. Christable. Line 7

[1]Doolittle, Hilda. *The Sea Rose*. Line 1-4.

[1]The term *MohuarDesh* has been used by Samar Sen in his poem. *Mahua*is an Indian tree that produces oil-rich seeds and fleshy edible flower. This is actually used to make alchohol. Here *Desh* does not refer nation, it refers certain area like SanthalPargana where these trees usually grow.

[2]*Bare Foot on the Grass* is an English song, sung by Louis pavlou. This title has been used here to describe christable as she goes to the forest to pray for her dreamy prince.

[3]The word Pagan was originated from a Latin word 'Paganus'. The Christians first used the word Pagan to refer those who are not in practising Christianity and who believe in polytheism. This religion (pagan) is involved in the spirituality and magical power of the nature.

[4]Usually Electra complex refers young girl's attraction towards her father and she develops a sense of competition with her mother. But here, in this paper this term has been used to signify father's attraction towards his daughter as a suitable term to define this aspect is failed to be found.

[5]The sea rose is primarily known as Orphiumfrutescens which is a south African star shaped shrub, pink or purple in colour.

[6]Sarkar, Subodh. *Ami krishnakoliMahato*.

[7]Bonsai tree is a mountain side grown up tree. This tree is being used in its miniature version as indoor plant in the case of home décor.

[8]Piercy, Marge.*A work of artifice*. Line 12-13.

[9]The Phrase "Son of Man" has been taken from Eliot's *The Waste Land,* line 20.

[10]Orwell, George. *1984*.

References:

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. 1798.

————————. Christabel. 1802.

Doolittle, Hilda (H.D.). "The Sea Rose." Collected Poems 1912–1944, edited by Louis L. Martz, New Directions, n.d.

Eliot, T. S. The Waste Land.Boni and Liveright, 1922.

Glotfelty, Cheryll, and Harold Fromm, editors. The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology. University of Georgia Press, 1996.

Islam, KaziNazrul. "Unscalable Mounts, Impassable Deserts." Selected Poems of KaziNazrul Islam, translated by KabirChowdhury, n.d.

Piercy, Marge."A Work of Artifice." The Moon Is Always Female, Alfred A. Knopf, n.d.

Rueckert, William. "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism." The Iowa Review, vol. 9, no. 1, 1978, pp. 71–86.

Sarkar, Subodh. "I Am KrishnakoliMahato." Selected Poems of Subodh Sarkar, translated by Nandini Dhar, n.d.

Scott, James C. Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance. Yale University Press, 1985.

Sen, Samar. "MohuarDesh." Collected Poems of Samar Sen, Ananda Publishers, n.d.

Tagore, Rabindranath. "NirjharerSwapnabhangha" and "Sonar Tori." Selected Poems of Rabindranath Tagore, translated by William Radice, n.d.

Wordsworth, William. "Composed upon Westminster Bridge."The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, Longman, 1802.

[11]This line is inspired by the line of the song "A Thousand Years", sung by Christina Perri : I have died every day waiting for you." (line 8).

Sayani Roy, Email ID: royrosi2015@gmail.com, Contact: 8617519612

Ben Okri's *Songs of Enchantment* and *The Famished Road*: An Examination of Post-Colonial Realities

Kavita Chouhan

Anjana Pandey

This article discusses the postcolonial settings of Ben Okri's books *Songs of Enchantment* and *The Famished Road*. These works undergo textual analyses that begin with postcolonial theory in order to shed light on the postcolonial reality in post-independence Nigeria. These postcolonial realities highlight the characters and ideas of Ben Okri's art. This article looks at how Okri used the abiku myth (spirit kid) to illustrate Nigeria's postcolonial realities by combining the spiritual and material worlds. Corruption and other social evils are depicted in both the books as widespread in Nigerian society. In the books, two groups clash over dominance, with one attempting to impose its views on the other. On the other hand, the oppressed group challenges the ruling class's views. This study concludes and maintains that Okri employed prose fiction to offer insight on the postcolonial conditions in Nigeria depicted in his books.

Keywords: postcolonial, abiku, realities, spirit child

Literature depicts truth by emphasizing the- anticipated facts and principles within individuals and societies. It encompasses the complicated interactions between a society's fundamental parts and its inhabitants. Literary critics such as Mary Kolawole (2005:9), Ayo Kehinde (2011:62), and Joy Ebong Mbipom (2011:62) have supported this by claiming that literature is more of a fabrication than a straightforward reflection of reality.

In this article, "postcolonial realities" refers to people's lived experiences, a topic on which many postcolonial authors, including Ben Okri, aim to shed light through his writing. Furthermore, African authors frequently address postcolonial concerns while describing and recalling African experiences. Postcolonial African nations are defined by common themes such as oppression, hardship, unemployment, misery, poverty, and famine. The points raised in this paper are those indicated above. Nigeria's political independence has yet to enhance security or economic prosperity. In Oko (2010), J.F. Ade Ajayi described it as a "obsession with politics" for its own sake, which has ironically caused to economic stagnation and an overconcentration on politics.

The evasive aspect of growth, whichever defined, has been Nigeria's distinguishing attribute since independence. This implies that the general welfare of the average rural family farmer and urban worker has been significantly harmed. Since independence, there has been little to no improvement in urban development, and in some ways, things have

gotten worse. Since independence, there has been little to no growth in urban development; in some aspects, it has deteriorated. Help is required to guarantee that Nigerians have sufficient food and energy supplies. To unite the people, Nigeria must first develop strong political institutions rooted on patriotism and social fairness. Even within the same region, there must be a clear disparity in development between rural and urban areas. Furthermore, the growing economic disparity during colonial control deteriorated drastically after independence. As a result, there has been an upsurge in civil strife and instability, and people's sense of security has significantly diminished.

On rare occasions, despicable and abnormal regimes have emerged, preying on their people rather than protecting or improving their lot in life (9). Achebe (1983) adds weight to this argument by saying that the problem in Nigeria is essentially and directly linked to an absence of competent leadership. All parts of Nigeria, including the terrain, weather, water, and air, are in excellent shape. The issue in Nigeria arises when the leader is unwilling or unable to take charge... (1).

Even though imperialism and colonialism have ceased in Nigeria, the country is still grappling with the neocolonial crisis, and the works reviewed in this article address these challenges. These novels expose two groups to postwar Nigeria: the wealthy and the impoverished. Okri illustrate the persistent disenchantment that has distinguished the postwar African experience.

Postcolonial literature, argue Ashcroft Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Hellen Tiflin (1989), finds its voice via repurposing the prevailing language and fusing it with a discourse entirely in touch with the colonized site. To express the postcolonial realities and experiences of the colonized, this replacement is achieved by appropriating and erasing some aspects of the language used by the colonisers. This previous remark explains why Okri adopted the abiku myth, as well as how the road is always hungry for food. In his examination of Nigeria, Okri draws connections to the mythical abiku, road, and magic.

The Myth of abiku, in which a spirit child acts as a portal between the worlds portrayed in Okri's writings, is a theme he often returns to. According to Adeniji (2008), the Yoruba people of southern Nigeria have a phrase for "children born to die young"(240), "my emphasis." This word plays a significant role in the Myth of abiku, which Adeniji argues is a vital part of the story.

Accordingly, abiku, like Azaro and Ade, are linked to the capacity to die young and reincarnate multiple times in the texts under study. In Yoruba tradition, a person with this name is associated with death and grief for the family, hence it has a negative connotation. Its metaphysical nature is further demonstrated by the name Abiku, which suggests a person who may exist in both the spiritual and human worlds at the same time. The abiku is an interesting cultural figure but not one that is highly prized because of this attribute. Okri creates a captivating environment for "spirit children" and integrates them into his prose fiction by using the word "abiku," which has a fundamentally positive sense.

In *Songs of Enchantment* and *The Famished Road*, Okri deftly gives the downtrodden and oppressed people the extraordinary imagination of an abiku. Kehinde (2004) provides further detail concerning the social context of poverty. Consistent with the aims of this research, reviewers have hailed The Famished Road as a postcolonial work due to its accurate portrayal of cultural and sociopolitical reality. Even if myth and magic are there, according to Harry Garuba (1993).

Okri skillfully integrates a number of myths, such as the biblical tale of Lazarus (Azaro) and reincarnation, to depict the institutions and society of contemporary Nigeria. Since achieving independence, Nigeria has seen significant political and economic unrest as a result of multiple changes in government and political culture. Political and economic instability recurs frequently, much like the spirit kid or abiku that makes an appearance in The Famished Road. All of these factors are fundamentally influenced by Nigeria and its history.

I was asked, "Why were you staring at my belly like that, with those evil eyes of yours?" by Madame Koto. (464). Madame Koto is aware that Azaro's Nigerian parents are unlucky. Azaro is compared to the echo of independence and the challenges it brings. "This state of autonomy has resulted solely in difficulties" (169). Azaro compares the Nigerian nation to the birth of a child. Their refusal to be seized is attributed to the three remaining Abikus' incapacity to establish themselves as an independent nation, which is viewed as a continuation of Azaro.

The way the narrator describes Azaro's Nigerian family—based on the actions of the three motorcycles when they are still in the womb—strongly illustrates the extent of the country's poverty. Another illustration of the pervasive inefficiency of Nigeria's government is the poverty in Azaro's household. The relationship between the Abiku realm and a Nigerian person named Azaro is impacted by the absence of capable leadership, which also undercuts attempts to reduce Nigeria's unpredictability. Although the colonizer who established our country is not to blame for our issues, we Nigerians are. The herbalist predicts these issues, referring to Azaro (Nigeria) as "a child who resisted being born but will also confront mortality."" (8), this statement makes it clear that for Nigeria to be an independent nation, the colonizer must be involved. Azaro's father's dream is compared to the forecasts made by the diviner.

Ben Okri has made observations about the issues facing Nigerian society by drawing on Yoruba mythology. In Yoruba cosmology, life plays a crucial role. As a result, Okri has employed life cycle images to preserve harmony between the history, present, and future of the

natural cycle by following the right procedures. Okri links this idea to both the nation's colonized past and present. Azaro, the spirit child, is the narrator chosen by the author to depict Nigeria's ever-evolving political landscape. Azaro makes observations about the nation's ever-evolving population. He criticizes the native people for acting a lot like their colonial overlords. The satirical portrayal of the indigenous people forsaking their traditional heritage and become increasingly imperialist is told by Azaro. independent in their endeavors. As a beginner, Azaro recognizes that their indigenous people behave in a

highly colonized and imitative imperialist and self-centered way. Azaro provides several examples of indigenous personalities who lose their sight in the pursuit of political and financial dominance. Madame Koto is one such instance, who benefits from political parties by becoming wealthier and more wealthy. As a result, she becomes a symbol of both colonial power and her historical forgetfulness. She turns becomes a metaphor for the nation's imperial changes.She turns becomes a metaphor for the nation's imperial changes. Madame Koto is seen managing the run-down pub, which over time is turned into a contemporary space used for political gatherings. Her ghetto

the bar abruptly transforms into a forum for political discussions. She turns out to be the creator of hybrid identities that attempt to mimic their colonial overlords and eventually alienate themselves. Her opponents propagate rumors about her as someone who engages in illegal behavior since she supports the party of the rich.

He centers his convictions on the poor people. He wants to provide for their basic necessities, including housing and education. His efforts, however, fail because they show a daring confrontation with the massive political fall that comes before him. The individual's actions could be contrasted to the historical pattern of Nigeria's unavoidable decline following colonization and the failure of democratic ideology and nationalist ideals to persist following political independence.

Moreover, it can be argued that Azaro represents the political, social, and economic shortcomings of various African countries, especially Nigeria. It is feasible to make comparisons between the cycles of his death and subsequent resuscitation and the multiple unsuccessful attempts by Nigeria's past and present administrations to establish a workable democratic system. In Nigerian culture, people are still dealing with their sadness and great poverty, which leads to the continuation of disastrous situations. Azaro's reflections are reflected in this part. Azaro concentrates on the political climate in Nigeria, which is currently impacted by the abiku phenomenon, while taking into account the information that has been presented thus far. This phenomenon characterises a nation that was created and is currently headed toward extinction due to a lack of foresight, excessive greed, and corruption.

The majority of Nigerian politicians exhibit this quality, which is seen to be typical. The widespread political incompetence has developed into a narrative that is frequently disregarded and occurs constantly inside the political sphere. "Corruption afflicted the people and thrived." They suffered greatly as a result of their situation and were afflicted with numerous illnesses. The group included youngsters of varying ages. There was a complete inversion of the Earth's atmosphere. As the creation progresses, it becomes more difficult to understand (75). Following that, Azaro makes the decision to remain, which is one of the difficulties from which people everywhere, especially those in Nigeria, may learn a valuable lesson. To fully comprehend their spiritual cosmos, Nigerians must expand their scholastic horizons. They were able to proudly demonstrate their ability to escape the ongoing misfortune that was negatively affecting society's political and social elements at that time.

In addition, Ade is mindful of the despicable role Madame Koto plays in the political landscape of the ghetto, and similar to Azaro, he seeks to end her harsh rule. In light of this, he attempts to attack Madam Koto, but his efforts are fruitless still. As a result, he ultimately dies away. As a result of his conflicting ideals, he is unable to use his powerful potential to do damage to the lady. His goal to destroy Madame Koto is decisive. Still, he also maintains a desire beyond the sphere of living things, which demonstrates that he is not committed to tackling the sociopolitical challenges that are now being faced. Several characters in *Songs of Enchantment* in addition to Azaro, Ade, Madame Koto, and Black Tyger, represent the difficulties that come with having freedom. Among them are the Masquerade, the Yellow Jaguar, and several other spirits that are metaphors for the nation's vicious, greedy, and repressive leaders. Furthermore, it is essential to emphasize that Black Tyger reflects the heavenly characteristics that Christ has as well as the ferocious, unbridled force that is associated with Ogun, the Yoruba god of war. This association may also be seen in the book that was written by Adeniji (2008).

In this study, the postcolonial contexts of Ben Okri's novels Songs of Enchantment and The Famished Road have been carefully examined and evaluated. The paper includes a thorough X-ray investigation of human conditions. To address this issue, Okri turned to the concept of the "spirit child" to illuminate postcolonial reality. Ghana is a country. The novels have a distinct narrative style that effortlessly blends the supernatural with the everyday. The ability to switch between the two worlds is also essential to Azaro's Nigerian culture. Both pieces demonstrate how widespread corruption and other social evils are in Nigerian society.

The "Rich" oppress and enslave the "Poor," which is a reflection of Nigerian reality. Azaro and Ade speak for the underprivileged, while Madame Koto represents the affluent elite that exploits the poor. Thus, the goal of this study is to learn more about how Okri illuminates the postcolonial realities shown in her works about Nigeria by utilizing the norms of prose fiction. ■

Works Cited

Achebe, C. The Trouble with Nigeria. Enugu: fourth Dimension, 1983, Print

Adenji,A, "Myth and Realism in Ben Okri's Linguistics Aesthetics" Oko OKoro (Ed):Lagos Review of English studies, 17&2, 2008:16:28, Print.

Adeniji, A. Myth and Realism in Ben Okri's Linguistic Aesthetics Oko Okoro (Ed): Lagos Review of English Ashcroft, Bill et al. The Empire writes back. London: Routledge,

Ashcroft, Bill et al. The Empire writes back. London: Routledge, 1989, Print.

Garuba, H. Ben Okri Animist Realism and famished Genre" The Ashcroft, Bill et al. The Empire writes back. London: Rutledge.

Garuba H. “Ben OKri Animist Realism and Famished Gener” The Guardian; Saturday,13 March, 1993,23

Hawley, John C. “Ben Okri Spirit Child: Abiku Child Migration and Post-Modernity”, Research in African Literature. Spring: Indian University press, 26.1, 1995:20-29, Print.

Kehinde,Ayo. The Image of Meja Mwangi’s Going Down River Road ‘Journal Cultural Studies 26.1, 1995:20-29 Print. River Road ‘Journal Cultural studies 6.1 2004: 94-113 Print

African Fiction: The Example of Mejan Mwangi’s Kill me quick”, Nordic Journal Studies13 (2)2004:94-113Print

Hawley, John C. Ben Okri Spirit-child: Abiku Migration and Post-Modernity”, Research in Kehinde, Ayo. “The Image of MejaMwangi s going Down River Road” Journal Culture Studies 6.1, 2004:94-113 Print.

African Fic “Rethinking African Fiction in the Era of Globalization: A Nigerian English Contest of text and context”Journal of the studies Association1.1,2005:87-97.Print

Kehinde,Ayo and Mbipom Joy Ebong “discovery,Assertion and Self –Realisation in Recent Nigerian Migration Feminist Fiction: The Example of Sefi Att’s Everything Good Will Come” African Nebula,Issue3,2011:62-77 Print.

Kehinde, Ayo andMbipom Joy Ebong “Discovery, Assertion and Self-Realisation in Recent Nigerian Migrant Feminist Fiction: The Example of Sefi Atta s Everything Good Will Come” African Nebula, Issue3, 2011:62-77 Print.

Kolawole, Mary Text, Textuality and Contextuality: Paradigm Lost and Paradigms Regained in Literary Theory. IleIfe: Obafemi Awolowo University Press2005 Print.

Mamudu, C.O Theorizing Magic realism in Latin American and African Literary Traditions: The Writing of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Ben Okri, Unpublished M.A Thesis,Department of English

Oko, Eze Ernest Animism in Ben Okri’s the Famished Road and Songs of Enchantment, Unpublished M.A Thesis, Department of English, University of Ibadan 2010 Print.

Okri, Ben the Famished Road. Ibadan: spectrum Books Limited 1991 Print. Songs of Enchantment. London: Vintage Books 1993 Print.

Kavita Chouhan, Ph.D. Research Scholar, School of Studies in English, Vikram University, Ujjain, M.P.

Dr. Anjana Pandey, Head, School of Studies in English, Vikram University, Madhya Pradesh.

Fluid Realities: Water as a Climate Witness in Select Poems on Environmental Crisis

Seena N

In the era of ecological instability, water emerges not merely as a passive backdrop but as a sentient force bearing witness to the shifting dynamics of climate change. This study investigates how water functions as a posthuman witness and material agent in three contemporary climate poems: Sukrita Paul Kumar's Tsunami Snapshots, Rohan Chhetri's Fish Cross the Border in Rain, and Ruth Padel's Water Wars. Using the frameworks of Jane Bennett's vibrant matter and Stacy Al aimo's trans-corporeality, the paper explores how water operates as a powerful entity that records trauma, contests geopolitical borders, and reflects fractured ecological identities. These poems do not treat water simply as a symbolic device; instead, they foreground its unpredictable vitality and its deep entanglement with human and nonhuman suffering. Through poetic language, water becomes a site of memory, mourning, and resistance, reminding readers that it is not merely the substance of life but a repository of planetary grief and survival.

Keywords: Ecological identity, Entanglement, Climate change, Trans-corporeality, Geopolitical connections.

Introduction

Water has long occupied a central place in human imagination, mythology, and material survival. However, in the age of climate change, it demands to be seen not only as a life-giving element but also as a volatile and responsive participant in the ecological crisis. Whether it floods coastlines, erodes histories, or vanishes silently into drought, water carries with it the scars of planetary degradation and the weight of anthropogenic violence. It does not merely surround us; it saturates our bodies, thoughts, and ecosystems. Poetry, as a form of ecological expression, has become a potent medium through which the agency of water is reimagined. This paper examines three poems that treat water not just as subject or setting but as an active presence capable of grief, memory, and transformation. Drawing on Jane Bennett's theory of vibrant matter, which proposes that nonhuman entities possess a dynamic and often unpredictable vitality, and Stacy Alaimo's concept of trans-corporeality, which emphasizes the material interconnections between human and nonhuman bodies, the

study positions water as a force that challenges human exceptionalism. These theoretical lenses help illuminate how water operates in the selected poems as a witness to trauma, a medium of resistance, and a fragmented archive of environmental and political histories.

In Sukrita Paul Kumar's Tsunami Snapshots, the ocean is portrayed as a birthing force that simultaneously enacts destruction and renewal. The poem captures the haunting aftermath of a tsunami through a deeply personal and collective lens, where the sea does not merely consume but also narrates loss. Rohan Chhetri's Fish Cross the Border in Rain engages with the transnational flows of rivers and the political consequences of damming, surveillance, and ecological violence. Here, water becomes a smuggler of histories and a vessel of wounded life, resisting the rigid constructs of state control. Ruth Padel's Water Wars, with its six evocative sections, traverses a global terrain to explore how water is commodified, spiritualized, extracted, and erased in late capitalist ecologies. Through diverse poetic strategies, Padel's work constructs water as a polyphonic force that eludes containment and insists on being acknowledged in its multiplicity. Together, these poems offer a rich hydrological archive that transcends metaphor and moves into the domain of posthuman ethics. They compel us to consider water not as a mute substance flowing beneath human narratives but as a vibrant and trans-corporeal presence that shapes and is shaped by the world around it. Water becomes a witness not only to the environmental transformations of the Anthropocene but also to the entangled lives, deaths, and memories that ripple through its depths. By listening to water through the lens of poetry, this article proposes a way of rethinking ecological agency and fostering an ethic of care that acknowledges the liveliness of the nonhuman world.

Water as Border-Crosser and Political Witness in Rohan Chhetri's *Fish Cross the Border in Rain*

In Rohan Chhetri's Fish Cross the Border in Rain, water becomes a silent insurgent, a fluid witness slipping across national boundaries, exposing the artificiality of borders and the ecological violence they enable. The poem unfolds through a deeply personal memory, as the speaker recalls a journey to the river with his father. However, this seemingly innocent moment is quickly undercut by the stark realities of hydro-political manipulation. The scene evokes a dam opened "in the kingdom across the border," causing the aqueduct to pulse with a force that has been mechanically regulated, not naturally released. Here, water is no longer a neutral element; it is politically weaponized, its flow controlled by sovereign hands, and its movement dictated by power rather than gravity. This manipulation of water reveals a deeper ecological injustice. The river, once a site of generational memory and familial bonding, has been transformed into a stage for geopolitical assertion. Chhetri's description of "men wear lead batteries around their necks / & wadchest-deep casting low voltage / discs of current rounding the fish belly up" is brutal and precise. The fish, stunned into submission, are no longer symbols of abundance but of exploitation. The violence enacted upon them is not just biological but symbolic, exposing the ways in which human greed and technological intervention devastate aquatic life. Jane Bennett's notion of vibrant matter

becomes especially relevant here, as the river and its fish are caught in a web of electrical currents and industrial practices that reduce living bodies to mechanical outputs (20). Yet, even in their subjugation, the fish retain a ghostly agency, surfacing as witnesses to the systems that exploit them.

The moment when the fish "wake older, dreaming brief new lives huddled / in a foreign prison gasping at each other's / gills" is chilling in its imagery. The fish, displaced and blinded, evoke a broader refugee condition, as if the river itself has become a site of incarceration. Water, typically associated with freedom and movement, here becomes a conduit for forced migration. Alaimo's theory of trans-corporeality provides a useful framework to interpret this moment (20). The fish are not only physiologically affected by the toxic waters and electric shocks but also entangled in a network of human decisions, transboundary conflicts, and environmental degradation. Their suffering is not isolated; it seeps into human consciousness, implicating all who bear witness.

Moreover, Chhetri's poem is laden with irony. The father, "singing / because the breeze makes him young in the face," is juxtaposed against the grim imagery of poisoned ecosystems and mechanized death. This contrast highlights a generational disconnect, where nostalgic recollections of riverside outings are layered over present-day realities of environmental collapse. The breeze, a symbol of vitality, cannot conceal the stench of decaying ecologies. The poem thus becomes an elegy for both the river and the innocence lost in the shadow of industrial modernization.

The act of crossing, the movement of fish across an unseen border,serves as a potent metaphor for water's refusal to conform to national ideologies. Rivers do not recognize sovereignty; they flow according to their own rhythms. Yet, the human impulse to partition, dam, and divert disrupts these natural movements, transforming rivers into geopolitical pawns. The poem critiques the anthropocentric arrogance that assumes mastery over water, failing to acknowledge its fluid resistance. Water, in this sense, is both victim and resistor. It carries the residue of electric pulses, the memory of stunned fish, and the burdens of disputed territories.

Chhetri does not offer a resolution. Instead, he leaves readers with the image of fish gasping "like a sack of mirrors." This metaphor suggests fractured reflection, a multiplicity of perspectives that cannot be neatly contained. The fish reflect us, our violence, our borders, our delusions of control. Yet, they also mirror something deeper: the persistent agency of the more-than-human world, struggling to survive in the margins of human conflict. The river, electric and muddy, emerges not only as a site of loss but as a document of political trespass and ecological betrayal.

Ultimately, Fish Cross the Border in Rain compels us to confront the unseen violence carried by rivers and to recognize the ways in which water becomes entangled in the machinery of power. Through Chhetri's precise, mournful verse, water transforms from a passive element into a vigilant observer, whose currents carry the histories we try to suppress.

It does not speak in words, but its witness is undeniable—etched into the gills of fish, the pulse of aqueducts, and the silent astonishment of sons standing beside their fathers.

Water as Fragmented Identity in Ruth Padel's *Water Wars*

Ruth Padel's Water Wars is a polyvocal and multi-sectional meditation on the global crisis of water scarcity, overuse, and commodification. Structured into six titled sections—Water Wars, Water Connects, Water is Identity, A Banquet at the Water Table, Rainbow, and Water Bed. The poem constructs water as a dispersed, unstable, yet persistent presence. Through its fragmented form and diverse geographic and philosophical references, the poem presents water not as a unified concept, but as a posthuman entity whose vitality challenges political structures, penetrates bodily and psychological boundaries, and mirrors the fractured state of the world's ecological consciousness.

The first section, "Do You Know Where You Are in the Milky Way?," immediately resituates water in a planetary and cosmic register. The river, once a source of life and cultural memory, is reduced to "the last struggle of the water butterfly / in toxic red mud," a disturbing image that signals the violent consequence of extractive capitalism. The mention of aluminium—used to connect a SIM card—links personal digital connectivity to global resource extraction. Padel here reminds readers that modern life is entangled with distant ecological devastation. Bennett's concept of vibrant matter becomes particularly apt in this context, as water, soil, and mineral ores are not simply exploited materials but possess energies that resist and respond to human intervention (31). Water is wounded, yet not inert. It becomes a site of struggle; a dynamic presence caught between extinction and survival.

In the section Water Connects, the poem evokes the fluidity of thought, memory, and bodily existence. Describing water as a leak "from the conscious mind" and "a gush from the pericardial sac," Padel blends psychological and physiological imagery to illustrate how water permeates all boundaries. This entanglement aligns with Stacy Alaimo's theory of trans-corporeality, which emphasizes the permeability of human bodies and ecological systems (19). The human body is not separate from the water that courses through it; rather, the two are part of the same porous continuum. Even language, the poet suggests, is a watery medium"not quite real enough / till pushed through the mesh of words." In this moment, poetry itself becomes a kind of waterwork, an effort to contain, translate, and channel fluid realities.

The section Water is Identity deepens the poem's inquiry by asserting that water embodies multiplicity and dislocation. The speaker claims, "I am different in different places," and this fluid voice resists being pinned down or named. Water here becomes a metaphor for displaced identities, for all that refuses fixity. The reference to "the scarlet fleck / in the black and white stone eye of Shiva" and "a swamp cloud of mosquitoes" expands the geographical and cultural frame, blending sacred iconography with disease-bearing marshes. This juxtaposition speaks to water's dual power to nourish and to infect, to bless and to

displace. Water, like identity in the globalized Anthropocene, becomes ungraspable and mobile, shaped by systems of neglect, migration, and surveillance.

In A Banquet at the Water Table, Padel critiques the politics of ownership and resource extraction. The question "Who owns beneath?" disrupts human claims over subterranean reservoirs, pointing toward a deeper ecological mystery. The poet imagines water trapped "in blue rock" beneath the Earth's mantle, evoking the silent depths of planetary time. Here, water becomes a hidden force that, if extracted, could destabilize the very balance that holds the Earth together. Bennett's vision of matter as affective and unpredictable is again relevant, as water is not only a substance to be mined, but a co-sustainer of geophysical equilibrium. The reference to Time Magazine proclaiming this hidden water as a solution to human problems is ironic, suggesting how modern society continues to see water as a fix rather than as a being with which we are ethically entangled.

The fifth section, Rainbow, brings water into sharper focus as a carrier of memory, violence, and invisibility. The shimmering oil from a "spill in the Niger Basin" contaminates both environment and meaning, rendering water a toxic witness. The speaker confesses, "I am the journey this drop from your tap / has taken to get here," suggesting that every act of consumption is haunted by hidden histories. Water here is more than physical substance; it is a geopolitical document, moving across invisible boundaries of labour, pollution, and migration. The reference to "the invisible cycle / of evaporation, precipitation and runoff / (trying to reach the sea)" connects the local to the planetary, reinforcing that water's movement is always relational. Alaimo's framework reminds us that this cycle passes through and around our bodies; what we refuse to think about will nonetheless return, materially and metaphorically, to our systems.

Finally, in Water Bed, water is presented as dependent on human engineering yet threatening to exceed it. "I have no form without a container," says the voice of water, acknowledging both its pliability and its resistance. This line undercuts the human fantasy of control. The mention that "a thousand tonnes / of me [are needed] to make a single tonne of aluminium" returns us to the earlier critique of industrial consumption. Water is not only overused; it is commodified, quantified, and reduced to contracts of productivity. Yet in this very commodification, water becomes uncanny, exposing the contradictions of capitalist efficiency. The poem's reference to "drought at the heart of India" links these global systems back to localized suffering, reminding us that the consequences of consumption often appear elsewhere, often among the most vulnerable.

Padel's Water Wars therefore articulates a deeply posthuman vision of water. The poem refuses a singular identity for water, instead offering a mosaic of voices, locations, and temporalities that defy linearity. Water is spiritual and industrial, intimate and geopolitical, visible and hidden. It mourns, remembers, and resists through its persistent circulation. By invoking both Bennett's and Alaimo's ideas, the poem challenges readers to listen to water as a narrative force—one that has been wounded by human ambition yet

continues to flow with a stubborn, unsettling vitality. Through this poetic journey, we are invited not to master water, but to recognize our entanglement with its fluid reality.

Water as a Posthuman Witness Across the Three Poems

Across the three poems by Sukrita Paul Kumar, Rohan Chhetri, and Ruth Padel, water emerges not as a neutral background element but as an agential force—capable of disrupting, remembering, grieving, and resisting. Despite their differences in style, structure, and context, all three poets reconfigure water as a participant in ecological and political events, aligning with the central tenets of posthuman ecocriticism. Through a comparative reading, it becomes evident that water functions simultaneously as a catastrophic life force, a political actor, and a fragmented archive of identity, challenging the human-centred frameworks that typically dominate environmental discourse.

In Kumar's Tsunami Snapshots, the sea embodies both life-giving and life-taking energies, making visible the paradox of creation and destruction. Water in this poem is not simply an external threat; it is deeply entangled with human life, from birth to obliteration. The ocean's capacity to "swallow her children" after years of quiet reverence reveals a rupture in human trust toward nature. Jane Bennett's concept of vibrant matter helps us understand this shift, as she argues that nonhuman entities—including water—possess agency and affective power, "the capacity of things... to produce effects" (6). Kumar's sea does not merely react to environmental imbalance; it enacts memory and loss, asserting itself as a sentient witness to planetary trauma.

Similarly, Chhetri's Fish Cross the Border in Rain constructs the river as both victim and subversive force within a larger system of political violence. The act of crossing, typically seen as a human or animal movement, is appropriated by water itself. Rivers, although mapped and bordered by nation-states, continue to resist confinement through their very nature. The presence of stunned fish—trapped in a "foreign prison"—is emblematic of a broader ecological violence enacted by state power. Bennett's theory again applies here, as the fish and the water are not inert casualties; rather, they carry an immanent vitality that unsettles human control. The river's pulsing flow, the electric current, and the bodies of the fish become co-participants in a scene of ecological degradation. As Bennett reminds us, "efficacy or agency always depends on the collaboration, cooperation, or interactive interference of many bodies and forces" (21). Chhetri's river and its entangled inhabitants embody this collaborative vibrancy.

Padel's Water Wars extends this posthuman framework by fragmenting water across multiple global locations and thematic layers. The fluid is no longer confined to a single river or ocean but spans spiritual, industrial, physiological, and psychological realms. Water in this poem is commodified and distributed, yet it retains its agency through symbolic resistance. The voice of water declares, "I have no form without a container," revealing its dependency on human systems while subtly mocking that dependence. Stacy Alaimo's theory of trans-corporeality becomes particularly salient in this context. Alaimo argues that human

bodies are not isolated entities but ultimately inseparable from the environment through constant exchanges with air, water, and toxins (2). Padel's evocation of oil spills, poisoned rivers, and hidden reservoirs illustrates these exchanges, drawing attention to the porous boundaries between the human and the nonhuman.

What unites all three poems is the rejection of water as a static metaphor. Instead, water is presented as a fluid ontology—a shifting entity whose roles evolve with historical, ecological, and emotional currents. In Kumar's poem, water mourns; in Chhetri's, it resists; in Padel's, it transforms. Water becomes an actor of memory, implicated in human and nonhuman suffering yet never reducible to victimhood. These poets give voice to what Timothy Morton calls "hyperobjects"entities so massively distributed across space and time that they defy direct comprehension (Morton 1). Water, in its planetary circulation, accumulation of trauma, and unpredictable transformations, functions as such a hyperobject, omnipresent yet elusive.

The interplay of vibrant matter and trans-corporeality across the poems thus challenges conventional readings of ecological poetry. Rather than viewing nature as passive or as backdrop to human drama, the poems position water as an affective and material force whose presence cannot be ignored. These poetic visions urge a shift in perspective, from anthropocentric control to interspecies entanglement, from dominance to ethical response. They demand that we recognize water not merely as a resource but as a relational entity—one that speaks in waves, resists in floods, remembers in silence, and endures in drought.

In the end, what these poems offer is not a solution to the climate crisis, but a reimagining of how we perceive the more-than-human world. They suggest that healing cannot begin without listening—and water, in all its fluidity and fragmentation, has much to say. It remembers the children of tsunamis, the stunned fish gasping at the border, and the invisible toxins moving through our bloodstreams. Through poetry, water becomes a witness, not to the past alone, but to the unfolding and entangled futures we all inhabit.

Conclusion

Water, in the selected poems by Sukrita Paul Kumar, Rohan Chhetri, and Ruth Padel, emerges as far more than a natural element shaped by human use; it is reimagined as a climate witness, a grieving archive, and a restless posthuman force. These poets do not merely describe water; they animate it. Through their verse, water remembers, protests, flows across forbidden borders, and mourns its entanglement with systems of power, violence, and neglect. The poems collectively articulate a new poetics of water—one that resists sentimentality, transcends symbolism, and foregrounds agency within fluid ecologies.

By applying the frameworks of Jane Bennett's vibrant matter and Stacy Alaimo's trans-corporeality, this article has explored how water acts not as backdrop but as participant in the Anthropocene. Bennett reminds us that agency does not belong exclusively to humans but arises in assemblages of human and nonhuman forces; in these poems, water is a central member of that assemblage, capable of interrupting, remembering, and reconstituting

meaning (23). Alaimo, in turn, pushes us to recognize the porousness of our bodily and ecological boundaries, underscoring that what flows through rivers also flows through us (3). These theoretical lenses help illuminate how water, in its many forms, shapes not only climate narratives but the contours of subjectivity and survival.

Kumar's depiction of the tsunami reveals water as both womb and weapon, collapsing distinctions between life and death, comfort and catastrophe. Chhetri's electric river becomes a border-crossing force that refuses the limitations imposed by nationalism, offering a powerful commentary on transnational ecological injustice. Padel's multifaceted portrayal expands water into the molecular and mythic, transforming it into a shimmering, destabilized force that exposes the illusions of containment and ownership. In all three, water resists domestication—it floods the symbolic, overflows the political, and reclaims the poetic. What these poems offer is not an escape from the realities of environmental collapse but a deeper immersion into them. They reveal that to write about water in the time of climate crisis is not to romanticize it, but to confront its spectral agency and wounded memory. Through these verses, water ceases to be a passive mirror of human action and becomes instead a turbulent voiceaccusing, mourning, and remembering.

In listening to that voice, we begin to revise our understanding of ecological agency. Water, in its posthuman role, does not belong to us. It is not ours to possess or perfect. It precedes us, permeates us, and will outlast us. Poetry, in bearing witness to water's witness, allows us to glimpse this truthnot only intellectually, but viscerally. In its flows and ruptures, water tells the story of the planet. These poets have simply given it the language. ■

Work Cited

Alaimo, Stacy. Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the material Self. Indiana University Press, 2010

Bennett, Jane. Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things. Duke University Press, 2010.

Chhetri, Rohan. "Fish Cross the Border in Rain." Open Your Eyes: An Anthology of Climate

Change Poetry and Prose, edited by Vinita Agrawal, Hawakal, 2020, p. 30.

Kumar, Sukrita Paul. "Tsunami Snapshots." Open Your Eyes: An Anthology of Climate Change Poetry and prose, edited by Vinita Agrawal, Hawakal, 2020, p.31

Morton, Timothy. Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World. Universityof Minnesota Press, 2013.

Padel, Ruth. "Water wars." Open Your Eyes: An Anthology of Climate Change Poetry and prose, edited by Vinita Agrawal, Hawakal, 2020, p.21

Seena N. Research Scholar, Deptt. of English, Calicut University, Kerala.

Literary Sensibility vis-à-vis Technology: A Study

Bhabani Sankar Behera

As artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic systems increasingly permeate our lives—transforming our communication, education, employmentand cognition—the importance of literature may appear to be diminishing. In this day of swift technological progress, the importance of literary education is not only preserved but becoming progressively vital. This study contends that literature is essential in developing and enhancing three uniquely human faculties: empathy, ethical reasoningand creativity. These attributes are vital in a realm where machines can analyse data but lack emotion, make decisions without contemplation, and produce outputs without genuine creativity.

This paper analyses how interaction with literature enriches emotional intelligence, improves moral sensitivity, and cultivates imaginative capacity, utilizing interdisciplinary perspectives from literary studies, cognitive neuroscience, moral philosophy, and AI ethics. Literature provides immersive narrative experiences that enable readers to explore varied views, grapple with ethical challenges, and imagine alternate realities, so enhancing their comprehension of humanity and society. These encounters cultivate capacities that AI systems, regardless of their sophistication, cannot emulate.

This study ultimately promotes the reunification of the humanities, especially literary studies, with modern discussions on technology. For AI to benefit mankind instead of supplanting it, we must guarantee that our future is influenced not alone by engineers and programmers, but also by intellectuals, narrators, and audiences. Consequently, literature must remain pivotal in cultivating ethical, sympathetic and imaginative persons equipped to address the moral dilemmas of the algorithmic era.

Keywords: artificial intelligence,technological progress,literary education,emotional intelligence

We inhabit an era characterized by data dominance, wherein algorithms progressively influence our decisions, including our consumption habits and modes of communication. Artificial intelligence (AI) already anticipates human preferences, automates tasks, facilitates discussions, and even explores the realm of creativity. Machines compose poetry, make visuals, create music, and provide interpretations of literary works. The significance of the humanities, especially literature, has been challenged in such a world. What function might

imaginative storytelling serve in a civilization fixated on optimization and efficiency? What is the purpose of reading novels or poems when artificial intelligence can summarize, evaluate, and even create narratives?

The solution resides not in the rejection of technology, but in the reclamation and reaffirmation of our humanity's essence. Literature transcends mere words on a paper; it serves as a conduit for the evolution of awareness, culture, and morality. It offers a realm where language intersects with humanity, where narratives delineate ethical intricacies, and where creativity transcends the limitations of code. Literature enhances our capacity to understand various perspectives, confront moral complexity, and imagine alternative realities beyond the current one.

Although AI systems can analyse language with exceptional speed, they are devoid of the interiority—the emotional profundity and ethical consciousness—that literature fosters in its audience. In this regard, literature is indispensable. It functions not simply as a cultural artifact but also as a dynamic influence that influences our emotions, thoughts, and interpersonal relationships. This study examines how literature cultivates three fundamental human faculties—empathy, ethics, and imagination—and contends that these capacities are vital in the digital era. Rather than becoming outdated, literary engagement may emerge as one of our most potent instruments for addressing the problems and uncertainties of a future increasingly influenced by intelligent technologies.

Literature and Empathy: Narratives as Human Bridge

Empathy is the ability to comprehend and share the emotions of another—an aptitude that technology can replicate but not authentically feel. Literature serves as an exceptional platform for cultivating empathy. Through novels, plays, and poems, readers engage with lives markedly apart from their own, encountering unfamiliar emotions, identities, and challenges.Martha Nussbaum (1995) contends that literary reading constitutes a moral endeavour, allowing readers to perceive others not as mere instruments, but as complete individuals. In a society where AI frequently simplifies persons to mere data points, literature reinstates the intricacy of the human experience. Fictional people stimulate contemplation of real-world disparities, anguish, and happiness—cultivating emotional intelligence in ways that data cannot.

Furthermore, neuroscience corroborates this perspective. Research indicates that reading literary fiction stimulates brain areas linked to social cognition and theory of mind (Kidd & Castano, 2013). Literature not only provides entertainment; it also restructures the brain to enhance empathy.

Ethics in the Algorithmic Era: Literature as a Moral Laboratory

In the era of artificial intelligence, ethical concerns have transitioned from futuristic fiction to pressing, tangible challenges. We are confronted with a landscape of unparalleled moral complexity, characterized by autonomous weapons that render life-and-death choices

devoid of human intervention and algorithms that perpetuate systemic bias in policing, hiring, or lending. However, prevailing paradigms in science and technology frequently prioritize efficiency, utility, and optimization, relegating ethical inquiries to either insufficient examination or mere technical considerations.

In contrast, literature provides a distinctive arena for ethical inquiry. It serves as a moral laboratory—an imagined space where readers can safely engage with challenging problems, complex reasons, and contradictory values. In contrast to computational systems that prioritize binary logic, literature encompasses nuance, contradiction, and ambiguity. Dystopian works like George Orwell's 1984 and Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale serve not just as entertainment but also as critiques of surveillance, ideological conformity, and the degradation of individual liberties, prompting inquiries that resonate profoundly in our data-centric cultures. Philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's concept of "moral narratives" underscores the significance of tales in enriching ethical decisions by embedding them within personal experiences and historical frameworks. Literature encourages readers to engage in critical thinking—not through abstract concepts, but in relation to real experiences. Storytelling exposes readers to many viewpoints, enhances moral imagination, and sharpens their capacity to discern not only what is right, but also the significance of such judgments.

Unlike AI's focus on swift decision-making and forecasting results, literature advocates for a more deliberate and contemplative approach to ethical reasoning. It instructs us that morality encompasses not only outcomes but also processes, circumstances, and values. As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into our systems, literature remains vital for fostering the intelligent, empathetic debate that algorithms cannot emulate.

Imagination in the Era of Automation

Imagination is vital to our humanity. It serves as the cornerstone of artistic expression, empathy, inventiveness, and identity. In an era increasingly dominated by artificial intelligence and automation, the significance of creativity becomes both more critical and more jeopardized. Although AI systems can produce art, music, or literature through extensive databases and predictive algorithms, these creations are inherently derivative. They reflect pre-existing concepts rather than generating anything genuinely novel. In contrast to machines, human imagination encompasses abstraction, emotional profundity, conflict, and the imaginative anticipation of the unknown.

Literature is fundamental in cultivating this uniquely human ability. Literature enables readers to beyond their immediate reality through storytelling, metaphor, and language innovation. It contests established conventions, expands the limits of perception, and fosters alternative modes of existence. Authors such as James Joyce, Toni Morrison, and Haruki Murakami employ non-linear storytelling, symbolic frameworks, and surreal logic to elicit inner realms that defy measurement. Their works engage readers in imaginary realms where ambiguity and uncertainty are not issues to be resolved but experiences to be investigated.

The significance of literature as a means of fostering creativity in education is paramount. As educational institutions progressively prioritize STEM and vocational achievements, the study of literature offers an essential alternative. It prompts students to inquire not only about the functioning of the world but also about the nature of the world that is worthy of construction. It cultivates curiosity, critical thinking, and receptiveness—qualities vital for responsible innovation and democratic participation. In an era where automation threatens to limit human experience to the programmable, literature serves as a reminder of the richness, unpredictability, and creative capacity of the human intellect. It provides not an escape from reality, but the means to reinvent and transform it.

Literature vs. AI: Competition or Collaboration?

The emergence of artificial intelligence, especially huge language models that can produce essays, poetry, and novels, has elicited both enthusiasm and apprehension within literary communities. Instruments like as ChatGPT and other generative AI models obscure the distinctions between human and machine creativity, prompting intricate inquiries regarding authorship, originality, and the essence of artistic expression. Does the capacity of machines to replicate literary creation pose a threat to human creativity, or does it facilitate new opportunities for collaboration and exploration?

Some critics apprehend that AI-generated content may diminish human authorship, while others perceive it as a technological augmentation of the creative process. AI can function as a co-creator—an aide that assists writers in brainstorming, experimenting with style, or surmounting writer's block. This collaboration must be scrutinized critically. Human literary insight is crucial for ensuring that the outputs of such systems are ethically sound and culturally significant. Moreover, literature can serve a pivotal function in influencing the development and implementation of AI. The moral intricacies, emotional subtleties, and profundity of human experience included in literary works provide a wealth of ideals that can guide the ethical programming of intelligent systems. Literary experts and writers, well-versed in the nuances of language and character, ought to be included in technological design and policy-making discussions.

Furthermore, literature can facilitate society's critical examination of the ramifications of artificial intelligence. Novels such as Kazuo Ishiguro's Klara and the Sun and Ian McEwan's Machines Like Me not only have AI characters but also pose essential inquiries on consciousness, empathy, and the essence of humanity. These narratives compel us to examine our preconceptions and reflect on how technology influences, and at times distorts, our humanity. Instead of simply rejecting AI, literature encourages us to utilize technology judiciously—and, crucially, to maintain our humanity in its midst.

Education and the Literary Mind: Readjusting the Curriculum

In recent years, global educational systems have increasingly prioritized science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, frequently to the detriment

of the humanities. Literature, specifically, is being relegated in curriculum focused on market-driven results and quantifiable abilities. Although STEM education is essential for equipping kids for the requirements of a technologically advanced economy, the increasing disparity threatens to produce a generation that is technically skilled yet ethically indifferent, emotionally disconnected, and culturally ignorant.

Literature provides more than aesthetic enjoyment; it fosters vital human capacities including empathy, ethical contemplation, critical analysis, and imaginative insight. These attributes are not just advantageous but essential in an era influenced by artificial intelligence, where ethical quandaries, cultural transformations, and social intricacies cannot be resolved solely through technological reasoning. A well-rounded curriculum that integrates literature with technical education prepares students to excel in the job market while fostering their development as intelligent, caring, and involved citizens. Interdisciplinary methodologies can reconcile this disparity. Integrating literary narratives into AI ethics classes or coupling programming projects with reflective writing can cultivate a comprehensive knowledge. These pairings enable children to comprehend the power and responsibility inherent in technological progress. Narrative helps humanize programming, and ethical exploration can enhance technical comprehension.

Consequently, educators are pivotal in advocating for the significance of literary analysis. Literature must be regarded not as an ancillary enrichment but as a fundamental discipline that cultivates the moral and intellectual essence of future generations. By emphasizing the significance of the literary intellect, education may meet the demands of the technological era—cultivating persons who are not only adept at constructing the future but also capable of conceptualizing a desirable existence.

Conclusion: Restoring the Human Narrative

In an age of rapid technological progress, where algorithms increasingly dictate our choices and mold our experiences, literature continues to be an essential human resource. It provides an experience that no artificial intelligence can ever replicate: a profound and intricate connection with the complexity of human emotion, morality, and significance. Literature not only mirrors life but also interprets, interrogates, and alters it. Through the cultivation of empathy, the promotion of ethical inquiry, and the stimulation of imagination, literary engagement equips individuals to coexist with AI and to responsibly influence its evolution.

The trajectory of technology ought to be guided not only by the principles of innovation but also by the insights of humanistic philosophy. Literature provides us with the means to comprehend ourselves and others, to traverse uncertainty with empathy, and to conceive futures rooted in justice and dignity. In this regard, literature is not an artifact of history but a framework for a morally aware future.

To safeguard the human tale, we must not diminish literature in the pursuit of development. We must reinvest in its transformative potential—reestablishing narrative,

introspection, and imagination as fundamental to our collective destiny. Ultimately, the future will not be shaped solely by robots, but by individuals who possess the audacity to envision beyond their capabilities. ■

Works Cited:

Kidd, D. C., & Castano, E. (2013). *Reading literary fiction improves theory of mind*. Science, 342(6156), 377-380.

Nussbaum, M. C. (1995). *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*. Beacon Press.

MacIntyre, A. (1984). *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. University of Notre Dame Press.

Ishiguro, K. (2021). *Klara and the Sun*. Faber & Faber.

Atwood, M. (1985). *The Handmaid's Tale*. McClelland and Stewart.

Orwell, G. (1949). *1984*. Secker & Warburg.

McEwan, I. (2019). *Machines Like Me*. Jonathan Cape.

Bhabani Sankar Behera, Dept. of English, KISS University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

With District Governor Rtn Yagnasish Mohapatra in Dist office, RID - 3262 at Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Green and the Dumb Others: Urban Eco-Consciousness in the Works of Eunice de Souza

Barsha Sahoo

This paper presents De Souza's concern for the natural environment including stray animals, rivers, birds, and pets often neglected in the fast-paced urban world. Through the lens of ecocriticism analysing her poetry collections like *Learn from the Almond Leaves* reveals how 'crows' are essential for the cleanliness of cities through their feasting on roadkill. The 'Mithi River' which flows through Mumbai is so polluted that it is fit to be a garbage dumpster rather than a place to swim and admire. The two novels *Dangerlok*, and *Dev and Siman* present the need for love and caring that the modern individual duelling in cities gets through their interaction with pet parrots or by feeding stray dogs. Animals melt the doors of loneliness, making humans fitter to face society daily as they head to work in a harsh and judgemental city and leaving little ground for emotional fulfilment. De Souza details how the little nature that's left in Mumbai namely the trees, the monkeys, the Koel, and the moon inspired her to write her best poetry. She also sheds light on how every season in the city feels like summer due to the pollution.

Ultimately, "Green and the Dumb Others" seeks to illuminate Eunice de Souza's works as both a social critique and an ecological lens, contributing to a broader understanding of eco-consciousness within the urban literary canon.

Keywords: Eco-consciousness, Urban Nature, City, Stray, Dangerlok, ecological awareness

Introduction

The team 'modernite' or 'modernity' by Charles Baudelaire means the fast-moving city life leaving little to no room for artistic experiences (Wikipedia contributors). Cities were built for better living through commercial activities like trade, employment opportunities, and recreation activities. City dwellers must work to sustain their livelihood with little to no leisure to idle around maintaining a green environment or feeding the stray animal kingdom. Eunice De Souza even though she lived in the city of Mumbai practiced transcendentalism. She captured the external beauty of the city through her interactions with urban nature in her literary masterpieces.

Transcendentalism is a literary movement that started in nineteenth-century America through the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and was popularised by writers who

experienced nature first hand like the diary entries of Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman. According to Philip F. Gura as opined in his masterpiece *American Transcendentalism: A History* (2007), "For the Transcendentalists, nature was not merely a backdrop for human activity but a dynamic, living entity that embodied divine principles, inspiring spiritual awakening and ethical living." Away from anthropological views that put man at the center of the universe, transcendentalists have an eccentric approach to the workings of the universe. Without nature, humans cannot exist in harmony. Even city dwellers without nature can't cope up with the rising climate temperate and clean air. Henry David Thoreau in his philosophical book *Walden* (1854) writes, "Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads." Thoreau states that even though we try to control nature, it is above us spiritually.

Transcendentalists' respect for nature has been reflected in Indian literature since time immemorial. Both Transcendentalism and Indian Literature view nature as sacred and reflective of the divine. Indian texts like The *Rigveda*, and *Upanishads,* even in Kalidas's writings, often emphasize the unity of all life, mirroring Emerson's vision of the over soul that connects humans and the natural world. In Eunice De Souza's texts, the presence of nature through Koel, Crow, Stray dogs, the avocado trees, and house plants make human life bearable in the ever-summer weather of Mumbai.

Urban nature in Indian Literature reflects the interplay between the natural environment and the urban setting, often portraying the tension or harmony between modernity and nature. Writers have used this concept to explore themes of alienation, loss, and the impact of industrialization on both the environment and human consciousness

Eunice De Souza is often associated with urban themes; nature is sometimes juxtaposed against the complexity of modern, urban life. In her poetry, the natural world contrasts with the noise, confusion, and alienation of the city. The tension between the urban and the natural worlds can be interpreted as a critique of contemporary life's detachment from simpler, more organic realities.

Nature in her poems is often a means of expressing emotional depth, illustrating the tension between the individual and the larger world, or offering a retreat from the complexities of urban and personal life. Her poems reflect urban life, often blending elements of the natural world within the context of urban settings. Urban nature in her work is not lush or pristine but often reflects the grittiness and complexity of city living.

Nature as a Reflection of the Inner World

Eunice de Souza grieves for a friend's death by planting an Avocado tree, she states in her poem "Avocado Stone", "…I will give it room to be a tree/ to last/ as long as grief lasts." (De Souza, *Learn from the Almond Leaf)* Here, De Souza gives a melancholic reason for her planting and growing a tree which is to grieve and remember her departed friends from this world.

In her famous poem "Women in Dutch Painting" she writes, "When I see myself in a mirror/ I see a drunk woman, / a house falling apart, / trees shedding leaves out of season." (De Souza, "Women in Dutch Painting"). In these lines, nature's decay and disorder mirror the poet's emotional turmoil and self-perception. The shedding leaves signify loss, transition, or despair.

In "Advice to Women" the poetess states "Keep cats/ if you want to learn to cope with/ the otherness of lovers. / Otherness is not always neglect." Her use of cats—a natural element—represents independence, detachment, and the unpredictability of relationships. This reflects an inner struggle to understand and accept emotional boundaries.

Urban Nature as a Space of Literary Creation

Eunice De Souza has written several poems on the Moon as one of the few nature aesthetics to be found and inspired by a writer in an urban space. She writes in the poem "I Distangled the Moon" how she had chopped down trees which was an obstacle to seeing the moon. In the following lines, she describes how the moon is hidden from her view due to the branches. "I disentangled the moon/ from the branches. / It's disappeared. / I built a house. /Sparrows no longer frolic/ in the mud. / I chopped down the tree/ that obstructed my view. / A lone raven breaks into song." (De Souza, *Learn from the Almond Leaf).* This also highlights the fact that the city dweller's craze for the aesthetics of space has resulted in more concrete spaces both in public and private property than nature in cities. This also led to overheating of the ground and the atmosphere of cities during the summer months.

Urban strays

In the novel *Dev and Simran* by Eunice De Souza, the protagonist is a recent widow who is childless and feels emotionally empty and distant from her family and friends. Simran's only source of feeling an emotional connection is when she feeds stray dogs. She reflects that the stray dogs are only interested in her as she feeds them regularly. Slowly but surely feeding the stray makes her feel needed and loved.

In her poem "Rats"from *Learn from the Almond Leaf* she reflects "Rat as roadkill/ Roadkill a feast for crows. / Rats are worshipped in some places, / Snakes in others. / Crows, cleaners of cities/ are not worshipped at all." In these few lines, she observes something that every person fails to notice which is the importance of crows in urban spaces. Crows help in keeping the city streets clean by eating the dead remains of ran-over rats, even snakes. This shows how important the dumb creatures are for urban places to sustain.

"Kite Season" is a poem from *Learn from The Almond Leaf* that shows how Kites with strings coated with glass dust particles are dangerous for high-altitude birds. Eunice De Souza writes "The trees are festooned with kites/ of many colours. / The Trees are festooned with birds/ hanging by a wing/ an entangled leg. /Glass-coated string."

A Portrait of the Urban Landscape

In "Mithi River" a poem from her poetry collection *Learn from the Almond Leaf* she observes "The Mithi River won't let you Sink or Swim. It will carry you on a raft of garbage to a dying sea." Mithi River is one of the main water bodies in Mumbai, one of the most populated cities in India. The poetess states how polluted the Mithi River is with human-made garbage. It is of no use physically or aesthetically. Poets for ages fail to mention the praise of the beauty of natural surroundings whose human activities have polluted our environment. Eunice de Souza shows her concern and keen observation of the degradation of nature rather than just praising what is appealing to the eyes.

Pets

Eunice De Souza writes about her pet Parrots in many of her works, be it in paragraphs or verses. In her novel *Dangerlok* (2001) the protagonist who is a professor in English shares her concern for her parrots when she is away for work while at the same time her friends talk about their children. In the poem "Pahari Parrots"; she talks about her parrots thus— "I talk about the parrot/ she talks about her children. She tells me little K cries for effect. If I get home after dark, I tell her, they look at me with sad, reproachful eyes." (De Souza, *A Necklace of Skulls).* This shows how in urban spaces a single woman's children and family are her pets. The pets long for their owner as a child does for the mother. This shows the emotional connection between humans and animals in a place where both of them are each other's safe place.

In the poem "For the Love of Lout, my Dog" she writes "For the love of Lout, my dog, / A howling pup abandoned/ At my doorstep/ I'll wake at four to walk him…" (De Souza, *Learn from the Almond Leaf).* These lines in her poem show how attached she is to her pets. She did wake up at four in the morning when all the Mumbai was asleep and took him for a walk. She also shows the side of us humans that feel pity and love for dumb animals hence her kind act of taking the dog in as her pet alongside her pet parrots.

Humidity in Seasons

In the poem "Close on the Heels" from her poetry collection *Learn from the Almond Leaves* she reflects on how seasons are all the same, even in winter months it's always hot. She prays "Close on the heels/ of a hot October/comes a hot November/a hot December. / Somebody up there, down there, /anywhere/ Have mercy…" These lines ultimately point to the fact that the earth's climate is disturbed. The atmosphere is becoming hotter and hotter and it is difficult for humans to survive in a city that knows no winter. The humidity and heat of Mumbai due to human activities find mention in her works several times. This shows how brave she was to point out the ugly with the beauty of the city of Mumbai through her works. She makes her reader aware that the way we treat nature is how nature is going to treat us. Her concern for human and their natural surrounding presents itself through topics of urban alienation and self-expression through nature motifs.

Conclusion

Eunice De Souza's poetry often reflects a profound engagement with nature, portraying it as both a symbolic and literal entity. In her works, nature is not merely a backdrop but an active participant, embodying emotions, cultural memory, and personal introspection. Through her vivid imagery and concise language, De Souza juxtaposes the natural world with human experiences, exposing its capacity for both beauty and indifference. In conclusion, her exploration of nature transcends simple descriptions of landscapes or flora and fauna; instead, it reveals the complexities of identity, displacement, and belonging. Her works remind readers of the interconnectedness between humans and their environment while inviting deeper contemplation of nature's role in shaping individual and collective consciousness. By intertwining nature with themes of mortality, spirituality, and cultural heritage, De Souza positions it as an essential element in understanding the human condition. Her poetry and novels thus offer a nuanced perspective on nature, one that resonates with universal truths yet remains deeply rooted in her unique voice and context. ■

Work Cited:

De Souza, Eunice. *Learn from the Almond Leaf.* Paperwall Media & Publishing Pvt. Ltd, 2016

De Souza, Eunice. *Dangerlok*. Penguin Random House India Pvt. Ltd, 2008.

De Souza, Eunice. *Dev & Simran*. Penguin Random House India Pvt.Ltd, 2015.

De Souza, Eunice. *Necklace of Skulls: Collected Poems.*Penguin, 2019.

De Souza, Eunice. *Fix.* Newground, India. 1979

De Souza, Eunice.*Women in Dutch Painting.*1988.

Wikipedia contributors. "Charles Baudelaire." Wikipedia, 11 Dec. 2024, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Baudelaire#:~: text=He%20coined%20the%20term% 20modernity, as%20being%20the%20first%20Modernist.

Gura, Philip F. *American Transcendentalism: A History.* Macmillan + ORM, 2008.

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden.* Maple Press, 1 Sept. 2013

Barsha Sahoo, Ph.D. Research Scholar in English, GIET University, Gunupur, Odisha.

Pandemic Driven Educational Research: Issues and Challenges in Teaching and Learning Process at the Present Time in India; Perspectives and Evaluation from a Developing Country

Mousumi Paul

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced sudden transformation in many sectors of the global community, turning the world upside down. Everything has been impacted, not excluding the education sector, which has experienced some unforeseen changes in many parts of the world. The sudden transition to online pedagogy as a result of COVID-19 in developing countries has exposed some inequalities and challenges, as well as benefits. These challenges and inequalities have now become the new realities in the educational sector of developing countries. Suggestions are provided here so that the challenges presented by the new approach can be mitigated while we come to terms with the disruptions introduced by COVID-19 to our education sector. Despite having the innumerable challenges to teach and learn English, it has become necessary to find out ways to overcome the hindrances which are encountered during the teaching-learning process. This paper aims to highlight the present scenario of teaching and learning English in a developing country like India and the probable and prospective solutions to overcome those challenges.

Keywords: Language learning, teaching- learning, multilingual classroom, second language.

Having a rich cultural diversity, India has 22 official languages (including English). Since the states were formed on linguistic lines, each of the 28 states has its native language(s) as the official language(s). English, due to its 'lingua franca' status, is an aspiration language for most of the Indians and learning English is viewed as a ticket to economic prosperity and social status. Therefore, almost all private schools in India are English medium and our obsession for English medium schools is ever increasing. Many public schools, due to political compulsions, have the state's official languages as the primary school language and English gets introduced as a second language from grade 5 onwards. Albeit, we live in a technologically advanced era where people are multitasking in a multicultural environment but it is an obvious fact that multilingualism

is not so prominent at every sphere of life, especially in education sectors and professional spheres. India, by default multicultural, can be multilingual if proper measures are taken. In today's classroom, flexibility is a must thing. Gone are the days where it is believed that each and every student is at same level of learning.

This is fact that we are not the native speakers of this language; and we have learnt it in wrong way. Instead of first listening and speaking, and then moving to reading and writing, we started in a reverse way. We started by reading the alphabets first which is indicative of reading part and then we practiced it on paper which is writing and at the third stage we started listening from teachers and sometimes from parents and speaking came as the last stage. Speech is natural to humans. We are born with an innate capacity to learn any language and more than one language. Most of the children are born with an innate ability to perceive the phonology of any language. Before six months of age, they start to recognize the vowels and consonants (in this order) of their mother tongue or the language(s) they are exposed to.

English, an extensively used language of today, has often been mentioned as 'global language'. It is the *lingua franca* of the current era and the same is taught and learnt as a second language around the world. In India, English is used not only for communicative purpose but also serves as a link language for inter-state and intrastate coordination as the nation is found with the great ethnic and linguistic diversity. Though modern technology has started playing a considerable role in imparting and acquiring the language in schools and colleges, it is rather inadequate and unproductive in small towns and rural areas. The students studying English at school and college level manage to get through the exams without making enough attempts to either understand the language or learn to appreciate the utility of the language. This article highlights the significance of using English as a tool to fulfil the interminably increasing requirements of the competitive corporate world. The tasks before educators in the contemporary day ELT and strategies to overcome are considered in this paper. The method by which the learners can put their knowledge into real daily practice is to fulfil their real-world necessities to gain an expertise over the language is emphasized.

Teaching English in India is not of course without challenges and sometimes threats. However, challenges are neither frustrating nor insurmountable. Teaching without challenges is unproductive. Challenges are something which encourages teachers to undertake action research and improve the ways of teaching. The challenges lie in various areas like the position of English in India, methods of teaching, method of blending, method of testing and evaluating. In addition, there are more factors which play crucial role in teaching English as second language in a developing country like India. Factors such as diverse socio-linguistic backgrounds of learners, medium of instruction in private and public (government run) schools, amount of exposure on English, the influence of L1, ill-trained English teachers in schools etc. Apart from these listed points, there are other significant and prominent issues which cause it difficult to learn English as second language such as, in India there are

English teachers with rich literature background in their degree (Graduation and Post Graduation) programmes but they do not have adequate knowledge of applied linguistic areas, such as psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis etc and some important theoretical linguistics branches, such as phonetics and phonology, semantics, syntax etc.

India is such a diverse country that, most of the cities have students from almost every state. The primary reason to come and settle in a city is either professional or educational. Students from states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Odisha, aspire to take admission in various popular and reputed colleges of various cities in India. As a matter of fact, initially they feel tongue-tied while they communicate either in their academic institutes or public forum. Now, the teachers are the ones who experience this fact and try to find some ways to deal with.

Few case studies would be helpful to relate such issues. Most of the Engineering Colleges in Kolkata, one of the oldest cities in India and capital of West Bengal, are infested with students from neighbouring states. It has been surveyed that the students are competent and innovative to fulfil the criteria of engineering domain; yet it has been noticed that most of those competent students fail to either explain or express their opinions while being interviewed during placement. This is not because they do not know the answers but in most of the cases they lack confidence due to lack of communication skill in English. No matter how efficiently the English teachers make them interview ready but it comes as a challenge to them when they are given the task to make the students feel confident and overcome their fear of speaking before the employer and interviewer.

This issue related to teaching English, making the students feel comfortable and confident cannot be done overnight. The root causes must be annihilated. Population is an important factor in every aspect of life. Naturally, most of the states in India do not have the infrastructure to teach a foreign language with ease. Most of the public schools do not have sufficient number of language teachers. As a result, the teachers are negligent to teach due to the student-teacher ratio. In addition, there are many villages in India where a good number of teaching faculties is lacking and the socio-economic background of the students is no sound also. Apart from this socio-economic factor, it has been observed that, even in private schools, there are obvious factors which prevent them to learn English without obstacle.

There are various classroom challenges from the teachers' end while teaching English. Some of the classroom challenges are mentioned below.

A) Insufficient time for preparation: The current circumstances differ significantly from the past. Today's environment presents greater challenges. Adapting the curriculum to meet new demands and incorporating innovative strategies to align with contemporary educational trends is essential, yet there is a lack of adequate planning for these initiatives. Educators are increasingly struggling to manage these expectations, as they

often do not have enough time for thorough preparation. The responsibilities of preparing, planning, and executing the required tasks create additional pressure, and the absence of time amplifies this stress.

B) Lack of parental support: A student spends a complete span of six to seven hours in school or college. Now it is an obvious fact that, the teachers help shape the career of a student but the one fourth (i.e. six hours out of twenty four hours in a day) of an entire day is only spent with them. As a matter of fact, parents should consciously and partly take care of their wards while they are learning and practising a second language from the very beginning. It has been observed that most of the parents have learned English for academic purpose and therefore, they always tend to translate their thought in English which is a second language for Indians. This is an obvious reason which hinders the students to think in English. In addition, working parents are so busy with their own official responsibilities that, they hardly find time to converse with their sons and daughters who are admitted in private schools of repute. This is one reason why teachers today are taking initiatives to set up meetings with parents and communicating with them so that they can have an eye on the progress of their child.

C) Changing Educational Trends: This is one of the toughest classroom challenges faced by most of the teachers and it has become more prominent after the pandemic situation caused by COVID 19. Any language needs to be practised orally for fast learning. As English is taught as second or third language in India, hence it has to be practised with utmost concern and frequency. There are many schools which are eager to adopt new technologies and tools but they may not take the same effort to give proper training to the teachers on how to use the new tools, software etc. This might result in inconsistency in their teaching style and the teachers may have frustration, leading to low job satisfaction.

D) Applying a prescribed curriculum to all types of students: Every student has different language acquisition ability. Sadly, the way English is taught to students is generic. The pace of understanding a concept differs from student to student. Situation turns crucial when a teacher is expected to apply the same curriculum and teaching methods to students with varying needs.

E) Developing interest in students: In a technologically advanced era, it is challenging to teach a language with ease and flexibility. In the era of smart phone, students can easily get “ready-made” materials they require. As a result, they lack interest to learn anything separately. Technology has eased off the way they collect information but it cannot instruct us as a teacher does with proper care. Hence, the concept of any topic needs to be illustrated by proper guidance of a teacher.

F) Classroom challenges: Dealing with a silent class is yet another classroom challenge, as a teacher can move forward confidently only if they get a good response. With changing educational trends and the limitations of teachers in student-centered classrooms, their

existence is getting tougher and tougher every day. However, a timely involvement from the school management and the cooperation from students and parents can help teachers to give their best out. A good flexible teaching platform can help them to contribute better to the education quality and the overall success rates of students. Teachers also have to make serious efforts to tackle all these classroom challenges and contribute their best to the teaching world.

G) Textbook centric curriculum: It is a known fact that each student is different and hence the way they perceive anything will be different. Teachers are instructed to follow the text books only and final examination is what they intend to keep in their mind. The limited exposure to learning makes a huge gap between what is required from the students and what knowledge they possess to tackle concerns. However, apart from these listed ones, there are many other challenges that a teacher encounters while teaching a language with a prescribed ad limited curriculum.

Challenges are always there in teaching learning process. Thus, finding out probable solutions must be the biggest concern from the end of the teachers. As the world is going digital and almost 55 percent of the world's WWW is composed in English, it has become mandatory to teach English language as fast as possible. So far as the process of teaching and learning is concerned, few ways may be practiced to facilitate the process.

In a scenario where neither adequate resources nor tools are available, English teachers themselves have to devise innovative ways to make their students' climb the staircase easily. This can be done with a resolve, as Patel says: "I have to create opportunities for the students to use English in meaningful, realistic and relevant situations". (Parel, 2008, p.07).

A) A native speaker can be asked to be a part of the learning time.

B) Group learning plays a vital role as students get motivated from the peers. It actually boosts the learning process.

C) Setting the default language of gadgets in English

D) Taking notes and remembering the mistakes

E) Watching movies in English

F) Having conversations in English as much as possible

G) Developing a regular reading habit

English, whether we like the language or not, is the *lingua franca* in various non-English-speaking countries. All things considered, English is one of the most useful languages to know in the world; therefore, no matter how many challenges are there in the process of learning and teaching this language in a developing country like India, are meant to be overcome with each passing day. ■

Works Cited:

Teaching English.org. The British council/BBC.2002

Crystal, David, *Language and the Internet*, second edition 2006, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Prem Shankar (2003). *Teaching of English*, New Delhi, APH Publishing Corporation

Parel, M. (2008). *English Language Teaching* (Methods, Tools and Techniques)

Mousumi Paul, Assistant Professor, Department of Basic Science & Humanities, Swami Vivekananda Institute of Science & Technology, Email-mousumipaul2021phd@gmail.com

While attending a meeting at Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi, as a member of NCSrC, Govt of India

The Mirror of Society: Hilary Mantel's Thomas Cromwell Trilogy as a Reflection of 16th – Century Social Issues

Vikram Bilwal

Anjana Pandey

Hilary Mantel, a celebrated British author, left an indelible mark on historical fiction with her Thomas Cromwell trilogy, comprising *Wolf Hall* (2009), *Bring Up the Bodies* (2012), and *The Mirror & the Light* (2020). Through her works, Mantel showcases literature's profound ability to reflect society in all its complexity, highlighting both its virtues and vices. By holding up a mirror to societal ills, literature serves as a catalyst for awareness, prompting reflection and ultimately, reconciliation. This paper also explores Hilary Mantel's approach to historical and psychological fiction, particularly her use of a socio-centric narrative framework. By emphasizing the interconnectedness of social structures, relationships, and collective experiences, Mantel crafts characters that are deeply embedded in their historical context. In the Thomas Cromwell trilogy, Cromwell emerges as a multifaceted character, shaped by the complex web of power dynamics, social hierarchies, and personal allegiances that define Tudor England. Through this portrayal, Mantel masterfully illustrates how individual identities, decisions, and moral compasses are influenced by the societal forces that surround them.

Keywords: Perspectives, Power dynamics, allegiances, Tudor England and Historical Fiction.

Hilary Mantel's remarkable storytelling brings history to life in her novels, particularly in the Cromwell trilogy, which comprises *Wolf Hall, Bring Up the Bodies,* and *The Mirror & the Light.* This sweeping narrative masterfully explores the complexities of Tudor England, breathing new life into iconic figures like Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII, and Thomas Cromwell. Mantel's meticulous research and richly detailed characterizations offer readers a fresh and captivating perspective on this pivotal era, showcasing her exceptional skill as a historical novelist. Mantel's masterful characterization brings depth and nuance to historical figures, revealing their inner struggles, desires, and contradictions. By doing so, she subverts traditional narratives, inviting readers to see these individuals as multidimensional human beings. Through her vivid portrayal of the past, Mantel offers a profound understanding of the era's complexities. Furthermore, her novels, particularly the

Thomas Cromwell trilogy, tackle sensitive societal issues like social hierarchy, gender dynamics, faith, mental wellness, and institutional power with remarkable insight and subtlety. By merging historical accuracy with psychological depth, Mantel sheds light on the intricate interplay between individuals and their environment, showcasing how people navigate the constraints and paradoxes of their time.

Hilary Mantel's literary legacy is marked by complexity and depth. With a dozen novels and two short story collections to her name, she is perhaps best recognized for the critically acclaimed Cromwell Trilogy, consisting of *Wolf Hall* (2009), *Bring Up the Bodies* (2012), and *The Mirror & the Light* (2020). The trilogy's remarkable reception, including two Man Booker Prizes, has somewhat overshadowed her other notable works, resulting in a scarcity of scholarly attention and public recognition beyond the Tudor novels. Despite this, the literary landscape is evolving, with growing interest in her broader oeuvre, although comprehensive studies of her work remain limited. This paper aims to fill a significant void in Hilary Mantel studies by exploring her novels through a thematic lens, drawing on the ideas of prominent thinkers like Jacques Derrida, Jacques Rancière, Roland Barthes, and Sigmund Freud. The challenge in categorizing Mantel's work stems from its eclectic nature, spanning multiple genres and styles. Typically, scholars focus on a single aspect or novel, such as Victoria Stewart's analysis of *Beyond Black,* which examines the theme of mediumship in the context of contemporary British fiction's renewed interest in spiritualism. Mantel's diverse literary output, encompassing complex thrillers, dark humor, and historical fiction, has led to her being regarded as a versatile and enigmatic storyteller.Mantel's works often explore themes of family dynamics, isolation, the passage of time, feminist perspectives, spirituality, and the impact of societal and political systems. Her narrative skillfully weaves together diverse elements, conveying a rich and nuanced portrayal of human experience. In the context of Thomas Cromwell's story, those around him express concern for his well-being, suggesting that leaving his current situation would be a wiser choice than enduring further hardship. Cromwell himself considers this option and ultimately decides to take action, embarking on a journey to France. There, he gains new skills, including knowledge of card games, and becomes embroiled in the complexities of life, experiencing both its benefits and drawbacks. One of his few goals is to become an officer in the military: *"he wanders the docks asking people if they know where a war is going on" (Thomas,2014).* Cromwell has worked hard to succeed since he was a little boy.

Cromwell's fascination with historical inquiry is driven by a desire to uncover truth, which he links to the study of material artefacts that often hold little inherent significance. However, he comes to realize that the true gap in historical records lies in the absence of embodied knowledge. This idea resonates with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's philosophical musings on the family as a microcosm of societal structures. In his influential work, Rousseau notes that *"the familial unit can be seen as a prototype for political societies, where the relationship between parents and children mirrors the dynamic between leaders and their people" (Jea, 8).*Males, women, and children all utilised private places within

this framework, yet males continued to use public spaces the most. Throughout order to examine the marginalised experiences of women, Mantel uses the distinctions between the private and public spheres throughout the novel. Mantel's portrayal of Cromwell as either remorseful or valorised is ultimately criticised for likely attempting to maintain the notion that he is a monster. A historical figure who is presented as the embodiment of evil loses all other attributes and accomplishments.

While maintaining the feminine elements of a monarchical society, Mantel's method consistently promotes the masculine. Although the substance of the novels has been carefully evaluated, a more in-depth analysis of the stories' gender roles would also consider the books' stylistic composition. Both theme and technique in *Fludd*had a significant impact on Mantel's work and the historical fiction genre. Tudor England's religious turmoil during the English Reformation is seen as a turning point in history, characterised by the breakdown of spiritual unity and the state-church relationship, which laid the groundwork for the development of a new kind of faith in later generations. *Eight Months on Gazhah Street* illustrates this seismic shift, as Henry VIII's break with Rome symbolised both a sense of freedom and a loss of home.

The realignment of all the spiritual, political, and cultural structures of the societies from the earliest English translations was more significant than a petty church quarrel. One of the authors from the British Isles, Eamon Duffy, saw the Reformation as a weapon that both helped and hurt the laity in his potent depictions of the disruption and persistence of ancient Catholic customs, such as in The Stripping of the Altars.

But the battles that took place are captured in Hilary Mantel's fictional work *Bring Up the Bodies* and *An Experiment on Love*. For example, it shows how the ideas of transformation were connected to the objectives of the Tudor English political elite. The way religion and politics interacted throughout this period shows that the Reformation was a divisive political issue, even while theological discussions obscured the problems with legitimacy and power. The Anglican Church was founded by Henry VIII not because he had just come to terms with his religious beliefs, but just to preserve his dynastic stability and sovereign authority.

This blending of the king's power and religion is seen in Hilary Mantel's fictional depiction of Thomas Cromwell, *"whose practical approach would ultimately serve as the foundation for spiritual change" (Cromwell, 10).*A further illustration of a mutual interaction may be found in John Guy's Tudor England, *A Change of Climate*, which primarily emphasises the fragility of early Protestantism and the conflicting tides of tradition and innovation.These traits are also present in later works such as T.S. Eliot's Death in the Cathedral, which focusses on Thomas Becket's execution against the backdrop of a conflict between royal and heavenly authority. *"During the 16th century, religion was not just a personal matter; it was framed as a very political matter, and the religious arena served as the primary platform for forming and severing allegiances" (Becket,11).*

William Tyndale, a theologian and reformer, was executed by burning at the stake for defying an established church establishment. In the same spirit, Mantel shows how individuals like Anne Boleyn, who were seen as both reformists and opportunists, eventually came to be in charge of overturning papal power. By combining the two main domains of politics and personal beliefs, religious and civic life were nearly inseparable in Tudor England.

The atmosphere of Tudor England, as shown by Hilary Mantel, is one of spiritual rifts and overall degradation brought on by the allegiance to the breakaway movement, which led to the certainty of divine ejection. *"the establishment of the Church of England and the disintegration of a common religion as a result of the Pope being the sole head, leading to a profound and severe theological ambiguity. This is most evident in the lives of the protagonists, where conflicting aspirations and spiritual beliefs often cannot be effectively reconciled" (Bring up the Bodies,13).*

Mantel's emphasis on the tension between one's personal religious convictions and the church's demands is clear in The Bodies. Because he sees change as the force he wants to utilise to change things, Cromwell consistently upholds the validity of temporary doctrinal ideas even when he is aware of the negative effects of his actions. "*The residents of Fetherhoughton and Netherhoughton, who attend the prayers in considerable numbers, are a testament to Fludd's impact. Additionally, they attempt to resolve their disagreements to a single theological subject. "Oh, Fludd, you sorcerer's apprentice, you've gone and got it wrong this time," Father says, seeing him as a sorcerer's apprentice after he departs at the time of Bishop's entrance and accepting the divine power he bestows on humans. You've performed a wonder in reverse.The soul has been replaced with moist, warm flesh, the heavenly fire has been extinguished, and the divinity has been reduced to mundane humanity." (Fludd, 158–9).*

Mantel's depiction of her accomplishes both political and theological goals. The fictionalisation of individual belief and institutional expectation is further supported by Mantel's analysis of the Tudor court, where religious attendance is transformed from a way to strengthen faith to a way to gain bargaining leverage. The study paper illustrates Cromwell's trilogy's private faith vs public doctrine. For missiology, the *Bring Up the Bodies* split religious landscape is a great location to think about the problems that missions face in environments of institutional upheaval and division. With its contradictory doctrines and shifting loyalties, Mantel's clear explanation of the English Reformation demonstrates that it was a process of establishing authentic religious communities in the face of intense debate. *"The destruction of monasteries, the reallocation of holy places, and the ideological battles between Catholics and Protestants are examples of the complexity of witnessing in a period when people were losing their faith because it was being dismantled in a systematic way" (Bring Up the Bodies ,17).* Mantel analyses human individuality in judgement, but she also views it as a tool of society and God. Through her persona, she explores the function and limitations of human weakness. The characters underwent challenging moral and spiritual

transformations that gave the work a universal appeal and provoked contemplative responses about what it's like to be a man trying to figure out where he fits in the world, make amends, and reconcile his past. As a result, it serves as an inspiration for religious historical fiction.

A mind is at the heart of every well-developed literary character. Since she is developing a character based on a historical person, Mantel needs to be careful to make sure that her depiction of Cromwell's intellect and mental faculties is credible. According to the character's perspective, she creates this picture mainly through two channels: internal and outward. The most obvious is the external channel, which means that the narrator or other characters describe his thoughts or mental capacities without his having to do so.As an example: *"His quick, low voice and assured manner make him feel at ease in a courtroom, on the seaside, in a bishop's palace, or in an innyard." He is able to make a contract, furnish a home, train a falcon, stop a street fight, arrange a jury, and create a map. He will give you a nice quote from one of the ancient writers, such as Plato, Plautus, and others. He can recite fresh poetry in Italian. He works from the moment he wakes up till the end of the night. He earns money and spends it. He is willing to wager on anything (Wolf Hall, 31).*

These explicit, externally channelled depictions abound throughout *Wolf Hall, Bring Up the Bodies* and *The Mirror & the Light* in the Trilogy. The reader nonetheless identifies these traits with Cromwell, regardless of whether Mantel has displayed them in her works. Mantel uses other external methods, which will be discussed later in this paper. Mantel builds Cromwell's ideas in a less obvious, internal manner. This approach is more challenging to recognise since it is implicit. These are the times when Cromwell remembers small details, commits dates and numbers to memory, or momentarily recalls a past event when he developed a certain skill. These occurrences are often throughout both books and help the reader build a picture of Cromwell's mental ability.Even though this skill is most frequently employed subtly, Cromwell's two works include references to a memory system that he is said to have developed while still a young man in Europe, which the other characters praise: *"Cavendish looks sly." "No one exceeds your own powers of memory," he says (Wolf Hall,78).*

In the Thomas Cromwell Trilogy, themes of intrigue, ambition, and political manipulation are prevalent. With the superb writing of these three novels, Mantel transports readers to the historical era and lets them see the world through Thomas Cromwell's eyes. By portraying Thomas Cromwell as a smart man rather than the monster that he is usually thought of as, Mantel offered him a fresh viewpoint.The trilogy only learns about courtly politics and its inner workings from Cromwell's point of view, even though it revolves on the lives of King Henry and his wives.

According to *Wolf Hall*, Cromwell rose to prominence and became a vital member of King Henry's court despite originating from a humble background. Because of his brilliance, devotion, and sense of humour, he is a vital ally of the King. Through his assistance in establishing new political ties with other countries, Cromwell aided the King in his conflicts

with the pope and the Catholic Church. *Bring up the Bodies* showed how devastating power politics can be and how skilfully Cromwell influences the King's decisions.

Alongside religious shifts and the continuous destruction of monasteries, Cromwell envisioned a New England that was receptive to innovation and advancement. The Northerners' steadfast opposition to the King's policies generated a lot of political pressure, as the book demonstrates. The main task Cromwell had throughout the queen's hunt was to maintain religious and political concerns while juggling foreign ties. In particular, Catherine Howard, Anne of Cleves, and Jane Seymour were queens of King Henry who shaped the legal atmosphere of the Tudor Dynasty. By the end of the trilogy, Cromwell was being criticised in court and had suffered a series of personal and political defeats that ultimately led to his downfall.

Mantel used clothing to indicate social status. Mantel used clothing during the Tudor Dynasty to symbolise the separation of classes. Members of the court were especially conscious of their attire in order to distinguish themselves from the general public and to symbolise their social identity. Luxurious fabrics, jewels, and lavish embellishments enhanced their garments and elevated their political status. Clothing with intricate needlework was a sign of power and luxury.Cromwell's path was significantly influenced by religion. With much deference, Mantel examines Cromwell's political intrigue and his endorsement of the monarch's theological reforms. Cromwell's genuine trust in change stands in stark contrast to the difficult practical realities of civilised life, where relationships shift and beliefs are constantly bargained for impact and survival.

Hilary Mantel portrays female characters in historical contexts as multifaceted individuals who defy stereotypes and social expectations, subverting gender roles and traditions. Mantel's narrative style and character development provide a fresh perspective on the autonomy, perseverance, and challenges experienced by women navigating patriarchal power structures. Mantel challenges traditional gender standards in part by showcasing the brains and ambition of her female characters. Her novels present women like as Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, and Thomas Cromwell's wife Liz as intelligent, politically astute, and actively involved in shaping their own lives.

When Mantel explained how she came to write about Cromwell, she said that she felt a really strong feeling of connection or identity with the figure. The fact that opinions on Mantel's work are so different may not come as a surprise, considering the popularity of her Cromwell books and, more recently, the attention that both volumes have gotten from the film version.Some people critiqued her depiction of history and how she portrayed Oliver Cromwell, a character who is still controversial today. Some reviewers, on the other hand, use almost reverent language when describing her work, pointing to the technique's almost magical quality and its result as a way to set it apart from other historical fiction. By facilitating communication between the Tudor and contemporary worlds, Hilary acts as a medium or resurrectionist. ■

Works Cited:

Mantel, Hilary, *Wolf Hall*. Fourth Estate, 2009.

————- *Bring Up the Bodies*. Fourth Estate, 2012.

———— *The Mirror & the Light*. Fourth Estate, 2020.

———— *Beyond Black*. Fourth Estate, 2005.

———— "King Billy is a Gentleman" *Learning to Talk*, Harper Perennial, 2006, pp. 1-20.

"Dissolution of the Monasteries." *Historic UK,* 16 Nov. 2023, www.historic uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/Dissolution-of-the-Monasteries/.

Barnes, J. *The Man Who Shot the Man: Thomas Cromwell and the Tudor Court*. Harper Collins, 2015, pp. 45-115.

Benson, Margaret A. "Changes in Tudor Religion and Politics and Their Impact on the Modernization of Ireland." Handle Proxy,31 Jan. 2017, hdl.handle.net/20.500.12648/6730.

"English Reformation." World History, www.worldhistory.org/English_Reformatio/.

MacCulloch, D. *Thomas Cromwell: A Life.* Viking Press, 2011, pp. 101-213.

Smith J. "Hilary Mantel: resurrecting the Tudor world." *The Guardian,* 15 Oct. 2012, pp. 19-22

Pollock, J. *The English Reformation: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 45-77.

Vikram Bilwal, Research Scholar, School of Studies in English, Vikram University, Ujjain MP.

Dr. Anjana Pandey, Professor and Head, School of Studies in English, Vikram University, Ujjain, MP.

From Ancient Roots to Modern Mandates: Reimagining Literature Pedagogy through the Indian Knowledge System and NEP 2020

Sarita Chauhan

Kusum Tripathi

This research paper examines how the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's emphasis on holistic and multidisciplinary education can be realised through the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), particularly within the field of English literature. The study argues that incorporating principles from the IKS, such as Vedic and Upanishadic traditions, classical Indian aesthetics (like Rasa, Dhvani, and Alankara theories), and indigenous narrative forms, can enrich literary analysis and cultivate critical thinking. The paper investigates a multidisciplinary framework that integrates literature with subjects such as philosophy, history, linguistics, and scientific inquiry, providing students with a more cohesive and profound engagement with literary texts. It offers a critical review of current English literature curricula in Indian higher education and suggests revisions inspired by the IKS to meet the NEP 2020's objective of a flexible, inclusive, and value-based learning environment. By embracing ancient Indian literary discourse, including its storytelling traditions and ethical and cognitive approaches, this research seeks to redefine literature as a transformative educational practice. The study concludes that embedding the IKS in literary pedagogy not only helps in preserving cultural heritage but also in nurturing critical awareness, creative investigation, and interdisciplinary scholarship, all of which are essential for developing well-rounded global citizens.

Keywords: Holistic Pedagogy, Indian Knowledge System (IKS), Literary Studies, Multidisciplinary Approach, NEP 2020.

Introduction:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a considerable shift in India's educational landscape, championing a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to learning. This profound vision aims to move beyond simple memorisation, instead encouraging creativity, critical reasoning, and cross-disciplinary understanding [1]. At the core of this pedagogical transformation resides the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), a rich resource of

historical wisdom encompassing various subjects such as philosophy, literature, science, and the arts. The incorporation of the IKS into contemporary teaching methods presents an unparalleled chance to connect established knowledge with modern academic practices, thereby creating a well-rounded and culturally embedded education [2]. In the realm of literary studies, the potential for embracing holistic pedagogy is vast. Literature has always been a multidisciplinary field, drawing from history, philosophy, psychology, and linguistics to enrich textual interpretation [3]. However, current pedagogical practices in India often prioritise Western literary theories and frameworks, sidelining the profound insights offered by indigenous traditions. Concepts such as Rasa, Dhvani, and Alankara theory provide nuanced lenses for understanding narratives, emotions, and aesthetics, yet they remain underexplored in mainstream curricula. NEP 2020 presents an opportune moment to reimagine literary education by embedding these indigenous frameworks into academic discourse [4].

Holistic pedagogy, as envisioned in NEP 2020, aligns seamlessly with IKS principles by promoting interconnected learning [5]. The Vedic tradition, for instance, advocates for the integration of diverse knowledge streams, wherein literature is not viewed in isolation but as part of a larger intellectual and spiritual pursuit. By adopting this perspective, students can develop a deeper appreciation of texts, recognising literature as a reflection of socio-cultural realities and human consciousness.

Moreover, a multidisciplinary approach enriches literary interpretation by drawing connections across fields. Historical contexts illuminate the socio-political underpinnings of narratives, while philosophical inquiries offer insights into ethical dilemmas and existential themes. Linguistic analysis unravels the intricacies of language and meaning, and scientific paradigms can shed light on cognitive processes underlying storytelling and reader response. Such an approach not only enhances textual understanding but also nurtures holistic thinkers equipped to address complex global challenges.This paper explores the integration of IKS into literary pedagogy, advocating for a curriculum that reflects India's diverse intellectual heritage while embracing the global dimensions of literary discourse. It examines the transformative potential of embedding indigenous knowledge, ethical reflections, and interdisciplinary inquiry into the study of literature, aligning with NEP 2020's vision of education as a means for personal growth, cultural preservation, and global engagement.

In a world that's becoming increasingly globalised, reclaiming India's rich intellectual traditions is more than just a nod to the past; it's a vital step towards preparing future-ready citizens. By adopting a comprehensive and multidisciplinary teaching approach rooted in the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), literary education can move beyond its conventional boundaries. This approach fosters a deeper critical awareness, encourages creative investigation, and builds a profound connection to India's unique cultural heritage. This important endeavour promises to not only enrich literary studies but also cultivate a more inclusive, diverse, and truly meaningful educational experience for students.

Understanding Holistic Pedagogy and NEP 2020: Holistic pedagogy is an educational philosophy focused on developing the entire learner, combining the cognitive, emotional, social, and ethical aspects of learning. Instead of just prioritising academic results, this approach cultivates personal growth, creativity, and critical thinking, preparing students to handle complex real-world issues. This philosophy closely matches India's ancient educational traditions, where learning was considered a journey toward self-realisation and social contribution, not merely the acquisition of knowledge.The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights the need for a holistic and multidisciplinary educational structure, acknowledging that education must provide students with a wide range of skills and perspectives [6]. It promotes an education system that dismantles the traditional boundaries between subjects, encouraging learners to discover links between disciplines and to apply their knowledge in practical, significant ways. By championing inquiry-based learning, problem-solving, and critical thought, the NEP 2020 aims to foster individuals who are adaptable, inventive, and ethically conscious.

A central tenet of NEP 2020 is the integration of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into mainstream education [7]. The policy acknowledges the immense value of India's intellectual and cultural heritage, advocating for the incorporation of indigenous knowledge, traditions, and philosophies into contemporary learning environments. In the context of literary studies, this means embracing ancient Indian frameworks such as Rasa theory, which delves into emotional resonance, Dhvani theory, which explores the power of suggestion, and Alankara theory, which examines figurative language and poetic ornamentation.Holistic pedagogy, as envisioned by NEP 2020, is inherently multidisciplinary. It invites students to draw insights from various fields, understanding literature not merely as artistic expression but as a reflection of historical contexts, philosophical inquiries, and socio-political landscapes [8]. For example, studying a literary text through the lens of history provides context to narratives, while engaging with philosophical traditions fosters ethical reflections and existential inquiries. This interconnectedness enriches students' interpretative skills and broadens their intellectual horizons.

By adopting a holistic, multidisciplinary pedagogy, NEP 2020 aims to create learners who are not only well-versed in their chosen fields but also capable of drawing on diverse knowledge streams to address complex challenges [9]. In the study of literature, this means moving beyond conventional analytical methods to embrace diverse perspectives, nurturing a deeper appreciation for cultural narratives and fostering critical consciousness. Ultimately, NEP 2020's vision of holistic education offers a transformative potential for literary studies, blending ancient wisdom with contemporary insights to create a richer, more inclusive learning experience.

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and Literary Pedagogy

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is built upon a profound philosophical tradition that sees knowledge as interconnected and holistic. The Vedas and Upanishads, which are

foundational texts of Indian philosophy, offer deep insights into the nature of existence, consciousness, and knowledge. Indian epistemology, with its concepts like PramâGas (means of knowledge), highlights various paths to understanding, such as perception, inference, and verbal testimony. This philosophical foundation strengthens the notion that knowledge isn't compartmentalised but rather interwoven, which is particularly relevant for literary studies, where multiple perspectives can enrich interpretation.

Indian Aesthetics and Literary Theories: Indian aesthetics offer rich theoretical frameworks for analysing literature, providing sophisticated tools to explore emotional resonance, implied meaning, and artistic expression. These principles move beyond surface-level reading to cultivate a deeper appreciation of texts.

Key Concepts in Indian Aesthetics

i. Rasa Theory: Central to Indian aesthetics, Rasa Theory examines the emotional connection between a text and its audience. The theory posits that specific literary elements evoke particular rasas, or emotional flavours, such as love, sorrow, or wonder, thereby enriching the reader's experience and deepening their engagement with the narrative. This approach shifts the focus from a text's objective content to its subjective, affective impact.

ii. Dhvani Theory: This theory, meaning 'suggestion' or 'resonance', highlights the power of implied meaning in literary works. Dhvani suggests that a text's true richness often lies in what is left unsaid, in the subtle allusions and undertones that are communicated through suggestion rather than explicit statement. Applying this theory encourages readers to move beyond the literal, fostering a more nuanced and profound interpretation of the work.

iii. Alankara Theory: Focusing on figurative language and rhetorical devices, Alankara Theory explores how artistic embellishments enhance a text's beauty and meaning. By analysing literary ornaments such as metaphors, similes, and personification, this theory reveals how authors use language to create a more compelling and aesthetically pleasing narrative. It adds a layer of interpretative depth, allowing for a more thorough understanding of the author's craft

Indigenous Narrative Techniques: Indian literary traditions are deeply enriched by indigenous narrative techniques that reflect the country's cultural and historical diversity:

i. *Oral Storytelling Traditions*: These traditions have preserved folklore, myths, and histories across generations. The oral transmission of stories fosters communal engagement and provides a dynamic space for interpretation.

ii. *Mythological Narratives and Folk Literature*: Rich in allegory and symbolism, these narratives offer profound moral and philosophical lessons. Integrating such texts into literary studies allows students to explore universal themes through culturally resonant stories, creating a deeper sense of identity and connection.

By weaving these elements into literary pedagogy, IKS offers a holistic framework that enriches textual analysis, nurtures critical thinking, and fosters a deeper appreciation of India's intellectual and cultural heritage.

Multidisciplinary Approach in Literary Studies

The study of literature is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing from various fields to offer richer interpretations and deeper insights into texts. Integrating literature with other disciplines enhances the analytical framework and broadens students' intellectual horizons.By embracing a multidisciplinary framework, the study of literature can transcend traditional boundaries, creating a more comprehensive and engaging educational experience. This approach aligns with the holistic principles of both the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) and the NEP 2020.

Benefits of Multidisciplinary Learning: Integrating Literature with Other Disciplines.

Literature and Philosophy: Integrating philosophical inquiry into literary analysis opens up avenues for ethical reflection and existential questioning. Exploring philosophical concepts like dharma (duty), karma (action), and moksha (liberation) can provide a profound understanding of character motivations, narrative arcs, and universal themes. This intersection enables students to see literature as a vehicle for examining fundamental human values and the nature of consciousness.

Literature and History: Contextualising literary works within their socio-historical narratives is crucial for deep analysis. Students can understand how political events, social movements, and cultural shifts have influenced literary forms, themes, and conventions. This approach transforms a text from a static object into a dynamic product of its time, revealing the intricate relationship between art and historical reality. The study of history provides the essential backdrop against which literary creativity unfolds.

Literature and Linguistics: Linguistics provides the essential tools for a granular analysis of language. By exploring aspects such as language evolution, syntax, and semantics, students can gain a deeper insight into how meaning is constructed. Semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, further enriches textual interpretation by allowing students to decipher the layers of meaning embedded within a text, from individual words to cultural symbols and archetypes.

Literature and Science: The intersection of literature and science is increasingly important. Cognitive literary studies, for example, draws on cognitive science and psychology to explore how the human brain processes narratives. This field investigates how readers understand and engage with characters, emotions, and plot structures, revealing the universal mechanisms of storytelling. Furthermore, ecocriticism connects literary texts with ecological principles, examining how literature represents and responds to the natural environment, thereby linking aesthetics with environmental science.

The integration of multidisciplinary approaches into literary studies offers a range of key benefits:

i. *Enhanced Critical Thinking*: Exposure to diverse perspectives fosters analytical skills, enabling students to evaluate texts from multiple angles and question established narratives.

ii. *Broadened Perspectives and Cultural Sensitivity*: Interdisciplinary learning encourages empathy and cross-cultural understanding by illuminating the varied historical, social, and philosophical contexts that inform literary works.

iii. *Development of Creative Inquiry and Problem-Solving Skills*: Multidisciplinary frameworks nurture creative thinking by challenging students to draw connections between seemingly disparate fields, fostering innovative interpretations and solutions.

By embracing these integrative approaches, literary studies become a dynamic field of inquiry, reflecting the interconnectedness of knowledge and empowering students to become more insightful, adaptable, and culturally aware thinkers.

Assessing Existing Curricula and Proposing Reforms

Current literary curricula in India largely favour Western literary theories and frameworks, often overlooking indigenous perspectives and multidisciplinary insights. This limited approach means students miss a significant opportunity to engage with India's rich literary heritage. Existing syllabi frequently present literature in isolation, which constrains students' ability to view texts through a variety of lenses. Moreover, experiential learning—an essential component for a holistic understanding—is rarely prioritised, limiting deep student engagement with narratives through cultural immersion.

Integrating the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into Literary Studies: To create a more balanced and comprehensive curriculum, we propose integrating the **Indian Knowledge System (IKS)** through the following measures:

1. Inclusion of IKS-Driven Literary Theories and Practices: Introducing foundational Indian aesthetic theories like **Rasa, Dhvani, and Alankara** into literary studies can greatly enrich textual interpretation. Courses could be designed to include comparative analyses of Indian and Western literary theories, fostering a more balanced and nuanced academic discourse.

2. Introduction of Interdisciplinary Courses: Offering courses that deliberately intersect literature with other fields—such as **philosophy, history, linguistics, and science**—promotes a truly holistic educational experience. For instance, a course on "Myth and History in Indian Literature" could explore the interplay between historical events and mythological storytelling, while "Cognitive Narratives" might delve into the neuroscience behind storytelling and reader engagement.

3. Emphasis on Experiential Learning: Integrating traditional **storytelling and cultural practices** into the curriculum allows students to experience literature beyond the confines of textbooks. Workshops, viewings of folk performances, and field trips to historically significant literary sites can provide firsthand engagement with India's narrative heritage. Collaborative projects with local storytellers and scholars from various disciplines can further reinforce a multidisciplinary approach.

These reforms align with NEP 2020's vision of nurturing critical thinking, creativity, and ethical reasoning, thereby creating a dynamic and inclusive literary pedagogy rooted in Indian tradition and global perspectives.

Case Studies and Practical Implementation

(1) Successful Models of Integration

Institutions across India have begun embracing the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in literary studies, setting precedents for holistic and multidisciplinary education. For instance, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has integrated courses that combine classical Indian literary theories with modern interpretations, encouraging students to analyze texts through the lenses of Rasa, Dhvani, and Alankara. Such models offer students a richer understanding of literature, where emotions, suggestion, and aesthetic embellishment become tools for deeper textual analysis.

Another notable example is Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), where interdisciplinary courses bridge literature, philosophy, and history, aligning closely with the NEP 2020's vision of flexible learning. These programs often involve comparative studies, examining Indian epics alongside Western classics, fostering a global perspective rooted in indigenous wisdom. In addition, smaller liberal arts colleges have pioneered classroom practices such as storytelling workshops and oral tradition reenactments, immersing students in the experiential learning championed by IKS.

Innovative teaching practices further support this integration. Educators employ methods like reflective journaling, where students connect personal experiences with literary texts, and peer teaching, which simulates the guru-shishya parampara, allowing knowledge transfer in a more collaborative setting. Digital tools have also been employed to archive folklore and document oral narratives, making ancient traditions accessible to contemporary students.

(2) Challenges and Solutions

Despite the promise of IKS-driven pedagogy, certain challenges hinder its full-fledged implementation. One primary obstacle is the resistance to curriculum change. Existing syllabi in Indian higher education often prioritise Western literary theories, and introducing IKS requires rethinking the canon. Overcoming this requires advocacy and institutional support, with stakeholders recognising the value of contextualised

learning.Another challenge is the lack of trained educators well-versed in IKS and multidisciplinary approaches. Addressing this demands robust teacher training programs that familiarise faculty with ancient texts, interpretative frameworks, and pedagogical innovations. Institutions can organise workshops and certification courses to empower educators with the tools to effectively implement IKS methodologies.Additionally, resource development plays a crucial role. Creating textbooks and anthologies that blend IKS perspectives with global literary theories can provide students with balanced materials, ensuring that curriculum reform is sustainable and impactful. Collaborative research between departments, funding for field studies in oral traditions, and fostering networks among institutions embracing IKS will further strengthen the foundation for a holistic pedagogy in literature.Through these models and solutions, educational institutions can pave the way for a more inclusive, enriched learning environment, aligning closely with the transformative goals of NEP 2020.

Implications and Future Directions

(a) Cultural Preservation and Global Relevance: Integrating IKS into literary studies helps preserve India's rich cultural heritage while enhancing the global relevance of its literary traditions. Students gain access to diverse narrative forms, philosophical discourses, and aesthetic frameworks, making Indian literature more accessible to the global academic community.

(b)Preparing Future-Ready Global Citizens: By embracing a multidisciplinary approach, students develop critical thinking, empathy, and adaptability—key skills for thriving in a rapidly globalising world. Exposure to varied disciplines cultivates a broader worldview, equipping learners to navigate complex socio-cultural landscapes.

(c) Promoting Value-Based Education and Ethical Consciousness: Incorporating ethical reflections from Indian philosophical traditions into literary studies fosters value-based education. Analysing narratives through ethical and moral lenses instils a sense of responsibility, encouraging students to become conscious, compassionate contributors to society.

Conclusion:

The integration of a holistic pedagogy in literary studies, as envisioned by the NEP 2020 and rooted in the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), offers a transformative approach to education. By adopting a multidisciplinary framework, literature becomes a dynamic field of inquiry that allows students to explore diverse intellectual traditions and cultural narratives. The inclusion of Indian aesthetic theories—such as Rasa, Dhvani, and Alankara—enriches students' analytical skills, while interdisciplinary courses and experiential learning align with the NEP 2020's vision of fostering critical thinking and creativity. This approach prepares learners to become future-ready global citizens who are equipped with cultural sensitivity and problem-solving skills. Ultimately, embracing IKS-driven pedagogies not

only preserves India's rich literary heritage but also creates a globally relevant and value-based learning environment. This synthesis of tradition and modernity redefines literary studies as a bridge between the past, present, and future, cultivating a generation of critically aware, culturally rooted, and ethically engaged individuals. ■

Works Cited:

Bhardwaj, Meenakshi, Amit Ranjan, and Jyoti Sharma. "Curriculum and NEP 2020: Perspectives and Inter-connections." *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 70, no. 2, 2024, pp. 237-55.

Korada, Mrunalini. "Nep-2020: Teacher Education and Sustainable Development." *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, vol. 12, no. 4, 2023, p. 4.

Krishnaveni, R., and B. Purusotham. "NEP 2020 emphasis on multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach." *Education and Society*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2023, p. 17.

Mahesh, K. M., et al. "Literature review on Indian ancient university in imparting holistic and multidisciplinary: to create Indian knowledge system (IKS)." *International Journal of Philosophy and Languages (IJPL)*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2023, pp. 1-17.

Mandal, B., and K. S. Sultana. "RESHAPING EDUCATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF NEP 2020 ON THE INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM." *NEW TRENDS OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND TECHNOLOGY| VOLUME 2*, 2024, p. 139.

Mandal, Sudhanshu. "School Education in Creating." *Roadmap for Humanities and Social Sciences in STEM Higher Education*, 2024, p. 107.

Sarkar, Debasish, Partha Adhikary, and Dilip Kumar Biswas. "Integrating Traditional Indian Knowledge System into the Indian Higher Education in Perspectives of NEP 2020." *KUNAL BOOKS*, 2023, p. 118.

Shukla, Bhupendra, et al. "Demystifying Approaches of Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education for Diverse Career Opportunities: NEP 2020." *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, vol. 15, no. 14, 2022, pp. 603-07.

Singh, Sarvendra Kumar, and P. R. V. Kumar. "Need for Pedagogical Training of Teachers in Higher Education Institutions: A Systematic Review." *UNIVERSITY NEWS*, vol. 61, 2023, p. 37.

Sarita Chauhan: PhD Research Scholar in IIMT University, Meerut, U.P.

Dr. Kusum Tripathi: Assistant Professor of English, IIMT University, Meerut, U.P.

Survival of the Fittest: Reflections of Contemporary Society in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*

A. Arockia Johnson

M. Anisa Barvin

This article examines the dystopian themes of Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* and their reflection in contemporary society. It highlights political corruption, authoritarian leadership, and the exploitation of citizens as parallels to modern governance. The games symbolize a survivalist contest shaped by greed and spectacle, mirroring society's fascination with violence and competition. The discussion emphasizes the erosion of compassion and human values in both Panem and the real world, where technological progress often coexists with moral decline. Katniss Everdeen's defiance and role as the Mockingjay embody resistance, sacrifice, and the enduring human quest for justice. The article argues that today's world represents a dual state of utopian privilege and dystopian struggle, where inequality and self-interest dominate. It concludes by stressing the need for solidarity, empathy, and collective resistance to injustice, affirming love as a transformative force in reshaping society.

Keywords: Contemporary, Dystopia, Utopia, Society, Survive, Games, Love.

Introduction

From time immemorial, literature has served as both a mirror and a lamp—reflecting society's realities while casting light on its hidden truths. Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* is one such work that unsettles, provokes, and awakens its readers. Beneath the surface of its thrilling narrative lies a profound meditation on power, inequality, and the fragile balance between hope and despair. Dystopia, though a creation of fiction, is never far removed from reality; it exaggerates the cracks already present in our world. In Collins' Panem, we see not only the cruelty of an imagined Capitol but also the haunting echoes of our contemporary struggles. Thus, *The Hunger Games* is not merely a story of survival—it is a cautionary tale, a mirror of our own time, where utopia and dystopia coexist in uneasy tension.

Societal Similarities in *The Hunger Games*

Utopia and Dystopia are contrary.
Contemporary is the combination of this contrary

"**Utopia**" is what most would regard as a paradise. Everything seems to be good and smooth flowing with the right balance of the social, governmental, and religious systems among others. "**Dystopia**" is the opposite of "**Utopia**" because everything seems to be imbalanced, chaotic, lawless, unruly, dirty, violent, and the like. They are actually two sides of a same coin that portrays science fiction setting to its extent. The novel *The Hunger Games* is set in the dystopian background that contains the imbalanced elements which one can take for comparison to the contemporary society. This society is the best example for both utopian and dystopian life setting. People are experiencing utopian lifestyle on one side and dystopian lifestyle on another side. The main reason for these happening are the political structure and disqualified political leaders here like Snow in *The Hunger Games.* The theme that followed here is what contemporary people do to overcome the growing seriousness. "Happy Hunger Games! And may the odds be ever in your favor"**.**

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collin's is a science fiction work that is filled with questionable matters of our society. *The Hunger Games* is filled with competition that leads to destruction. There is no use in this type of competition for the people living in Panem. The game gives two things to the people of Panem, one is survivalism and the another is entertainment. Both belong to the different kinds of people depending upon their lifestyle. Eventhough the competition is disliked by many it is a huge success. The reason behind the success is people's excitement in watching someone's forced destiny (nature of people from *The Hunger Games*).

"I want to tell people if You Think For One Second That The Capitol Will Ever Treat Us Fairly, You Are Lying To Yourself. Because We Know Who They Are And What They Do. This Is What They Do, And We Must Fight Back!"(99)

This is actually a forced competition for twelve district people. Two from each district will be selected to participate in the competition. Selection progress happens without their willingness. Participator can be replaced if there is any volunteer and it is the only good thing that saved Primrose Everdeen. What is the use of Hunger Games? If you think you couldn't find any uses but loses. One has to kill to survive is the major one line plot. This concept creates happiness and excitement among the viewers, at the same time without any hesitation killings are happening in the name of Games. The major thing I would like to discuss is the comparison of our contemporary society to the portrayed dystopian society in the Hunger Games. In the novel the society is expressing the bare nature of people. They do not show any natural sense towards others. They do nothing except living as slaves with fear. They are not living but surviving. At the same time people here are technologically moving forward. This is a well known and appreciable thing. But, what we have to look is the losing bond among people. There is no affection, love, helping tendency or any other basic positive nature are found in people today. This is what happened in the Hunger Games.

We are in the place to realize the current situation and to clear about what is the need of time. The solution was given at the climax of *The Hunger Games* to that people.

When Katniss gets the right time, she turned the arrow and killed the real silent antagonist (Coin, President of District 13, who is known to be a traitor by Katniss) instead of Snow. This helped very much for us also to identify the contemporary world's people who are acting as a trigger behind a person to achieve something for their goodness. If a person looks at someone with a deep thinking behind the motive of his/her ideas he/she can easily find out the nature of them. One must clear about how to avoid negativity and bring positivity into his/her life.

The bird, the pin, the song, the berries, the watch, the cracker, the dress that burst into flames. I am the mockingjay. The one that survived despite the Capitol's plans. The symbol of the rebellion.(21)

The above words spoken by Katniss to Snow could be taken as a good representation for a rebellion. It makes sense finally! The thing I want to conclude through this article is a simple one: what we need to live peacefully is to spread love and rebel. Love is a pure factor that connects everything with everyone. "At the end of the game, Peeta and Katniss win together by refusing to kill each other. When they are the only two left, Katniss defies the game makers by suggesting she and Peeta eat toxic nightlock berries and die together". Just as they are about to consume the poison, they are both declared the winners. If love played a major role in Hunger Games among the people or the competitors like Katniss and Peeta the plot would be a positive vibe producer but rebellion overpowered love. Unfortunately it is a dystopian novel, so it is justified in its standards. The main characters were highlighted by their act of rebellion throughout the novel and love between them. Inspite of these things they become the enemy of Capitol. At the same time we are living in the world which is in a combined form of "dystopia and utopia". People here are divided into two. One part of people is living and other part of people is surviving. Money plays the major role among human beings which is the main cause for all the struggles and sufferings. Everyone must accept this truth. The point I want to highlight here is make money as a part don't as a major part of your life. To get out of this surviving mentality, we need to spread love and positivity with rise up arms against negativity without any hesitation like the protagonist in the novel in our contemporary life can make impossible things possible.

Conclusion

Ultimately, *The Hunger* Games is more than a dystopian spectacle of fear and violence; it is a parable for our age. Katnis' defiance, her refusal to surrender to tyranny, becomes a living emblem of rebellion and hope. Collins reminds us that oppression thrives only when compassion falters and conformity prevails. Just as Panem's people stood divided between living and merely surviving, so too does our world wrestle with inequalities that threaten our shared humanity. Yet the novel whispers an enduring truth: love, courage, and the willingness to resist injustice can re-imagine even the bleakest reality. To rise above dystopia, both in fiction and in real life, we must dare as Katniss to make things possible. ■

Work Cited

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games.* Scholastic press, 2008.

A. Arockia Johnson, Research Scholar, Research Department of English, Dr. Zakir Husain College, Ilayangudi, Tamil Nadu.

Dr. M. Anisa Barvin, Assistant Professor and Head, Research Department of English, Dr. Zakir Husain College, Ilayangudi, Tamil Nadu.

At Dhanuskodi, Tamilnadu (India - Sri Lanka border)

Unveiling the Feminine: An Exploration of Sensibility in Sunetra Gupta's *A Sin of Color*

Nithya. K

R. C. Sheila Royappa

The article exhibits woman's more refined sensibility. The myriad societal, economic, and cultural factors that affect women's sensibilities lead to their corruption and deterioration. The patriarchal and societal cultural norms in Sunetra Gupta's writings have crushed and ruined this feminine sensibil1ity. As a result, a woman's voice and ego are both harmed. Women are portrayed by Sunetra Gupta as personal individuals who purposefully violate gender norms. Sunetra Gupta depicts women as soft, weak and defenceless. Gupta's women characters are prepared to give up and make concessions; they continue to be poor, suffering victims. Their concessions and sacrifices are covered up as their assets. Sunetra Gupta has given these traditional female characters a fresh twist. Gupta's female members have the capacity to establish a position for themselves in both their families and society. The three generations of ladies from an affluent Calcutta family are discussed here in this paper.

Keywords: Patriarchal, Societal and Cultural and Tradition norms, Feminine Consciousness, Gender Norms, Identity and Belonging.

The logical formation of gender and sexuality is highlighted by feminist theory and practice. Built on interpersonal and domestic relationships feminist studies aim to address the marginalized voices of women. It depicts the way they are suppressed or exploited in numerous aspects of life. Feminism which includes liberal, radical, Marxist, and psychoanalytic perspectives, aims to address the marginalization of women in society, politics, literature, and sexuality. Feminist authors argue that the culture of our society is fundamentally patriarchal. It is inclined in favor of manhood. In male-dominated cultures, women's actual selves are often suppressed or twisted. According to post-structuralist view woman's self-identity is contrary to men's views. This culturalthought is left over from the past. It focuses on how men's ideologydominates women. In literary and other texts thediscourse is in such a way that depictsthe natural being of a woman. It shows the way woman sees herself and her surroundings. The fictional texts the lead character is a female.

It offers their readers to be in a position as female charactersand derive particular meanings definitions offemininity in relation to masculinity.

Sunetra Gupta is one of the most resourceful diasporic female writers of the 20th century. Gupta isalso one among the Indian English writers Rushdie and post-Rushdie's generation. She was born in Calcutta and spent her earlier days in Ethiopia and Zambia. Sunetra Gupta is a prominent novelist, essayist, translator and writer of short stories and also the author of the five novels*Memories of Rain (1992), The Glassblower's Breath (1993), Moonlight into Marzipan (1995), A Sin of Colour (1997), and So Good in Black (2009).*She has earned a number of awards- the Sahitya Academy Award, the Southern Arts Literature Prize and the DSC South Asian Literature Prize. She was adjudged the winner of the Rosalind Franklin Royal Society award in 2009 for her experiments and scientific achievements. She's an adroit translator of Rabindranath Tagore's poems.

Gupta was announced "Prodigious Talent" by the UK magazine Independent on Sunday. Critics in the West link Gupta to legendary novelist Virginia Woolf, citing similarities in the female protagonist, limited textual language, and experimentation. Most of the main characters of Sunetra Gupta come from Bengali households and have been brought up stereotypically. The characters are well educated, which in turn enables them to make their own decisions and hence upholding their self-respect. They prove their survival instincts without getting emotionally lost under the toughest of circumstances of life.

The novel *A Sin of Color* begins with the third-person narrative, it opens with Debendranath's twenty year homecoming from Oxford. Sunetra Gupta utilised the large mansion house in Mandalay as a metaphor for Bengali culture. Throughout the book, Gupta's passion with Bengali culture is evident. Three generation of women from the Mandalay family are shown by Sunetra Gupta, also describes their lives and goals. Neerupama Roy, a first-generation woman, is the wife of Indranath Roy and mother of the protagonist Debendranath Roy. Reba, a second-generation woman, is the beloved of the protagonist Debendranath Roy and the mother of yet another protagonist of the novel named Niharika. Third generation female Niharika, Reba's daughter, is the only member of the Roy family and Debendranath Roy's niece.

A Sin of Color,says about the story of three generations of people. All of them are deeply connected to a house called Mandalay in Kolkata. The novel starts with a young man named Debendranath Roy. He falls in love with his sister-in-law Reba, which is entirely platonic. Mandalay, a big mansion house bought by a wealthy Bengal Merchantfrom a British officer, Indranath Roy takes his wife with him to Mandalay, a clever and innocent bride. The eldest son of Indranath, brings with him his wife She was a brilliant, beautiful and successful woman. Debendranath Roy falls in love with his sister in law. Debendranath ran away from home and family to Englandto Oxford. There he marries an Englishwoman.He largely ignores her in the story. Debendranath is later said to have faked his death by drowning. Mandalay was later taken care by his niece Niharika, who dominates Gupta's

story, the clever successful women who bear many similarities to the author and gave finishing points to the story. Debendranathlater flies to Indiaand was living in incognito mode. He later becomes blind and returns to his family in and to his niece Niharika, his writer. In later days he is the only family member who lives in Mandalay, which is in ruin, and is abandoned by the next generation.

The main focus of *A Sin of Color* is on the lives and choices made by its two main protagonists, Debendranath Roy and his niece Niharika, each during two separate times, during their teenage years. Most of the story revolves around Calcutta and Oxford.Often it shifts to rural Bengal and the US. Both are them are victims of unanswered love. This affects their lives to a great extent which drives them to commit sin. Niharika is pictured with Morgan's friend Daniel Faraday, who was the last person to see Debendranath alive. The book has several sections. Each one of it is given acolour name, starting with amethyst indigo, azure, jade, saffron, ochre and crimson.

The *Indigo* part is dyed another colour by Sunetra Gupta. This section reveals everything in a deep, oceanic voice. It simultaneously highlights Reba's deep loneliness and Debendranath's depth of feelings for Reba. Reba is unwilling and callous to treat Jennifer. But Debendranath doesn't care about those things when he's immersed in Reba's loneliness. Reba is shown throughout the novel from Debendranath Roy's point of view. He feels and expresses her loneliness. He calls Reba a woman who enjoys everyone's orders and respect.The first section is a mixture of blue and red *Amethyst.* This demonstrates Neerupama's motivation to learn Red's assertiveness. "Coolness" in blue means accepting family commitments.

Niharika is described in the *Azure* section. Depict her growth as a 20-year-old girl by an innocent girl. She pays tribute to her co-stars and everyone who is familiar with her respect for her mother.Every grown-up girl has her feelings as a grown-up girl in Niharika.Gupta adroitly demonstrates the inhibited emotions, inner feelings of a growing up girl in oriental context:

"She came to reconcile herself with the notion that it was only unrequited love that held any prolonged charm for her that she preferred to Adore from a distance, as she did some of her College professors, one or two of her mother's Actor friends, all much older than her, and utterly unaware of the condition of her feelings. She had never had a relationship with a man when she came to Oxford at the age of twenty-Three. She had even submitted, albeit reluctantly, to her father's search for an appropriate mate to accompany her, or better still guard her and shelter her…" (93).

The *"Jade*" section, a colour that depicts a circumstance where there is a lack of interest or enjoyment in anything.It shows Daniel Faraday's departure from Niharika's life. This section deals with indifference or enjoyment in daily work. However, she is dating Daniel's boyfriend Morgan and is on friendly terms with him.By looking back at the lives of Reba, Jennifer and Alison's wives, Niharika tries to explain her woman's life will do.

She reasoned that Niharika never discovered a terrible attraction to her mother or to Jennifer that was deeply related to the rituals of women that she believed she would never escape.

The *"Saffron"* section is depicts the reunion of Jennifer's family and her husband Debendranath Roy. The final part "*crimson*", which is the color of love, unites her lover Niharika and Daniel. In this Niharika disappears like her Debendranath, but this time with her lover.

A Sin of Color explores the emotional narrative of Neerupama and Reba. Neerupama and Reba struggle with identifying themselves. They are lost in the patriarchal conformity of 'Mandalay'.*A Sin of Color* has a definite story-plot. It involves three generations ofa family in Calcutta.

Three generations:

The***first generation*** women of the Roy family is Neruppama, has been examined through feministic perspective. Gupta effectively illustrates how woman's empowerment is undermined by her family and society after marriage.Neerupama is Indranath Roy's wife.Indranath Roy is a timber merchant, a wealthy businessman in Bengal. Neruppama grew up in a small town in North Bengal. She has experienced numerous dreams. She wants to study. She prepares for her matriculation exam, likely with the goal of attending college. Many pre-independence Indian girls aspired to achieve this ideal. Indranath Roy first sees Neerupama walking back from school in a little North Bengal town. Since then, her life has changed drastically. She is prohibited from taking her matriculation examinations by her husband and her in-law "an important elderly relation was coming to spend the day [...] all the way from Chinsurah to see her and it would not do for her to be absent for the whole day" (A Sin, 44).All of Neerupama's dreams have been crushed by her breakdown. Neerupama's desire to serve society is undermined by her marriage to wealthy timber merchant Indranath Roy. In India, marriage typically locks women inside their homes and denies them access to numerous opportunities. Even in Neerupama's instance, a girl from an affluent family, a marriage ended all of her goals, and she was even made to stop her education. Neerupama's need for knowledge and her anxiousness ruin her life and prevent her from appreciating her husband's devotion.

The novel clearly illustrates the notion that women are expected to bury their wishes as soon as they are married, through the character Neerupama. Her disappointment at not having accomplished more in life has a profound impact on her. In general, societies like India view marriage as a need for all women. In order to be respected in the culture they live in, women must also accept marriage, whether they want it or not. Mother of five,Neerupama is unable to carry out her duties as mistress of their home. She chooses to put space between herself and her husband, who works very hard to please her in every way. In a Tangled confusion and jealousy, the woman who was destined to be Reba's mother-in-law gradually loses her individuality before passing away.

The *second-generation* female member of the Royfamily who is married into it was,Reba is a daughter of a professor who teaches ancient Indian history. Their home was constantly buzzing with thought-provoking conversation. Reba came from a musically talented family. Reba liked singing Tagore songs and playing on her esraj. Reba takes up the responsibilities of the family's eldest daughter-in-law with ease. Unfortunately, Debendranath, Indranath's second son, falls in an unrequited love with Reba. Reba worked very hard to keep Debendranath Roy at a distance, but she was unable to do so with enough success.Throughout the novel Reba is portrayed by Debendranath's point of view, About Reba beauty:the "beautiful woman who decorated her rooms nicely, baked excellent cakes, played exceptionally well on the Esraj, and could scorn a person's indelicacy of manners with the faintest tilt of her eyebrows" (17).

Debendranath Roy adores his sister-in-law with great passion and love.Debendranath learns that Reba has a long history of engaging in intellectual argument when he meets with Reba's father to discuss it. Debendranath comes to known about that Reba longs to visit her mother's house she seems to be letting the house speak for herself. Through the thorough examination of her father's house furniture that Debendranath gets a deep insight into her personal identity."How different Reba's childhood must have been among these noiseless Bookladen walls, alone, with her mother sleeping in her sick-room, and her father Deep in his papers, and the maids whispering softly in the kitchen as they cleared Up after lunch. It must have been in such a time that she had invented herself. From elements of the novels she had devoured in her childish loneliness, from Images obliquely prescribed to her by her father and his friends, from the odours and colours of the silence around her, she had made herself (19)."

When he realised the harm he caused to Reba, we saw some changes in his feelings for her. However, despite his best efforts to defend his own male weakness, he was unable to make amends for what he had done.

In the Indigo colour segment, Sunetra Gupta captures the intensiveness of Reba's loneliness. It also shows Debendranath's deep love for her. Reba attempts to create a third space within the domestic space in order to elevate herself and stretch herself outside of this location like a wide reverse loneliness is infinite. She can only exceed the limitations of domestic space by positioning herself on stage while performing music. This is where she can create her own personal space. Only by this she can free herself of the images projected on her by acting out the identities of drama characters.

Niharika, a Roy family descendant and Reba's daughter, is a woman of the *third generation*. Niharika's current life becomes the subject of "*A Sin of Color*," in which her potential is spent on an uncalled-for love. She and her lover end up in a watery grave as a result. Niharika relocated to Oxford to further her research education. She experienced a difficult love there with Daniel Faraday. Her talent was wasted in her heedless and pointless existence. Englishman Daniel Faraday is married and in his middle years. Niharika is the

object of Daniel Faraday's fervent affection, and he would do anything to keep her. Daniel, however, chose to keep their romance a mystery. She must travel to Princeton, New Jersey, to work on her thesis after some time at Oxford.

To meet her, Daniel Faraday travels to New Jersey. She stayed in Princeton for a year before returning to Oxford. Daniel Faraday makes the decision at this moment to relocate to Australia with her wife and son. They are now separated from one another. Niharika decides to write a book in an effort to get some relief from the excruciating pain of her love for Daniel Faraday. She went back to Mandalay to write a book about her uncle Debendranath after presenting her thesis. Debendranath also went back to his family's home from where he had been missing for 20 years. He reconnected with Niharika once more as a family. The house's future is imagined by Niharika as–

"to find it In a state of sublime decay, overrun with thick green creepers, birds' nest crowding the Roofless stairwells […]. And in his room overlooking the cemetery her uncle will still be Sitting in his old armchair" (174)- it becomes clearer and clearer that the Calcutta house Will stay undead as long as it can live through someone's presence, feeding off someone's Life.

When his English wife Jennifer learned about Debendranath's homecoming, she travelled back to Kolkata and picked him with her to England. And Niharika also went back with them. Once more, Niharika and Daniel Faraday are brought together by fate, and this time there is no parting. Niharika vanishes along with her partner Daniel as they begin their new life.

Readers can observe that Neerupama and Reba are both are like a foreigners in Mandalay who are compelled to take positions of authority. The experience of Neerupama as subjugation of patriarchal family structure differs greatly from Reba's generation and Niharika in the third generation. Neerupama submits to all acts, obligations, and customs in order to fit into the family mould. Reba, who is well aware of her abilities, quietly resists by focusing on music and theatre. Reba is conscious of her "self," but she doesn't take care of it. In the dimly lit theatre, she misplaces it. Third-generation Niharika resolves courageously to achieve her wish by vanishing with her lover Daniel Faraday. Inside a new and supportive family in England, they are able to create their unique tone identity. With her open-ended tale, Sunetra Gupta successfully creates tension. But this work expertly and vividly illustrates awoman's thoughts and emotions in different phases of life, circumstances, and cultures. ■

Works Cited:

Gupta, Sunetra.*A Sin of Color*, London, Phoenix. 1999.

Gupta, Sunetra. *A Sin of Color*, Penguin, 1999, p-174. "IJREAM: International Journal of Research in Engineering and Application & Management." IJREAM, vol. 4, no. 12,

2019, https://ijream.org/papers/IJREAMV04I1248197.pdf

"Alienation and Displacement in Sunetra Gupta's A Sin of Color." AGPE The Royal Gondwana Research Journal, Vol.4, No.12,2019 https://www.agpegondwanajournal.co.in/index.php/agpe/article/view/308

Nithya.K, Ph.D. Research Scholar,Department of English and Foreign Languages, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu.

Dr. R.C. SheilaRoyappa, Head and Associate, Professor (Rtd.), Department of English, Seethalakshmi Achi College for Women, Pallathur, Tamil Nadu.

With Dhananjay Swain, noted Odia poet, at Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Blood on Border: A Postcolonial reading of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*

P. Swarna Pandi
S. Hannah Evangeline

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) is still one of the most significant literary explorations of the trauma of Partition, a historical break that persists to shape South Asian cultural and political existence. This paper analyzes the novel in terms of postcolonial theory, highlighting how Singh's account slices through the colonial inheritance that fabricated communal strains, the outburst of violence during Partition, the silencing of subaltern voices, the creation of hybrid identities, and the persistence of postcolonial memory. Drawing on HomiBhabha's concepts of Hybridity, GayatriSpivak's theory of the Subaltern, and Frantz Fanon's Meditations on colonial violence, the analysis highlights the way in which the novel mirrors and satirizes the effects of imperial rule and decolonization. Singh's concentration on the tiny village of Mano Majra is elevated to a microcosm of the greater historical disaster, staging the way in which common folk felt the effects of imperial legacy. By questioning collective anxieties as colonial heritage and shedding light on the ways in which marginalized voices are erased in nationalist narratives, this research contends that *Train to Pakistan* illustrates the potential for postcolonial texts to reclaim suppressed histories and vocalize trauma. The novel is therefore not just a Partition novel but also a critical commentary on the fault lines left by empire.

Keywords: Postcolonial Theory, Colonial Legacy, Communal Violence, Subaltern Voices, Hybridity, Postcolonial Memory.

Introduction

Partition literature holds a unique place in postcolonial scholarship, for it reveals both the harsh facts of decolonization and the long-lasting residues of colonialism. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) is a classic novel in this genre, placing the human toll of the Partition of India in a small Punjabi village called Mano Majra. In contrast to grand political histories that prioritize leaders and state discourses, Singh's novel records the private agonies of villagers whose lives are interrupted by violence, terror, and displacement. The novel thus constructs a counter-narrative to state records, bringing into view the lives of the marginal and the ordinary during the subcontinent's most traumatic disruption.Applying

postcolonial theory to Train to Pakistan permits a multi-layered reading of the text. Partition cannot be read in abstraction from colonial history that formed the religious, cultural, and political differences between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. Colonial state policies of census-taking, religious categorization, and political manoeuvring institutionalized difference and strengthened communal rivalries. In the aftermath of decolonization, this colonial inheritance emerged anew with calamitous consequences, climaxing in the record violence of 1947.

The novel's portrayal of mob violence serves as a site to examine what Frantz Fanon theorized as the inexorable outburst of violence in decolonization. Fanon points to how colonial domination dehumanizes subjects, and Partition violence in *Train to Pakistan* is readable as the nightmarish enactment of the same dehumanization. Singh theatricalizes the outburst of riots, killings, and large-scale displacements as not only spontaneous events but as historical continuities of colonial divisional strategies.Additionally, the novel also poses necessary questions regarding the subaltern. GayatriChakravortySpivak's incisive question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" also deeply resonates through Singh's work since the voices of women, peasants, and marginalized characters continue to be silenced or constructed in distorting ways by nationalist and colonial narratives alike. Singh's book shows their agonies especially women kidnapped, raped, and trafficked across borders but also shows the challenges of reversing their agency within hegemonic forms of history.

The concept of hybridity, postulated by Homi K. Bhabha, adds to the richness of the reading of *Train to Pakistan*. The village of Mano Majra, which lies close to the border, is a site of hybrid religious and cultural practices, with Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs coexisting in communal traditions. However, as Partition gets underway, hybridity breaks down, revealing the tenuous nature of communal existence under the strain of political turmoil.Lastly, the novel's role as postcolonial memory makes it relevant outside of its historical context. Singh's story does not only record trauma but also moulds cultural memory of Partition. According to Marianne Hirsch in "post memory," future generations inherit traumatic memories, and *Train to Pakistan* acts as such a means of memory, making the brutality of Partition remain part of South Asia's collective memory.In exploring these theoretical concepts colonial legacy, violence, subalternity, hybridity, and memory this article positions *Train to Pakistan* as both a literary work about Partition and a critical postcolonial book. Singh's novel is more than a tale of one village; it is a witness to the broken histories and open wounds inflicted and left behind by colonialism and Partition.

Theoretical Framework

This piece places Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* in the context of a set of postcolonial ideas that shed light on Partition as historical tragedy and discursive reshuffling of identity. Edward Said's description of Orientalism provides a starting point for how the colonial regime generates knowledge that naturalizes the "native" as an object of governance; the epistemic tendencies outlast empire and structure social vision in the post colony (Said). In the Indian case, GyanendraPandey illustrates how colonial practice census-taking and

codification of the law reified religious communities into rigid categories, making it possible to polarize them later on (Pandey). AshisNandy takes up this argument further, claiming that colonial domination colonizes the mind, depositing hierarchies of value and selfhood that continue to function after official independence (Nandy).

Second, Frantz Fanon's theorization of decolonization as a necessarily violent "programme of complete disorder" explains why empire's retreat in 1947 caused not just constitutional reform but mass trauma; the remapping of borders rearranges space, belonging, and bodily life simultaneously (Fanon). ParthaChatterjee contributes to an understanding of how the postcolonial state inherits colonial technologies of rule; "national" government tends to persist colonial patterns of surveillance and emergency (Chatterjee).

Third, GayatriChakravortySpivak's questioning of the subaltern highlights those who refuse to enter "History" as speaking subjects readily peasants, women, and rural poorwhose lives are mediated or effaced in elite discourse (Spivak). RanajitGuha and the Subaltern Studies enterprise relocate these actors as integral to South Asian modernity's story, without idealizing their "voice" as easily recovered (Guha).

Fourth, Homi K. Bhabha's ideas of hybridity and liminality consider how identities are constructed in spaces-in-between borderlands, thresholds, and moments of translation. Hybridity does not merely "mix" cultures; it deconstructs colonial binaries by laying bare their ambivalence (Bhabha). A village such as Mano Majra, sitting at the border between new nation-states, illustrates a liminal space where identities are renegotiated.

Lastly, Postcolonial studies have come to focus more on memory and trauma. Cathy Caruth defines trauma as an occurrence that comes back late, while Marianne Hirsch's "post memory" indicates ways in which subsequent generations narrate inherited disaster (Caruth; Hirsch). In South Asia, UrvashiButalia has brought women's testimonies to the centre, revealing how Partition's gendered violence and family silences complicate nationalist records (Butalia). Collectively, these thinkers offer a framework to read *Train to Pakistan* as not simply a realist account of Partition but as a reflection on colonial afterlives, violent decolonization, silenced subjectivities, borderland identities, and the ethics of remembering.

Colonial Legacy and Communal Division

Partition's communal violence in *Train to Pakistan* is not an organic outburst but the afterlife of colonial classification. Said's assertion that imperial governance produces knowledge to stabilize difference helps to explain how British governmental practices hardened porous social boundaries into fixed identities (Said). During late colonial India, census operations and legal orders categorized populations according to religion and caste, constructing an archive that rendered "Hindu" and "Muslim" intelligible as political blocs (Pandey). Singh's Mano Majra seems at first a terrain of quotidian cohabitation; Sikhs and Muslims occupy the same rhythms of labour, markets, and even the identical consciousness of time calibrated to the railway timetable (Singh). But when rumours of trains carrying

corpses reach them, those colonial categories harden: neighbours turn into "other," and identity is securitized.Nandy contends that colonialism introduces a hierarchy of selves that continues psychologically in the post colony (Nandy). In Mano Majra, the post-"ghost trains" moral panic revitalizes colonial dichotomies civilized/savage, loyal/rebellious now inscribed along communal axes. The shift from Empire to nation-state therefore does not erase colonial episteme; it refines them. Chatterjee's observation is essential here: the sovereign state tends to retain colonial tools of order, so policing, detention, and "collective responsibility" still structure everyday life (Chatterjee). Iqbal's detention as a suspect, and the administrative organization of Muslim evacuation, set exactly this administrative continuity (Singh).

Singh further reveals the discursive character of communalization. Mano Majra villagers initially experience violence in the form of stories reports, rumours, and hearsay affixed to trains. Said makes one realize how narratives co-produce the enemy: language labels the neighbour as "Muslim threat" or "Sikh avenger," covering over established reciprocity (Said). Once officials define evacuation as required for "security," a colonial grammar of public order re-emerges, authorizing dispossession in the name of safety (Chatterjee).

Key to this analysis is Singh's resistance to simplistic determinism. He describes quotidian attachments love, work, family that defy the tug of categorical hostility. But the intensity of the colonial archive (census, police records, land deeds) and the colonial habit (divide and rule) directs perception towards enmity at times of tension. Thus the novel illustrates how decolonization apart from political freedom minus epistemic change leaves the post colony vulnerably open to renewed communal scripts (Nandy; Pandey). The tragedy of Mano Majra is that its social fabric, interwoven through shared practice, is outflanked by institutional memories of difference inherited from empire.

Fanonian Violence and Decolonization

Assuming "Sanon" is a reference to Frantz Fanon: his description of decolonization as a world-reversing upheaval assists in deciphering the terror in Train to Pakistan. For Fanon, colonial space is "compartmentalized," controlled by violence; decolonization upends that spatial regime in violence since colonialism is violence (Fanon). The Radcliffe Line a geographical fiat re-compartmentalizes land overnight, transmogrifying contiguous rural existence into opposing sovereignties. Singh's symbol of this transformation is the train: a device of modern timekeeping that now transports mass death, marking visible the lethal math of partitioned space (Singh).Fanon maintains that liberation's temporal disruption disorients colonizer and colonized alike the past cannot be retained, and the future comes too soon (Fanon). Mano Majra feels this as simultaneity: old solidarities are still experienced, but new boundaries demand action. The police, as the postcolonial state's inheritance of colonial violence, move pre-emptively detaining Iqbal and Jagga, rounding up Muslim families attempting to reconstitute order through methods learned under empire (Chatterjee).

In Fanon's language, violence here is both systemic (administrative) and spectacular (mobs, massacres). Singh freezes the double register: files, orders, and timetables sanction the clearance of a population, while vigilantes plan the sabotage of a refugee train (Singh).Fanon also theorizes a moral dialectic of violence: it can degrade but may also make political becoming possible the colonized subject identifying agency in struggle (Fanon). Singh refracts this assertion through Juggut Singh's last action. Jagga, criminalized by colonial law and village memory, reiterates violence as sacrifice, severing the rope to forestall a communal slaughter even at the cost of his own life (Singh). Fanon would not idealize martyrdom, but the moment literalizes a possibility he leaves open: redirection of force from reactive revenge to positive refusal of colonial/communal scripts.

Last but not least, Fanon foretells the potential for postcolonial elites to take over the state, perpetuating colonial hierarchies in national guise (Fanon). Singh's characterization of officials as more committed to order than to justice implies the threat of a national bourgeoisie that treats partition as logistics, not ethics. The coordinated attack on the train rationalized as defenceagainst the community recalls Fanon's warning that violence, disconnected from liberatory purposes, solidifies a new system of domination. The novel thus renders readable a Fanonian paradox: independence is born in violence, but only an ethical transvaluation of violence as when Jagga will not allow refugees to be killed can break the cycle empire leaves behind.

The Subaltern: Gen-der, Peasantry, and Voice

Spivak's challenge "Can the subaltern speak?" clarifies how *Train to Pakistan* deploys the non-audibility of some subjects within Partition's archive (Spivak). Mano Majra's peasants and women are there as bodies acted upon evacuated, detained, protected, or violated but their viewpoints seldom stabilize as authoritative telling. Muslim families' evacuation is organized by officials and brokers; the reasons, routes, and dangers are told to them, not told by them (Singh).Guha cautions against histories that explain peasant action as derivative of elite politics; Singh resists this partially by focalizing a village, but the agency of the villagers is still bounded by state commands and communal conspiracy (Guha). Gender compounds subalternity. Butalia recounts how women's experiences of Partition abduction, forced conversion, "recoveries" by the state were brokered by family honour and nationalist prestige, frequently silencing women's own desires (Butalia). In Singh's novel, Nooran is readable only as the beloved for whom Jagga gambles his life; her decision is overshadowed by male decisionismJagga's self-sacrifice, elders' advice, police orders (Singh).

Spivak's warning against the fantasy of a transparent recovery of women's voices without re-inscribing them in patriarchal or statist discourses is pertinent here: narrating risks making women allegories of the community instead of subjects (Spivak). Subalternity here is not pure silence but overdetermination. Villager's talk in rumour, gossip, prayer but what they talk is rarely heard as policy or history. The intended assault on the refugee train

is discussed in semi-public settings, but the terms of potential action are determined by forces outside the village: the border, the schedule, the rumour of atrocities elsewhere (Singh).This is subalternity as structural position, not simple muteness: one can talk and remain unheard as political subject (Guha). Paradoxically, Singh eschews condescension. The moral counter-narrative is written by those same figures that law and elite talk exclude: Jagga, stamped as criminal; the families without names upon whose fate a stranger's veto of massacre depends. Their moves cut across both colonial and communal logics. Nevertheless, the novel's own narrative economy does reproduce subaltern obscurity at times Nooran's subjectivity remains undernourished, Muslim evacuees are grouped together instead of being shown as individuals. Spivak would call us to criticism here: the text both lays bare and unwittingly inscribes the terms of subalternity (Spivak).

Analyzing the novel through Spivak and Guha then makes explicit a twofold work: to recognize in which ways the subaltern is structurally bound and to pay attention to points at which the text strains to allow non-hegemonic ethics dominate the narrative.

Hybridity and Liminality in Mano Majra

With Bhabha, border areas produce hybrid identities that disrupt colonial dualities (Bhabha). Mano Majra, sitting astride the new Indo-Pak border, is exactly such a threshold place: it aligns daily life to the railway's modern beat while sustaining village solidarities created across religious divides. Partition forces this space to take sides, but the village practices are still interstitial, demonstrating identities as contingent arrangements and not essential truths (Singh). Iqbal, the Western-trained political activist, embodies hybridity's uncertainty. Villagers can't situate him firmly: is he Hindu? Muslim? Sikh? Trained outsider? Cosmopolitan Marxism breaks down before idioms of honour, kinship, and religion that prevail locally; he is familiar with the rhetoric of emancipation but can't find a way to translate it into practical action (Singh). Bhabha would describe this as a crisis of address: hybrid subjects operate between agonistic enunciative communities and can become unintelligible to both (Bhabha).Iqbal's detention mistaken identity compounded by bureaucratic suspicion exposes how the postcolonial state reads hybridity as risk, not resource.Juggut Singh is yet another model of hybridity: an ethical self constituted between types—outlaw and guardian, community insider and humanistic dissident. His martyrdom creates a third space where belonging is calibrated not by religious identifiers but by responsibility to strangers (Bhabha). Hybridity here is not cultural mixture as style but ethical improvisation under compulsion: the ability to respond to a call that no current category fully legitimates.

The train is the novel's liminal object of focus: both colonial infrastructure and postcolonial disaster, it carries time, bodies, rumours, and dead. It is also a traveling threshold at which choices are determined who gets on, who is refused, who lives. Bhabha's interstitial temporality where the present is saturated with contradictory assertions realizes in the episode of scheduled sabotage synchronized to bridge crossing: the moment when communal

retribution might become indelible fact (Bhabha; Singh). Hybridity is usually faulted for being celebratory about ambiguity while being oblivious to material dominance. Singh's account eludes such faulting because it demonstrates how power structures ambiguity. Iqbal's ambivalence does not free him from arrest; Jagga's moral hybridity does not redeem his life. But in both instances, liminality causes the colonial and communal scripts' inevitability to break. The village's condition of threshold neither quite this nor that makes apparent the constructed nature of identities Partition would solidify.Bhabha's ideas thus enable us to read Mano Majra as a postcolonial becoming laboratory, where the signification of Sikh/ Muslim/Hindu, criminal/citizen, or insider/outside is re-negotiated in the context of fear and duty.

Postcolonial Memory and Ethical Responsibility Where Partition destroys life in Train to Pakistan, the novel is also a part of postcolonial memory work a form of telling violence when official narratives forget. Hirsch's post memory term explains how later accounts pass on a disaster one did not (or could not entirely) see; Singh writes ten years on from 1947, piecing together an account from testimonies, silences, and public information (Hirsch).

Caruth's definition of trauma as delayed and resistant to assimilation accounts for the ways in which the novel's central images "ghost trains," cannibalized bodies, nocturnal arrivals keep appearing as unassimilated scenes structuring the imagination of the village (Caruth; Singh).Memory too is at stake. Nationalist records highlight constitutional victory; village memory documents loss, shame, and compromise. Butalia illustrates how family narratives and women's memories challenge heroic accounts of rescue or retrieval (Butalia). Singh points toward this gendered memory in the unobtrusive erasures surrounding Nooran and other dislocated women over whose futures men, police, and "community" preside. The lack of their durable testimony in the book is itself a trace of patriarchal erasure. At the moral centre is Jagga's insistence that the killing of refugees not be permitted. This is not after-the-fact memory but memory-for-the-future: a deed that anticipates how Partition should be remembered not as vengeance tallies but as instants when common people broke the mathematics of retaliatory murder (Singh). Bhabha's "third space" makes possible this act as an ethical invention that transcends nationalist scripts (Bhabha).It is a moment the community can perpetuate as counter-memory, defying stories of community honour with a narrative of obligation to foreigners.

The book also examines the media of memory. Trains carry bodies and rumours; police records pin down identities; village rumour spreads fear; religious ritual provides templates for grieving. These media do not merely record what happened they determine what can be remembered. The state's accounts remember evacuees as numbers; the village remembers them as neighbours; the vigilantes remember them as enemies. Postcolonial memory is therefore plural and political, and Singh's book sets up the conflict between these forms of memory. Lastly, the book suggests ethical memory involves admitting complicity. There were villagers who had not conspired violence but gained from others'

dispossession homes abandoned, lands reallocated. Recalling Partition as a human tragedy involves acknowledging such mundane entanglements, not just spectacular violence.Here, *Train to Pakistan* exemplifies what postcolonial memory would be like: testimony mindful of erasures of the subaltern, a protectionist ethic that eschews communal math, and dedication to telling acts of solidarity that leave a window open to existing beyond Partition without repeating its logic (Hirsch; Butalia; Caruth).

Conclusion

Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan remains a foundational text for understanding human, cultural, and political implications of the Partition of India, and its vitality in postcolonial thought cannot be overemphasized. Through centering the everyday experiences of ordinary villagers in Mano Majra, Singh circumvents the prevailing nationalist and colonial historiographies that usually omit the voices of the marginalized.The novel is therefore both an archive of memory and a place of resistance to historical amnesia.In the perspective of postcolonial studies, Train to Pakistan reads not just as a Partition novel but also as a subaltern analysis of colonial afterlives. The novel explains how the colonial state organized communal differences through making censuses, ruling through administrative policies, and using "divide and rule" strategies, which later found their culmination in the unexampled violence of decolonization. Singh stages this legacy of violence, showing Fanon's observation that colonialism gives rise to cycles of brutality which reappear in the era of decolonization.The silenced voices in the novel, especially women who have been abducted, sexually violated, and erased, call for introspection with Spivak's theorization of the subaltern. Singh unmasks their pain, but at the same time, he also uncovers the challenge of recovering their voices in history as well as literature. The failure of the novel to fully document their agency becomes itself a critique of the silencing structures perpetrated by colonialism and patriarchy.

In the same way that Mano Majra's brittle hybridity, in which Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus existed in shared cultural practices and interdependence, exemplifies Bhabha's concept of hybrid cultural places, Partition breaks this hybridity as much as it shows both its strength and its susceptibility to political violence. In tracing this failure, Singh emphasizes the tragic price of identity politics based on colonial categories.

Last but not least, the novel serves as postcolonial memory, keeping Partition's trauma alive for future generations. It not only commemorates the atrocities of 1947 but also influences how Partition is remembered and commemorated. Singh's book contributes to what Hirsch refers to as "post memory," keeping Partition's legacy in South Asia's cultural memory and critique alive. Overall, Train to Pakistan moves beyond its status as a historical novel to be a thoroughly postcolonial text that questions colonial legacies, unmasks the architecture of communal violence, grants partial presence to the silenced subaltern, and records the fractured hybridity of cultural existence. Singh's book compels readers to face the uncomfortable truths of history: that the brutality of Partition was not sudden violence

but the outcome of centuries-long colonial manipulations, and that the subaltern and the marginalized were most brutally affected by these historical forces.

The novel is therefore still central to the understanding of the traumas of Partition as well as of larger questions of colonialism, memory, and identity in postcolonial studies. ■

Works Cited:

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.

Butalia, Urvashi. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*. Duke UP, 2000.

Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1996.

Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton UP, 1993.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Constance Farrington, Grove Press, 1963.

Guha, Ranajit. *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*. Oxford UP, 1983.

Hirsch, Marianne. *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*. Harvard UP, 1997.

Nandy, Ashis. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*. Oxford UP, 1983.

Pandey, Gyanendra. *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism, and History in India*. Cambridge UP, 2001.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Vintage, 1978.

Singh, Khushwant. *Train to Pakistan*,1956.

P. Swarna Pandi, Ph.D Research scholar, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu.

Dr. S. Hannah Evangeline, Research supervisor (Asst Prof), Department of English, Arumugam Pillai Seethai Ammal College, Tiruppattur, Tamil Nadu.

Individual Morality and Justice in Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions*

N. Rajalaksmi

K. Chelladurai

Mahesh Dattani's play *Final Solutions* is one of the most significant works in modern Indian theatre. Written and staged in the early 1990s, the play addresses the disturbing realities of communal violence in India. At first glance, it is a play about riots, but at a deeper level, it explores how individuals respond to hatred, prejudice, and division. Dattani carefully weaves together the voices of a Hindu family, a Muslim youth duo, and a faceless mob to reflect the struggles of everyday people in extraordinary circumstances. Through this framework, the play raises timeless and universal questions about morality and justice. This paper examines the role of individual morality and the concept of justice in the *Final Solutions*. Dattani does not present morality as a fixed or simple concept. Instead, he shows morality as fragile, shifting with personal fears, guilt, and courage. Characters like Ramnik, Aruna, Smita, Javed, and Bobby are forced to choose between hate and tolerance, silence and honesty, violence and peace. These moments of choice become moral tests that reveal their humanity. Justice in the play is also not merely about legal systems or punishment. It is instead about truth, fairness, and dignity. Justice begins within the private space of the home before it can spread to society. By admitting guilt, by listening to the other, or by standing against inherited prejudice, the characters show that justice must be practised in small, everyday ways.This abstract argues that *Final Solutions* remains relevant because it challenges audiences to rethink their own moral responsibilities. Dattani refuses to give a single or final solution to communal conflict. Instead, he suggests that morality and justice are ongoing practices that require dialogue, honesty, and courage in a divided world, these values are not luxuries but necessities for survival.

Keywords: Morality, Justice, Theatre, Religion and Conflict

Introduction

Mahesh Dattani is widely regarded as one of the most important voices in contemporary Indian theatre. He is known not just for writing in English, but for bringing to the stage issues that were often silenced or ignored in mainstream discourse. His works explore themes of identity, gender, sexuality, family conflicts, and social divisions. In 1998,

Dattani was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award, the first playwright in English to receive it. This recognition reflects the depth and relevance of his contribution to Indian drama. Among his works, *Final Solutions* stands out as one of the most powerful and provocative plays.*Final Solutions* was first staged in 1993, at a time when India was still reeling from the communal tensions of the early 1990s. The play is set against the backdrop of riots, but it is not just about mobs and street violence. Dattani shifts the focus inward, into the private home of a Hindu family, where personal fears, prejudices, and silences reveal themselves. The play shows how conflict outside seeps into domestic spaces, forcing individuals to confront the prejudices they have inherited and the choices they must make. In this way, the play makes communalism a personal matter, not just a political or social one.

At the heart of *Final Solutions* lies a deep concern with morality and justice. The title itself is ironic—there is no "final" solution offered by Dattani. Instead, the play presents questions. What is right in a time of hate? What does justice mean when society is divided by religion? Can individuals rise above prejudice, or do they remain trapped by it? These questions drive the narrative forward.Scholars have read the play in different ways. N. Gangwal observes that riots and communal hatred thrive only in a society where moral foundations are weak, and individuals fail to resist pressure from the mob (Gangwal 17). Abin Chakraborty points out that Dattani does not provide easy answers. Instead, he exposes broken systems of trust and faith, leaving the audience to grapple with uncertainty (Chakraborthy 45). Rashmi Jain stresses the humanist spirit in the play, showing how truth and compassion can still guide moral responsibility (Jain 112).

This paper builds on such interpretations by looking at two interlinked aspects: the idea of individual morality and the concept of justice as portrayed in the play. The first section will explore how morality is tested in personal choices made by the characters. The second section will examine how justice is imagined within both personal relationships and the larger social framework. By focusing on these two themes, the paper argues that *Final Solutions* remains a relevant and urgent play in today's divided world.

Individual Morality in *Final Solutions:* In *Final Solutions*, Mahesh Dattani explores morality not as an abstract idea but as a lived experience. His characters are ordinary people caught in extraordinary circumstances. When riots break out in the city, a Hindu family encounters two young Muslim men who seek shelter. The reactions of each family member, and the decisions they make, reveal the moral struggles at the centre of the play.The central family—Ramnik, his wife Aruna, and their daughter Smita—represents different shades of morality. Ramnik is a conflicted figure. On one hand, he condemns communal violence and shows sympathy for Bobby and Javed, the Muslim youths. On the other hand, he carries guilt because his family once profited from the dispossession of Muslim neighbours. His morality is not clear or fixed; it is shaped by personal shame and the need to make amends. N. Gangwal observes that riots and prejudice thrive only in societies where individuals fail to uphold moral strength, and Ramnik becomes a figure who is trying to correct such inherited weakness (Gangwal 18).

Aruna, in contrast, represents a rigid and socially defined morality. She clings to ritual purity and religious boundaries. For her, morality means following the expectations of her community and protecting family honour. Her morality is less about justice and more about social approval. Dattani shows how this narrow definition can perpetuate prejudice, even if it is disguised as religious devotion. Rashmi Jain points out that Dattani uses such characters to highlight the need for moral responsibility based on humanity, compassion, and truth rather than fear or tradition (Jain 115).

Smita, the daughter, emerges as a more progressive moral voice. She challenges her mother's rigid values and questions the prejudices embedded in her family. She does not reject her faith, but she wants to define morality for herself. Her role shows that morality can change with generations. Smita embodies the courage to question and to seek fairness.The two Muslim characters, Bobby and Javed, also deepen the moral conflict. Bobby seeks dialogue and understanding. He represents a possibility of healing. Javed, however, begins as a character filled with anger, shaped by rejection and discrimination. His morality seems clouded by resentment, but his gradual shift during the play shows how individuals can still rethink their choices. Abin Chakraborty notes that Dattani deliberately avoids offering "final solutions." Instead, he leaves the audience with unresolved questions about the moral choices of each character and their consequences (Chakraborty 52).

Even the faceless "mob" in the play has moral significance. Dattani presents them as a chorus that embodies collective fear and hatred. Their anonymity shows how individuals can surrender morality when they merge into a crowd. Y. Handibag argues that Dattani often depicts morality as tied to personal decisions, and once individuals abandon those decisions to a group mentality, justice collapses (Handibag 1944).Overall, individual morality in *Final Solutions* is fragile and situational. It is constantly tested by fear, prejudice, guilt, and courage. Dattani reminds us that morality is not a set of rules but a responsibility that must be carried out in the face of social conflict. By portraying different moral positions through his characters, he forces the audience to reflect on their own choices.

Justice in Personal and Social Spaces: In *Final Solutions*, the idea of justice is deeply connected with personal guilt, fairness, and the ability to listen to others. Dattani does not limit justice to the courts or to political systems. Instead, he places it in the small choices made by individuals within homes, families, and communities. Justice in the play is less about punishment and more about recognition and reconciliation.Ramnik Gandhi's character shows how justice can begin with personal acknowledgement of wrongdoing. His family's wealth was built on the suffering of Muslim neighbours during partition. This guilt haunts him, and his decision to shelter Bobby and Javed can be seen as an attempt to seek justice. He is not able to undo the past, but he tries to create fairness in the present. N. Gangwal observes that Dattani highlights how personal moral strength, or the lack of it, directly impacts the possibility of justice in a community (Gangwal 19). Ramnik's journey demonstrates that justice can start with honesty about past mistakes.Aruna, by contrast,

understands justice differently. For her, it is about defending her religious identity and protecting the pride of her community. She does not see justice as inclusion or fairness but as maintaining purity.

This view of justice is narrow and divisive. Rashmi Jain notes that Dattani warns against such limited visions of morality and justice, arguing instead for a broader humanist approach that values truth and compassion above prejudice (Jain 118).Smita's stance shows another side of justice. For her, justice means having the freedom to think and speak for herself. She refuses to follow her mother's rigid rules blindly and instead demands honesty. Her voice reflects the younger generation's desire for a more equal and open society. In this way, justice in the play is not just about communities but also about individuals gaining freedom from oppressive expectations.

The two Muslim youths, Javed and Bobby, also illustrate the struggles of justice in a divided society. Javed initially sees justice in terms of retaliation. His anger makes him believe that violence is the only fair answer to humiliation. But through his interactions with Ramnik and Bobby, he begins to see that real justice lies in dialogue and in the rejection of hate. Abin Chakraborty emphasises that Dattani does not offer a final closure here. Instead, he presents the characters' struggles as open-ended, urging audiences to reflect on the ongoing search for justice (Chakraborty 54). Bobby, on the other hand, represents a quieter, more patient pursuit of justice. He seeks dignity and recognition, showing that justice does not always come through force but often through understanding and resilience.

The presence of the mob in the play represents the failure of social justice at large. The mob is faceless, irrational, and violent. It denies individuals any chance of fairness. Y. Handibag points out that when people surrender their moral choices to a collective frenzy, the path to justice is blocked (Handibag 1945). Dattani's use of the mob demonstrates that societal justice collapses when individuals fail to resist hatred.In the end, *Final Solutions* shows that justice is never absolute or complete. It is fragile, just like morality. It begins within families, in private spaces, and then extends outward. For Dattani, justice is not about giving 'final solutions.' It is about keeping dialogue alive, admitting guilt, and choosing fairness even when it is difficult. Thus, it is inferred from the forgoing discussion and close analysis Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions* is not only a play about communal riots; it is a deep study of how ordinary people wrestle with morality and justice when fear and prejudice dominate their world. Dattani does not place his focus on politicians, leaders, or institutions. Instead, he looks at families, neighbours, and young people—those whose small choices either sustain or challenge prejudice. By doing so, he makes morality and justice deeply personal.

Conclusion

The play shows that morality is not fixed. It shifts with fear, guilt, and courage. Ramnik feels the heavy guilt of his family's past but tries to act fairly in the present. Aruna defines morality through rituals, yet her narrow vision prevents her from seeing justice for

others. Smita questions tradition and seeks honesty, showing the possibility of a more open future. Javed's anger reveals how injustice creates cycles of hate, but his gradual change shows that self-realisation is also a form of justice. Bobby's quiet strength demonstrates that listening and recognition are equally powerful forms of moral action. Together, these characters prove that morality is always fragile and must be renewed through conscious choice.Justice in the play works in the same way. It is not a courtroom verdict but a process of dialogue and recognition. Here, Dattani links the failure of justice to the moral weakness of individuals who allow prejudice to rule. The play avoids giving closure, reflecting how the search for justice is always incomplete.The mob as collapse of individual responsibility shows that justice can only survive if individuals resist hatred. Thus, *Final Solutions* remains relevant today because it teaches that morality and justice are ongoing practices, not finished answers. Dattani forces us to ask: Do we remain silent, or do we speak? Do we follow hate, or do we listen? In asking these questions, the play does not give us a 'final solution.' Instead, it hands the responsibility back to us. ■

Works Cited:

Chakraborty, Abin. "Beyond Broken Columns: Mahesh Dattani's Final Solutions and the Quest for 'Horizontal Comradeship.'" *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2012, pp. 43–55.

Dattani, Mahesh. *Final Solutions and Other Plays*. East West Press, 1994.

Gangwal, N. "Final Solutions to Riots: Mahesh Dattani's Final Solutions." *New Man International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2016, pp. 15–22.

Handibag, Y. *Social Realism in the Plays of Mahesh Dattani*. Routledge, 2023.

Jain, Rashmi. "Influence of Culture and Ancient Philosophy on Mahesh Dattani's Plays and Its Interpretations." *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2013, pp. 110–120.

N. Rajalaksmi, Research Scholar,Department of English and Foreign Languages, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu.

Dr. K. Chelladurai, Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, Government Arts and Science College for Women, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu.

SHORT STORY

The Smoker Girl

Original Odia : **Zakir Khan**

Eng. Tr. : Sukomal Dash

I had my first ever encounter with her in the airport smoking room. I was all alone there and she arrived just like a pleasant dream. Approaching me hesitantly she said, "Excuse me! If you don't mind, can you please give me a cigarette?"

"Of course," I replied and handed her over the packet.

The way she received the pack with her cute soft fingers, I was at once reminded of a pretty lass closely holding a velvety white furry rabbit with her comely hands.

The girl was refreshingly beautiful. Aged about twenty or at best two years more. She appeared to have come from some respectable noble family. Clad in a pair of blue jeans and a pink tight crop-top over her fair, slim five and half feet frame, she was dressed as if to kill. The flat, fair, slender belly peeping in between the crop-top and the blue jeans was charming and mesmeric. The make up on the face evinced a chunk of time spent behind it. I however felt, in stead of boosting her beauty up, it highlighted her grey sorrows more.

Handing the packet back to me, in a penitent voice she said, "I hope you don't take me for a bad girl!" While she asked, her eyes were trying to read the emotions which might have floated over my middle aged face.

Laughing my heart out I replied, "Nothing like that. Please permit me to quote Saddat Hassan Monto, 'Smoking damages the lungs of women not their character'."

A simple smile came upon her lips. With a light drag on her cigarette, she said, "Ok then, I have asked for it from the right person."

Many, one after the other, now entered the smoking cabin and the girl fell silent. Quietly she remained absorbed in smoking. She appeared to have been lost somewhere. As she finished, she thanked me with her eyes and left the room.

As I boarded the plane and approached my seat, again I met the girl. She sat next to me. She smiled at me. "So, you too are headed for Kolkata?"

As I occupied my seat, I asked her, "Any idea about Marquez?"

Without trying to suppress her subtle smile she asked, “Gabriel Garcia Marquez? I love his stories.”

Being impressed with her answer, I asked, “That means you read.”

“Not always, but yes occasionally, an amateur reader you can say.” Making herself more comfortable in her seat she asked, “Aren’t you a writer?”

“Why do you ask? Because I uttered Monto and Marquez?”

“No. I assumed considering your observation only.”

“Your guesswork is of course not wrong.” After a short silence I said, “If you don’t mind, may I tell you a thing or two.”

A spark flashed in her eyes. She tried to suppress it, still said, “Please proceed.”

“First of all, I am truly happy finding you next to my seat. Last night I was reading ‘Sleeping beauty and the Airplane’ by Marquez. I don’t know why, I was reminded of the story as soon as I saw you in the smoking room.”

Still smiling she said, “Yes, I too have read that story.”

I had a hunch that she was trying hard to suppress her deep sorrows behind her smiles. As our gossip became a bit cordial, I came to learn that she was Swetalina. A software engineer, on her way to Kolkata to meet another girl, her friend.

As the plane landed in Kolkata, she became restless - “Would you like to join me over a cup of coffee? I hope you don’t have to attend to any urgent work!”

“No, I don’t have to. At least, I am free for today. Is it your resolve to compensate for the cigarette?” I asked.

“Your assumption is half the truth.” She said.
“What about the other half?”
“I will reveal on the coffee table.”
I fell silent.

We exited the airport with our respective trolly bags and hired a taxi. A cafe came up as we headed for some distance. The driver of course dropped us much before the cafe under the pretext of one way traffic. Swetalina insisted to pay the rent. We walked down the rest part dragging the trolley bags.

A huge frog jumped over to the street from somewhere. Swetalina was startled. Leaving her bag behind as she went ahead to pick the frog off the road, a speeding car ran over the frog. Swetalina cried out. The mishap struck so fast that no one could do anything. I found Swetalina shivering and two drops of tear flowing down her cheeks. Clueless how to console her, I asked, “Are you okay?”

Wiping her face she said, “Let’s go,” and we moved on.

The whole sky was overcast. A dimness subdued the atmosphere making it listless and bleak. By now, Swetalina also appeared to me ravaged and shattered. As I asked her, “What happened”, she squinted at me and answered, “Nothing”. Then suddenly she asked, “Is it going to rain today? What do you think?”

To relax the tense moment I said, “When frogs croak, it rains. Goes a common belief.”

“Then no more it will rain today.” She said.

As I looked at her bewildered, she said, “The frog died before it croaked.”

By then we had reached the cafe. There was a thin crowd. We occupied a corner. Placing order for two cups of coffee she again asked me for a cigarette. Her suppressed sorrows had now replaced her facial make up.

I said, “You appear very soft hearted.”

She didn’t reply but let out just a plaintive smile. As she lit the cigarette, I asked, “Do you like frogs?”

Intaking a long drag and puffing through her nostrils she said, “At times I consider myself a frog.”

Her answer didn’t surprise me. Rather I understood it as an emotional expression in her the then state. The coffee arrived just then. Swetalina, sipping her coffee said, “My granny had told me a story in my childhood. Would you like to listen?” Without waiting for my answer she continued, “A king had three sons. Incidentally the elder two married two beautiful princesses and the youngest one married a frog. The king was desperate to find out as to who amongst them was most intelligent. The frog lady used to shy away from others. One day the king invited the three ladies for a feast. Finding her husband upset, the frog lady said to him, “Go and tell the king that I will attend the feast on time.” The lady reached the banquet on time and she proved to be the most beautiful one amongst all. Finding his wife engrossed in gossip with others, the prince went to their bedroom and searched for the truth behind his wife. Finding the frog skin of his wife he instantly burnt it down to ashes. On return the frog lady learnt everything. She came to know that her husband had been spying on her since long. The lady couldn’t digest the suspicion of her husband. She lamented, cursed her husband and taking leave of her vanished.”

The girl was almost breathless as she finished the story and asked me for another cigarette. Handing one over to her I asked, “Did your boy friend cheat and dump you?”

She brooded over for long. I tried to decipher the tense lines which erupted on her face. Still smoking she asked, “Do I seem to you a cheap woman?”

"Not at all, I can bat. You are an educated, open minded and open hearted young lady. Sympathetic and cute as well." She looked defeated, her smile dim. "I had been into living-in relation with him for nearly a year. Initially everything went on fine. Since the last six months I had a hunch that he was trying to get rid of me. I endured with him in every way. Do you know what happened last week? One night he asked me, with whom else did I sleep. I was crest fallen. His question broke me from inside. I wept the whole night. The frog story of my granny crossed my mind. I felt as if he has thrown my very existence into fire and ruined me. I wished even to end my life. Then I analysed, why should I spoil my life for the sake of a leery lowly man? Leaving all those behind I have come over here. To lead a life anew." Then looking straight into my eyes, she said, "I could have managed his betrayal but his suspicion I couldn't tolerate. It's relaxing to open up one's mind before else one. Since then, as we gossiped in the smoking room, I realised that you are the person to whom I could open up my mind."

She hailed at the waiter and placed order for two more cups of coffee. We were silent until the coffee arrived.

The waiter served coffee and retreated. Silent for sometime and her eyes fixed on the vapour rising from the hot coffee she said, "Do you know, unforeseen things occur with us at times. We can call it even coincidence. I too, as you did, was reading 'Sleeping beauty and the Airplane' by Marquez last night. The protagonist fails to obtain that beauty. She is lost somewhere in the crowded forest of New York. But, I don't wish to be lost like her. Won't you share your contact number with me?"

We exchanged our contact numbers. She committed to disturb me occasionally and smiled. I accompanied her up to the taxi to see her off. From inside of the taxi she looked at me with an intimate, indebted eye casting a pitiable look. As the taxi started I said, "Bye dear frog!"

She was almost elated with my address. The taxi moved on. Looking back at me she went on waving with one hand until the taxi vanished and wiping her tears with the other hand.

The taxi was no more in sight, still my eyes were fixed in that direction. By then, started a drizzle.

My cell phone ringed. As I picked up, Swetalina was unstoppable from the other side, "Rain started in this part. Is it raining around you?" ■

Mr. Zakir Khan, a well-known story teller in Odisha, presently working in OTV, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Mr. Sukomal Dash, a passionate translator, now lives at Kalapani, Dist. Bargarh, Odisha, E-mail - sukomaldas8@gmail.com

POEMS

What's the Matter?

(a science poem)

Bimal Chandra Mishra

Matter is anything that occupies space,
From the core of the Earth
to the outer face.
It has mass, it's always there,
In soil, in water and in air.

It is found in forms like solid , liquid, gas,
Also in plasma and BECS(Bose-Einstein
Condensate State).
Solid has definite volume and shape,
Particles fit tight and do not escape.
Melted to liquid, sublimates to gas,
Example as iron and dry ice
to dash(go somewhere suddenly).

Liquids can flow for which they fluid,
They fit into the space
as a druid(Magician).
Liquid has definite volume not shape,
They fit to the container
and the stape (Grasslands).
Vaporizes to gas and freezes to solid,
Example as water and lava to rigid.

Gases can zoom and fly around,
Don't have shape fix and space is bound.
They don't have shape
they don't have volume,
How much you space they can consume.
Deposit to solid and condense to liquid,
As like snow and as like limpid.
Matter can change with heat or chill,
Ice turns to water, if you will.

Water to gas? It starts to fly—
Evaporation says everyone goodbye!
Compress, expand, freeze or boil,
Matter's magic is worth the toil.
(For a long time)
Solid to liquid, gas and back,
Science leads us down the track!
If someone asks you, "What's the matter?"
Say, "Solids, liquids, gas that scatter!"
In every corner, big or small—
Matter is my friend and part of all! ■

bimal.mishra38@gmail.com

Your Savvy Grip

Ganeswar Behera

O' cloud,
carry us amid your celestial touch
To a place unknown, untouched ...

Let our wishes be unseal and volatile
For seamless, shiny and soupy dives

We'll cook surreal drops of affection
Basking foggy sketches of intuition

We' ll share all dusts and rusts
sans lending eyes to fragile throbs

We'll dance to our wished tunes
Bloom spiral smiles , curly rhymes

Beyond stiff strikes of evil eyes
We"ll draw horizon with rosy rise

Oh! we might taste watery rebounds
Still wanna hold the thrilling sounds
You know, am lost in your savvy grips
Coz your love reaps pinkish leaves. ■

gsbehera1998@gmail.com

Destination

Ratnakar Rout

My destiny has left me alone,
A lone pedestrian in the heart
of a vast desert.
I thirst, parched and worn,
Longing for a drop of water
to sustain my life.

You are a constant surprise,
An oasis that appears in the guise of a mirage
But since then, I'm lost
in the sea of confusion
And puzzled by the waves
that crash and flee.

The sea's vastness puzzles me,
Like the golden deer
that deceived Shree Rama's sight.
I see a wavy surface, restless and wide,
With water all around, yet none to abide.

I ran madly, ceaselessly, to reach the shore,
To catch hold of fortune,
and grasp it once more.
But each effort turned futile,
hopes shattered and failed,
Slipping through my hands
like sand, unavailed.

My quest, my search, my aspiration,
All endeavors, efforts, and attempts
to reach my destination,
Smoked out, gone in vain, yet I proceed,
Driven by the hope of finding you,
my heart's need.

A ray of hope, a glimpse of your presence,
Keeps me moving, propels me
to make some sense.
Though unknown, your existence feels real,
A feeling that keeps me agile, alive,
and I reveal.
I know not if you're there, but I'll move on,
Overcoming all obstacles,
till my journey's done. ■

ratnakarrout2010@gmail.com

Death in the Air

(Ahmedabad Air Crash)

V.R.Badiger

London is the most beautiful city,
the Capital of England, the great city
of our erstwhile rulers;
All Indians love to go there and live there;
as it is very clean and beautiful;
The life there is more comfortable;
with this in their innocent minds,
the Indians took the flight
from Ahmadabad by a Boeing 717;
some to seek new livelihood,
newlywed bride to meet her husband,
the old husband to bring his aged wife back;
Some who came to celebrate Eid
with their relatives,
were to return happily to their cozy homes;
All were in hurry, all were happy
as the larks including the plane crew;
Nobody could notice the loopholes
before the take off;
The plane took off in hurry, within a minute
quickly crashed down
on the medical hostel building,
killing eating students and doctors;
some of them jumped off and escaped
the jaws of death.
But almost all passengers were burnt down
in the wink of an eye.

What a great tragedy!
they lost their lives in the air!!
Their friends and relatives came running,
to the deadly spot and shed tears
unburdening the sorrow; burnt corpses
scattered among the debris
Of course, the company declared the
compensation of a crore each
But, alas! the lost lives
can never be brought back.
Death is the cruellest predator. ■

✉ vr_badiger@rediffmail.com

Baggage

Nilamadhab Kar

Are you carrying baggage?
That you shouldn't?
That's not yours,
You picked it up, just in case,
Lest you might need,
Or you have forgotten
You're still carrying something
That's fit for the bin,
It is stale now, withered with time
Are these just memories?
Indelible, that you couldn't erase,
Despite dying to
You needn't carry
All that heavy loads, on yourself
You can travel light
In fact, you aren't allowed to carry any,
Anything at all,
No, you can't
Just be bare, carry yourself alone
Drop all those unnecessary baggage
Off your shoulders,
Before you drop dead, relieve yourself
Shed your shades,
Unnecessary masks,
Paints of characters that you aren't
No need to act the way you aren't
Don't try. Just be you, act as you
To the bone
Be bare, be light,
It's easier to fly that way
To reach higher,farther
Realise
You don't even carry your body,
Yourself. ■

✉ nmadhab@yahoo.com

Bahuda

Saroj K Padhi

Home coming is always exciting
but with our sibling deities'
charioting back home an event
of a mixed feeling :
of pathos at their departure
from the birth place
after a short sojourn
in aunt Gundicha's home
and in the same breath
a happy return to their throne
in the midst of a sea of loving
frenzied crowd.
Gods and angels watch
this journey of the divine
from heaven ,
enjoy each nuance
of tearful parting
and happy annual meeting
with common folk
that ends in happy ending.
After an emotional week's
sojourn and lavish life,
the sibling deities
come back to temple-home;
their chariots drawn

by lakhs of human hands
clasping the holy rope
and dragging on
in tune with music playing on,
enlivening the Grand Road
with extravaganza of spiritual
bonding each moment
gathering momentum.
A sea of frenzied devotees
swaying like waves
roaring like sea
drag the holy rope on,
filled with love's happy tear
they reach back the main gate
to be adorned with Gold attire.
a ritual so rare.
And then Pahandi back
soon to relapse into a peaceful
deep sleep,
handing over charge to Lord
Shiva for the world's upkeep! ■

skpadhi407@gmail.com

Touching Lives while Touching Moon
(India's Space Saga)

Sada Bihari Sahu

India's space journey reaching so high
Among the top four to land on Moon
which make us pride
Land on Moon's southern polar to be first
Pragyan Rover and our Scientists make it
possible to reach that sight
It is not easy to be on the top
Our long patience and untiring efforts
make the dream come true
50 years of efforts, support and research
From Aryabhat to Chandrayan-3
SLV to PSLV and Cryogenic, IRNSS,
Aditya-L1 many such things
From Vikram Sarabhai to S Somanath
There is a long journey both success,
failure and faith
Rocket to protect my country
and countrymen
Satellite to communicate
and better weather forecast
Touching the lives of people
in every sphere
from earth to sky and beyond,
I am everywhere
Dreaming to Sun, moon, star
and other planet to explore
Miles to go before becoming the top
and always on the top
I am here to serve humanity as a whole. ■

sadabihari@rediffmail.com

Keeping a Promise

Lalatendu Mishra

Keeping a promise to dearest self
In breaking the ice -
The inertia of silence
Solemnly peeping for an outburst
Is not so easy a task
But a spark for early ignition !!!
Sudden was my conviction -
An instant declaration of war
Between my sluggish thoughtfulness
And elegant arena of life's bewilderments.
Bewitched was I —
How to light the candle?
How to rouse the drowsy horse?
And how to pave the derailed compass
In a stormy sea of perceptions?
But I have to uphold my word
Open my nerves and lips

Expand the senses beyond horizon
With wings to fly higher
Deep into the vast sea and endless sky
To discover the pearls and stars
As treasures of love for all. ■

srilalatendumishra@gmail.com

What Childhood?

Khushnuma Anwari

It's something which got snatched away,
Was something I should've lived;
But here I'm writing this,
While weeping with a heart
which got grieved.

It has always been me who's
Stucked between the worst situations;
Oh I feel like a sinner,
As nobody's getting my perceptions.

There's not a normal day when—
With a heavy heart, I'm not crying;
So mute, so suppressed,
Oh I can't live but I'm trying.

They say I was unwanted to—
Have birth in this world's existence;
So why did y'all keep me with you?
Why took me with acceptance!

And slowly, I got over emotions—
Like pain, happy, sad or shy;
"I wish you were never born"
Oh Damn!! So do I.

When the surroundings
are filled with poison,
How am I supposed to—
Heal and embrace my inner self?
"you're being too sensitive"
God forbid a 16 year old—
Who's just trying to be herself.

Now I feel so suffocated,
Like a fragile and scared deer—
Struggling in a dense wood;
"You're a child, so behave like one",
Maybe it's satire,
Cuz, "What Childhood?" ■

anwarikhushnuma@gmail.com

Before I Say Goodbye

Nadia Afsheen

I've whispered death's name
several times,
For the weight it leaves behind.
I do not crave endless days—
Just a short life that burns with grace.
My screams — I've swallowed them
whole,
Till my throat cracked under the burden,
Till silence burst like thunder
Inside my chest.
The hospital asks,
"Where shall the body rest?"
They never knew
When I said goodbye.
If I could,
I would become the cloud
That cries each time it misses its land.
I would become the flower in her garden,
The bird in his painting.
I'd dance around them
As the wind.
I'd be the breeze of a July noon,
The warmth of December's hug. ■

afsheennadia2009@gmail.com

Lord of the Universe on Chariots

Arpita Priyadarshini

I was one among the thousands
Drenched in rain,
Pushed by waves of bodies,
feet trampled, hair flying,
breath held tight—
And yet, I had never felt more at peace.
Around me, people trembled,
eyes brimming with tears,
Strong men, old women, young children,
All swept up in the same salient yearning:
To catch a glimpse of Him,
To hold the braided ropes,
To pull His chariot even once.
This wasn't merely a festival,
It was a procession of love.
A surrender.
A divine frenzy.
People danced barefoot in the mud,
Sang *bhajans* through cracked voices,
shouted *Hari Boll* with every heartbeat.
It felt like the universe was chanting back.
There was no 'me' and 'you' that day.
Only us—
Held together by the sacred ropes,
Drawn by the magnetic pull,
Of those towering chariots:
Nandighosh, Taladhwaja, and
Darpadalana,
Rolling forward like time itself,
Ushering the idols through the hearts
of their people.
The rain fell like blessings,
heavy, cleansing and unstoppable.
Yet not a soul flinched.
No one cared about the downpour.
No one ran for shelter.
All that mattered was the Chariot,
And the sight of those round,
merciful eyes!
As it rolled closer,
The crowd surged like a tide.
The ground grew slick, the air tighter,
bodies pressed from all directions.
Still, not a single step retreated.
People stumbled. Some even slipped.
But no one complained.
In that holy surge, in that divine chaos,
We all knew-
We were being drawn closer to Him.
Who we were, what we wore,
how we looked,
It all dissolved in that moment of grace.
Our names, Our doubts, Our stories-
All paused at His feet.
We weren't individuals anymore.
We were hearts beating the same name,
One longing, one chant.
And now, as the dust settles,
as the drums grow faint,
A quiet longing lingers…
Because no matter how many times
you go,
You never return the same.
A part of you stays behind-
Beneath the chariot wheels,
within the temple walls,
in His generous, watching eyes.
And until He calls you back,
You carry Him within,
In your breath,
Your ache,
Your silence that echoes the chant:
Jay Jagannath. ■

---

lives in Nawarangpur, Odisha.

Fading Greens, Rising Greys

*** Shreya Samhita Kundu**

The earth once breathed in emerald hues,
With whispering leaves and silver dews.
Rivers ran wild, the skies stretched free,
A world untouched in harmony.

But now the trees fall, one by one,
Steel and concrete block the sun.
The songs of birds are lost in sound,
Of engines roaring, drilling ground.

The grass once danced in golden light,
Now drowns beneath the neon night.
The stars fade out, the air turns thin,
Glass and smoke replace the wind.

We race ahead, we build, we climb,
Yet leave behind the roots of time.
A future forged in hollow gains,
Where earth still cries in silent pains.

Will we return before it's late,
Before the green succumbs to fate?
Or will we wake one mournful day,
To find the last leaf blown away? ■

* Lives in Singapore.

Relationship

Original Odia: **Ipsita Sarangi ***

Translation : Soubhagyabanta Maharana**

He, whose relationship
Is not bound by any strong rope
Is ready to tolerate
In time and bad time
The invisible storm
Taking place around him.

He, whose relationship
Is near to nearer
And of self to more of one's own
Is not prepared
To lift the weight of a straw.
He wants to stay
Being unrivalled or like that
Without dipping his feet in mud.

It is heard that
Only consolation is God.
In friendship and faith
You are certainly found
Like all relationships being lost
Can your name be blotted out ?

Can the helpless sea-wind
With acute salinity
Eat away the Jagannath temple ?
Like hand of the triangle
Who will then keep earth's
Centre of gravity steady ? ■

* Lecturer at Niali College, Odisha.
** Noted Odia Poet, lives in Sambalpur, Odisha.

In the world We Live in

Nending Butung *

It was a calm, clear morning
and everything felt fine,
My father summoned me
as soon as I came in sight.
He held something in his hand –
small, slight, rough, white,
A thread woven from wild creepers,
called *stinkvine*.

He tied it around my wrist,
with a deep pensive thought
Its touch was scratchy, itchy.
With regard I voiced my doubt
“Aba, why do you tie this to me?”
He didn’t forthwith respond
His thoughts adrift, sailing through
memories far and beyond

His fingers still lingered
on the tiny thread with knots tightly fasten
Then with a calm voice and eyes
that had seen many seasons hasten
He said: “To shield you, secure you,
from the world’s cruel reckoning.”
Then he spoke again with words
forged with care and warning
“Child, in the world we live in;
The tall and upright tree
that is what the axes seek -
The one without knots,
that grows perfect in the forest streak.
The trees with scar and crooked limbs,
are left to grow in wild.”
He continued unfazed,
I listened bit dazed and beguiled

“Smooth, round rocks are first
to face the hammer’s blow
While rugged, ridged rocks lie untouched
somewhere below.
The fairest flower, are plucked too
soon before they even fade away
But those that bloom less sweet,
in shadowed soil are left to stay.

The radiant bird and mighty beast
instantly draws the hunter’s wait
It is their splendour and majestic form
that seals their cruel fate.
The feathers are plucked, flesh skinned
carved with sharpened blade,
Their skulls and hides as trophies
in headgear and dormitory displayed.”

He paused, then spoke - gentle yet grave
“You are too well-formed,
too finely grown
And that invites danger.
Thus, to dim your glow
This thread is a talisman;
it gives you flaw.”
I stood in silence – half proud,
half alarmed.
Thinking in my heart
what else in me can be harmed
A warding thread - to mar me slightly,
so I may stay
A blessed or cursed knot -
but why protect me in this way?

His gaze went beyond -
through the fields, into the past
Unto that universal soul that shaped us,
unseen and vast
Then he spoke, not just to me -
of something deeper
Speaking of what came before and after -
a path seeker

“When a soul is born as human
into our world,
It doesn’t arrive alone.
It manifests in many forms:
The tree, the rock, the flower,
the bird, the beast
These are all your body.
These are all your breath.
When that tree falls,
the part of you it held dies that moment
When that rock is shattered,
your strength is broken.

And when that flower is crushed,
A piece of your spirit is taken.
We do not die in one instant.
We die in fragments-
As our incarnation in birds and beasts
are destroyed, one by one,
That's how we end,
that's how we are undone."
I learned – a leaf, a rubble, a breath,
a flower - each my own creature,
An embodiment, and that I am
more than myself, I am nature.

There he looked again,
as if in silent pleato the natural thread
Entwined on me, firmly coiled
around my tender wrist
Like creepers guard and hide a sapling
from unforeseen threat
Hoping it hold on tight, through every turn,
through every twist.

And so, I wear the thread.
Not as ornament, ritual, or marker
But to secure, all those existences,
those hidden parts of me
In land, sea or sky – to protect that parts
so no eyes can see
To keep the soul whole,
to shield the wearer from its destroyer.
My father's wise words,
deeply rooted like the creeper vine
Tied close to my veins,
carries the wisdom of our ancient line
Though slender, this thread is
as strong as bone beneath the skin
And binds all things, big and small,
in the world we live in. ■

* Asst. Prof, Rang-Frah Govt. College, Changlang, Arunachal Pradesh.

My Love…

Original in Tamil: **Sundara Murugan***
English rendering: Sheela Banu**

(i)

I shall
Chase you
Like a shadow
All through my long life
Within my heart by love…

Birth on Earth
Is sure to bring Death
Someday…
I've given
My heart to you
There isn't
Death for me…

If I nosh
Aren't you
My immortal elixir
If I fancy you
Sans tasting you
I'll lose my life
In your love…!
Give me your love
Let's in unison
Forever…! ■

My Love…

Original in Tamil: **Sundara Murugan***
English rendering: Sheela Banu**

(ii)

My heart dances in glee
When I proceed in quest of you
When I meditate upon you
Step into my heart

And make me suss
The essence of true love…

Enough…
Come,my Love…
Like a devotee
Experiences Revelation…
I experience the epiphany
Of your love

A glimpse of you
Fills my being…
Your sweet endearing smile
Stirs up
Rhapsody and serenity…
Blessed with heaven on earth
I'm in seventh heaven
My Love…
Are you surviving
Simply supping dew drops?

Your Monalisa smile
Is a perfect blend of
Thoughtfulness and Truthfulness
Come…
Let's sustain solitude
And sweeten life
With our tender love… ■

---

* A poet par excellence, now living in Puducherry.

** Associate Prof in English, Govt. Arts College, Salem, Tamil Nadu.

Travel Mania

Sumitra Mishra

How I wish to trek down the alley
To ride a bus or taxi to reach a beach,
A hill or a temple on a hill
To hop into a train among the crowd
Or push into a tram
to visit the city around!

How I long to travel and explore
The world beyond my city and state
To visit parks,gardens, churches afar
Or museums and zoos
and experiences share,
To sail on a boat along a river or lake
To enjoy riding on the breakers
And fishing of fishermen by their nets
To sail or cruise along the sea or ocean
To observe the trouts, crocodiles,
dolphins, seals and whales in action
Swimming smoothly in shoals or alone
Rolling or basking on sand
or enjoying the sun!!!

How I want to enjoy friendship
with animals
Share with them a few moments
Create memories in my mobile camera
That records all my visits and visited
Because I would love to rewind
The gallery and watch the videos
when resting on my bed,
Incapable to move or incapacitated
to travel any more!

How I wish to travel in groups and make
friendship with people from foreign lands
A suitcase by my side,
and a knapsack clinging to my back,

I would love to talk, gossip
and share my thoughts with all,
Thousand happy experiences and photos
I would like to make
Before I am cursed to lie still on the bed
Or lose my vision or power of my brain
To explore and experience the marvels
of this earth,sky and ocean!! ■

Dr. Sumitra Mishra, Retd. Prof. of English,
lives in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Urmila

Original in Odia: **Hrusikesh Mallick***
English rendering: Santosh Kumar Behera**

Tell me who will deny
The early clouds of June
Not to float over my roof-top.

Tell me who will deny
The gourd flowers
Not to twinkle on my fence.

My mother-in-law fulfils my needs
As soon as I wake up
The maid plucks flowers
From the ticoma tree in the courtyard
For my morning offerings
The wind brings me
The message of my bygone days
Yet my dear, my home
I feel alien to me.

I feel my chest
Brimming with his sweet signs
As milk steaming out
I feel my eyes
Shut in drowsy numbness
I find the chain
Around my feet getting loose.

The tree I planted,my dear
Fourteen years ago
Yet to bloom a flower
The tree I planted,my dear
Fourteen years ago
Yet to nest a bird.

In the evening
Lo and behold
A shadow moving and whistling
Beside the screw-pine hedges
A thin line of laughter
Seems peeping through
The top of the casuarina tree
The fragrance of his perfume
Blowing over the new mown field
Anointed all over my body
Bewilders me
Titilates me
Makes jest of me
Causing an unknown alarm
Keeps me awake
Throughout the night.

I fail to find me
In my mirror as before
My own picture looks at me in surprise
As if a picture of
Another one known and forgotten.

In tottering dew drops
In dazzling star lights
I know not
Who is seen roaming
In spite of mine
Stretching my hands
Repeatedly again and again
Slips away the wrapper and
All my efforts proved in vain.

Sometimes a call
I listen from the forest not known to me
I fail to look on
My unfastened hair
Lengthened up to the thigh
I fail to look on my clothes
Rolling on the ground
And I feel like passing over
Many a calm and cool grassy land
Overcoming the latitude and longitude
Of many a birth and death.

Oh!How sacred is the order of sounds
How excited I feel
Everywhere I smell
The bewitching odour of champak
In my home,inside and outside.

The trees,the creepers
The rivers and rivulets
I see my dear
When eyes are open
Where do they go
When eyelids are closed!
An ocean of milk,utterly astonished
Seems to be touching
The feet of a blue hill.
Oh!What a strange feeling
The body becomes thinner and thinner and
The soul becomes more and more exalted!

Hands stretched from the moon
Seem like his own
As if the land everywhere
Reverberated in his whistle.

Tears roll down from eyes
Unrestrained in unending line
I feel pitch-black darkness
Pervading in all
The secret chambers of my body.

How intimate embrace
In the pangs of separation,my dear!
How hair raising thrill!

'My dear Luxman is now in exile.'
The thought,my dear
Ever makes my heart tremble
And may it never come to an end!

Tell me who will deny
The early clouds of June
Not to float over my roof top
Tell me who will deny
The gourd flowers
Not to twinkle on my fence.

In his absence
He is ever present
Enticing me
From fort to forest
Tell me who will arrest
The silent sounds of his footsteps! ■

---

* Former President of Odisha Sahitya Academy, Bhubaneswar.
** A retired Associate Prof. in English, lives in Dharmasala, Odisha.

Prohibited Lotus Garden

Original Odia: **Pravat Kumar Mallick***
English rendering: Saroj K Padhi**

Never said ' No' to anyone
nor pushed a single person into despair,
I always kept open the dual door
of my heart,
to every darling customer ,
and sans any grudge,
offered nectar of the best
from the hive of my chest.

Since ages from beggar to the king
all have given their best
to grovel in the mud of my lotus pond
and drink from my baity's lactating chest.

I have offered the honey of my youth
to all in ways leisurely and in haste.
When night alights in black
tearing the skeleton of the sky,
the lightning of male pride
into the womb of clouds doth die.

Every night stings me
with its venomous hood
forcing me to lick it with loveless lust
turning bouts of passion
into heaps of dust.
I plod on thro dark
turning my back to the Sun
and eagerly wait for someone
to come stealthily with a little love,
open the shut door of my heart
to plant a seed
and fill my pitcher with pure water
that's all I need ! ■

---

* Enterpreneur and poet, lives at Katikata, Jajpur, Odisha.
** Noted poet and translator, lives in Cuttack, Odisha.

Limitless Thirst

Bidyut Prava Kar*

Who am i?
The tears of poverty in the bright garden
A collection of flowers of sadness
An irresistible scent?
A lot of corpses
In the trenches
From the dried leaves on the sidewalk
The wretched eater
Near the skeleton
Nurturing the bond of scarcity
By feeding it with blood of failure
Or the main hall of the unbroken temple?
Who am I?
Am I in the sky?
Among countless rainbow roads
Where the fear of death is mixed
with colourful colours
The hope of the wicked rings in silence
To satisfy the body's hunger
Body is filled with ecstasy
Shredded many innocent petals.
The blood thirsty lover's jealousy burns
the soul's crops
Who am I?
Am I a wave of joy, a honey-faced wave?
As sweet as a moth
The pride of the lovely blue moon,
Exciting times of false pretence
The swaying of the steps, the splendid
headdress of the great emperors?
Am i the fierce desire, the one who shakes
the human soul, in the timeless throne?
I am a formless "limitless thirst",
an uncertain worn-out page
with the faded title
of an unharmed time. ■

---

* Lives in Jajpur Town, Odisha.

Music Brings Joy

Kalpana Panda*

Music brings joy
transcending boundaries and cultures.
It has the power to evoke emotions
and bind souls in close contact.
Music restores our emotions.
When it is sung,
it alleviates the boredom of the mind.
It has the power to uplift
the mind from pessimism
to a comfort zone.
Listening, playing, or singing
leads to the charm of the ecstasy
of worldliness. ■

* Jaraka, Jajpur, Odisha.

Poet of this Quarter

Sri Pramod Kumar Rath is a bi-lingual writer from Odisha. His Odia poems are published in different Odia literary journals. He has contributed his articles to English newspaper like 'The Asian Age' and different literary journals like 'The Quest, 'Rock Pebbles' and 'The Replica'. He is a retired Prof. in English. Some of his Odia short stories are broadcast by AIR, Berhampur. Sri Rath is devoted to teaching English language and literature. His poems depict the harsh realities of life. He has a passion for Folk-plays like Prahallad Natak of Ganjam District. Sri Rath has also presented a paper on the play in the State-level Seminar at Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

(1)
Ambiguous Allies

A Phantom beckons, shall I follow?
A bell calls,shall I attend?
A voice says that they are hollow.
And who's there,a foe or a friend?
Bounced the deer on the hill,
And leaped the child in me.
Ran the blood as retuned the thrill.
I galloped and galloped in boundless glee!

Was it a flower that dropped a smile?
Or was it a thorn that made me bleed?
No,no it was all a guile,
Yes,I had really failed to read.
Yet,they are my Allies may be ambiguous;
To baffle my intent
and make my state ridiculous!! ■

(2)
Bomb Blast

The skeletons in the cupboard whisper.
They play games in nocturnal delight!
Crying for air they quiver.
Would someone see them bright?

At the top of a volcano
you search itchy touch?
How the dreams dwindle
when night is short!
What else will this pestilent frame
clutch?
Devoid of oxygen all,all shall be lost.
Still a resolution is at hand.
Dormant longing lingers
as conscience it locks.

No urge can play the band.
Unless you ignite the dynamite
to blast the rocks.

In the heart of hearts the bomb blasts
in deep silence.
Does Serenity follow massive violence? ■
.

(3)
Dastardly Devil

Born-brazen face bears not blows.
Surreptitious stubbornness speaks
from the womb.
Starts slouching with hideous claws
To tear out the hands that fed him
in his room.
Dark, dark! the Devil pranced.
Home of the credulous heard the hiss.
Plots hatched, passion danced.
A snake in the grass!
In exchange of KISS?

Denizens of dungeon haunted
the Hall of Honor
And went on the business of brazenness.
Credibility suffered,
smiles turned into a stupor.
Peace is in mess and joy in wilderness.
But the Dastardly Devil daren't thrive.
As Forces to fight back are still alive. ■

(4)
Forlorn Flower

The flux has a usual glow.
Quotidian process adds forms
Stars turn friend or foe.
There goes the carnal celebration
of motley worms.

A leaf turned, ideas struck.
The vicissitudes merely painted.
The heart and soul are somewhere stuck!
The formalities play and say
how images are tainted.

O' Time-Healer or Killer we hail you.
To this domain of pestilent fantasy.
Pray you to subdue
The passions that mar the pure ecstasy.

But Fancy of the forlorn flower
loses its hue.
When ceases the euphoria
and vanishes the dew! ■

(5)
Squirming Snake

To analyse is to open a can of worms.
Yes, I know, yet stops not the mind.
Mark! the snake squirms
In the domain of the blind.

Hail the king! here he thumps his chest.
Listen his celestial melody.
He is not here to stand the test;
And all your 'Blasphemy'.

You are born
With spiritual spoon in your mouth.
How blessed you're, what more you need?
If you question, norms you shall flout.
And who cares how much you bleed?

The snake is glorious with his crown.
Bow down before him
lest he should frown. ■

(6)
Yearning Youth

An unbridled horse is the Passion
When it spians the plot
Of brutality on campus in
'brain excersize Session '
And youth begin to rot.

Perpetrators yield to Devil.
'Ragging'-any worth?
Humanity is in peril.
Youth yearn for the mirth.

They get traumatized.
No more ground for Amity.
Vistas of Virtues dimmed.
Love lacks solemnity.

At the end of the tunnel there
still flickers a light.
Footprints of forefathers still look bright. ■

(7)
Envied Ego

The beleagured Ego bellows
in a barren barn.
Flatterers' fluttering fingers stay fixed,
His empty belley tells a yarn
Of how arrows of treachery
are precisely pierced.

Ego eats no humble pie.
Impulse knows no reason.
Rhymes ,rhythms prefer to die,
As candidness loses the vision.
To strive or to retreat is the only question.
Who cares if he howls?
None but his shadow asks him
now and then
Do you see how passion bowls?

Surely Envied Ego is caught in a guile.
And lo!assails the Sinister Smile. ■

(8)
Hollow Holiness

Sombre thoughts rise higher.
Monks sitting on meditation are free
from mundane delight?
If it is so,why they fear purgatorial Fire?
And to which heaven do they take
the flight?
Come out of the caves and face the Fire
and the rising flames.
The flesh is humbled or consumed?
Centuries of holy hooliganism,
the fame of the names.
All,all shall be doomed.

Fanatic forces claim celestial pride.
Bulldozing humanity they twist
the true tale of devotion.
Legalized fraudulence and its rising tide
Drowns the Messiah in the abysmal
omission.

In the hands turning the cunning pages
of holiness,
Noticed the ghoulish inscription
of Hollowness!! ■

(9)
Mesmerizing Monalisa!

Delving deep into the self,
Diving into the blue sea.
Those two eyes and the gulf.
Didn't you swim and see?

Millions made a dip into those two eyes
That broke the spiritual shell.
Came out the humbugging guys
Blood and flesh rang the bell.

Those two eyes made them know
How sensuality lurks beneath celibacy.
Ask who stole the show.
Hark!how well sings Hypocrisy.

"Mesmerizing Monalisa" is all
that they cry foul.
Beset with wolves they listen their howl. ■

(10)
Willy Winter

Feigning to be shy she touched the chord
Of well-being and sweet harmony.
Knew not when was assailed
by Winter's sword
And when warmth returned aligned
with remedy.

Jeers or cheers she sent the chill.
None discerned the spark that caused
the catastrophe.
Cold, cold smiles and the shrill
Piercing into the heart
made me read Philosophy.

The rose and the nightingale are in unison.
Other amorous birds nestled in ecstasy
Did find nothing in common.
No joy, nor peace ever returned to the tree.

Fair-weather friends and I never saw
eye to eye.
But why? The willy-winter has no reply. ■

(11)
Languoishing Lover

The nymph vanishes in the woods.
Chasing her the love -lorn broods.
The sea is so cold,the tree is so dry!
Did love freeze,is passion wry?

Frantic Romeo roams in a desert
With sighs and cries languishing for Juliet.
No,he is not Narcissus -a forlorn flower.
And his love is not Echo,
no death can kill her.

As the vernal wind breezes,
there oozes a sweet note
From the stab in the heart of his heart!

In his dream he still chases the maiden.
Fantasy or Ecstasy knows no rhyme,
nor reason.

Still like a cactus in the oasis
He cherished love-its basis.
Lo! a fairy descends with bliss!
Will this vision accomplish the WISH? ■

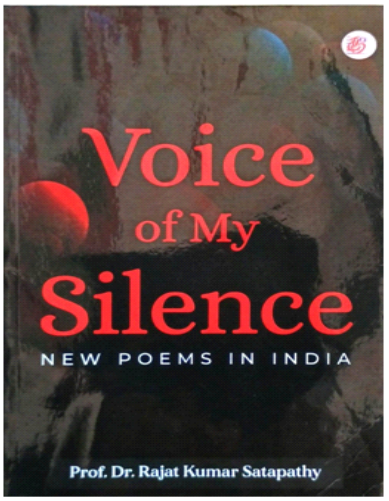
Book Review

Voice of My Silence:

(New Poems in India)

by Dr. Rajat Kumar Satpathy

Reviewed by: Smt. Kirti Vishwakarma
Assistant Professor, Pt. Motilal Nehru Law College, Chhatarpur (M.P.)



"The Voice of My Silence: New Poems in India" by Dr. Rajat Kumar Satpathy is a profound anthology that offers a compelling journey through the unspoken emotions, silent struggles, and deep introspections of life. The collection presents a thoughtful blend of personal reflections and philosophical depth, rendered in a poetic style that is both graceful and accessible.

This book is not limited to a few striking titles-it is an expansive anthology that brings together many other thematically rich and emotionally resonant poems. Each piece in this collection is carefully crafted to engage the reader's heart and mind, reflecting the poet's deep sensitivity and intellectual insight. Among the standout poems are:

- "Time, You and Me" - a tender contemplation of human connection and the passage of time.
- "Boon in Disguise" - a poetic revelation of hidden blessings in adversity.
- "My Struggle to Exist" - a powerful voice for silent battles fought within.
- "My Last Painful Smile" - capturing the quiet grief behind a final gesture.
- "Ode to Time" - a reflective tribute to time's mystery and influence.
- "Ode to My Daughters" - filled with love, pride, and unspoken hope.
- "Unmasking You" - an invitation to shed the layers of pretense.
- "The Nirvana" - an evocative poem of spiritual release and inner peace.

In addition to these, the anthology encompasses many other poems that delve in to similar themes of love, loss, identity, time, and transcendence-each contributing to a larger narrative of the human experience. Dr. Satpathy's voice is sincere and lyrical. He has an exceptional ability to translate internal emotions into poetic language that resonates deeply with readers. The poems evoke empathy, reflection, and often, a quiet sense of healing.

Verdict: "The Voice of My Silence" is more than a poetry book-it is a mirror to the soul, a sanctuary for silent emotions, and a testimony to the beauty of thought and expression. This anthology will surely leave an indelible impression on anyone who values meaningful literature. It stands as a commendable contribution to contemporary Indian poetry. ■

Subscription Form

Type of Subscription : Individual / Insitution

Name of the Subscriber (Capital Letters) : _____

Correspondence Address: _____

_____

District _____ State : _____ PIN Code | | | | | | |

e-mail _____ Tel / Cell. No: _____

Bank Draft No: _____ Dt: _____ Amount : _____

Bank : _____ Branch: _____ I am/we

are interested to subscribe Rock Pebbles Journal for _____ year / Life time. (12 years).

Signature of the Subscriber with date

N.B: - Annual Subscription fees @ Rs. 1200/-
Life Subscription (12 years) fees = Rs. 10,000/-

We accept A/c payee Bank Draft or Cheque in favour of ROCK PEBBLES payable at Canara Bank, Rambagh Branch, IFSC - CNRB0001676 / Bank of India, JAJPUR TOWN Branch, IFSC - BKID0005120. Out-station cheques need to be added with Rs. 100/- extra towards Bank Collection Charges. Bank Draft / Cheque must be sent by Regd. Post to:- The Editor, ROCK PEBBLES, At - NARANPUR, Post - KODANDAPUR, Via - DEVIDWAR, Dist - JAJPUR, ODISHA - 755007. Mob - 9437449490 / 9861012630. You may scan the given QR code & pay.

ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये
आचार्य मनिष र. जोशी
सचिव
Prof. Manish R. Joshi
Secretary

सत्यमेव जयते

आज़ादी का अमृत महोत्सव

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग
University Grants Commission
(शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)
(Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)

F.No. 1-1/2018(CARE/JOURNAL)-Part file 22 माघ 1946/11 February, 2025

सार्वजनिक सूचना

In supersession of the Public Notice dated 28th November 2018 for establishing UGC Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (UGC- CARE), the Commission, in its 584th meeting held on 3rd October 2024, based on the recommendations of the expert committee, has decided to discontinue UGC-CARE listing of Journals and develop suggestive parameters for choosing peer-reviewed journals by faculty members and students. The suggestive parameters, developed by a group of experts and academicians, are now placed in the public domain for their feedback till **25th February, 2025 at email id: journal@ugc.gov.in.**

The stakeholders, including HEIs, faculty members, researchers, and students, may take note of it.

(मनिष जोशी)

बहादुरशाह जफ़र मार्ग, नई दिल्ली-110002 | Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110002
दूरभाष (Ph.): 011-23236288/23239337 | सम्पर्क सूत्र (ई-मेल) (E-mail) : secy.ugc@nic.in

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, Retd. Prof. of English, Dist. Jajpur, Odisha

Dr. R.P. Lokhande, Principal, Mahavir College, Kolhapur, Maharastra

Dr. Shobha Sharma, NBBD 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 Mahavidyalya, Dist.- Nagaon, Assam

Dr. M.S. Wankhede, Dhanwate National College, Nagpur, Maharastra

Dr. Rajendra Padhi, Odisha State Open University, Sambalpur

Prof. P. Kannan, KSAW University, Vijayapura, Karnataka

Dr. Subash Ch. Rout, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Prof. Neeraj Kumar, Magadha University, Bodh Gaya, Bihar

RNI. No. 48173/89 Postal Regdn. No. JJP/13/2024-26 ISSN: 0975-0509 E-ISSN: 2230-8954

THE HINDU
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.

Printed, Published and Owned by Dr. Udaya N. Majhi, at Naranpur, Post : Kodandapur, Via : Devidwar, Dist. : Jajpur, Odisha, India and Printed at Print-tech Offset Pvt. Ltd., Chandaka Industrial Area, Post : KIIT, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India. Editor : Dr. Udaya N. Majhi
Annual Subscription : ₹ 1200/-

ISSN 0975-0509
9 770975 050003