
ROCK PEBBLES
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by Kala Ratn Sonjaye Maurya

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about the Journal

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Editor speaks……

The world rejoices upon the arrival of spring. Renewal, rebirth, and rejuvenation are linked to this season that adorns our surroundings with pretty shades and hues. As we transition from winter, warmer temperatures greet us. The tender green leaves cover the branches of trees that lay bare during the winter months. Flowers bloom, and the symphony of birds is a treat to our ears. Nature bounces back to action, showering abundant blessings on mankind.

The resplendent beauty of spring has the invincible power to stir feelings, ignite the spark of creativity that flow organically with unencumbered ease. The passions and emotions are crystallized into beautiful poetry that carves its niche in the literary realm.Happiness overflows the brim with flowers blooming, birds chirping, lambs frisking, and maids dancing. There is romance in the air as young lovers meet. The cuckoo's songs rent the air. There is no room for worries, with all and sundry revelling in the gaiety of spring:

> 'The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet, Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit, In every street these tunes our ears do greet:
>
> Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to witta-woo! Spring, the sweet spring!'

Such is the power of spring; it evokes a plethora of emotions that find expression in the magnificent canvas of literature. Right from Kalidas, the ancient Sanskrit poet to the modern minds having literary sensibility, spring has been always a source of inspiration for creating great art, literature, painting and other forms of creativity that have undying charm

So through this issue of **Rock Pebbles** we would give a clarion call to all the creative artists to use their full potential and create great literature that would help mankind transform the contemporary world filled with uncertainty, anxiety, fear and apprehension to a world.

'Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high; ……..... Into that heaven of freedom' ■

Chief Editor

- : Obituary :-



Born on 13thDecember 1934, in Cuttack, Ramakanta Rath, one of the most renowned contemporary poets of Odia literature, left for his heavenly abode on 16th March 2025. We express our deepest condolence and pay our homage to the departed soul of one of the iconic figures of Odia literature,especially poetry. Words are inadequate to express our feelings at the sad and sudden demise of the great artist. In fact with the death of late Rath,the void created in the horizon of odia literature shall never be filled up.After completing his Masters in English literature from Ravenshaw College he joined Indian Administrative Service in 1957 and retired as the Chief Secretary of the state of Odisha. He has published more than twenty poetry collections to his credit. *Sri Radha, Saptama Rutu, Sebe, Ebe, Sabubele*–selected poems, *Sachitra Andhara, Kete Dinara, Aneka Kothari Megha O Anyanya Galpa, Sandighda Mrugaya* etc. are the prominent works of Rath Among many awards, he has received, Central Sahitya Academy award for the poetry collection *Saptama Ritu* in 1978, Saraswati Samman for the long poem *Sri Radha* in 1992 and Sahitya Academy Fellowship in 2009. He has also received Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian award in 2006.

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CRITICISM

Realism in K.N. Daruwalla's Poetry: A Critical Appraisal

Aparna Mishra

Prakash Bhadury

Indian Writing in English emerged as a notable genre in the late 20th century, with Daruwalla holding a significant position as a commentator on the life of his era. The fundamental aim of this paper is to present an authentic depiction of India's extensive landscape, along with its political and social context, behaviours, customs, moral failings, corruption, environment, and, significantly, the Indian way of expressing an Indian perspective that reveals its inequities realistically. This realism is contrasted with the understanding of realism in the 19th and 20th centuries, examining how it both aligns with and diverges from those definitions, thereby establishing a unique and realistic literary technique.A selection of poems is examined to provide a cross-sectional view of poetic style from the collection, emphasizing thematic elements related to realism that depict India in the 1970s and beyond. At his core, he was a moralist who aspired to see the nation improve or, more aptly, become a place where one could truly feel at home.

Keywords: Corruption, Humour, Imagery, Myth, Postmodern, Realism, Satire

Introduction:

The very premise of this paper is to find a realistic representation of the vast landscape, the political and social milieu of India, its manners, modes, vices, corruption, environment and of course, the Indian idiom of an Indian sensibility for laying bare what is uneven in it. We would argue his realism in contrast with what it meant to be realism in the 19th c and 20th c and how far it is aligned with and different from and thus, forms a literary technique that is unique and realistic. Select poems as the cross-sectional view of poetic style are analysed from the corpus of poems to highlight his thematic parameters vis-a-vis realism that reflects Inia in the decades of seventy and onward with its socio-political scenarios, public and private life, myths and prejudices, environmental concern, the experience of migration and rampant corruptions as he was essentially a moralist in his heart who wished to see the nation change to better or rather, it adopts to a place to be at home. Just a few months back, on Sep 30, Daruwalla breathed his last hence, a peep through his background and literary career is pertinent to throw light on.

His first book of poetry was *Under Orion,* which was published by Writers workshop, India in 1970. He then went on to publishhis second collection *Apparition in April* in 1971 forwhich he was given the Uttar Pradesh State Award in1972. His poems appeared in many poetry anthologiessuch as *Anthology of Contemporary Indian Poetry* editedby Menka Shivdasani, *The Dance of the Peacock* editedby Dr. Vivekanand Jha, *Ten Twentieth-Century IndianPoets* edited by R. Parthasarathy and *The Oxford IndiaAnthology of Twelve Modern Indian Poets* edited by ArvindKrishna Mehrotra. He was awarded the Sahitya AkademiAward, in 1984 for his poetry collection, *The Keeper ofthe Dead*, by the Sahitya Akademi, India's NationalAcademy of Letters. He returned the same award inOctober 2015 in protest against attackers on rationalthinkers and did not take back his award evenafter Sahitya Akademi passed a resolution condemningthe attacks on rational thinkers. He was awarded PadmaShri, the fourth highest civilian award in India, in 2014.He received the Commonwealth Poetry Prize for Asia for hisAlong with performing your duty as agovernment official. Unfortunately, he passed away in Sep 2024.

The primary goal of this research is to investigate the authentic portrayal of India's socio-political scenario. His application of imagery, keen humour, and observations of everyday life in the streets contributed to the emergence of Indian writing in English as a notable genre in the late 20th century, with Daruwalla acknowledged as a key commentator on the era he lived in. Furthermore, the study examines Daruwalla's stylistic methods in his novels, providing insights into his choices of language and imagery. His depictions of places and markets, along with the integration of Indian idioms, landscapes, and the environment, are conveyed distinctly, solidifying his status as a significant voice in Indo-Anglian poetry.

Daruwalla's work features vivid imagery, sharp wit, and keen observations of daily life in streets, workplaces, and marketplaces. He effectively incorporates Indian idioms, landscapes, and the environment, establishing himself as a leading voice in Indo-Anglian poetry. The poet consistently confronted the injustices and corruption he encountered throughout his life, expressing his feelings of discontent through his writing. This is why many of his poems are filled with themes of gunfire and mortality. However, he did not condone violence; rather, the tone of his poems serves as a form of protest and disapproval of it. Therefore, as someone who believes in action, he refrained from explicitly conveying any direct message to others. That is the reason he returned his Sahitya Akademi Award without any regrets:

> Daruwalla, one of India's foremost writers and poets and a recipient of several national and international literary accolades was among the leading faces spearheading the 'award wapsi' (returning of awards) in 2015 in protest against rising intolerance and the alleged threats to the spirit of free speech in the country (Suman).

He spent two tenures spanning six years at special security borders in hilly regions of Uttarakhand, namely, Joshi Math and Ranikhet which served him as a background with a

lot of serenity, the beauty of nature along with its rugged terrains in contrast with human behaviours and manners. His poems of ordinary life and its ordinary happening were cloaked with terse language, original and free from all imitations as he speaks frankly in his usual temper of frank conversation:

> Imitating the Indian "savants" who also thought they were writing 'poetry' was even a worse choice. But never thought actively on these matters—chose my path as instinct and literary sense (hope that doesn't sound pompous) dictated. Hence the terseness. Police environment also affected me and my poetry for my first volume (Giri 161).

Realism was first introduced in England by George Eliot and in the United States by William Dean Howells. The literary trend in 19th-century France, particularly the French novelists Flaubert and Balzac, is most frequently linked to realism, but it is not restricted to any particular century or group of writers. Thousands of threads are weaved together in literature to create a stunning piece of art. In the creative process, every thread has a certain significance. Similarly, many storytelling approaches are used to tell stories in literature. Realistic writing, out of all the storytelling methods 'aims to depict life without romantic subjectivity, idealization, or fancy. Contemporary academics and critics have frequently noted that Realism is not a straightforward theory, rather, as per the World Book Encyclopaedia it is'a unique literary phenomenon which never tries to distort life by forcing it to agree with their desire or with the formula of art' (Janakiram 101).

In the context of fiction, Shumway argues the following criteria to match realistic literature:

> it depicts contemporary or recent social life; (2) it provides detailed description,featuring visual and other sensory details; (3) it presents psychologically and sociallyplausible characters; (4) it is concerned with quotidian events or "ordinary life," including ordinary people; (5) the events are plausible given the assumptions of theaudience; and (6) the narrative reveals aspects of social life that are normally not known, confronted, or represented in artistic works (183).

Realism represents life through detailed observations, without glorifying anything noble or iconic and omitting all that is unpleasant or awful. Realists assert that the main objective of artists is to express what is perceived through the senses with accuracy. In both literature and the visual arts, realism signifies the representation of subjects as they naturally appear in everyday life, stripped of any additional details or interpretations. By the mid-19th century, realism had developed into a significant artistic movement that had its roots in the 18th century. Initially, realism was regarded as a reaction against romanticism and classicism. While romanticism depicts life as more emotionally intense and fulfilling than it truly is, classicism presents life as more rational and orderly than it is. He is essentially a realist. Realism captures life with vivid details, leaving out nothing that is unpleasant or distressing

and does not romanticize anything heroic or legendary. Poems and writings reflect everyday events as the poet was inspired from a call from within to write his mind and observations as he speaks it with Dipak Giri.

> I speak what is in my heart and in my mind. Critics, just one of them, say/s that some of my poetry is what teleprinters dish out. Yes, the outer reality cannot be blanked out by poets who think they can ignore that aspect (the outer reality) by searching, rodent –like in some fake or real interior. Often this interior cave is fake, and so, as logic dictates, is the poetry that comes out of it. I have never aped a writer—poet or novelist. I assiduously keep away from influences that cover you like a cloud—
>
> T. S. Elliot, for example.

As we talk about Realism in literature, it finds its roots in Classic Realism which originates from the novels of the nineteenth century, and remains 'the dominant popular mode in literature, film, and television drama,' It tends to present the assumption that character, which is unified and coherent. It serves as the foundation for action, as the 'obvious' basis of its understanding. 'Subjectivity represents a significant—possibly the most significant—theme in classic realism. An understanding of character and psychological processes is proclaimed to be one of the distinguishing features of serious literature' (Sumway 187). Whether an event is ordinary or extraordinary, itneeds to be plausible in a realistic picture. Daruwalla's social verse describing anti-establishment elements vis-a-vis his social awareness is rightly admired by critics and scholars. His unblinking eye for epileptic woman, epidemics like cholera, communal tension, communal conflicts and human suffering show his social sensibility.Daruwalla has the capacity for a sharp perception of the environment. Daruwalla seems to leave his contemporaries far behind in so far, his depth of feelings,the economy of language, and traditional and unconventional use of imagery are concerned. On the contemporary landscape of Indian English poetry, Daruwalla stands as a class by himself as if he is committed to presenting the socio-economic, political religious and cultural reality. Regarding social criticism, Daruwalla occupies a prominent place along with other poets such as Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Jayant Mahapatra, A. K. Ramanujan and Nissim Ezekiel. With the help of sharp satire, he highlights contradictions, complexities, ironies, hypocrisies, stupidities, violence and corruption, the contemporary Indian life is replete with. His sensibilities were shaped by his profession and his association with people of all rank and file.

Instead of viewing poetry as a tool for escape, distraction, or consolation, Daruwalla sees it as a vital component of society that can serve as a witness, an aesthetic of rebirth, a force for change, reorientation, and awareness, as well as an element of a more robust and profound humanism that is concerned with laying the foundation for future progress. Indeed, Daruwalla notes that poetry "must be a social gesture, because sometimes I feel external reality bearing down on me from all sides with a pressure strong enough to tear the ear drums"(qt Prasad 147).

Since the poet began his life's journey through migration from Pakistan to India in his early years, the displacement caused by the partition, and the tension caused by society and nature have shaped Daruwalla's sensibility. The sensibility amounts to showing awareness regarding the present-daysocio-cultural and political realities in India. He has written many satirical poems exposing the social evils and the social concerns, corruption and malpractices, robbery and dacoits, communal conflicts and curfews, smuggling and slavery, the hypocrisy of Hindu rituals and also gives picturesque descriptions of Ganga. Corrupt politicians, fashionable social workers, fickle-minded people, callous medicine men and frightened policemen who fight to save their skin have been attacked by the poet with the help of devices like irony and satire.

The poet does not spare even medicine men who are not well qualified. They are unable to identify the disease and unable to serve people. Political leaders are only interested in feathering their nests. People foolishly follow their leaders; they worship them as their heroes and they seem to be fickle-minded.Perception of the reality, seen around is expressed in his original and innovative style. He observes the world around him minutely and depicts the same in his poetry. His job as a police officer seems to help him a lot in versification. He was working in the capacity of police officer and was probing the crimes and criminals, smuggling and robbery, bandits and rapists. Daruwalla portrays vividly the contemporary Indian socio-political world with subtle touches of irony and sarcasm. He ruthlessly exposes corruption, especially the notorious evil of bribery and widespread malpractices in 'Graft'. He not only reveals the corruption in government mechanisms, politics and religious rituals but also in the field of medicine. Adulteration is an uncontrollable phenomenon in society, oils are adulterated, medicines are made up of chalk, infected vegetables, meat and fish are on sale: You may adulterate oils, make tablets out of chalk /sell meat turning maggoty, fish turning stale (Under Orion 71).

Daruwalla's unwavering honesty, to tell the whole truth, however cruel,without experiencing any nausea, is the defining characteristic of his approach. His early poetry frequently deals with socially charged subjects like curfews, racial brutality, and riots. Here is an example of a Hindu-Muslim riot that resulted in curfew enforcement: 'but here providence, scurvy till now/ could still intervene/ half the village could be Hindu, half Muslim/ enough cause for a riot! /with half the village shouting /"death by fire!"/ and the other half /"death by burial!' ('Death by Burial,'*Under Orion*).'Collage I' is another poem in which the Politicians are attacked by Daruwalla. The leaders assert that they have pushed prostitutes off G.B. Road, outlawed alcohol, and eliminated Zamindari, or landlordism. All of these assertions made by government officials and leaders are either untrue or inaccurate. His humour serves to both rectify and raise awareness of the current situation. He keenly understands India's current sociocultural, political, and religious issues.

Political corruption is not something that Daruwalla ignores. Rather, he brutally denounces the widespread political corruption that has negatively impacted Indian society. He highlights the political handling of Republic Day: 'Freeing robbers and rapists/ on

Republic Day /the amnesty adds /"We'll review with sympathy /the cases of the following /pimps, paederasts, poets' ('Collage I,' Under *Orion*). Once more, Daruwalla attacks the archetype of a hypocrite politician who is skilled at exploiting delicate situations and manipulating data to win over the public to raise "a six-figure" sum for "the party coffers." In a poem that is a striking theatrical monologue, Daruwalla realistically depicts the corrupt politician. The politician chooses to visit "a thriving district"(Prasad 151) instead of the drought-stricken areas. When he arrives, he queries the local authorities: 'Cough out the number of hunger deaths here. / Why don't you answer? /What are you exchanging covert glances for? /None! What goddamned rot! /Half the people go hungry here/ so get the death figures of the town and halve them. /Hunger is the chief assassin!'

In the poem, 'Pestilence' patients suffering from cholera are taken to hospital soon. Doctors are unable to identify the disease and try to deny the possibility of cholera; they do not seem to be serious, and they take it lightly: they are engaged in using some difficult medicine Jargon to express the exact nature of that disease. The gloom of contagion and death incorporates another dimension, the sinister duplicity of official reports: 'Who says they have cholera? /they are down with diarrhea/who says it is cholera? /it is gastro-enteritis/ who says they have cholera (Under Orion 44)'? Finally, her sufferings only seemed to have cured her. This poem, 'Epileptic' is the climax of irony. The doctors are portrayed as either unqualified or less qualified, those might be trainees that are why they are neither sure of the nature of the disease nor of its treatment: 'The hospital doctors frowned with thought, / light words like petit mal were tied/to the heavies, 'psychomotor epilepsy'./A physician pointed out with pride/the spike and wave electrical activity/prescribed belladonna and paraldehyde (*Under Orion* 46)'.

In this context, we look through the fundamental difference between the modern and postmodern trends and approaches in literature.Modernism is characterised by the belief that human society is shattered, endangered, and disjointed, and it expresses sorrow over this state. In contrast, postmodernism acknowledges the same fragmentation but approaches it with a sense of playfulness. A detailed examination of Daruwalla's poetry reveals that he perceives post-independence India as 'a landscape of meaninglessness,' where issues such as corruption, suffering, violence, poverty, hunger, death, and disease are prevalent. However, reminiscent of a postmodernist perspective, he also embodies a sense of pessimistic optimism.He uses art as a weapon to bring these two different worlds together and create a balance between life and death: 'I want the two birds /always fighting/ or always making love /or half the time fighting/ and half the time making love' ('Notes'). His poetry shows originality and Indian sensibility concerning his frequent use of irony, humour, satire, intertextuality, new idiom, pastiche etc.Besides this, his presentation of human passion, love,nature, the Indian landscape, socio-cultural scenario and above all, his dramatic detachment from his subjects, open thinking etc registers his place among the postmodernists.

The widespread loss of life in India from starvation, violence, and illness left the poet feeling disheartened. Notably, the poet approaches these startling realities with a light-

hearted, romantic perspective, reflecting a postmodern tendency. In 'The Parsi Hell', the poet clearly expresses his awareness of death.In the poem 'Ruminations', the poet avoids expressing sorrow for death. In a postmodern manner, he undermines the traditional significance of death. Tired of the 'thorns of life' surrounding him, he sees the desire for death as a viable option:'Death I am looking /For that bald bone-head of yours' ('Ruminations')! The poem also evokes strong feelings. It examines the themes of violence, death, and rebirth, and attempts toconvey the frailty of the human body and the despair that might result from violence and death through the use of vivid images and a powerful emotional tone.He also idealizes in the following lines: 'The fires burnt higher/ and the dead went up/ like fragment of liturgies/ Lost in a great wind' ('Pestilence in Nineteen Century Calcutta').

Again, the poet highlights the mistreatment of women. They are regarded as items that can be bought and sold. The leader of the bandits remembers her commercialisation so conspicuously:'Do you recall how it was with the women/ When we started? Taut-breasted ones from the hill/ brown ones from Bihar - soft and overripe /daughter of the desert/ daughters of the forest tribe/ And where did we not sell them? /In holy fairs, in cattle markets…" ('Monologues in the Chambal Valley).In the poem 'Of Interiors,' Daruwalla illustrates the sombre existence of a widow within the Islamic community. She is concealed by a net, symbolizing obedience, modesty, purity, righteousness, faith, and shyness. The idea of the veil is deeply embedded in religious beliefs, as the Islamic community views it as a crucial aspect of their cultural identity. Throughout this portrayal, Daruwalla emerges as a poet who represents the provincial experience. This interplay between global themes in a local setting and the inverse positions him as a postmodern poet.

The poet's deep anguish at the institutionalized corruption in free India findsexpression in 'Hunger- 74', 'Monologue in the Chambal Valley', 'Hawk' and'Food and Words, Words and Food'.Profiteers and hoarders are so mean that they make capital out of people's sufferings: 'in drought and famine:/No end so hoarding/Breaking open the lockers they find/a briefcasefull of rice (Collected Poems 134). Common people suffer miserably during draught. The callous rich enjoy themselves in five-star hotels andthe party lenders remain forever busy to deceive people and enrich their partyfunds.The power of observation is found in the description of the beggar's appearance and actions demonstrates his exceptional observational skills. (Vignette) He writes about the epileptic woman, her husband, and the entire incident in such a lovely manner that the reader can quickly imagine the exact scenario. The person with epilepsy Violence can be found in his older poems, such as 'Rumination'. He describes the epileptic woman, her husband and the entire event in such a picturesque way that a reader visualizes the very situation within no time. People regard Varanasi as a holy city but the poetexposes the real picture of the so-called pious city by pointing at all manipulating'pandas' and the red-trafficking in the city simultaneously: In the street of the Lord/the sepia teeth of 'Pandas',/In the street of virginity/the raucous laughter of whores ('Vignette III'*Crossing of Rivers*102).

Concern for the environment, the natural world and an urge for its preservation are found in 'Hawk,' and 'Woulfe' and again 'Chinar' is a superb illustration of landscape poetry. It conjures up images of the tree chinar, which are then carried over to Kashmir. It also revitalizes the lakes of Kashmir and the Jhelum River. In addition, the poem beautifully evokes the moment of sunset when the dim light touches every motionless element—the visual imagery that distinguishes him from other writers of his generation.The imagery and succinct phrases in 'Hawk' reflect the irony and symbolism of an exploitative society and its systems. While the hawk's hunting may be ruthless, it is even more brutal for it to be hunted and confined by humans, as this infringes upon the hawk's natural rights. In 'Wolf,' there is a fusion of myth and reality, where Darualla metaphorically recounts his life journey from innocence to experience. The poem evokes memories of his past, during which he was immersed in such tales, but his daughter, living in modern times, remains sceptical.

Daruwalla's perception of the reality around him is expressed in his original and innovative style. He observes the world around him minutely and depicts the same in his original style tinged by realism andaesthetic elements in a postmodern trend to show all the hollowness existing around in all walks of life.The contemporary Indian socio-political world is depicted with subtle touches of irony and sarcasm. Corrupt government officials, physicians, police officers, politicians, priests, people, nurses, rituals, and other individuals were exposed to the critical and honest gauze. As a humanist and reformer, the poet made an effort to show his poetic ability to capture the harsh reality and unvarnished truth of Indian society during the 1970s and its continuation in later decades. Daruwalla presents the socio-economic, political, religious and cultural realities as though he is dedicated to doing so concerning social criticism. ■

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Negotiating Bathou Philosophy in Rashmi Narzary's *Whistles of the Siphoong : Tales from Assam's Bodo Heartland*

Farina Basumatary

This paper titled "Negotiating Bathou Philosophy in Rashmi Narzary's *Whistles of the Siphoong: tales from Assam's Bodo Heartland*" seeks to find traces of the reality of life amongst the followers of the Bathou religion in Kokrajhar, Assam. In the process, Narzary presents narratives that reveal the worldviews of an old man, about sixty years old, named Ojhai, as representative of the religious faith, and economic and social attitudes of the followers of Bathou principles, to try and gauge how Bathou philosophy has been influential in shaping the Bodo society at large.

Keywords: Bathou philosophy, Bathou religion, Bodo people, Bodo society, Harmony

INTRODUCTION

Whistles of the Siphoong: Tales from Assam's Bodo Heartland acquaints the reader with the culture, economy, religion and community life of the Bodo people through tales from the lives of three old Bodo men, each sixty years old or older: Ojhai, Daimalu and Birkhang from Madlagami in Kokrajhar district. There are eight fictional narratives that reveal the values, musical tendencies, traditional religious practices, economic activities, and love for human camaraderie and brotherhood among the people in 'Assam's Bodo Heartland'.

BATHOU PHILOSOPHY

Ojhai, Daimalu and Birkhang are followers of the Bathou religion. Bathouism is a religion that is believed to have originated protologically among the Bodo people (Basumatary 37). The Bodo people belong to the Tibeto-Burman racial stock. In the state of Assam in India, they form the most hugely populated ethno-linguistic group among the ethnic groups catalogued in the Scheduled Tribes list. Similar to what scholars like GA Grierson have proposed, Rashmi Narzary opines that their origins can be traced to the region between the Hwang Ho and the Yang-Tse Kiang rivers in northwest of China and are believed to have migrated to present-day Brahmaputra valley and the regions surrounding within and outside North-East India between the second millennium BC and the first millennium AD (Narzary ix).

The word "Bathou" is an amalgam of two Bodo words: 'Ba' meaning 'five' and 'gwthou' meaning 'profound'. The philosophy of the Bathou religion stems from the belief in and respect for the principle that everything in the universe is made up of five elements: *ha* (earth), *dwi* (water), *bar* (air), *ort* (fire) and *okhrang* (space). "This religion [Bathouism] believes that everything on this world is made up of these five basic matters" (Mwshahary 27). The Bodo people call the embodiment of an amalgam of these five principles Bwrai Bathou. 'Bwrai' means "the Elder".

Among the followers of the Bathou religion, the significance of the number '5' is poetically etched in the following proverb:

Bathouni bandwa bandwba
Shijouni siriya siriba
Siphungni goronga gorongba
Thaigir bikhonga khongba
Boro bwraini raoa phongba. (Mwshahary 27)
The above-quoted phrases translate in English thus:
A cactus has five stripes on it,
The Bathou has five bounds,
A flute contains five holes on it,
A wood-apple has five crusts,
We have five scriptures to follow. (Hazoary 43)

The five "bounds" are five incidents that are bound to happen in a person's life. They are conception birth, marriage, old age and death. The five stripes on a cactus represent the sun, the sky, the wind, water, earth. The five crusts of the wood-apple signify head, neck, body, limbs and mind. The five holes on the flute signify the mouth, the nose, the ears, the rectum and sex. The five sayings of the Almighty are "*Ong*, *Hring*, *Khling*, *Fwd* and *Se*", which have within them, some instructions, such as: to have faith in God; to maintain one's integrity; to harbor respect and love; to be truthful; to accept and follow *Bathou*, to pursue good deeds and to avoid stealing, killing, lying and hatred.

The Bathou philosophy governs the social, religious, philosophical gambit of existence of the Bodo people. "This religion incorporates rites, ritual, social norms, culture, tradition, ethics and philosophy of Boro Community" (Mwchahary 1). Hence, there are rules prescribed by Bathouism itself as to how to conduct oneself in godly as well as earthly matters. The Bathou philosophy encourages harmonious co-existence amongst all peoples and entities. It is an attempt at understanding life beyond the human species and beyond bodily form and to understand everything in an inclusive way. In an attempt to understand Bathou philosophy, one cannot overlook a study of the rituals associated with the Bathou religion and the characters in *Whistles of the Siphoong: tales from Assam's Bodo Heartland* and the principles they seem to abide by.

THE BATHOU RELIGION

The Bathou religion is known to have been in existence since the origins of Bodo people themselves. The doctrines of this religion have been transmitted across generations by word of mouth and through practice. Recently, there have been attempts to establish the tenets of the Bathou religion in writing. Researchers like Dr. Mangal Singh Hazowary, Dr. Subungcha Mwshahary and Dr. Barhungkha Muchahary have made significant contributions in this regard.

The followers of Bathouism worship Bwrai Bathou as their one, supreme God. However, Bathou worship accommodates paying homage to eighteen pairs of gods and goddesses some of whom are considered as household gods, and others as community gods. However, God immanent, for them, is Bathou, whose existence is given tangible form in the *Shijow* or *Shijou* or *Sijou*, *Euphorbia neriifolia*, plant. The name, *Shijow*, is an amalgam of two words: 'Shi' meaning 'soul' or 'life' and 'Jow' meaning 'supreme' (Basumatary 38). Thus, for the Bodo people, God is the Supreme Soul and not 'souls'. Planting of the Shijou is one pre-requisite before commencement of the *kherai puja*, the most important religious festival of the followers of the Bathou religion.

THE KHERAI PUJA

The worshippers of Bathou hold the *kherai puja* as their most important religious festivity. It is a religious as well as cultural festival wherein the Bodo people express gratitude to the deity for harvest and pay general obeisance to God and to their ancestors. The *kherai puja* is held in one of the days during harvest season as a mark of gratitude to God for harvest and in the hopes of a good harvest in the coming year.

Usually, the proceedings of the *kherai puja* may be summarized as such: Oja Bwrai or the 'medicine man' begins chanting; the *doudini* or oracle begins to be hypnotized until she loses human consciousness and becomes possessed by the deity and dances the eighteen different forms of the *kherai* dance to the sound of the *kham*, 'drum', *siphoong*, 'flute', and the *jotha*, 'cymbal' being played; while the *doudini* is in a hypnotized state, the villagers request her to predict the future of the village, to which the *doudini* complies; finally, the worship officially ends with the *doudini* coming out of the hypnotic state.

The participation of the three principal characters in *Whistles of the Siphoong: tales from Assam's Bodo Heartland* in the annual *kherai* festival in Madlagami is a must as they each plays important parts in the *kherai puja*. Ojhai plays the *siphoong*, Birkhang plays the *kham* and Daimalu plays the *jotha* and playing of these instruments is instrumental during the *kherai* puja.

NEGOTIATING BATHOU PHILOSOPHY IN *WHISTLES OF THE SIPHOONG: TALES FROM ASSAM'S BODO HEARTLAND*

The first narrative in *Whistles of the Siphoong: tales from Assam's Bodo Heartland*, titled "Barter of the Siphoong" tells the story of Ojhai, Daimalu and Birkhang's visit to the

Jonbeel Fair at Doyang Belguri in Morigaon, where varied indigenous products would be available for barter, like: "dried ginger, fermented fish and roots. . .sticky rice, sesame, jaggery. . .duck and quail with their eggs. . .mekhelas. . ."(Narzary 7). Ojhai carried some *siphoongs* to barter with, Birkhang took some *phalis* (a long scarf Bodo women use to cover the upper body), *aronais* (traditional Bodo muffler) and *dokhonas* (traditional dress of Bodo women) and Daimalu took some sticky rice and smoked pork. In the fair, Ojhai barters one of his *siphoongs* to a girl named Maira even though she does not have anything tangible to give him back. He extracts a promise from her that she would spread joy through the siphoong. According to Ojhai, life is a barter, one gives something and gets something in return. It is not important that one receives money and valuables in return for something one parted with; one could receive something intangible like love and joy. Truly enough, Ojhai is soon surprised with the sound of somebody playing one of his *siphoongs* at the fair itself. It relieves him from the concern of whether his *siphoongs* reach people who have inherent love for the music of the *siphoong* or not. In the fashion of a true Bathou devotee, Ojhai does not believe in attesting the value of a material object only through money or other valuables. Says Ojhai: "Give the siphoong some wind and it bestows upon you merry company, Birkhang, see?" (Narzary 4). In Ojhai's opinion, the end result of love and joy are apt translations of the value of a *siphoong*.

The second chapter, titled "Shaman" narrates the proceedings of one January day when Madlagami was holding the *kherai puja*. The incidents in this chapter present how God speaks to his devotees. God's words may be manifest through His decree, His words of personal address, His words through human lips, and His words in written form in the "Bathou Bijab" (Mwshahary 34-36). In the chapter "Shaman", one is acquainted with the unease in Ojhai's mind during the *kherai puja* because he does not have his ceremonial *siphoongs* with him on that day. God answered to Ojhai where his ceremonial *siphoongs* had been misplaced, through the mouth of the *doudini*.

Bathouism holds devotion towards God as a prime component of its belief system. One observes this feature of Bathouism being reiterated by Rashmi Narzary in the section "Shaman" in *Whistles of the Siphoong*. Ojhai's daughter-in-law consoles a dejected Ojhai when he could not find his three misplaced ceremonial *siphoongs* to play during the *kherai puja* thus: " 'if you play with devotion, any siphoong that you play will become a ceremonial siphoong. And devotion, Apha[father], lies in your heart. Not in your siphoong' " (Narzary 31). Ojhai feared that his devotion would not be whole if he could not play his ceremonial siphoongs, which could lead to the deity not entering the *doudini*. However, the deity enters the *doudini* and also eases Ojhai's restlessness through her revelation about the *siphoongs*, thus giving the impression that devotion is a matter of the heart rather than ceremonies.

Also, Bathouism maintains that God is formless. Piyali Roy, in her work "Influence of Bathouism In The Development of Social Values", reiterates B Bharadwaj's observation that the followers of the Bathou religion hang a piece of white cloth in the altar during *kherai puja* to indicate the formless existence of God (Roy 11558). This characteristic belief

is also referred to by Narzary. One comes across the character of Oja Bwrai explaining how the piece of white cloth tied on a bamboo plant to the south of the *Sijou* plant during *kherai puja* is a representation of the Creator Himself. To quote an extract of Oja Bwrai's speech in *Whistles of the Siphoong*: " '. . ., that piece of cloth that you see there also flutters to signify the formlessness of the Creator. . .' "(Narzary 23). In Bathouism, the spirit of God is believed to be formless, but existent.

The chapter titled "Orbs of Fire" shows Ojhai and Birkhang walking back home after nightfall after attending the wedding of the youngest daughter of a school mate, Kulin. During their journey home, they are followed by 'orbs of fire' they call *orthowpla* or 'haraibankha'. Ojhai and Birkhang are afraid and call on the name of Bathou Bwrai to protect them, in case these were spirits that were enraged for some reason. However, Ojhai plays his *siphoong* and is able to calm the *orthowplas*. Eventually, when the *orthowplas* do them no harm, Ojhai wonders if these were spirits of his mother and his father. Like a true believer in Bathou principles, Ojhai reveals himself to be a believer in the co-existence of human and non-human beings including spirits, taking the reader back to the Bathou belief that "All living beings have past existence"(Hazoary 46). Successive forms of existence may differ in bodily form but everything that has been in existence on earth, is made up of 'ba-thou'.

The narrative titled "Flame" describes the local scenes in Ojhai's village during a community feast after harvest. During the day, the villagers take part in community fishing; by evening, they have a social gathering of laughter and conversation around the flames of bonfire which culminates in their having a meal together. On the event of community fishing, it is also known that that Bodo people distribute whatever fish they have caught amongst all the families in the village, irrespective of whether some individuals have participated in the catch or not on account of their various incapacities or disabilities. Thus, the principle of peaceful co-existence which is originally found in their religious philosophy is embedded in every aspect of their life.

The narrative "Song of Spring" contains evidence of the fact that harmony and peaceful living is the main goal of Bathou principle finding expression through Ojhai's character. In matters of daily conduct, the followers of the Bathou religion are expected to follow some teachings:

> Man needs to endeavour
> To follow a pure heart,
> To live in total integrity,
> To foster forgiveness and
> To practice universal love. (Hazoary 42)

"Song of Spring" tells the story of how Ojhai and his family spread the joy of simple things by being kind towards the family of Ojhai's now deceased friend who happened to be a Santal man, Marcus. Ojhai's daughter-in-law sends some rice and potatoes to Jugnu, Marcus's

little grandson, who is forced to wait for his mother who goes out looking for daily wage work. It turns out this feeling of universal love had always been mutual. ". . .love is the same, Ojhai," Marcus was known to say, " 'whether it is a Bodo heart',. . .or a Santhal"(Narzary 93). Ojhai always felt the same, evidently, even long after Marcus was gone. Universal virtues like purity, love, charity and honesty are encouraged in Bathouism. "Bathouism is an ethnic and indigenous mode of living closely connected with nature which advocates fundamental human values like love, dignity, freedom, ethics, morality, altruism and so on" (Basumatary 45). One notices that there remains an attempt among the followers of Bathouism like Ojhai to make the values that Bathouism imparts a way of living.

In the chapter "Song of Spring" one is also notified of the fact that Ojhai's homestead has been built the traditional way with individual hutments placed around the courtyard and the *Shijou* plant planted in the north-east area of the courtyard (Narzary 75). Every homestead of Bathou families has the *Shijou* plant planted thus. Accepting the *Shijou* is one of the primary instructions of Bwrai Bathou. "Accept the Sijou and respect it,/ Accept the Bathou and follow it,"(Hazoary 45). This happens to be one of the five sayings of the Bwrai Bathou.

Bathouism arose amongst a people who have traditionally not known social stratification. This attempt to emphasize equality extends to attempts at maintaining gender equality as well, which is noticed in social and religious roles assigned to men and women. In Bathouism, both male and female individuals take up important roles during worship. In *kherai* worship, the priest, *Oja Bwrai*, is male and the 'shaman', known as the *doudini*, is female. Bibaree is her name in *Whistles of the Siphoong*. The *Oja Bwrai* officiates the worship and the *doudini* is the oracle through whom God speaks to the people.

Although unwritten, Bathouism puts forward rules for social conduct conducive towards harmonious living. These principles also extend to human relationship with other entities made up of the 'ba'-'thou', which, technically constitutes everything in the world. So, mutual respect for all human or non-human entities is at the base of existence in consonance with Bathou principles.

In the larger Indian context, the Bathou philosophy holds some parallels with the Samkhya philosophy. According to this philosophy, reality is composed of two aspects, 'consciousness' or *Purusa* and 'matter' or *Prakriti*. The nature of *Prakriti* is dormant. On coming into contact with the *Purusa*, *Prakriti* leads to the evolution of the five forms of basic matter: earth, water, fire, space and air. And these form the basis of all forms of sensory experiences. Analogous to this philosophy, it is these five elements that receive tantamount importance in Bathou religion as well.

CONCLUSION

Rashmi Narzary's *Whistles of the Siphoong: Tales from Assam's Bodo Heartland* is an insightful portrayal into the economic, familial, social and religious ways of existence amongst the Bodo people, whose existence has, since time immemorial, revolved around

the principle of respectful co-existence amongst the "Ba-thou", or, the combined forces of earth, sky, fire, water and air. The philosophy of Bathouism works towards shifting the focus of religion from rituals to spiritualism that would bring social integrity through religion by encouraging socially valuable morals. This fact is adequately portrayed by the fictional representations in Narzary's text. ■

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Colonial Modernity, Religion and Caste Crisis in the Memoir of Narayan's *Kocharethi: The Araya Women*

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Abstract

Tani E Barlow introduced the term colonial modernity of the East Asian countries in her research thesis titled Formation of colonial modernity in East Asia in 1997 says "Colonialism and modernity are indivisible features of the history of industrial capitalism" (Barlow 1). Colonial modernity is the modernity established after the Western impact. Colonial modernity makes the colonized people change their original identity and makes them admire Western lifestyle and culture. The development comprises building schools, roads, institutions, dams and railways in the surrounding. It resulted in the social and cultural transformation of people during the colonial period. Colonial modernity has marked its footprints highly in the lives of tribes. Before colonization, the tribes led their life with their custom and tradition. When the British colonized India, tribes had undergone various changes not only in their livelihood but also in the economy, social and political spheres. Narayan of Malaarayars tribe has written a memoir Kocharethi received the Kerala Sahitya Akademy Award in 1999. His memoir Kocharethi: The Araya Woman speaks about how the colonisers exploited nature, and religion and created a caste crisis among tribes in Kerala. Being a tribe of that time, Narayan has vividly captured the picture of his land and its transition in his memoir. In this context, the research paper studies that transformations happened in terms of colonial modernity, religion and caste crisis in Kerala.

Keywords: Colonial modernity, transformation, colonizer, nature, tribes

Introduction

Colonial modernity is a term coined by Tani E Barlow, a researcher on feminism and post-colonialism. Tani the impact of colonial modernity of the East Asian countries in her research thesis *Formation of colonial modernity in East Asia* in 1997. In that, she says "Colonialism and modernity are indivisible features of the history of industrial capitalism" (1). Colonial modernity is the modernity established after the Western impact. Colonial modernity makes the colonized people change their original identity and makes them admire Western lifestyle and culture. In the Indian context, "The encroachment of the British empire

into India which began in the mid-seventeenth century was consolidated in the nineteenth century" (197 Mahadevan). Dilip Menon in his article titled "Religion and Colonial Modernity: Rethinking Belief and Identity" define colonial modernity as, "a spatial term, i.e., modernity occurring within a colony rather than the metropolis as in, or a temporal term, that is, modernity experienced while under colonialism and some perversion of modernity occurring in the colonies" (1662). It shows the development of modernity in the society during the colonial context that is the development of building schools, roads, institutions, dams and railways. Such developments have changed the mindset of people psychically and socially. It brought change from the traditional lifestyle and allowed us to enter into the modern lifestyle abnormally. It resulted in social and cultural transformation.

Initially, colonial modernity has marked its footprints highly in the lives of the people living within the boundaries. The younger generation easily accepted the modern culture and its lifestyle but the life of the old generation finds it a Herculean task to accept it in their daily life. Through literary analysis, the research paper aims to follow and comprehend the meeting point of Western modernity and religion with Adivasi culture, rituals, and beliefs that result in the development of a hybrid identity. The goal is also to comprehend the author's works as an ethnographer.

Before colonization, the tribes led their life naturally with their tribal identity and rejoiced in their custom and traditions. When the British colonized India, tribes had undergone various changes not only in their life but also in the economy, social and political spheres. There is a changeover from traditional to modern society. Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha rightly observe "We find all the grand abstractions of the times - Empire, Human Nature, Ethical Responsibility, Tradition, Nationalism, Indianness, Masculinity, each with important stakes in the woman's question — imaged in the unfamiliar mirror of these changing subjectivities" (qutd in Mahadevan 197). During colonization, the British people developed the infrastructure of the nation. In that sense, they built roads and made boundaries on the hills. Since tribal people have a great love for nature, it is difficult for them to accept modernity. In the colonial period, Christian missionaries play a vital role in the life of tribes. It acts as an agency for colonial modernity. The Christian missionaries teach Western education to the young tribes. By providing education they made the tribal children become a wise person.

On the other hand, education imposes Western ideas into the psyche of youngsters and to an extent they tried to convert tribal people into Christians. Panikkar rightly points out "The colonial system of education itself was viewed as an attempt to indirectly help Christianization" (Panikkar 69). Initially, the missionaries changed the tribal mindset to become Christians. These tribes worshipped nature like trees, the sun and the moon but the Christian missionaries insisted that following Christ is the correct way of living a perfect life in this world. So the tribes are confused about which religion some are stubborn in worshipping nature but many tribes convert themselves to Christianity. The tribal people

are in poverty and they are struggling to survive in the world, it is another reason for their conversion. In the book *Tribes through the Ages,* the bishop of Chhotanagpur rightly says:

> (i) The Adivasis say that Christianity would give them relief from economic and social oppression and new security;
>
> (ii) They feel that by becoming Christians they would be able to better their lives and dignity as human beings;
>
> (iii) In the Christian mission they experienced loving concern and care which they had not experienced from others;
>
> (iv) They were delivered from the fear of evil spirits…. (Sharma 205)

As the tribals converted themselves into Christians the Christian missionaries stepped forward to help them. Since India is ruled by the British, the tribes think that by changing themselves as Christians they have become the citizens of the British. It shows the relationship between the government and the missionaries. K.S.Singh comments on Malai Arayan Christians in the book named *The Scheduled Tribes*. He says "The Malai Arayan started embracing Christianity in 1851 . . . The Malai Arayan follow a sect of Protestant Christianity in under the church of South India" (721). However, Indra Munshi in her book *The Adivasi Question* says, "One of the important characteristics of a tribal community is the traditional association with the territory" (100).

Modernity is seen in both the colonial and post-colonial periods. In that respect, the clothes define the class, K.N. Panikkar says, "That clothes and adornments have significance far beyond utilitarian functions and that they reflect social distinctions and cultural identities have been long recognized by anthropologists" (Panikkar 105).

According to him, the clothes which the people wear define their identity. Everyone in the world has a unique way of dressing. The Malaarayar tribes have different dressing senses but the younger generation of the tribal group is attracted more to the Western style of dressing than the older generation.

The impact of modernity is high in the life of tribes and it affects the tribes to a great extent. It stands as evidence of the Western impact. It analyses the changes that tribes face in the colonial period as well as in the post-colonial period. For instance

M*erriam-Webster dictionary* defines chuckram/chakram as "a very small silver coin issued by the princely state of Travancore from the eighteenth to early twentieth century " (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* 204). Coins are involved in the progression of the currency system. In those days tribes used silver and copper coins. During the transition, the tribes have used rupees instead of chakrams. In *The Tribal Culture of India* Vidyathri and Rai rightly state "A new set of Western-educated, urban-bred and secularized type of tribal leaders is fast replacing the age-old charismatic, rural-bred and tradition-oriented leadership" (Vidyarthi and Rai 462). In the beginning, they

have no idea about voting but later the tribal community accepts the changes in governess as a sign of modernity.

Next, the traditional family is converted into a modern family. Everyone in a traditional family works in the agricultural field. The tribes depended on the agriculture for the production and consumption. Agriculture is more than enough for their survival. The tribes consider agriculture as their family occupation. Such family occupation is not seen in the modern family. The young generation finds a suitable job for themselves. As education provides jobs and opportunities the young tribal generation has no bond with the ethnic ties. The tribes are coming out of the tribal world both spatially and occupationally. They move from one place to another for work.

Industrialization is the outcome of colonial modernity and it leads to the development of more number of industries and provides job opportunities for everyone. At the same time, it exploits natural resources at its cost. It also leads to urbanization, deforestation and modernization. Mining, market towns and factories emerge in tribal areas and give way to industrialization. Industries create ecological havoc in the name of development. Jasleen Kewlani in his book *Environment Conscience* states:

The economy can be developed by establishing more and more industries, which in turn needs a sufficient power generation…. To provide power and electricity to industries, to make them function successfully, dams are constructed. Where dams have a great potential to control food, the construction of several dams involves the eviction of thousands of families and their resettlement at some other site. (Kewlani 193)

When India gained independence the tribal people had certain changes in their life. The election brings a change in their traditional political activity. The tribes follow and obey the head of the clan and they are bound to the words of him. When the election occurs, the tribes have a chance to vote and a new political system is established in the tribal areas. Many indigenous communities, particularly the Malayarayars who live on the Western Ghats in Kerala, effectively exhibit this kind of combination. Through his groundbreaking book *Kocharethi: the Araya Women*, which Catherine Thankamma translated from Malayalam, Narayan, the spokesman of the tribe and the first tribal novelist of Kerala, brings forth Colonial modernity.

In *Kocharethi* the Malayarayar tribal group in Kerala is the focal point. The story takes place in the British era and depicts how that country interfered in local matters. It was penned in reaction to all the Arayar tribe misrepresentations in popular fiction and the media. It talks about the life of Malaarayar representing three generations. Ittayadi belongs to the first generation with superstitious beliefs, following tribal traditions and customs. The character Kunjipennu, a daughter of Ittayadi and Kochuraman is a vaidyan in the novel. The marriage of Malaarayars is arranged according to the illams. However, Kunjipennu against her clan marries Kochuraman. Parvati, a daughter of Kunjipennu, too forsakes all

her folk traditions and turns herself modern. She gets a job in Ernakulam and elegantly outfits herself. She spends more money to buy clothes. She doesn't depend on men for food, clothing and shelter rather she earns for her living. Parvathi speaks English and follows urban mannerisms. It is one of the impacts of colonial modernity which extends towards the post-colonial context after the colonizers leave India.

The Malaarayars in *Kocharethi* as their name suggests are the rulers of the hills. However, the status of the tribe changed when the British entered India. An instance, we find in the novel *Kocharethi*, is the often-used word " chakram" for money. Narayan says "We get rupees now. The chakram is gone" (*Kocharethi* 84). The voice of Malaarayars in certain situations sounds like "India is our country. The white man has no right here" (*Kocharethi* 162). Narayan reclaims "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru becomes the prime minister and the innocent tribes asking the learned man Keshavan whether Gandhi is king?" Keshavan replies that there were maharajas and emperors in India at one time. But now they do not rule. The people's representatives are the rulers" (*Kocharethi* 163). These tribal people led their lives in the governess of the King and then by the British. The novel catches the sight of partition within India.

In the post-colonial context, the old-generation tribes consider education as the reason for the change of young-generation tribes. In *Kocharethi,* Kunjupennu accuses her daughter Parvati of disbelieving God. Parvati often says there is no use in praying when the lamp is lit in the evening. Kunjupennu asks her daughter "Does all this study of yours make you forget God?"(*Kocharethi* 172). Later Parvati loves Padhmanaban and marries him against her family.

The Malaarayar tribes in *Kocharethi* are forced to work in the construction of roads. Later they are familiar with the roads which are built on the hills. They have no other go except to accept these modern changes because they depend on the British Raj. There are many buildings and factories and few tribes are attracted towards the urban lifestyle. Most of them changed their religion and became Christians. A tribe named Pentecost states "There is only one saviour, Jesus Christ. It is wrong to worship trees and stones. Man is a sinner. Death is a wage of sin. Do you want to gain freedom from sin and go to heaven? Then pray to Jesus Christ on your knees. Brothers and sisters, all of you must be baptized" (*Kocharethi* 149).

On the other side, Kochuraman sticks close to nature and identifies every herb. The second-generation tribes were introduced to the world trade. Before colonization, the tribes cultivated for themselves but later they sold their products to outsiders. During the colonial modernity, the outsiders were in the tribal area for the trade. The Christian and Muslim merchants looked for pepper and cashew nuts. As Malaarayars are illiterate they do not know much about the money and economy, and the urban merchants used the illiteracy as an opportunity to cheat them. The Malaarayars got low prices for the pepper even when the demand for pepper was high. Besides, the British looted the land of Malaarayars in which teak and rosewood were planted as it was required for their trade.

After colonial modernity, tribes lost their togetherness and they became a philanthropist. In *Kocharethi*, When Kochuraman does not have money to buy food he asks the shop owner to give him some rice but the shop owner does not help him. When Kochuraman had pepper in his field the same shop owner treated him with great respect. Narayan reclaims "It was money that defined a man's significance" (*Kocharethi* 192) after the independence.

Then, films and movies brought change. The tribes of the younger generation are attracted towards the m1ovies. They involve themselves in entertainment enjoy their life and invite other tribes to join with them. Apart from entertainment, they observe many things which are associated with the modern world. Shekaran informs the people about the arrival of new movies by beating drums.

Kochuraman is the vaidyan who cured many people by tribal medicine but in the post-colonial period, he stopped practicing traditional medicine. He drinks a lot and when he suffers from stomach pain he uses soda powder to get instant relief from pain. He uses Western medicine to cure his disease. As a result of modernity the tribes did not use tribal medicine instead, they go the hospital. " . . . modernization of social and economic institutions creates conflicts with the traditional ways of life. For example, the trained doctors pose a threat to traditional medicine men" (Kumari 262). The old-generation tribes have a fear of going to the hospital because going to the hospital is a new practice for the tribes. They believed that whoever went to the hospital would not return home alive. The old generation people are not that civilized when compared to the younger generation.

In an allegorical turn of events, the story finds Kochuraman and Kunjipennu trapped in a government hospital and at the mercy of state welfare aids as Parvathy, the educated subaltern, moves to the metropolis. So one may observe how the interventions of the modern state are translating the articulation of gender into a different vernacular. Assuming a nationalist identity, Narayan believes that tribal women should receive an education, but not at the expense of their "femininity" and "culture". The Kocharethi ladies play no part in the freedom movement. Madhavan and his friends walk into the public domain to free the country while Parvathy stays in the haven of her house, contributing their tribal identities to support the hegemony of a patriarchal nationalist culture.

The book also examines the Malayaryan social life, in which people rely on an Ayurvedic doctor known as a Vaidyan, who treats patients using medicinal heads taken from the soil. Through the example of Kochuraman, who was a master of these therapies, Narayan also proves its effectiveness. The reader is given an insight into the way of life of the people who mostly chewed on areca nut and betel, followed the customs of the clans, and got married by them by Narayan. "Valayillam, Poothaniyillam, Modalakkattillam, and Nellippullillam" are the four clans of the Malayarayars. A Modalakkatu person can wed into either the Nellipulli or Valyaillam illams. From Vala, Poothani and Nellipulli can wed (Narayan 15).

Every Malayarayar family worshipped a different god, each with a unique meaning and a particular fondness for various items. The Aryans always carried out ceremonies to appease the spirits since they thought natural disasters were a sign of their wrath and they feared the curse of the Gods. The belief that God and man are the same and that they coexisted also spoke to the continuing relationship between religion and medicine. Narayan makes clear that the tribe can be identified by what they have in common and how that distinct identity sets them apart from others. Concerning the main character is another incident. Hardworking Kochuraman met trader Pareethu, who arranged a sale for the entire crop and paid a meagre sum. Kochuraman, who is less knowledgeable about the worth of the crops, takes the money anxious but believes he is doing something wrong in his heart. Simultaneously, a peculiar thrill takes hold of him. He weighs the pepper and requests the trader to pay the whole sum.

Tribes maintain that man and God are essential to one another. Without expecting remuneration, they are ready to work for the temple on any project. The one who receives official backing can demand employment from the prayers and enjoy the privileges bestowed upon them by certain maharajas. The big man in the area Pattathil Kunjunni Pilla has the authority to arrest people who do not pay the tax and seeks his portion from the arayars. The tenants had to pay Kunjunni Pilla a sack of pepper as rent. Together with the contractor, even the forest officials arrive with their tools to demolish the plantains and coconut palms as well as their homes. They claim that is official government business. They pay too high taxes. They have to pay taxes for the privilege to live and work on land that is owned by the British colonial authority and the king. They are tenants occupying their property. They lose their identity, land, and family even after hard labour. Some of these effects and the shortcomings of conventional sources drive them to change their religion.

Another issue Rayars deals with is survival struggle and self-identity. It suggests a fight, a struggle, or a movement to get away from something limiting or to go or advance with difficulty. Protecting their land and identity is their primary responsibility. To survive in their country, the Arayar labour and fight hard. Apart from the higher authorities, the arayars must defend themselves against the animals that eat their crops. Wild boars and elephants among other animals invade the field and eat the crops. “Well, there won’t be anything left of the paddy if the elephant and wild boar come and go” (17). Any moment the elephant might show up there and damage the crop. Kochuraman battles and makes efforts to keep wild animals away from the crops. Midway through the farmed area is a massive marathon. For a view of the animals, he constructs Erumaadom in the sturdy tree. An elephant will never leave without eating grain once it has sighted it. Kochuraman works hard and struggles to rescue the harvest. To keep birds and animals out of their crops is like a headache for the prayers. At night, Kochuraman must safeguard the fields from elephants, while during the day, birds and wildfowl arrive to consume the matured grain. This show depicts the arayars’ arduous quest for survival. They recognize the necessity and importance of acquiring knowledge about calculations and the external world for their livelihood. Krishna

Pilla, acting as a guardian of the prayers, has guided Kochuraman and others on the importance of educating their children. He dispatches someone named Aashan Kochupilla, who fulfils the role of a teacher. Kochupilla remains in that location and commences instructing the children in the skill of literacy. Under the guidance of the instructor, the children residing on the hill acquire the skills of literacy, including reading, writing, and arithmetic. Parvati, the offspring of Kochuraman and Kunjipennu, attends school alongside her peers. The inhabitants of the hill are opposed to allowing their adult daughters to pursue further education. However, Parvati expresses her desire to engage in academic pursuits and diligently pursue education and attain the position of a magistrate.

Parvati perseveres in her studies despite her father's counsel, facing significant challenges. Once she secures employment, she regularly remits a portion of her earnings to her parents. Subsequently, she enters into matrimony with Padmanabhan, defying the wishes of their parents, as she is deeply in love with him. Kochuraman and Kunjipennu are distressed contemplating their daughter. They believe that they have been deceived, even by their daughter.

Kochuraman often frequents a toddy shop and frequently suffers from episodes of fatigue and intense abdominal pain. He keeps it to himself. Medications provide no alleviation for his condition, thus he escalates his consumption of arrack. On another occasion, he encounters excruciating agony resembling a stabbing sensation when consuming arrack. The severity of the situation was such that he was unable to take even a single step. He has been admitted to the hospital. Padmanabhan and Parvati visit the hospital and assist the staff. Upon departing from the hospital, Kunjipennu is appalled to discover the state of the yard. The animals consume all the banana trees, sweet potatoes, and yams. She obtains a loan from Pathrosu Nanaaru on two occasions, and on each occasion, she leaves an impression of her left thumb on a sheet of paper.

Subsequently, Kochuraman is admitted to the Medical College Hospital. However, neither of them possesses knowledge regarding the treatment, surgical procedures, medical professionals, and healthcare facilities. These individuals are oblivious to the reality that exists outside their immediate surroundings. Their minds are deeply connected to and influenced by nature and God. They intend to depart from the hospital before the scheduled procedure date for Kochuraman. Finally, they descend the stairs and flee from the hospital. "Kochuraman emitted a weary groan." Aware of every single uneven heartbeat, Kunjipennu pulled him closer, contemplating their next destination. If, before their arrival, they had not encountered any obstacles, she would not have expressed her distress by sobbing once more (207). Throughout the story, it is evident that Kochuraman and Kunjipennu are determined to enhance the quality of their children's lives through education. Consequently, individuals exert significant effort to earn a living. Pepper serves as their defining characteristic, enabling them to acquire and gain respect from the traders. They acquired basic arithmetic skills to sell pepper. It holds significant significance in the lives of prayers. The arayars experience happiness by providing their children with a superior education.

However, they become aware of the disparity in age and perspective between themselves and their children. Despite their attempts to enact changes in their lives, they are unable to progress towards modernity by relinquishing their authentic identity, homeland, culture, nature, and traditions.

This text aims to analyze the experiences of oppression, misery, and frustration faced by Kochuraman, Kunjipennu, and other characters in the novel. It explores their persistent desire to escape from the overwhelming difficulties of life. The characters endeavour to evade the harshness of reality, which inflicts torment upon them, by seeking solace in various pursuits, with Kochuraman being particularly inclined towards this. The prominent subject of the battle for survival, self-identity, and exploitation persists throughout the entire narrative. ■

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Kunzang Choden's *Circle of Karma*: A Confluence of Buddhist Philosophy and Modernization

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Kunzang Choden's novel *Circle of Karma* is a unique exploration of the junction between traditional Buddhist doctrine and modernization forces in Bhutan. This study looks at how Tsomo, the protagonist, navigates Bhutanese society's changing terrain while dealing with deeply rooted Buddhist beliefs and traditions. The study examines the novel's portrayal of karma, impermanence, and suffering as core Buddhist themes, as well as how they combine with new ideas of individual agency, gender roles, and social mobility brought about by modernization.

The study contends that Choden's work exemplifies a complicated relationship between tradition and modernity, in which Buddhist philosophy challenges and embraces modernizing influences. This essay uses close textual analysis and contextual study to show how *Circle of Karma* depicts the evolution of Bhutanese identity in the face of cultural transition. The novel's narrative structure, character development, and thematic components are investigated to show how Buddhist ideas are reinterpreted and used in a changing societal situation.

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on contemporary Bhutanese fiction and offers insights into the role of traditional philosophy in shaping responses to modernization in the Global South.

Keywords: Kunzang Choden, Circle of Karma, Buddhist philosophy, modernization, Bhutan, karma, impermanence, gender roles, cultural identity, contemporary fiction, spiritual journey,

Kunzang Choden's groundbreaking novel, *Circle of Karma*, is a seminal work of Bhutanese literature, offering an insightful exploration of Buddhist philosophy against the backdrop of a rapidly modernizing Bhutan. As the first English-language novel written by a Bhutanese woman, the novel not only breaks new ground in literary expression, but also offers a unique perspective from which to examine the intersection of traditional Buddhist values and the forces of modernization in contemporary Bhutanese society. This article,

delves into the rich fabric of *Circle of Karma*, examining how Choden masterfully weaves Buddhist philosophical concepts with a narrative of modernization to create a compelling story that resonates far beyond Bhutan. Through the journey of its protagonist, Tsomo, the novel illuminates the complex interplay between ancient wisdom and modern progress, offering insight into the challenges and opportunities that arise when traditional societies face rapid change.

At the heart of the novel's thematic structure is the Buddhist concept of karma, which posits that a person's actions in this life determine the circumstances of future existences. Choden skilfully uses this concept as both a narrative device and a philosophical framework, guiding the protagonist Tsomo through a series of life events that mirror the unfolding of her karmic destiny. The very title of the novel, *Circle of Karma*, evokes the cyclical nature of existence in Buddhist thought, known as samsara. Tsomo's journey, marked by suffering, pilgrimage, and spiritual growth, can be seen as a microcosm of the broader Buddhist understanding of life as a continuous cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.

The Circle of Karma is the first novel by a woman to come out of the small kingdom of Bhutan. Written in English, the novel tells the story of Tsomo, a young Bhutanese woman who embarks on the difficult and lonely journey of life. In her childhood she was not as strong as she turned to be, as her mother said,

> Tsomo was such a small and weak baby she was
>
> Surprised that she survived at all.[1] (CoK, pg. 1)

Tsomo's travels, which begin after her mother's death, take her away from her family, and leads her across Bhutan and into India. All the while, Tsomo seeks to find herself and a life partner, and grows as a person and a woman. She has to face appraisals of matriarch's,

> Tsomo was scrutinized and appraised, 'Lhatu, your wife does'nt have any looks. Why did you marry her? Asked the matriarch earnestly, eying Tsomo with apparent disapproval. People of position and power are allowed to make such remarks and Tsomo felt like idiot, an animal on display. All she could do was smile, enjoying the exhibition…[2]
>
> This caused her husband to remark,
>
> Although you are a meritless woman, you are enjoying the benefits of my karma.[3]

The text of this unusual work is enriched by detailed descriptions of ritual life in Bhutan. The text of this unusual work is enriched by detailed descriptions of ritual life in Bhutan. The novel weaves a complex tapestry of life from a relatively unknown part of the world.

Another important Buddhist concept explored in the novel is impermanence (amnesia) and suffering (dukkha). Tsomo's life is marked by constant change and difficulties, from the death of his mother to his turbulent marriage and travels. These experiences illustrate

the Buddhist teaching that all phenomena are transitory and that attachment to the ephemeral leads to suffering. Choden's depiction of Tsomo's resilience in the face of these challenges reflects the Buddhist emphasis on accepting the nature of reality and seeking liberation from suffering through spiritual practice and understanding.

The Buddhist principle of the Middle Way, which advocates a balanced approach between extremes of asceticism and indulgence, is subtly woven into the story, and Tsomo's journey can be seen as a search for this balance, toggling between the strict traditional expectations imposed on her and the lure of modern freedom. To fully appreciate the novel's treatment of modernization, it is essential to understand the historical context of Bhutan's development: the country began a planned modernization process in the 1960s during the reign of the third king, Jigme Dorje Wangchuck. During this period, formal education, health care systems, and infrastructure developed.

Choden sets her novel against this backdrop of rapid change, using Tsomo\'s experiences to reflect the broader societal transformations occurring in Bhutan. One of the central tensions in *Circle of Karma* is the conflict between traditional Bhutanese values, deeply rooted in Buddhism, and the influx of modern ideas and lifestyles. This tension is embodied in Tsomo, who struggles to reconcile her traditional upbringing with the new opportunities and challenges that modernization brings. The novel explores how traditional gender roles, religious practices and social structures are challenged and sometimes reshaped by modern factors such as education, urbanization and exposure to foreign cultures. All these is explored in different chapters, like the very first chapter 'Being a Daughter, then followed by various chapters like, ' We are Different', 'Games and Pain', 'Also a Custom', 'Mother's Child', 'Death and Birth', 'Sleepless', 'love', 'Lust', 'Scorpions and Compassion', etc.

Education becomes a key theme in the novel, symbolizing both the promises and problems of modernization. Tsomo's lack of formal education initially limits her options, reflecting the reality of many Bhutanese women of her generation. However, his eventual literacy and exposure to different ways of life during his travels represent the inspiring potential of education in a modernizing society.

One of the most fascinating aspects of *Circle of Karma* is its exploration of how Buddhist traditions adapt to the pressures of modernization. Choden depicts a Bhutan where ancient rituals and modern practices coexist, sometimes in harmony and sometimes in tension. For example, the novel shows how traditional Buddhist pilgrimage has been transformed by modern transportation and communications, making it more accessible but potentially diluting the spiritual experience.

The spiritual journey of Tsomo, the central story of the novel, functions as a metaphor of the road to the modernization of Bhutan. Her experience in various areas in Bhutan and India indicates how mental exploration is preserved and developed in the face of social changes. The novel suggests that while the external trappings of spirituality may change

with modernization, the core of Buddhist philosophy – the search for meaning and liberation from suffering – remains relevant and vital.

Circle of Karma offers a nuanced exploration of gender roles in Bhutanese society, particularly in relation to Buddhist practice and modernization. Tsomo's struggles and triumphs highlight the changing status of women in Bhutan, reflecting broader societal shifts towards greater gender equality.

The novel questions traditional interpretations of Buddhism that have sometimes been used to justify gender inequality, and suggests that true Buddhist principles are compatible with and even supportive of women's empowerment in modern times. Chöden's use of a circular narrative structure reinforces the Buddhist concept of reincarnation and the cyclical nature of karma. The novel begins and ends with Tsomo in a state of spiritual exploration, suggesting that the path to enlightenment is continuous and cyclical rather than linear.

The novel is richly peppered with Buddhist symbolism, from the prayer wheels Tsomo spun in his youth to the sacred sites he visits on pilgrimage. These symbols serve as touchstones, connecting the narrative to Buddhist philosophy and tradition even as the story explores themes of change and modernization. While the story primarily follows Tsomo, Choden incorporates multiple perspectives to provide a more comprehensive view of Bhutanese society in transition. This method allows the author to explore a range of reactions to modernization, from enthusiastic acceptance to cautious skepticism. To fully appreciate Choden's achievement with *Circle of Karma*, it is helpful to consider the novel in the context of other works that explore similar themes.

Although *Circle of Karma* was groundbreaking as the first English-language novel written by a Bhutanese woman, it is based in a tradition of Bhutanese literature that deals with issues of tradition and modernity. Works such as Dasho Karma Ula's The Hero with a Thousand Eyes (1995) also explore modernization in Bhutan, albeit from a male perspective.

On a broader scale, *Circle of Karma* can be compared to other novels of Buddhist culture that deal with modernization, such as Tsering Wangmo Donpa's *The Tibetan House* and *The Open Road* by Pico Iyer. These works also explore the challenges of maintaining spiritual traditions in a rapidly changing society.

Circle of Karma has been widely acclaimed as a sensitive portrayal of Bhutanese culture and an exploration of universal themes through a uniquely Bhutanese lens. Critics have highlighted Chöden's skill in making Buddhist concepts accessible to a global audience while maintaining the authenticity of his cultural perspective. The novel played an important role in drawing international attention to Bhutanese literature and contributed to developing debates on gender, spirituality and modernization within Bhutan and beyond.

Kunzang Choden's *Circle of Karma* demonstrates the enduring relevance of Buddhist philosophy in the face of modernity. Through richly drawn characters and a thoughtprovoking

story, the novel offers profound insight into how traditional societies deal with the challenges and opportunities presented by rapid change. The book suggests that while modernization may change spiritual practices and outward forms of social organization, the fundamental human search for meaning and liberation remains the same. In doing so, *Circle of Karma* not only contributes to the growing body of Bhutanese literature, but also offers valuable insights into the universal experience of navigating tradition and progress in an increasingly interconnected world. As Bhutan continues on its unique development path, balancing material progress with spiritual and cultural preservation, works like *Circle of Karma* serve as important signposts, reminding us of the complex interplay between ancient wisdom and modern realities. Choden's novel ultimately affirms the possibility of finding harmony between Buddhist principles and the demands of the modern world, offering a vision of modernization that does not require abandoning spiritual values or cultural identity. ■

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Reimagining Tribal Identity: A New Era of Cultural Understanding

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The tribal, known as indigenous people or adivasis, have an age-old historic background. These peoples have coexisted peacefully with nature throughout the length and breadth of the country and beyond. They continue to preserve the basic components of this unique indignity despite the traumatic and terrible experiences of colonization and assimilation by the so-called mainstream. There existed numerous art forms and literatures of the tribal much before the development of the so-called mainstream literatures. However, the "tribes" literary heritage was primarily oral. The literary talents of indigenous communities hanged about in a supine state for long years. Although the tribesmen lived distant from the centers of power and wrote in basic vernacular languages, their literatures regardless of forms were overlooked. Several indigenous languages continue to generate tribal literature, although we know very little about it. The term "tribes" refers to a historical and cultural identity. Tribal literature is the creative force that manifested itself at the national level after 1991 to defend tribal life and identity against growing economic exploitation. This paper seeks to understand the tribal cultural identity, ethnic diversity and nationalistic feelings of the tribal.

Keywords: culture, identity, tribe, literature, paradigm

Introduction

Tribal cultures have been a part of the world's cultural fabric since time immemorial, but these groups are mostly pushed to the margins of society, politics, and culture by mainstream social, political, and cultural forces time and again. Known for their deep relation with nature and unique cultural practices, tribals have been part of human history long before the modern state system and its apparatus ever existed. Adivasis are those "who originally inhabited India or live in tribal or indigenous states." They are with nature; their lifestyle defines them, that is, them and their believes. Tribal communities reside in geographically and socially isolated surroundings which enabled them to construct an advanced cultural identity strong enough to survive colonization, assimilation, and socio-economic forces over centuries. As Malik quoted: "Land for the Adivasi population like other indigenous community is neither a transactional commodity nor a profit-making entity. The totality of tribal life involving ancestral spirits, belief systems, identity centres around the land they inhabit" (Malik, 2020).

Much of this cultural heritage-for instance, in the form of literature-was oral tradition until recent times. Rich folk traditions in words, music, dance, and storytelling were an important part of their cultural life but largely neglected by the mainstream literary critics until the last century. It's obvious that many tribal cultures have had to face one series of exploitation, marginalizations, and forceful assimilation of their culture under the compulsions of colonialism and modernity. However, the rise of tribal literature as a political and cultural force developed only after 1991 and started a new phenomenon. The paper will now discuss changes in contemporary perception regarding tribe cultural identity and literature. As defined by Sriratana (2008), identity was originally a Latin word "idem" which means the same. Oxford Dictionary of English also states that it is "a close resemblance or relation" and also "the fact of who or what a person or thing is."The identity of a person or thing is the sum of a set of features that characterize it. Since a person can be included or excluded from a group based on their identity, it is a concept that is both inclusive and restrictive. Since there are different identities based on race, gender, region, ethnicity, language, caste, social class, and other factors, no one can have a single identity. Moreover, a person's political, social, economic, and intellectual beliefs can be used to identify him or her. Depending on whether or not a person belongs to multiple groups, he or she may have multiple identities. Perera states, "Indigenous cultures around the world are strongly attached to the land they inhabit. The various aspects of indigenous life such as social identity, cultural and spiritual distinctiveness are undoubtedly rooted in their territory"(Perera, 2009).

Different groups at different times have oppressed the tribes and treated them violently. The colonies were established in different regions, which continued to be so even after gaining independence of the nation. Firstly, it is considered necessary to mark that the domination and exploitation of native peoples really affected their lower class underprivileged condition. This has been stressed in the study by Xaxa (2008: 223-240). Another point of consideration is that in talking about identity, one needs to think about the coming into being of identity, the implications that accompany the articulation of one's identity, and the dynamics that accompany the assertion of one's identity. Lastly, it should be noted that identity is always relational and that identity is determined by the relations people have with others. The perception that a group has of itself and of others and how it combines those perceptions to determine its identity. Identities are formed through interpersonal relationships. This takes place on a personal and collective level. The social structures that constitute our identities are parts of the social aspects of identity. Consequently, our identities are partially composed of social structures.

Tribal literature or Adivasi Sahitya mostly exists in the form of songs and performing art forms. These art forms have been orally and generationally passed on and therefore is a cultural heritage surviving for centuries. Unfortunately, some of these precious folk songs went extinct forever. In order to preserve this priceless heritage for posterity, it is necessary that tribal literature is collected and preserved. As an integral part of the oral and folk literature, the mainstream Indian literary tradition accedes to it as a complement that gives a comprehensive view of the culture ethos.

However, Bourdieu's (1991) theory of the individual offers an alternative view of hegemony in that cultural imprinting as political imposition is not always successful in controlling the choices of individuals. Even though the Soviet Union and its satellite states had a strong cultural indoctrination apparatus, its citizens were able to resist and eventually overthrow the regime. It then challenges an understanding of hegemony as being a singular means of control in culture, which therefore reveals complex agency and resistances within the societies.

Wallace coined the term "identity struggles" to describe how interaction may lead to a disconnection between how a person perceives himself or herself and how others view him or her. Eric Erikson, on the other hand, developed the term "identity diffusion," where a person acquires several identities and thus loses his or her focus or gets fragmented away from his or her real identity. Both states are significant in the process of creating or changing one's identity. "In terms of the overall stage hierarchy, the identity stage is preceded by the industry stage and followed by the intimacy stage. There are no clear boundaries between these stages and considerable overlap may exist. In fact, according to Erikson, "nobody . . . in life is neatly located in one stage; rather persons can be seen to oscillate between at least two stages and move more definitely into a higher one only when an even higher one begins to determine the interplay" (Erikson, 1978). The definitions of identity crisis perfectly coincide with the experiences of the tribal population since during the colonial period the tribes were no longer recognized by their original ethnic names, but by names that were imposed on them. Consequently, they found themselves in a deep crisis as the identity imposed from outside differed significantly from their own self-perception and inner understanding. Ninomiya states, "Land dispossession the taking or using of Indigenous land without consent has contributed to a loss of language and culture, interrupted the transmission of knowledge, and become a source of intergenerational trauma" (Ninomiya, 2023)

It starts with the voiceless protest towards the project of development as, "They pinned me to the ground. They did not let me speak, they did not let me protest, and they did not even let me raise my head and look at my fellow musicians and dancers as they were being beaten up by the police. All I could hear were their cries for mercy," (Shekhar, 2015). Therefore, the determination of Adivasi communities goes beyond mere acts of political defiance and offers a kind of shield that protects cultural heritage, using selfhood as a tool in defiance at the attempts being made to erase it from the faces of the earth. The arrival of the British brought great changes to the system of government and law. These reforms involved the implementation of new systems alien to these regions that determined society. Among them, apart from others, was private property rights application on lands such as those Khuntkatti/Bhuinhari are supposed to be owned as sacred-not saleable, let alone procurable. The reforms went directly into the core of tribal societal values and morals and things turned against beliefs.

Due to the restriction of public access to forest areas, cultural practices such as jani shikar, whereby women are attired like men for hunting, are gradually disappearing. Oraon

women, inspired by the courage of a woman who fought the Turks and chased them out of Rohtasgarh, have this ritual commemorating her bravery where she is performed every twelve years. Unfortunately, most of the forest areas are now closed to the public, so these practices can no longer be performed by the women. As a result, they are fast losing these traditions.

The territorial and physical aspect of tribal identity is symbolized by the slogan of the Jal-Jungle-Zamin (water-forest-land) symbiosis. Jal, jungle and zamin play a central role in defining tribal identity. These are not only natural resources, but much more important to them. The whole tribal way of living is based on their relationship with the land. They regard land as essential to their survival and prosperity. Their customs and traditions run deep into the seasons, harvests, trees, and agriculture-related activities pertaining to the land. Apart from this, they also survive through the forest and water. However, their relationship with the resources is not just survival; they are deeply bonded to them. A tribesman is to the land what the sea is to a fisherman. Other factors that may influence this interrelation between the personal and the social, often referred to as the tension between structure and agency, include socio-economic organization, religious institutions, scientific and technological progress, migration patterns, ethnic diversity, and the organization of domestic and gender roles. All these social structures shape and reconstruct individual identities. In addition, social structures can also be controlled by the individual and may be used as a tool in the formation of collective identities. Identities should be understood in the sense that they are fluid and change with time in several ways. However, in the given situation, the importance of identity has been obtained because of the effects of globalization and the dissolution of national, cultural, and social boundaries. Diversity has emerged because of the fluidity of changing identities because nation-states face cultures, religions, and types of identities. This is a reason why nation-states should acknowledge and embrace diversity to overcome the risk of getting homogenized.

The Adivasi people, like any other cultural and religious groups have a unique philosophy of life that distinguishes it from other people. Their way of life, values, and beliefs are quite different from other communities. They have their own unique worldview about the origin of the universe and human beings. They also have their own perception of life in this world and the afterlife. Their perception of the Supreme Being and other beings that exist in the world is also unique. Not to mention, their religion system and cosmology find really deep roots in the myths and legends of themselves.

Due to exposure to other cultures, the tribal community is undergoing a drastic change currently. The presence of Christian missionaries has led to the development of bilingualism, which has made them lose interest in their mother tongue. In addition, the tribal population is adopting many aspects of western culture, which is causing the decline and loss of their own unique cultural practices such as traditional dance, music, and craftsmanship.

The tribal community welcomes life and encompasses it in celebration. Nowhere else can one see the sense of collective unity, cooperation and active participation like in expressions of literature, art and music. Their art will bear intrinsic values that will not reduce to mere commodity; though, this process is slowly changing with growing changes. In addition, literature and art serve as reinforcement to individual and cultural identities in displaying not only the artistic brilliance of the piece but also its culture.

According to Robbins (1973: 1208), identity is a result of different influencing factors, which may also be changing in nature. It is a concept in which an individual can portray himself or herself under different identities in accordance with the motivation or gain the upper hand against others. Such a process of identity building and sustenance has a lot of cultural-related involvements.

According to Korostelina (2007), social identity is an internal component of the mind by which social thought and actions tend to be constructed. In response, she makes the case of how social identity can provide means of defense or protection from being lonely since group boundaries create room for sharing similar space with someone. But conversely, the creation of social identity is subject to existing structures such as societal expectations, while naturally present in every living person. The author further points out those social identities are not fluid as some may believe; instead, one can view the social identity as quite stable and concrete, as those who dismiss all efforts made toward creating, preserving and maintaining boundaries. To them, such boundaries are simply imaginary constructs without any real form of action through which individuals express themselves on an everyday basis. Whether these boundaries are purely psychological or something more is a separate issue. As Korostelina suggests, social identity acts as a bridge between an individual's psychology and the larger structures and processes of social groups.

Conclusion:

Even in the Soviet era, despite stringent social reforms, the traditional institutions of Indian society survived and could not be broken down. Tribal or regional rivalries remain deep-seated and cannot be easily overcome. Alas, most of the tribal people are unaware of the government's schemes for development and hence progress in these areas remains minimal. While the world has taken that step towards world organization, we cannot give away political and cultural sovereignty as different countries with different faiths, traditions and practices. We have to embrace and celebrate that kind of diversity which characterizes our. Besides all this, less attention paid to this diversity can damage the struggle for special political rights of the tribal communities. When building in governance and all types of institutions, it's crucial to fight racial philosophies. The devastation of embracing essentialist visions of national belonging and which portion of the society deserves political, cultural and human rights has witnessed its devastating consequences in devastated nations around the world. The future way out for ending the Tribal identity crisis is to appreciate the worldview of the tribals and to treat their cultural differences with dignity. Let their lands

remain in their hands and let the scheduled area laws and other laws protecting tribal rights are strictly implemented. Efforts should also be made to promote their languages and create opportunities especially for them. ■

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The Ecocritical Study of Catastrophic Practices in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*

Sonu Kumar Mehta

The present study is focused on the ecocritical reading of Rachel Carson's book Silent Spring through the lens of 'slow violence', as illustrated by Rob Nixon in his book Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor. Environmental issues are among the major concerns of the modern world. During the last few decades, human activities have led to a worrisome outcome and thus have posed a threat to the existing environment. To meet the requirements of the modern world people are crossing the limits. The development in the field of science and technology has provided us the power to defend every possible adverse situation, but this defending strategy has gradually, unintentionally, transformed into an attack on our ecosystem. Rachel Carson draws our attention towards the spontaneous and unethical use of pesticides by farmers, particularly in America. The lack of awareness and the wrong or incomplete information conveyed by the chemical producers have been brought into the limelight through this book. The use of harmful chemicals to check the pests has a far more severe impact than is often confirmed by the chemical-producing giant companies. Farmers use these pesticides for their instant benefit but in the long run, these chemicals have deadly effects upon both the biotic and the abiotic substances. The residue of chemicals passes through several mediums and is ultimately consumed which often leads to many severe diseases or even death. Though this book is widely focused on the environmental issues in America, this article aims to present the environmental issues from a universal point of view.

Keywords- Environment, Literature, Ecocriticism, Slow Violence, Pesticide

Introduction

"Lulled by the soft sell and the hidden persuader, the average citizen is seldom aware of the deadly materials with which he is surrounding himself: indeed, he may not realize he is using them at all. So thoroughly has the age of poisons become established that anyone may walk into a store and, without questions being asked, buy substances of far greater death-dealing power than the medicinal drug for which he may be required to sign a 'poison book' in the pharmacy next door."

Rachel Carson (2000, first published in 1962)

This quote from the book *Silent Spring* compels us to think about the farming practices that exist in the modern world and how it has gripped the modern farmers who use them without knowing the deadly consequences. In recent past years, the intense ecological loss has become a matter of deep concern throughout the world, not just human beings but

the entire ecosystem is suffering from this loss. The rapid increase in pollution, be it air pollution, water pollution, soil pollution or thers, the uncensored deforestation in the name of development and advancement, the endless exploitation of natural resources, and other such issues have caused an irreparable loss to the ecosystem. This concern for the ecosystem has prompted scholars worldwide to delve deeper into environmental issues. Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary approach in which literature is employed to analyze and check the condition of nature and the loss caused to nature by human actions. Ecocriticism thus aims to spread awareness, instruct, and rectify the harms that are being inflicted upon nature or natural phenomena through, intentional or unintentional, human activities.

Rachel Carson has always been admired for her books that are based on the idea of the preservation of nature and natural components. Being a marine biologist, she has always found herself amidst nature. She was initially focused on writing scientific texts about marine life, but over time, her writing evolved to a more public, advocacy-oriented focus, particularly on environmental issues. Her deep concern for nature can be felt through her books. Some of her major works include her first book Under the Sea Wind, published in the year 1941, which portrays the marine ecology of the Atlantic coast. The Sea Around Us, published in 1951, is another book quite famous for exploring the complex scientific topics related to oceans. The Edge of the Sea (1955) is her third major work that focuses on the coastal environment. She has proved herself a revolutionary woman by practicing such intense writing stuff. Her wide literary career produced amazing literary pieces and *Silent Spring* is probably her best creation ever. Most of her books are based on ecological phenomena. Her knowledge in diverse fields finds the best reflection in her literary output. Her publication of the book *Silent Spring* led to the ban on DDT, which was earlier widely used in both domestic and commercial sectors.

1. Ecocriticism

The term 'ecocriticism' was coined by William Rueckert in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" in 1978. Though this term was coined very later in the context of time horizon, the meaning that this particular term carries has been being used since the very beginning of the literary practice."Ecocriticism is an umbrella term for a range of critical approaches that explore the representation in literature (and other cultural forms) of the relationship between the human and the non-human, largely from the perspective of anxieties around humanity's destructive impact on the biosphere." (Marland, 2013)

In the last few decades, this field of study has gathered a huge number of scholars throughout the world. A large number of novels, short stories, poems, and articles have been written on it. Some of the most renowned ecocritical practitioners are Laurence Buell (The Future of Environmental Criticism), Henry David Thoreau (Walden, or Life in the Woods), Timothy Morton (Ecology Without Nature), Bruno Latour (Politics of Nature), Joseph W. Meeker (The Comedy of Survival), Eugene P. Odum (Ecology: A Bridge between Science and Society), and the list keeps on going.

2. Catastrophic Practices in *Silent Spring*

In *Silent Spring* Rachel Carson draws our attention tothe potentially disastrous effects of the application of pesticides on the environment- especially those chemical pesticides that are used by the farmers to control any particular species of insects on a large scale. This book is a thorough study of such pesticides and their possible outcomes. This book is a sort of warning to those people who often use such pesticides without knowing their deadly effects. The ignorant farmers use such pesticides to meet the market requirements but they hardly know the fact that these pesticides are far more dangerous than anyone can even imagine. Though this book deals with the issue of America primarily, the issues that have been raised in this book are universally existing. The aerial spray of chemical pesticides not only controls the desirable pests but also affects a large number of flora and fauna species. Though the use of these pesticides appears to be very convenient and economical, in the long run, these chemicals are very costly.

Carson points out that the modern agriculture system is taking resort to chemicals that are non-biodegradable, such as DDT. Several species of flora and fauna are being affected by it. Some species of birds are on the verge of becoming extinct because of the unchecked use of chemicals in agriculture. "Over increasingly large areas of the United States, spring now comes unheralded by the return of the birds, and the early mornings are strangely silent where once they were filled with the beauty of bird song. This sudden silencing of the song of birds, this obliteration of the color and beauty and interest they lend to our world have come about swiftly, insidiously, and unnoticed by those whose communities are as yet unaffected."

The effect of these pesticides does not stop merely by hitting the target insects, though the farmers' intention is fulfilled with the control of the target insects only. These pesticides keep on existing on vegetables, fruit, soil, air, and water over a longer time than expected. These chemicals pass through water streams to the water reservoirs and are consumed by various living beings including human beings. The consumption of such chemicals results in numerous deadly diseases. Though the use of these chemical pesticides is to serve mankind, but the outcome is quite contrary. ‘

Another practice in the modern agricultural system is the plantation of similar species of plants in the same area, which invites new diseases to the plants and also boosts the growth of any particular weed and insects. "What is happening now is in large part a result of the biological unsophistication of past generations. Even a generation ago no one knew that to fill large areas with a single species of tree was to invite disaster. And so whole towns lined their streets and dotted their parks with elms, and today the elms die and so the birds." Modern engineered agricultural systems do not work according to natural principles and so it invites lots of issues. Single species of insects can grow rapidly when farmers grow any single group of plants, and it even makes the plants prone to several mutable diseases because of the lack of diversity. When any new variety of plants is imported to any particular region

some insects are also transferred to that new region with the plants. When such insects find a favorable condition, they start growing rapidly without being controlled by the natural predators, which could have been possible in their natural habitat.

A matter of fact that Carson mentions in chapter xv of *Silent Spring,* "Nature Fights Back" is that the predators of such harmful insects have always been available in nature to control their growth and they are termed as 'resistance of the environment'. These predators have a low resistance rate as compared to the insects hence the application of pesticides rapidly reduced their number and the population of the destructive insects increased beyond control. Carson supplies many examples of the destruction of predators and the rapid growth of unwanted insects. An example that she mentions about the population of mites is quite logical to understand, when pesticides were sprayed on the undisturbed colony of mites then most of the mites did not get killed and the irritated mites dispersed to search for better places to hide. In doing so they find better and bigger space and abundance of food which was earlier not available in their dense colonies. Their enemies were vulnerable to the pesticides hence most of them died thus now the mites had no need to secret protective webbing and they were utilizing all their energies in producing more mites.

A more disturbing thing that Carson mentions in her book is the tendency of growing resistance against the pesticides used on insects. In chapter xvi of *Silent Spring*, "The Rumblings of an Avalanche" she talks about the Darwinian concept of survival of the fittest and has filled this chapter with several examples of insects growing resistant to deadly pesticides like DDT and others. The blue ticks, mosquitoes, blackflies, sand flies, tsetse flies, houseflies, lice, brown dog ticks, German cockroaches, cabbage insects, potato insects, fruit moths, leaf hoppers, caterpillars, mites, aphids, wireworms, and many others have developed resistance against several pesticides that have ever been applied on them.

Rachel Carson is quite aware of the destruction that these pesticides can cause hence she calls these pesticides 'biocides'. By calling it biocide she tends to express that these chemicals are not just capable of controlling the target pests, but they can also harm the entire biosphere. Not even a single natural component can remain unaffected by the impact of these harmful chemical pesticides. Even the soil gets barren from its regular and prolonged usage. A long list of such occurrences has been mentioned in the aforementioned book which is evidence of the destruction that can be caused by the use of chemical-based pesticides. In "Agriculture development, pesticide application and its impact on the environment" Muyesair Tudi and others write that When pesticides are applied to a targeted area or plant by a farmer, they have the potential to spread and degrade into the environment. Through interactions with indigenous microbial strains and physicochemical factors, they can wield diverse effects on non-target plants and organisms within the animal kingdom upon entering the ecosystem.

The experts even say that the use of such pesticides results in overproduction of agricultural products. The natural growth is hampered by the use of such pesticides. The

government has to spend a handsome amount of money to dispose of the overproduced crops. The use of pesticides is literally a war against nature. People in the modern world have lost their patience and they just want the desired result at any cost. “Recently, the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC), a leading US environmental NGO, came out with a shocking statistic that 40% of the total US food supply is wasted (Gunders, 2015). Despite the statistics and warnings demonstrating the prevalence of agricultural overproduction, it has continued for many years. Overproducing food, while allowing for food security, also disrupt world markets as well as causes immense environmental damage to soil and water supplies.” (Dufalla, 2016)

The case of overproduction continuously arises in the United States and European nations. The loss that overproduction incurs is not only limited to material things like money and labour but also to natural factors like water, air and soil. With the advancement of technology in the field of agriculture, farmers are capable of growing an abundance of crops without being disturbed by either insects or any undesirable circumstances. “Although large quantities of pesticides are applied to few crops, less than 0.1% of these chemicals actually reaches the target pests. This means that more than 99.9% of the applied pesticides move into the environment where they can adversely affect beneficial biota, like natural enemies, and contaminate the soil, water, and the atmosphere of our ecosystem.” (Pimentel, 1995)

The use of air sprayers has been considered convenient for the farmers for spraying pesticides, but when pesticides are sprayed in the crops through the help of drones or air crafts then a much wider area gets affected by it. The dosage of pesticides is often exceeded in such spraying campaigns. The healthy plants and the unwanted areas are also drenched in pesticides. The tiny droplets of pesticides get mixed in the air and hence these tiny droplets are consumed by all sorts of living beings. Human beings, animals, birds, butterflies, insects, and reptiles all get affected when such poisonous pesticides are sprayed.

3. Conclusion

There is no doubt that the development in science and technology has fueled all the sectors including agriculture, people are not in a position to deny another major fact that such development has amputated the ecosystem. The use of harmful chemicals by the farmers has led to the degradation of air, water, and soil quality. Many vulnerable species have been badly affected by such practices. Modern agricultural practices have badly affected the ecosystem. The problem is quite worrisome, if some steps would be taken to control such activities then the self-healing capacity of the environment can regain its past form.

As Rob Nixon writes, slow violence is “a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all.” If we analyse this definition of slow violence then we can easily understand that the application of harmful pesticides is no doubt

a slow violence and its impact is not instant but quite dangerous. The practice and consumption of such pesticides can result in life threatening diseases such as cancer. Rob Nixon also writes that, "Climate change, the thawing cryosphere, toxic drift, bio-magnification, deforestation, the radioactive aftermaths of wars, acidifying oceans" are some major factors of slow violence that can destroy the environmental balance of coexistence.

After performing an intense survey on the effects of pesticides Vinay Mohan Pathak and others write:

> The deadly impact of pesticide exposure that persists over time is known as chronic toxicity. Chronic toxicity of pesticides is a worry for the general population and those who work with pesticides directly because of possible exposure to pesticides. Pesticides are now classified into "WHO Hazard classifications" according to the widely used "WHO Recommended Categorization of Pesticides by Hazard." (Pathak et al. 2022) ■

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A Symphony of Words: The Poetic Essence of Alaka Sanyal

Sonali Sahu

"For thousands of years, I roamed the paths of this earth,
From the oceans of Ceylon to the darkened night of Malaya,
Farther still, from the Ashoka forests of Vidisha,
And the vast seas of Malabar.
Life and death have been intertwined with my travels,
And amidst it all, I found respite—
Only for a moment, in the glance of Banalata Sen."

(Banalata Sen, Jibanananda Das)

This stanza of Banalata Sen , a famous Bengali poem written by Jibanananda Das, one of the most celebrated modernist poets of Bengal evokes a sense of timelessness and weariness through his wanderings across mythical and historical lands. The journey symbolizes humanity's endless quest for meaning and solace which culminates momentarily in the serene presence of Banalata Sen. It is one of his most renowned works cherished for its lyrical beauty and profound emotional depth. The poem reflects themes of love, longing, and the solace of human connection amidst the weariness of existence.

Sachi Routray, the architect of modern Odia literature drew inspiration from Jibanananda Das's iconic poem Banalata Sen. Following its evocative and lyrical style, Routray created the equally celebrated character of Alaka Sanyal, which became a significant part of his poetic legacy.

Inspired by the metaphorical beauty and timeless essence of Banalata Sen, Routray penned Alaka Sanyal to embody a similar concept of idealized beauty and tranquility. Like Das's Banalata, Alaka Sanyal became a muse symbolizing solace amidst life's chaos and a representation of the human longing for peace and connection.

"When I first saw you,
In the royal palace of Bedeha,
In the courtyard of an ancient memory,
Where dreams of history burned brightly,
You walked in slowly,
Hiding all the secrets of life within your eyes."

(Alaka Sanyal, Sachi Routray)

The lines from Sachi Routray's Alaka Sanyal evoke a sense of mysticism and emotional depth, blending personal memory with timeless, mythical imagery. The poet begins by recalling the first encounter with Alaka Sanyal in the royal palace of Bedeha, a place symbolizing both historical significance and ancient memories. The phrase "in the courtyard of an ancient memory" suggests that the moment is not merely a personal recollection but something universal, steeped in the weight of history. Routray's use of "dreams of history burned brightly" creates a vivid image of past dreams or desires that have been preserved in the fabric of time. The slow and deliberate movement of Alaka Sanyal, who "walked in slowly," enhances her aura of mystery and grace. The poet captures her as a figure holding profound truths, "hiding all the secrets of life within your eyes," further elevating her to an almost divine status. The poem skillfully combines a sense of longing, awe, and reverence, making Alaka Sanyal not just a character but a symbol of eternal beauty and the mysteries of life. The emotional resonance is heightened through Routray's ability to merge personal experience with the universal and the mythic.

The poem Alaka Sanyal was first published in February 1947 in Nababharat Patrika , a prestigious literary magazine. Later the same year, the poem marking its recognition in the modern Odia literary movement was also published in his celebrated poetry collection Pandulipi. This book further solidified his reputation as one of the leading figures of modern Odia literature. Routray adopted a free-flowing, lyrical style similar to Jibanananda Das, integrating rich imagery and metaphors. While Banalata Sen traversed historical and mythical landscapes, Alaka Sanyal focused on capturing the essence of modernity intertwined with timeless emotions. The poem established a new trend in Odia poetry, blending tradition with modernism and reflecting universal human sentiments.

Following the literary footsteps of Sachi Routray, renowned Odia poet and Kendriya Sahitya Akademi Awardee Shree Guruprasad Mohanty , also contributed to the immortalization of the character Alaka Sanyal. Guruprasad Mohanty, celebrated for his modernist approach to poetry, crafted his version of Alaka Sanyal , which was published in 1955 in Jhankar Patrika. In the same year, in the month of August, Guruprasad Mohanty's poem Alaka Sanyal was published in the Nutan Kavita Collection alongside the works of Bhanuji Rao. Later, in 1970, it was included in his book Samudradarsan. Alaka Sanyal, introduced by Sachi Routray and later explored by Guruprasad Mohanty, transcended the realm of individual poetry to become a universal metaphor in Odia literature.

"I don't know where Sachi Babu saw you, Alaka Sanyal,
Was it under a golden tiger blazing in the sky,
Or a fleeting deer leaping through twilight's veil?
Or perhaps beneath the round yellow torch,
The luminous lantern of the moon?

Today, I see you, Alaka Sanyal,
As you gently wash the stain of tea,

With your inner garment, using warm water,
Then, you speak, your gaze lowered,
Resting upon the table in quiet thought.
You rise, move towards me,
And sit beside me, by the chair."

(Alaka Sanyal, Guruprasad Mohanty)

The lines from Guruprasad Mohanty's "Alaka Sanyal" evoke an intimate, tender moment where the poet observes Alaka Sanyal in her most mundane yet poetic actions. The contrast between the celestial imagery of the earlier lines (the "golden tiger" and "luminous lantern of the moon") and the grounded, everyday imagery of Alaka washing a tea stain and speaking with lowered eyes enhances the depth of the poem. This juxtaposition emphasizes the sacredness of ordinary life, suggesting that beauty and meaning can be found in the simplest of actions. The calm, contemplative tone, with Alaka's movements described in a slow, deliberate manner, draws the reader into a moment of shared presence and connection.

Guruprasad Mohanty's "Alaka Sanyal" and T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" share common themes of longing, existential questioning, and an exploration of inner emotions, though they approach these themes from different cultural contexts and literary traditions. A comparative analysis highlights both similarities and contrasts in how each poem reflects personal desire, disconnection, and the passage of time.

Following the trend established by Sachi Routray and Guruprasad Mohanty, Dr. Phani Mohanty, a renowned Kendriya Sahitya Akademi awardee, also contributed to the literary legacy of Alaka Sanyal. In 1973 his poem Alaka Sanyal was first published in Asantakali Patrika, a prominent literary magazine of Kolkata. Later in the same year, Dr. Mohanty published his own rendition of Alaka Sanyal in his poetry collection *Manachitra*. Dr. Phani Mohanty's Alaka Sanyal in *Manachitra* further immortalizes the character, ensuring that Alaka continues to evolve as a symbol of timeless beauty yet with deeper layers of human emotion and complexity. Like Routray and Guruprasad Mohanty, Phani Mohanty helped expand the character beyond its mythical roots, portraying Alaka as a figure whose essence can be interpreted in multiple often contrasting ways reflecting both the cosmic and personal dimensions of human experience.

"You are my Chandrabati,
You are my Alaka Sanyal,
I dream of you, in light slumbers, in gentle brightness,
Suddenly, your meeting, woes and weals
A silent nod of your head,
Sachi Babu, you saw her
In the gardens of Bideha's royal palace,
Where she was brought by the hands of Chitrarath, the celestial Gandharva,
Where your introduction was made,
In the ruins of Nalanda's ancient temple."

(Alaka Sanyal, Phani Mohanty)

This stanza from Phani Mohanty's "Alaka Sanyal" reflects a deep, almost reverential connection between the speaker and Alaka Sanyal, a figure who transcends both earthly and mythic realms. The line "You are my Chandrabati, You are my Alaka Sanyal" immediately establishes a dual identity for the character-one rooted in mythology and the other in personal reverence, blending the divine with the human. Chandrabati, an iconic figure in Odia literature, represents an ideal of feminine grace, while Alaka Sanyal is positioned as a mystical, almost unreachable figure.

The description of Sachi Babu's encounter with Alaka in "the gardens of Bideha's royal palace" and the celestial narrative of her arrival, "brought by the hands of Chitrarath, the celestial Gandharva," lends Alaka a divine, otherworldly origin, elevating her from a mere mortal to a mythic figure, akin to the goddesses or celestial beings of classical literature. This also places Sachi Babu in the role of a seeker or witness to a larger cosmic play, a timeless encounter between the human and divine realms.

In Phani Mohanty's Alaka Sanyal, the titular character emerges as an imagined figure of profound beauty and mystique, a construct of the poet's longing and idealism. Alaka Sanyal is not just a woman but a symbol-an amalgamation of myth, reverence, and poetic imagination. Much like Shakespeare's Dark Lady in his sonnets, Alaka Sanyal becomes a representation of human desires, complexities, and contradictions.

While Shakespeare's Dark Lady is enigmatic, her allure lies in her unapologetic flaws and unorthodox beauty, challenging the conventional standards of Elizabethan ideals. Similarly, Mohanty's Alaka Sanyal transcends physical boundaries, existing as both a divine presence and a mortal mystery. Where the Dark Lady is sensual, grounded in earthly connections, and evokes carnal emotions, Alaka Sanyal blends the celestial and the ethereal. Her introduction in the "gardens of Bideha's royal palace," her descent by the celestial Gandharva, and her association with ruins like Nalanda's ancient temple weave a narrative that is deeply rooted in the Odia literary tradition of mysticism and grandeur.

For Dr. Mohanty, Alaka Sanyal is an imaginary muse, a dream-like presence that inspires and haunts his poetry. She is neither fully real nor entirely fictional, embodying the duality of the human experience-tangible yet elusive, personal yet universal. Just as Shakespeare used the Dark Lady to explore themes of love, obsession, and moral conflict, Mohanty employs Alaka Sanyal to traverse the intersections of mythology, spirituality, and human longing. Both figures highlight the poets' struggles with desire and reverence, their muses representing an unattainable ideal that propels their creative energies. Ultimately, Alaka Sanyal serves as a timeless figure in Dr. Mohanty's oeuvre, capturing the tension between the mortal and the divine, much like the Dark Lady's role in Shakespeare's sonnets. Both characters, while steeped in their respective cultural contexts, reflect universal themes of love, beauty, and the complexities of human emotions.

The portrayals of Alaka Sanyal by Sachi Routray, Guruprasad Mohanty, and Phani Mohanty differ significantly in tone, focus, and the mystique they assign to the character.

The character of Alaka Sanyal is a fascinating study of how time, space, and the phases of the modern world influence literary imagination. Sachi Routray's portrayal in 1947 reflects the romanticism and grandeur of the independence era. Placing Alaka in the mythical gardens of Bideha, Routray draws heavily from classical themes, imbuing her with celestial and timeless qualities. His Alaka Sanyal symbolizes an idealized, unreachable muse, rooted in the cultural renaissance of the time, where poetry sought to merge tradition with artistic vision.

In contrast, Guru Prasad Mohanty's Alaka emerges in a modernist framework, shaped by post-independence realism and skepticism. His depiction of her as an ordinary woman strips away the layers of myth and divinity, reflecting the modern world's disillusionment with idealism. Mohanty's poetry bridges the gap between romanticism and realism, portraying Alaka as a tangible individual shaped by human experience.

Phani Mohanty's Alaka belongs to the contemporary, post-modern era, where imagination reigns supreme. Free from temporal and spatial constraints, his Alaka is entirely fictitious, reflecting a world increasingly disconnected from traditional moorings. She symbolizes inner longing, serving as a muse that blurs the lines between reality and fantasy, a product of individualism and introspection.

These depictions illustrate the evolution of Alaka Sanyal, shaped by changing literary trends and societal shifts. Routray's romanticized myth, Mohanty's grounded realism, and Phani Mohanty's imaginative abstraction highlight the impact of time and space on their writing. Together, they show how Alaka Sanyal transcends the boundaries of eras, growing into a multi-dimensional figure embodying cultural and poetic transformation. ■

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Euphemisms and Indoctrination: The Role of Propaganda in Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*

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Markus Zusak's "The Book Thief" offers a poignant exploration of the mechanisms of propaganda, focusing on the dual strategies of euphemisms and indoctrination in Nazi Germany. This article examines how euphemistic language, such as the regime's use of sanitized terms like "Final Solution," obscures the brutality of genocide and creates a veneer of legitimacy for its atrocities. Simultaneously, the novel highlights the indoctrination of children through education and youth programs, which instill blind allegiance to Nazi ideology. Through characters like Liesel Meminger, who gradually uncovers the truth behind the regime's lies, and Gretel, who succumbs to its teachings, Zusak critiques the moral and psychological consequences of propaganda. By juxtaposing the dehumanizing power of euphemisms and the systematic nature of indoctrination with the transformative potential of storytelling and resistance, the novel underscores the ethical responsibility of language. This article delves into these themes, shedding light on how The Book Thief serves as a powerful commentary on the destructive and redemptive forces of words.

Keywords: Nazi Germany, Propaganda, Euphemisms, Indoctrination, Language Manipulation, Holocaust.

Introduction

Set in Nazi Germany during World War II, *The Book Thief* is a poignant tale narrated by Death, who offers a unique and somber perspective on human life, suffering, and resilience. The story follows Liesel Meminger, a young girl sent to live with foster parents, Hans and Rosa Hubermann, in the small town of Molching after her mother is forced to flee and her brother dies en route.Upon arriving at the Hubermanns' home, Liesel struggles to adjust to her new life. Her love for books begins when she steals a copy of The Grave Digger's Handbook at her brother's burial, marking the start of her relationship with words. Hans, her kind and nurturing foster father, teaches her to read, offering her solace and empowerment in a world overshadowed by war and oppression.

As Liesel grows, she befriends Rudy Steiner, her spirited neighbor, and Max Vandenburg, a Jewish man hiding in the Hubermanns' basement. Max and Liesel bond over their shared love of words and stories, with Max even writing an allegorical story, The Word Shaker, for Liesel. Through their friendship, Liesel begins to see the human cost of Nazi propaganda and the horrors inflicted upon those labeled as "enemies" of the regime.Liesel's love of books and storytelling becomes an act of resistance. She steals books from Nazi book burnings and the library of the mayor's wife, Ilsa Hermann, who eventually becomes a quiet supporter of Liesel's thirst for knowledge. As the war intensifies, life in Molching grows increasingly dire, with air raids, food shortages, and the constant threat of violence.

The story culminates in a devastating bombing that kills Hans, Rosa, Rudy, and many others in Molching. Liesel survives because she was writing her own story in the basement. Overwhelmed with grief, she clings to the words and memories of those she has lost.Years later, Liesel grows old, having lived a full life marked by loss, love, and the enduring power of words. Death reflects on her story, marveling at the resilience of the human spirit in the face of unimaginable suffering.The Book Thief is a deeply moving exploration of humanity, seen through the eyes of a young girl whose love for words becomes both a refuge and a weapon against the injustices of her time. Through Liesel's journey, Zusak highlights the power of storytelling to preserve hope, resist oppression, and bear witness to the atrocities of history.

Central to the novel's exploration of Nazi Germany is the regime's use of propaganda to control the masses. Two key tools of this propaganda are euphemisms and indoctrination. Euphemisms involve the use of mild or indirect language to conceal harsh realities, as seen in terms like "Final Solution," which obscured the brutal genocide of Jews. Indoctrination refers to the systematic teaching of biased beliefs, often targeting children and young minds, to ensure unwavering loyalty to an ideology. Both techniques were instrumental in sustaining Nazi control and are vividly reflected in *The Book Thief.* This article explores how Zusak employs euphemisms and indoctrination in The Book Thief to critique the manipulative power of Nazi propaganda. By analyzing the language and actions of key characters, the article examines the moral consequences of propaganda on individuals and society, while highlighting the novel's overarching message about the power of words to both destroy and heal.

Historical Context of Propaganda

Propaganda played a central role in Nazi Germany's rise to power and the maintenance of its totalitarian regime. It was one of the most powerful tools used by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime to manipulate the German population, consolidate power, and justify the horrors of the Holocaust.Under Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda, the Nazi Party developed a sophisticated system of mass communication to control public perception, spread its ideology, and justify its actions. This propaganda machine relied

heavily on euphemisms and indoctrination to manipulate the German populace and suppress dissent.The Nazi regime used propaganda to craft a narrative that glorified Aryan supremacy, demonized Jews and other marginalized groups, and justified expansionist wars as acts of self-defense. This was achieved through tightly controlled newspapers, radio broadcasts, films, and public speeches that repeated the regime's core messages. The dehumanization of Jews, Poles, and other groups was central to these efforts, ensuring broad public complicity in the atrocities committed by the state.

The rise of Nazi propaganda began In the early 1920s with Hitler's establishment of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP). Recognizing the power of persuasive communication, the party used posters, speeches, and rallies to garner support. Hitler's own book, Mein Kampf, emphasized the importance of propaganda in controlling the masses:

"The function of propaganda does not lie in the scientific training of the individual,

but in calling the masses' attention to certain facts, processes, necessities, and aims."

When Hitler rose to power in 1933, he made propaganda a cornerstone of his government. Goebbels took charge of the Ministry of Propaganda and Enlightenment, ensuring that every aspect of German life—from newspapers and radio to film and art—served the regime's goals.

The Nazis used euphemisms to mask their true intentions and make their actions more palatable to the public. For example: "Final Solution" was used to describe the systematic extermination of Jews; "Resettlement" referred to the deportation of Jews to concentration camps; "Protective custody" was the term for imprisoning political dissidents and minorities. These terms not only dehumanized victims but also created an emotional distance for both the perpetrators and the public, making atrocities easier to accept or ignore. The Nazis tightly controlled all forms of communication. Independent newspapers were shut down, and the remaining press was forced to follow the regime's directives. Radio was a particularly effective tool. Cheap, widely available radios ensured that Hitler's speeches and Nazi propaganda reached every household. Programs were designed to glorify the regime and demonize its enemies.

Posters, films, and art were used to portray Hitler as a savior of Germany. Films like Triumph of the Will (1935), directed by Leni Riefenstahl, glorified the Nazi Party and its ideology. Anti-Semitic cartoons and posters dehumanized Jews, portraying them as dangerous and subhuman. Schools became tools of indoctrination, with curricula designed to instill Nazi ideology. Textbooks glorified German history, emphasized Aryan superiority, and demonized Jews. Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls were organizations that indoctrinated children from a young age, fostering unwavering loyalty to Hitler and the Nazi Party. Propaganda capitalized on Germany's post-World War I economic struggles, blaming Jews, communists, and other minorities for the nation's problems. Fear was a central

tactic. The Gestapo and SS used propaganda to instill terror, ensuring that dissent was minimal. The Nazi propaganda machine was highly effective in creating a unified, obedient society. It normalized extreme ideologies, justified the persecution of minorities, and fueled public support for the war. The use of propaganda also facilitated the Holocaust by desensitizing Germans to the suffering of Jewish people and other victims.

The Nazi regime systematically indoctrinated children and adults to ensure loyalty and conformity to its ideology.Through education and organizations like the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls, the regime instilled Nazi values in young minds. School curricula were altered to emphasize racial purity, the greatness of Germany, and unquestioning obedience to Hitler. Textbooks, songs, and slogans reinforced Nazi beliefs. Media outlets were censored and tightly controlled, ensuring that only Nazi-approved content reached the public. Films like Triumph of the Will and posters featuring Hitler as a savior figure reinforced the regime's narrative. Ordinary citizens were encouraged to report dissenters, creating a culture of fear and compliance.

Euphemisms in *The Book Thief*

Language of Deception

In *The Book Thief*, Markus Zusak captures the insidious power of euphemistic language, which reflects the Nazi regime's manipulation of reality. Euphemisms, as employed by the Nazis, served to mask the true nature of their actions, creating a façade of legitimacy for their atrocities. Zusak weaves these linguistic distortions into the narrative, showcasing how language can be weaponized to dehumanize victims and suppress dissent. The public book burning in Molching, witnessed by Liesel, is portrayed as a celebration of national unity and cultural purity. In reality, it symbolizes the suppression of intellectual freedom and the erasure of dissenting voices. The event is framed as a patriotic act, masking its role in consolidating ideological control;Hitler's speeches, referenced in the novel, are filled with euphemistic rhetoric designed to inspire loyalty and justify oppression. Phrases that glorify "cleansing the nation" and "protecting German values" obscure the regime's genocidal intent; Hans Hubermann's refusal to openly criticize the regime highlights the pervasive fear induced by propaganda. Conversations are often laden with coded language, as citizens grapple with the tension between complicity and survival.

Euphemisms in the novel serve to dehumanize victims and create emotional distance, making atrocities more palatable to the general population. By referring to Jewish deportations as "relocations" or "resettlements," the Nazis stripped their victims of individuality and humanity, reducing them to abstract concepts. This linguistic manipulation is echoed in the novel, where characters like Gretel accept these terms without question, reflecting the success of propaganda in fostering indifference.The sanitized language allows characters to rationalize or ignore the suffering around them. For instance, when Rudy Steiner's father is conscripted for defying Nazi norms, the true consequences of resistance are cloaked in euphemistic justifications of duty and honor.As Liesel uncovers the realities hidden behind the regime's

rhetoric, her growing awareness highlights the moral consequences of euphemistic language. Her friendship with Max, a Jewish fugitive, challenges the sanitized narrative of propaganda, emphasizing the human cost of dehumanizing language.By exposing the role of euphemisms in shaping perception and justifying atrocities, Zusak critiques the moral complicity of language in perpetuating systemic violence. The Book Thief ultimately calls for vigilance in recognizing and resisting linguistic manipulation.

Indoctrination in *The Book Thief*

Education and Youth

Nazi Germany relied heavily on the indoctrination of children to ensure the continuation of its ideology, a theme poignantly depicted in The Book Thief. Schools and youth organizations, like Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls, were central to this effort. These institutions reshaped education, emphasizing racial purity, Aryan supremacy, and loyalty to Hitler.Rudy's participation in the Hitler Youth reveals both the regime's pervasive influence and the cracks in its control. While Rudy outwardly conforms to the program's physical and ideological demands, his defiance—such as refusing to recite Nazi slogans or questioning authority—indicates his inner resistance to indoctrination. Liesel and her peers are exposed to curricula glorifying Nazi ideals and demonizing Jews. The education system's singular focus on propaganda leaves little room for critical thinking, creating a generation conditioned to accept Nazi ideology as truth.

Gretel's Transformation

Gretel, Liesel's older sister, undergoes a stark transformation, becoming a representation of successful indoctrination. Initially portrayed as a typical teenager, Gretel gradually adopts Nazi propaganda as her worldview. Gretel decorates her room with images of Hitler and Nazi symbols, immersing herself in the regime's ideology. Her shift reflects how propaganda exploits impressionable minds, turning them into loyal followers.Gretel's acceptance of propaganda distances her from the humanity of those persecuted by the regime. Her character illustrates the insidious nature of indoctrination, which replaces empathy with ideological rigidity.

Liesel's Resistance

In contrast to Gretel, Liesel demonstrates a growing awareness of the regime's lies and the human cost of its policies.Liesel's bond with Max, a Jewish fugitive hiding in her basement, serves as a direct challenge to the Nazi narrative. Her experiences with Max humanize those the regime seeks to dehumanize, fostering her rejection of propaganda. Liesel's discovery of the power of words, particularly through books, becomes a form of resistance. By reading forbidden texts and writing her own story, she reclaims language from the regime's control and uses it to preserve humanity and truth. Liesel's acts of rebellion, such as stealing books from Nazi book burnings, symbolize her refusal to conform to the ideology forced upon her.

The juxtaposition of Gretel's indoctrination and Liesel's resistance highlights the novel's exploration of choice and critical thinking in the face of systemic oppression. While Gretel represents the ease with which young minds can be manipulated, Liesel's journey underscores the importance of questioning authority and seeking truth.Through these characters, Zusak critiques the dangers of indoctrination while affirming the possibility of resistance, even in the most oppressive circumstances. The novel ultimately serves as a reminder of the power of individual thought and moral courage in the fight against propaganda.

Propaganda's Moral and Emotional Impact

Propaganda shapes the moral and emotional landscapes of the characters in *The Book Thief* in profoundly different ways, illustrating its multifaceted impact on individuals. Hans embodies moral resistance to propaganda. Unlike many of his peers, he refuses to internalize Nazi ideology, taking significant personal risks to act against it.His decision to hide Max, a Jewish fugitive, demonstrates his rejection of the regime's dehumanizing rhetoric.Hans's moral clarity and quiet defiance highlight the possibility of individual resistance, even in a society saturated with propaganda.Rosa's relationship with propaganda is more pragmatic. Unlike Hans, her actions often appear driven by survival rather than ideology.She does not openly oppose the Nazi regime but supports Hans's decisions, including hiding Max, showcasing her quiet resilience and inner humanity.Rosa's character reflects how many ordinary people navigated the constraints of the regime without fully embracing its ideology.Liesel undergoes a journey of awakening, learning to see through the lies of Nazi propaganda.Her love for books and storytelling becomes a powerful act of defiance. Through her friendship with Max and her exposure to the suffering inflicted by the regime, she develops a critical perspective on the propaganda surrounding her.Liesel's ability to question and reject the regime's rhetoric underscores the transformative power of knowledge and empathy.

On a broader scale, propaganda in The Book Thief demonstrates its ability to foster complicity, fear, and division within the community.Propaganda ensures that many citizens passively accept the regime's actions, even if they do not actively support them.Euphemisms and state-controlled narratives make atrocities easier to ignore, creating a population complicit through inaction.For example, the people of Molching largely accept the persecution of Jews as part of the status quo, unwilling or unable to question the regime's authority.Propaganda, combined with surveillance and coercion, creates a pervasive atmosphere of fear.Hans's ostracism after refusing to join the Nazi Party highlights the consequences of dissent, while others, like Rudy's father, face conscription as punishment for defiance.This fear compels many to conform outwardly, even if they privately disagree with the regime.Propaganda exacerbates societal divisions by labeling certain groups as enemies.The dehumanization of Jews and other marginalized communities fosters suspicion and hostility, breaking down bonds of trust and solidarity.Liesel's evolving relationship with Max starkly contrasts with the prejudice instilled in characters like Gretel, illustrating

the divisive effects of propaganda on relationships and communities.In *The Book Thief*, Zusak reveals how propaganda can deeply influence individuals and societies, shaping moral choices, fostering complicity, and spreading fear. At the same time, the novel celebrates the resilience of those who question and resist its narratives, offering a powerful critique of the destructive power of propaganda and a hopeful reminder of the enduring strength of human empathy and courage.

The Power of Words: Contrasts and Resistance

Max's allegorical story, *The Word Shaker,* serves as a poignant critique of propaganda and an exploration of the dual nature of words. Max compares words to seeds, noting how Hitler's ability to plant seeds of hatred transformed Germany into a forest of obedient followers. This metaphor underscores the destructive power of language when wielded for manipulation and oppression. The titular character in Max's story represents Liesel, who resists the regime's destructive rhetoric by climbing the tree of hope and refusing to be uprooted. This act of defiance symbolizes the power of words to challenge propaganda and inspire resistance. The allegory critiques how Nazi propaganda weaponized language to sow division and dehumanization. At the same time, it celebrates the potential for words to heal, unite, and resist tyranny.

Liesel's journey in *The Book Thief* centers on her reclamation of language, transforming words from tools of oppression into instruments of empathy and resistance.Liesel's passion for books represents her hunger for truth and understanding in a world dominated by lies.By reading stolen and forbidden books, such as *The Shoulder Shrug* and *The Whistler*, she rejects the regime's control over knowledge and seeks to expand her perspective.Her discovery of words as a source of comfort and connection stands in stark contrast to their use as weapons in Nazi propaganda.Liesel's act of writing her own story, *The Book Thief,* is a direct act of defiance against the erasure and suppression imposed by the regime.Through storytelling, Liesel preserves the humanity of those she loves, such as Hans and Max, countering the dehumanizing narratives promoted by the Nazis.Her words give voice to the silenced and bear witness to the atrocities of war, emphasizing the redemptive power of language.

Zusak contrasts the destructive potential of propaganda with the redemptive possibilities of truth and storytelling. Nazi propaganda manipulates language to normalize violence, foster hatred, and control the populace. Euphemisms and lies create emotional distance, making atrocities seem acceptable or inevitable. Liesel's journey demonstrates that language, when used with compassion and honesty, can resist oppression, foster understanding, and preserve hope.Through The Word Shaker allegory and Liesel's actions, *The Book Thief* explores the profound impact of language in shaping human experience. Zusak highlights the dangers of propaganda while celebrating the resilience of those who reclaim words to resist, heal, and inspire. In a world scarred by lies and hatred, the novel affirms the transformative power of truth and storytelling.

Conclusion

> *The Book Thief* masterfully illustrates the dual power of language in Nazi Germany. On one hand, it was weaponized by the regime through euphemisms and propaganda to control thought, justify atrocities, and dehumanize victims. On the other hand, Markus Zusak highlights the redemptive and transformative potential of language through characters like Liesel and Max, who use words to resist, preserve humanity, and inspire hope. The novel juxtaposes the destructive force of propaganda with the resilience of truth and storytelling, offering a nuanced 1exploration of language's role in shaping both oppression and resistance.

The ethical implications of language are central to the novel's message. Zusak underscores the dangers of complacency and the moral responsibility to question and challenge manipulative narratives. The story reminds us that language is never neutral—it can shape ideologies, foster complicity, or spark resistance. It is a call to critically examine the words we consume and the narratives we accept, emphasizing the importance of empathy, understanding, and courage in the face of oppression.

The themes of *The Book Thief* remain profoundly relevant in the modern world. Euphemisms and propaganda continue to influence public perception through media, politics, and advertising. In an age of misinformation and ideological polarization, the novel serves as a timeless reminder of the power of words to manipulate, divide, or heal. It urges readers to remain vigilant, think critically, and use language as a tool for truth and connection rather than division and control.By bridging the historical context of Nazi Germany with universal lessons about language and morality, The Book Thief transcends its setting to become a deeply resonant reflection on the enduring power of words. ■

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A Linguistic Analysis of Rabindranath Tagore's *The Repayment*

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This article attempts to analyse Tagore's poem 'The Repayment' linguistically. Tagore has used different stylistic devices such as inversion, personification, oxymoron, hyperbole, simile, repetition and picturesque description to adorn the story of Bajrasen and Shyama. The theme of the poem hinges upon the sacrifice of a young teenager, Uttiya. When the secret of his release was known, the attitude of Bajrasen towards Shyama changed. Thus, this secret makes a surprising turn of events in the story.

Keywords Linguistic Analysis, Inversion, Paradox, Hyperbole, Repetition, Simile.

Introduction: The linguist Murry opines that style is the personal idiosyncrasy of expression by which one recognises a writer. It is the power of lucid exposition of a sequence of ideas. Moreover, it is the complete realisation of a universal significance in a personal expression. It can also be defined as a quality of language that communicates precisely emotions or thoughts. When thought predominates, the expression will be in prose. When emotion predominates overwhelmingly, the expression will be in poetry (Murry, 65).

In his poem 'The Repayment,' Tagore uses his own style. He uses different stylistic devices to highlight his poem. Tagore's poem is based on Buddhist literature of Nepal. Tagore modified the Buddha Jataka Story and wrote 'The Repayment,' glorifying Uttiya, who had been portrayed as a young man who voluntarily offered his life for the sake of Shyama. Bajrasen, a horse dealer who came to Benares to sell his horses, was arrested as a thief, though his horses were robbed by robbers. When he was taken to prison, Shyama, the first public woman in Benares, saw him. She was attracted by the manly beauty of Bajrasen. By offering large sums of money to the police chief and persuading Uttiya, one of her admirers, to accept the crime, she released Bajrasen. Later, realising the truth, Bajrasen hated her and asked her to leave him.

Inversion: While narrating the story, Tagore uses many stylistic devices such as inversion. It is nothing but a grammatical construction that inverses the normal word order of a sentence, such as putting the verb before the subject. Writers use inversion to create emphasis, and suspense or draw attention to a particular word or Phrase. Leech States: "Inversion often

serves to highlight or foreground certain elements of a sentence, creating emphasis or a sense of formality, and it frequently contributes to the rhythm and balance of poetic and rhetoric language."

In 'The Repayment', Tagore uses inversion. Bajrasen lay in a ruined temple outside the city. This sentence is written differently: "outside the city/ in a ruined temple lay Bagrasen / a foreigner there, a merchant from Taxila" (5-7) Tagore also uses inversion in the speech of the Police chief: "Said the chief with a smile / untimely, comes such an unsolicited favour/ toward this undeserving person" (30-32). Instead of writing 'The chief said', the poet has changed the positions of subject and verb.

Personification: John Donne has personified the Sun as an old man. Keats personifies Autumn as a Winnower sitting near her store with her hair, flowing in the wind. Tagore also uses personification in his poem. He says that the woodland had become speechless as the hundreds of birds dwelling there simply slept: "The speechless woodland/ the sleep of hundred birds upon its head / stood still" (149-151). Tagore uses the same device when he describes the banyan branches as drowsy and declares the noon wind as the stealer of ripe corn odours.

> On the drowsy, banyan branches
> shade immersed birds' nests were songless
> only the indolent insects buzzed and buzzed
> when noon wind, stealer of ripe corn odours
> blew of Shyama's drapery from her head (106-110).

He also uses personification when he observes that the forest spread its hands like mute forbiddings. "The creeper - manacled forest spread its hands/ like mute forbiddings" (182-183). In the following lines also personification has been used by the poet: "Hundreds of thousands of tree-roots all around/ shuddered with terror, buried underground" (201-202). When Shyama laughed aloud, the grim prison woke up with shudders of great terror: "The woman laughed so loudly / that the grim prison woke again with shudders\ of renewed terror" (71-73).

Oxymoron: According to Boulton, oxymoron is a Paradox compressed into very few words. (164). When Shyama calls Bajrasen as the lord of her life and death Tagore uses this device: "O, lord of my life and death, my heart's sovereign" (86-87), She also asks him to punish her, so that she might receive a reward:" Pass it on me- your sentence my reward?" (198).

Hyperbole: Hyperbole is concerned with personal values and sentiments. Some statements may seem like exaggerations from the point of view of an onlooker. But from the speaker's viewpoint, they may be serious. Hyperbole distorts the truth by saying too much. Tagore has used hyperbole in the poem 'The Repayment'. When Bajrasen was dragged to prison like a common thief by police officers, Shyama fell in love with him. She says:

Alas who is this?
So tall, handsomer than great Indra himself,
being dragged to prison like a common thief
in harsh chains! Quick my friend (19-22).

As she considers Bajrasen to be a great Indra, the poet has used exaggeration here. Similarly, Bajrasen also expresses an exaggerated statement when he meets Shyama in prison:

Who are you, appearing in my prison
like the white dawn, the morning Star in your hand,
life to the dying, liberation incarnate,
merciful Lakshmi in the merciless city (67-70).

He praises her as white dawn, "life to the dying" and liberation incarnate. Finally, he calls her merciful Lakshmi. Here, the stylistic device, crescendo has also been used.

When Bajraden called Shyama the merciful Lakshmi, Shyama began to laugh. Her lunatic laughter burst into a hundred mournful tear streams. Here the poet uses exaggeration: "She laughed and laughed / till her bizarre lunatic laughter burst/ into a hundred mournful tear streams?" (73-75).

After Strangling Shyama, Bajrasen reached the boat. He took her anklet and pressed it to his breast. Its tinkling sound pierced his heart like an arrow with a hundred tips. Here also the poet uses hyperbole. "A hundred times/ he pressed it to his breast. It's tinkling sound/ pierced his heart like an arrow with hundred tips" (222-224).

Simile: The poet uses the poetic device simile in his poem. Bajrasen, was dragged to prison like a common thief: "So tall, handsomer than great Indra himself/ being dragged to Prison like a common thief" (20-21). The poet says that even the street stones are not as hard as Shyama. Many are the stones that pave the city's streets, /but none as hard as/ Shyama who's hard indeed (76-77). Shyama who had embraced Bajrasen, suddenly fell like a torn climber: "Shyama released from the embrace/ Collapsed like a torn climber" (157-158). After deserting Shyama, Bajrasen was wandering on deserted sandy beach like a madman "on deserted sandy beaches along the river/ heedless of all things, he spent the livelong day like a madman" (209-211).

After spending a day on the beach, Bajrasen rushed to the empty boat. He was compared to the insect which runs towards fire with ardent zeal:

At the day's end, with his body, fevered, burnt,
he ran and went aboard, the empty boat,
even as an insect, seeing fire,
runs with ardent zeal (218-221).

Bajrasen saw a shadowy figure like a ghost on the sandy beach: "On the sandy beach, against the deep black woods/ appeared a shadowy figure like a ghost" (234-235). After asking Shyama to leave him, he fell on the bed. It was like a bed of fire: "Even the bed was like a bed of fire beneath his feet and burned him" (248). Thus, the poet has used the device of simile suitably in his poem

Repetition: According to Leech, repetition indicates the poverty of linguistic resources. Yet, it presents a simple motion with force. It may further suggest a suppressed intensity of feeling for which there is no outlet but a repeated hammering at the confining walls of language.

Tagore uses the prefix un- in his poem repeatedly: "untimely comes such an unsolicited favour/ toward this undeserving Person" (31-32) He uses the word what' repeatedly in the following lines: "Beauty what sport, what perversive humour is this/ that makes you call me from the street into your house" (35-36).

When Bajrasen addressed Shyama as merciful Lakshmi, she laughed continuously. The poet uses the word laughed repeatedly: "She laughed and laughed / till her bizarre, lunatic laughter burst / into a hundred mournful tear-streams" (73-75). The poet uses the word "hard' repeatedly. "What I did for you was hard indeed enough / hard indeed, but even harder it is / to tell you about it now?" (137-139). Bajrasen expresses hatred by using the word 'fie' repeatedly: "Fie on my breath that stand indebted to you / fie on my eyes that blink in each moment that passes" (171-172).

Picturesque description: The Picturesque refers to a quality in art and literature that evokes visual beauty through natural landscapes, often characterized by irregularity and variety. Tagore uses Picturesque description of the underwood in his poem interestingly:

> In the stuffy airless underwood, thickly packed
>
> with strong vegetal odours, trunks of trees
>
> raised their twisted branches everywhere, assuming so many grotesque, frightening shapes in the darkness. All exits were blocked. The creeper-manacled forest spread it's hands like mute forbiddings (177-183).

After reading the lines given above, one could not but recollect the comments given by James Reeves regarding the poems of Young:

> In them the intellectual elements of thought and speculation finely balance the sensuous elements of a naturalist's pure observation. He observes with detachment, but is always intensely interested in his own. reactions to what he notes. There is always this combination of the recording eye and the speculating mind (104).

In Tagore's poem also one could find the combination of the recording eye and the speculating mind.

Conclusion: To sum up, one could conclude that Tagore masterfully employs a variety of stylistic devices to elevate the beauty of his poem. Moreover, as he uses different devices such as inversion, personification, oxymoron, hyperbole, simile, repetition, and icturesque description at appropriate places aptly, he excels in the art of poetic expression, kindling his readers' kaleidoscopic imagination. ■

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Transgressive Motherhood: A Reading of Toni Morrison's *Sula*

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Transgressive fiction provides a space for subversive characters who tend to sway from the traditional norms of society. In such fiction, we see the patterns of behaviours of the characters in which they are governed by selfish motives and unruly or untamed manners that are, otherwise, considered immoral by the traditional patriarchal society. In his work, "Preface to Transgression", Michael Foucault rightly stated, "Transgression is an action which involves the limit, the narrow zone of a line, where it displays the flash of its passage, but perhaps also its entire trajectory, even its origin" (33-34). In American literature, transgressive fiction made its mark by the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century.The events that catapulted this genre further is the World Wars. However, this paper attempts to highlight the transgressive motherhood reflected in *Sula.*

Toni Morrison in and her works have created a much-needed space for transgressive mothers. Any woman, who does not succumb to the traditional mould of motherhood faces severe criticism and tends to become an object of ire of society. Morrison has portrayed the role of mothers with immense sincerity. In novels like *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye,* her protagonists have undergonetorture and racial discrimination to an extent that eventually led them tothe cohort of some 'unmotherly' deeds.In *Sula*, Morrison portrays motherhood and its varied aspects in a male-dominated white society throughthe three members of the Peace family: Eva Peace, Hannah Peace, and Sula Peace along with other female characters such as Nel Wright and Helene Wright. Through these characters, we can see the disruptions of the common notions of motherhood and the expected behaviours of the motherly figures. It is also noteworthy that in *Sula*, the mothers go through the intersecting oppressions of race, class, and gender in the black community of Bottom (Bottom is the name of a place inhabited by the black community located in the hills above the fictional town of Medallion, Ohio).The fact that the black community was pushed to the periphery of a barren land is symbolic of racial segregation. Rebecca Ferguson, in her work, *Rewriting Black Identities,* states that in Morrison's fiction "the connections between mothers and children assume central importance…partly because this subject had been long neglected by many black male authors, and partly because legacy and responsibility became especially urgent in the context of motherhood" (16).Since slavery was the dominant form of practice,it shaped the image of African American mothers which, in turn, gave birth to various kinds of mothers in such communities- the matriarch, the community mother, the othermother, the mammy, the welfare mother and the likes.

In most African American communities, Black motherhood is glorified and mothers play an important role in those systems. Patricia Hill Collins, in her *Black Feminist Thought,* states that in most African American communities "the idea that mothers should live lives of sacrifice has come to be seen as a norm" (188). Since the mothers are left alone to look after their children, it becomes difficult for them to makesurvival owing to the socio-economic conditions that eventuallycompel them to make sacrifices either emotionally or physically to get their family going. In *Sula,* Eva Peace (Sula's grandmother), is a black mother who sacrifices one of her legs to feed her children. Eva is the mother of three children- Plum, Hannah, and Pearl, who is left on her own by her husband Boy Boy. Later, she also adopted three boys named Deweys which naturally makes her an 'othermother'. Being an underprivileged black woman, Eva faced the intersecting discrimination of class, race, and gender. She mostly had to fight alone to survive and feed her children with little help from other black families like The Suggs and Mrs. Jackson. These black families who used to live alongside her in those "low hills" saw Eva as "confused and desperately hungry" after her husband left her for another woman (32). They bought her "a warm bowl of peas", "a plate of cold bread" and "a little milk" (32).

One winter Eva had gone through the terrible experience of being a single parent when her "beloved baby boy" Plum suffered some bowel movements (34). With great care and out of compulsion, she sacrificed "the last bit of food she had in the world" (lard) to bring relief to Plum (34). This incident of helplessness, desperation, and love is very aptly portrayed by Morrison in the following graphic scene that takes place in an outhouse:

> At one point, maddened by his own crying, he gagged, choked and looked as though he was strangling to death. Eva rushed to him and kicked over the earthen slop jar, washing a small area of the floor with the child's urine. She managed to soothe him, but when he took up the cry again late night, she resolved to end his misery once and for all. She wrapped him in blankets, ran her finger around the crevices and sides of the lard can and stumbled to the outhouse with him. Deep in its darkness and freezing stench she squatted down, turned the baby over her knees, exposed his buttocks and shoved the last bit of food she had in the world (besides three beets) up his ass. Softening the insertion with the dab of lard, she probed with her middle finger to loosen his bowels. Her fingernail snagged what felt like a pebble; she pulled it out and others followed. Plum stopped crying as the black hard stools ricocheted onto the frozen ground. And now that it was over, Eva squatted there wondering why she came all the way out there to free his stools, and what was she doing down on her haunches with her beloved baby boy warmed by her body in the almost total darkness, her shins and teeth freezing, her nostrils assailed…As the grateful Plum slept, the silence allowed her to think. (34)

In this episode, it is evident how Eva carried out her duty as a black mother that is expected of her or how a mother would go to any extent to save her child. This scene is made particularly realistic and graphic in order to instil the idea that motherhood is indeed

gruesome at times. Unlike the rosy advertisements about mothers and motherhood as shown in the electronic as well as print media, a mother has to go through an unimaginable amount of agony and labour, especially when it comes to a poor black woman like Eva in a patriarchal white society.

The streaks of Eva's transgression are evident in the next episode when she leaves all her three children in the care of Mrs. Suggs, saying she will return the next day (34). Instead, she returned after eighteen months with "two crutches, a new black pocketbook, and one leg" (34). It was later known to the readers that she sold her leg for an amount of ten thousand dollars. With that money, she paid Mrs. Suggs ten dollars and built a house. This act of Eva can not necessarily be termed as 'transgressive' per se, since she has done whatever was needed to be done to save her family. Nevertheless, her actions cannot be termed as 'typical' too owing to the traditional ideas of motherhood.

Another atypical and transgressive behaviour depicted by Eva is the killing of her son Plum in order to release him from his drug addiction. Although Eva's act can never be justified under any circumstances, the readers are left oscillating between aversion and empathy. Plum's downfall is a clear mirror of the dangers of a patriarchal society. Being a war veteran and black, he could not manage to get the resources and respect of the male-dominated white society. Eva always had this patriarchal idea regarding Plum's life that he would one day grow into a man taking responsibility to look after his mother and sisters. Unfortunately, none of it happened as per her expectations and instead, Plum being an alcoholic and addict, had to depend on his mother. When her daughter Hannah questioned her actions, Eva responded thus:

> …he wanted to crawl back in my womb and well…I ain't got the room no more even if hecould do it. There wasn't space for him in my womb. And he was crawlin' back…I had room enough in my heart, but not in my womb, not no more…He was growed, a big old thing. (71)

Being disappointed in her son as well as being desperately worried about his future, Eva decided to set him free once and for all. Collins remarks, "The pain of knowing what lies ahead for black children while feeling powerless to protect them is another problematic dimension of Black mothering" (212). Although many critics have shunned Eva's decision of filicide, many others have been empathetic towards her. Her act has been viewed as a resistance to the patriarchal ideals of society where the male members are expected to make money and take all the vital decisions of the family. The fact that Plum did not feel the pain of his death is suggestive of the fact that he too might have regarded it as a maternal act of love and necessity.

In *Sula,* Toni Morrison does not portray conventional attributes in the relationship between Hannah and her daughter Sula. Sula's father died right after her birth and being a single mother, Hannah had to look up to her mother Eva while raising her daughter Sula. Hannah had never been able to fill the gap of emotional unavailability from her mother in

her life which has now passed down to Sula. Hannah does not fulfil Sula's emotional needs, and their relationship, as a result, is not quite amicable and typical. Morrison has depicted a scene where it is evident that Hannah does not like her daughter as she should as per the norms of a patriarchal society which, in turn, has resulted in Sula's indifference towards her mother. Sula's apathy to help her mother during her death is symbolic of Sula's resistance towardsthe motherhood of Hannah. Throughout her life, Sula has never felt it necessary to become a mother in order to be a complete woman. She has seen the mothering of her grandmother Eva, and her mother Hannah, which has made her firm to not give in to the expectations of a patriarchal society.Amid a conversation about child rearing with her friendsPatsy and Valentine, Hannah says, "…I love Sula. I just don't like her. That's the difference" (57). This conversation was overheard by Sula which sent her into deep shock and resentment towards her mother which is later represented in the death scene of Hannah as Sula stands dumb while watching her mother burn. But it is also equally important to state that in the same conversation, Hannah acknowledgesthat mothers and their children are "different people" (57). This statement throws light on the fact that 'motherhood' does not equate to 'womanhood'. It has often been seen that, in every society, once a woman assumes motherhood, she is expected to forsake her individuality. But Hannah never gave up her adventures with various men even when she was being looked down upon by the Bottom community. Motherhood is often conditioned to "biological determinants" where women are naturally expected to be the "caregiver" (Oliveira 67-84). Hannah is a transgressive mother in the sense that she defied the stereotypical image of an African American mother by not forsaking her sexuality. It goes without saying that Hannah's personality is influenced by the subversive attitudes of her mother since her childhood. Once, as a child, when she asked Eva if she ever loved them or why she never played with them, Eva responded:

> You settin' here with your healthy-ass self and ax me did I love you? Them big old eyes in your head would a been two holes full of maggots if I hadn't … I'm talkin' 'bout 18 and 95 … What would I look like leapin' 'round that little old room playin' with youngins with three beets to my name? …Ain't that love? You want me to tinkle you under the jaw and forget 'bout them sores in your mouth? … what you talkin' 'bout did I love you girl I stayed alive for you can't you get that through your thick head? (68-69)

This assertion of Eva had an impression on Hannah's young mind that this is the normal way of loving one's child. A large part of Hannah's motherhood is based on her experience as a daughter. Despite Eva's subversive attempts at child-rearing through her sacrifices, Hannah's maternal emotional vacuum never got filled, which, in turn, took an ugly shape in her relationship with her daughter, Sula.

Unlike Nel (Sula's best friend), Sula is quite subversive in her manners and behaviours. She does not fit into the ideals of a patriarchal society, let alone being a motherly figure. When advised by her grandmother Eva to become a mother, Sula defies her by

saying: "I don't want to make somebody else. I want to make myself" (92). Sula is considered a black sheep by her community due to her disruptive ideas about being a woman and motherhood. Betty Friedan, a second-wave feminist, calls the glorification of the wifely and maternal role as 'the feminist mystique'. It was the 'feminine ideal' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (148-150). Hence, women who were discontented and frustrated with the limits set for them and those who go beyond these set limits were considered to be rebellious and erratic. According to the Black community of Bottom, the ability to bear a child is considered the sole aperture for feminine creativity. Hence, Sula was considered subversive when she opted out of this option. Paula Gallant Eckhard asserts that mothers are the terrain on which patriarchy erects its empires (14).

Sula, being a black woman but exercising her rights as a white man is not taken positively by her community, wherein she is reminded by Nel, "You *can't* do it all. You a woman and a coloured woman at that. You can't act like a man…doing whatever you like…" (142). It is notable that Sula is constantly reminded of her miseries for being a subjugated woman in a male-dominated white society and that she needs to act accordingly within societal norms. Sula, however, defies these norms and hence the Black community of Bottom considers her to be an inappropriate presence for being intimate with white men. According to them, it is a grave and unforgivable crime. They accuse her of some trivial accusations labelling her as a 'seductress'.

However, the women, especially the mothers, of the African American communities have a deep sense of understanding among themselves as they go through a similar level of discrimination owing to their gender and race. Hence, they extend their help to each other by being the 'othermother' or the 'community mother'. O'Reilly is of the view that it is a common pattern in Morrison's novels, where other women serve as a safe space for other children through the practice of other mothering (41). This idea of other mothering came into force as a result of the deviations of the biological mothers from their roles and responsibilities shouldered onto them by the patriarchal society. The women from other families, whether it is their neighbours or relatives, appear on the scene to take care of such children. For instance, when Eva left all her children in the care of Mrs. Suggs for eighteen years, Mrs. Suggs took the role of being an othermother for Hannah, Pearl, and Plum. Another instance can be cited when Eva took the role of a community mother to the three Deweys. According to Collins, "the othermothers provide a foundation for conceptualizing Black women's political activism" (205).It can be argued here that other mothering is a concept the Black community invented for themselves in order to resist the male-dominated white society. By growing up in such a community, Black children have a sense of belongingness which is not easy to find in a white community. The influence of other mothers on children helps them form a sense of identity which in itself is a step forward towards the white resistance.Collins argues that childcare is a collective responsibility in the West African tradition (8). It is evident in the instance when Eva is being helped by Mrs. Suggs and Mrs. Nelson with milk and other food items at a time when Eva's economic conditions were dire

and dismal.According to Nancy Chodorow, society plays a vital role in defining the role of women and "women's mothering does not exist in isolation" (32).

To conclude, through the portrayal of various female characters in the novel, Morrison has been able to bring out the elements of motherhood which subvert the conventional or stereotypical idea of being a mother in a patriarchal society. Thewomen of the Peace household have inverted this typical idea of motherhood with their actions which can be regarded as transgressive enough. Eva's filicide, therumoured selling of her leg, her abandonment of her children in the care of another woman; Hannah's sexual indulgence, her emotional unavailability for her child; Sula's fiercely independent decision to not embrace motherhood, her reluctance to save her mother from burning etc. are the actions that feature the transgressive elements in the novel. Besides these, other mothering and community mothering are some of the unconventional attributes that have been highlighted in the novel to shatter the conventional idea about motherhood. Morrison here attempts to validate the atypical mothers who are in search of their individuality and self-worth in a society that tends to deny them these values. ■

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From Grandma's Tales to Virtual Realms: Nurturing Generation Alpha in Understanding of Indian Knowledge with Folklore

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Over the centuries, the Indian subcontinent has embodied folk literature as a repository of native knowledge, cultural wisdom, and social heritage. The Indian Knowledge System has significantly contributed to this folk literature, reflecting the nation's social, philosophical, and cultural ethos. Indian folk literature encompasses a broad spectrum of genres, including folktales, proverbs, regional songs, and folklore, each offering profound insights into various dimensions of life. Currently, certain Indian Knowledge System courses are already accessible through digital learning platforms. Animation and cartoons that depict myths, folklore, traditions, and "grandmother tales" have become essential tools for imparting cultural values to children via books, cinema, and online platforms.

This paper delves into how traditional Indian knowledge and folklore are being integrated into digital platforms, with the goal of fostering cultural awareness and understanding in Generation Alpha. By combining multigenerational storytelling (known as "Grandma Tales") with immersive virtual spaces, this research emphasizes the importance of preserving India's cultural heritage for future generations. Drawing on literature in cultural preservation and digital education, we propose strategies to engage Generation Alpha with India's traditions, philosophies, legends, and myths. Through interactive storytelling, engaging design, and multimedia features like animations and augmented reality (AR), we seek to create captivating educational experiences.

This paper also examines case studies of successful initiatives and discusses the challenges and opportunities in developing effective engagement strategies. The findings of this research aim to promote empathy, cultural diversity, and global citizenship within Generation Alpha, inspiring a deeper appreciation for India's cultural heritage in an increasingly digitalized world.

Keywords : Indian Folklore, IKS, Generation Alpha, Gamification tradition, Animation, Digital Reality, Moral lessons, Cultural values, Augmented Reality, Granny Tales .

Introduction

It's disheartening to observe that many young people in India seek knowledge and opportunities in Western countries. Drama holds a significant place in Indian culture, serving as the foundation for various other art forms. Indian boasts the world's longest epic, the Mahabharata, alongside the widely cherished Ramayana. Furthermore, India possesses an extensive collection of folktales, with many renowned tales globally believed to have drawn inspiration from Indian works like the *Panchatantra*. These stories often employed familiar tropes, proverbs, and dialects to resonate with the predominantly uneducated local populace. Raja Rao's "Kanthapura" exemplifies how regional lore, or 'sthal purana,' is utilized to engage with ordinary rural audiences through narrative techniques. The National Education Policy (NEP) now endeavors to incorporate indigenous literary forms into secondary and higher education, aiming to enrich learning experiences with diverse, inclusive, and multilingual perspectives.

What is Folklore ?

In English, the term "folklore" is used to convey fairy tales like Snow white or Cinderella. In a broader context, "folk tales" encompass all types of narratives on myths, legends, ancient cults, whether oral or written, are passed down through successive generations. We all have read about Greek folklore, which were written way back to before Christ- such as the "Trojan War", "Oedipus Rex", gigantic characters like "Achilles" and many more. Likewise India, a culturally rich country has a rich tapestry of fables, legends, myths, oral and written literature going thousands of years back before Greek and Roman writers like Sophocles, Ovid and Homer. Across the globe, various cultures have crafted myths, legends, fables, and oral traditions, intending to preserve wisdom for future generations. These narratives carry valuable moral, cultural and history, embodying a collective repository of wisdom. It is crucial for Generation Alpha to grasp their respective cultural folklore, ensuring its transmission to subsequent generations. In our country, the retelling of the Ramayana is legendary which is deeply ingrained with religious and cultural fabric of the Indian subcontinent. The Ramayana has its own significance, appearing to incorporate the local traditions and customs of those regions where it is orally transmitted. The Ramayana is a representation of the triumph over evil. Our Generation Alpha youths need to understand the greatness of the deeds of national heroes.

Difficulties in transmitting Folklore to Generation Alpha:

As Swami Vivekananda says, How can there be any progress of the country without the spread of education, the dawning of knowledge". We, the generation preceding Generation Alpha, have all been familiar with the traditional tales passed down from our grandmothers, mothers, as we listened attentively to their stories and wisdom shared by them. With the proliferation of digital media and the decline of traditional storytelling practices, there exists a risk of cultural erosion as the younger generations have become disconnected from their heritage. In today's digital age, bridging the gap between these outstanding narratives and

the virtual world presents considerable dilemmas and difficulties. So, balancing the transmission of traditional wisdom with the allure of virtual reality demands creative strategies and adaptable storytelling methodologies tailored to the preferences and habits of the younger generation. The Indian Knowledge System with the support of many educational institutions and cultural organizations have already started organizing seminars, workshops and cultural festivals to promote the Indian epics like *The Ramayana*, *The Mahabharata*. These initiatives not only encourage active participation but also ensures intergenerational learning, dialogue, while bridging the gap between past and present.

Harnessing Technology to Revitalize Folklore:

As we journey the complexities of the internet age, traditional folk literature still holds a special importance. They show how powerful human feelings, creativity and connections can be. These stories, morality, passed down through generations, still inspire, teach, and bring people together in ways that are not limited by time. In a world that's always changing fast, folk literature remain as strong symbols of our culture, history and emotions. Modern technology progresses at an incredibly fast pace. With personal computers, mobile phones, tablets and the internet, technology is used in all spheres, affecting our daily lives greatly. Educational games are also taking advantage of the technological process, for example, many useful apps are available for children. Gaming and educational opportunities have expanded because of the development of tablets and smartphones. Teachers have the opportunity to combine physical and electronic objects when creating education materials, so they are not confined to the use of traditional physical objects. Storytelling remains one of the oldest teaching methods for children: the development of technology has given impetus to the creation of tangible digital storytelling, which combines programs with physical objects, creating a single field for learning. Creating stories in which a child can interact with his/her peers has also provided new opportunities for inclusion and cooperation in young children. Indeed, the increased use of speakers, videos, pictures, and other tools that can help to quickly create and easily adapt objects for children with various backgrounds has fostered inclusive teaching.

A variety of virtual worlds, including Adventure world, simulation world, creative world, role-playing world, and collaborative world, are identified for their potential to enhance education through immersive and interactive experiences. Adventure world engages students in narrative- driven quests, promoting storytelling and exploration- based learning. Simulation world replicates real- world scenarios, offering practical experience in fields like science and engineering. Creative world fosters creativity and design skills through sandbox environments. Role- playing world encourages social interaction and perspective-taking, enhancing empathy and communication. Collaborative world facilities teamwork and cooperative learning, aligning with the emphasis on collaboration in education and professional settings. These virtual worlds are selected based on their unique educational benefits, aiming to cover diverse pedagogical approaches and meet various educational needs. The selection process involves a thorough review of scholarly articles, educational

reports, and user feedback to ensure a comprehensive understanding of their potential in educational settings.

Integrating Folklore(world, literature) into educational curricula:

The humanities field still lacks sufficient representation from Indian sources, especially in literature, which often prioritizes English and American writers over Indian authors from different regions and eras. While familiarity with William Shakespeare, Wordsworth, or Dickens may not be essential for Indian Students, it is crucial for them to be acquainted with Indian literary figures like Kalidasa, Bhartrihari, Valluvar, Munsi Premchand, Bankim, or Tagore, as well as Tamil epics and the works of saints. Many Post-graduate courses in English literature overlook notable contributions from figures like Sri Aurobindo. Moreover, there is a notable lack of awareness among Indian students about regional literatures beyond their own state, hindering the goal of national integration. This issue primarily stems from syllabus choices, but teachers can address it by incorporating inspirational pieces from diverse Indian regions into their teaching, assigning research projects, and organizing extracurricular activities such as staging plays. There are captivating stories and cultural wonders as we explore the richness of india's folklores, from Panchatantra to jataka tales (often referred to as grandma tales). By staging or role play this stories we unlock the linguistic and literary treasures of our country, displaying influence of Sanskrit, classic epics.

Famous quotations by Indian writers on Folk Literature studies:-

- *" the study of Indian folk literature unveils the collective consciousness of our people, preserving the essence of our heritage and identity."*—— ***Rabindranath Tagore***
- *" Indian folk literature is a living testament to the creativity and imagination of our ancestors, breathing life into the stories that have shaped our collective consciousness."*———— ***Salman Rushdie***
- *" Folk literature is the mirror of society, reflecting its culture, traditions, and values."*—— ***Mahasweta Devi***

Conclusion

In conclusion, the convergence of grandma's tales and virtual realms presents a unique opportunity to nurture Generation Alpha's understanding of Indian knowledge through folklore. Many educators today lack the capability or willingness to address this crucial issue. Withour proper training and support from parents and school administrations, the antiquated educational system will persist. Parents must decide whether they prioritize their children's success in current exams over their ability to tackle life's broader challenges due to lack of critical thinking and cultural understanding despite years of schooling. For start, the home and the school could start teaching Vedas and the Gita, not to be only viewed as spiritual books, but these books also helps in developing critical thinking and understanding to lead a successful life.

In contemporary India, numerous initiatives are seeking to overcome this cultural disconnect. These efforts should be encouraged, rather than diverting attention to political controversies, which only highlight our ignorance of India's heritage. it's imperative for Indian education to mature; there's no excuse for not decolonizing it after more than six decades of independence. This transformation should be undertaken thoughtfully, utilizing the best resources and prioritizing students' futures.Great nations are not built by narrow-minded individuals lacking vision, knowledge of their roots, or self-confidence. By giving due importance to India's heritage in education, the nation's enduring strengths will naturally flourish. ■

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Divided Sisterhood: Disunity among Women in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*

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Since its publication in 1985, *The Handmaid's Tale* has garnered intense attention for the portrayal of the fictional state of Gilead with its prevalent totalitarian, theocratic and patriarchal practices. Like any other patriarchal society, in Gilead also men are at the centre of the power and privilege and women are pushed to the margins. Women are deprived of all their democratic rights including right to work, to own property or to divorce. While there has been endless discussion about the nature of the state, the environmental concerns and the role of patriarchy in subjugation of females. However, amidst well-discussed themes lies a crucial aspect often overlooked: the role of the matriarchal network in reinforcing patriarchy. Women have been historically subjugated in patriarchal societies, often as spoils of war or subjects of revenge. Even in literature a wide array of works has been produced where men are at the focal point of gender-bias administration. This novel highlights how females can also facilitate exclusion of their own gender from mainstream. *The Handmaid's Tale* provides a nuanced panorama for critiquing the complex dynamics of power and gender. By exploring the overlooked role of the matriarchal network, the paper gains deeper insights into the multifaceted nature of misogyny. To achieve the stated objective, analytical and exploratory methods will be used. Key gender-based concepts will be explored and feminist theorist like Simon De Beauvoir and sociologist like R.W. Connell will be relied on.

Keywords: Gender discrimination, Reproductive injustice, Disunity, Gender Hierarchy, Hegemonic Masculinity, Hegemonic Femininity, Female Masculinity & Emphasised Femininity.

Introduction:

Margaret Atwood procures an eminent position in the literary world. She embarked on her phenomenal career with the publication *Double Persephone* in 1961, which spanned many years and genres. Over the years, Margaret's publication comprises twelve novels, eight short fiction collections, sixteen poetry collections, six children's books, and five major non-fiction works. In addition, She has published six literary anthologies. The most

notable *is Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature.* (1972) is the seminal work credited with reigniting interest in the Canadian literary heritage. *Edible Women* (1969), *Surfacing* (1972), *Lady Oracle* (1976), *Bodily Harm* (1971) and *Handmaid's Tale* (1986) are a few of her most acclaimed works. Atwood's thematic explorations are very diverse. She explored various topics ranging from Canadian national identity to the dynamics between Canada, the United States, and Europe. Her narratives often engage with pressing issues like environmental sustainability and the ethical quandaries posed by biotechnology. Atwood expertly constructs a setting in *The Handmaid's Tale* that reveals the complexities of a patriarchal system and its transformation into a matriarchal web. In the overtly religious, totalitarian state of Gilead, survival is a constant battle, particularly for women. With no other means to ensure their survival, women are forced into competition with each other, reinforcing a cycle of oppression that maintains their subjugation.

The fictional town of Gilead undergoes metamorphosis after the democratic government dissolves and an extremist religious faction known as Jacob's Sons seizes the power. Further, this transformation made the vulnerable groups, including women, face heightened restrictions. Gilead's women forcefully conform to prescribed gender roles. The phenomenon is that under a religiously extremist political system, women are often forced back into stereotypical gender roles extensively documented in scholarly research. One such research publication from the Sage Journal titled "Private Patriarchy's Impact on Women's Careers: Through Kaleidoscope Lenk" by Farzaana Ashraf and Denise Jepsen elucidates that patriarchal systems confine women primarily to domestic duties, effectively depriving them of opportunities for paid employment. Similarly, women in Gilead are also excluded from social life and compelled to forsake their careers after religious fanatics take over power. Prominent female characters of the novel: the protagonist, Offred, and her foil character, Serena Joy, exemplify the drastic change of lifestyle experienced by women of all social classes. Once esteemed for their professional accomplishments, they relegate to subservient roles. The UN's Human Development 2013 Report on Gender Inequality echoes the prevailing trend that gender inequality persists more prominently under overtly religious states.

Under Gilead's new social setup, women who earlier had been in interracial marriages, are divorced or are lesbians become outcasts. These outcast women are stripped of their autonomy by the new law (Interracial marriages are nullified; unrecognized divorce and lesbian relations are banned). These women face threats due to extreme environmental pollution; they are captured, imprisoned and used as vessels for reproduction to survive the dwindling population of Gilead. Patriarchy is a social system that reinforces gender inequality by relegating women to subordinate positions in political, social, cultural, and economic domains. A sociological and ideological construct that positions men as superior to women. In such a social system, men hold dominant power, and gender equality is non-existent. This social system permeates both the social and private domains of society. Patriarchy in the social domain severely restricts women's participation in public life and

limits their opportunities to assert independence. The private form of patriarchy confines the role of women to being caregivers in a family. Men are assumed to be the head of the household; women have no decision-making power and are financially reliant on men.

In *The Handmaid's Tale,* there is an intersection of public and private forms of misogyny, where they converge to oppress and control women. The public form of patriarchy excludes women from the public sphere by eliminating any possibility for them to have a desired career or to engage in any form of social life, thus confining them to the four walls of the house. The private form of patriarchy creates a notion of survival-of-the-fittest among women and creates a fertile ground for contention and scuffle within the household. Atwood's narrative exposes to the readers the ways patriarchy's overbearing practices place women in conflict with each other and create disunity among them. This paper highlights how oppressive systems augment women's subjugation by fracturing their solidarity. It raises the question about the role played by women in the oppression of their gender and explores the underlying reasons for such behaviour.

Rooted in biological essentialism is the belief that women are inferior to men, and this flawed assumption has shaped societal opinions and structures. Even renowned philosophers have held flawed judgments about women. In her seminal work *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir quotes Aristotle: "The female is female by a certain lack of qualities. We should regard women's nature as suffering from natural defectiveness" (Beauvoir 7). She also references St. Thomas Aquinas, who claimed that "woman was an incomplete man, an incidental being" (Beauvoir 7). These historical views reflect the deep-seated prejudices that have long justified the subjugation of women. The supposed superiority of the male sex has been used to create and sustain a male-dominated society where men govern all domains, including the area of women's rights and identities.

In Gilead, men exercise unchecked control, and women have become virtual prisoners of the state. The state dedicates women's lifestyle choices, reproductive rights, personal freedom and professions. The social and political system not only relegates women to a tertiary status (men in less powerful positions are the secondary citizens) but also creates a multi-tiered hierarchy within their gender. Women are segregated into different roles based on government-designated functions of wives, aunts, Marthas, handmaids, eco wives and un-women. Mobility between these social classes is not permitted. Women of each caste dress according to a state-imposed mandate. Wives wear blue, Handmaids wear blood red, Aunts wear drab brown, and Marthas wear surgical green. Each colour reinforces the state's control over women's lifestyle choices and calls attention to their state-assigned roles. The state-imposed division of women based on social rank and the colour of their attire, which is a well-thought strategy to strengthen Gilead's political and social system.

In human civilization, clothing is not only necessary for covering our bodies; it is a means of asserting our individuality, expressing our personalities, and silently conveying our thoughts. The elementary level of personal liberty i.e. the right of clothing, helps shape

the identities we wish to embody. However, in Gilead, this freedom is entirely denied to women. Offred, the Handmaid, finds the colour red distasteful, but she has no power to reject or change the colour imposed upon her. Despite her aversion, she forcefully wears red. Expressing her disdain, she mentions, "Everything except the wings around my face is red: I, never looked good in red, it's not my colour, it is the colour of blood, which defines us" (Atwood 18). Handmaids struggle to recognize their identities beneath the veils they unwillingly wear. Looking at herself in the mirror and observing her reflection, Offred mentions, "I find myself in it like a distorted shadow, a parody of something, some fairy-tale figure in a red cloak…. a sister dipped in blood" (Atwood 19).

This struggle for meta consciousness leaves no room for building camaraderie with other women. State-imposed clothing strengthens differences among women and shapes their perceptions of each other. These uniforms inhibit the ability to see other women as individuals, restricting the formation of connections and solidarity. Offred, describing another handmaid, says, "A shape, red with white wings around the face, a shape like mine, a non-descriptive woman" (Atwood 28).

The state-imposed gender stratification results in both exogenous and endogenous disunity. Exogenous disunity categorizes women into various roles and appearances, creating division and disunity among them. Endogenous forms of disunity pit women against each other, creating an atmosphere of competition for survival and the security of them positions. Handmaids are used as reproductive vessels to stabilise the ever-declining population of the state, thus making them Gilead's most prized possessions. However, the treatment given to them by other women, especially wives, is abhorrent. The nature of their job brings them disdain from the Wives. Handmaids unwillingly enter the homes of high-ranking officers, where they are forced into ritualized sexual encounters with the men of the house (the commanders) to bear children for their families. During these ceremonies, the Wives must partake by holding the Handmaids down on the bed while their husbands have intercourse with them. Witnessing such acts breeds hatred and resentment in the Wives towards the Handmaids. Describing Serena's mental state during the ceremony, Offred narrates, "Serena has begun to cry. I can hear her, behind my back……She is trying not to make any noise. She is trying to preserve her dignity, in front of us" (Atwood 101).

The relationship between Serena Joy and Offred exemplifies how coerced circumstances can create animosity between women who would otherwise have no personal rivalry. Under normal conditions, Serena and Offred might not have any conflict, but the oppressive system of Gilead forces them into a bitter dynamic. Serena's witnessing Offred's physical intimacy with her husband under the credence that she is the sterile one was the reason that stems her hatred for Offred. Later the story reveals that the Commander can't have children, not his wife. Despite knowing the truth, Serena's incapacity to change her situation exacerbates her frustration and resentment. Although Serena is fertile, because of the state-imposed biblical belief that a man can- not be infertile, she now depends on Offred to have a child. This enforced reliance brews competition over fertility between

them. Serena suffers from deep inner turmoil created by her resentment towards Offred and Serena's need for her.

Serena's disdain against Offred also springs from the nature of Offred's job as a handmaid. Serena does not share Gilead's high opinion of Handmaids as God's blessed creatures, women capable of procreation, but she thinks they are mere prostitutes. She disgustingly calls handmaids "Little whores, all of them" (Atwood Ch.19). Although Serena understands her husband cannot father children, she discards the possibility of engaging sexually with anyone else to fulfil her dream of motherhood because she believes adultery to be sinful and beneath her. Since she considers Offred morally inferior, Serena assumes that Offred would be willing to sleep with anyone. She shows no hesitation when she offers Offred to engage in a sexual act with their driver, Nick. Instead, she forces the Handmaid to have sex with Nick to try and produce a baby for her. This way, she not only participates in the ritualized rape of Offred by her husband but also forces her into prostitution to satisfy her maternal wishes.

A research paper published online 2018 titled "Competition, Domination and Relationships between Serena and Offred: Challenging Gilead's Rules and Patriarchy in Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale." Here, the paper's author, Charat Hildegarde, writes that Serena sees herself as a pious woman and Offred as morally corrupt. This perception, combined with the insecurity Serena feels because of Offred's capacity to reproduce, drives her to act violently and speak harshly towards her. Observing Serena's behaviour towards her, Offred says, "There is loathing in her voice as if the touch of my flesh sickens and contaminates her" (Atwood Ch.16).

Serena's hateful actions are also motivated by her desire to assert her status as a Wife, which she believes will always be higher than a handmaid's status. She continuously reminds Offred of her subordinate position. During her initial conversations with Offred, Serena says, "As for my husband. My husband. I want that to be clear. Till death do us part. It's Final" (Atwood 26).

By objectifying Offred and emphasizing her superior status, Serena adopts a masculine attitude towards her. She dehumanizes and subjugates Offred in an attempt to solidify her position. Serena had to give up her work like every other woman in Gilead. Motherhood is her only path to social advancement, so she actively participates in the culture of sexual abuse prevalent in Gilead. To achieve motherhood, she places Offred in a situation that violates even Gilead's moral codes. In Gilead's society, the state ritualizes rape but punishes with death any sexual activity by Handmaids that occurs beyond approved state-sanctioned interactions. Serena exploits Offred's maternal desires to make her sleep with Nick because she needs to protect her status as a Wife despite understanding the serious repercussions this affair would have for both women. She promises to show Offred her daughter's photo to ensure her cooperation. Offred had been separated from her child from the time the state of Gilead was established, and she desperately wanted to see her.

This manipulation—where one woman exploits another's maternal instincts to achieve her own goals is the direct result of oppressive patriarchal practices. Serena's actions highlight her insecurities, the deep divisions, and the moral compromises that force women to commit under such a regime. It is not only Serena who asserts her dominance over Offred; Offred, too, asserts her dominance and, in turn, finds ways to undermine Serena. Offred leverages her fertility against Serena's assumed infertility, mocking her as barren. While Serena finds her status as a Wife superior to Offred's, Offred emphasizes her importance as one of the few remaining fertile women in Gilead and considers herself a miracle, thus superior to Serena. Offred mocks Serena's choice to wear flowers. She ridicules her by saying, "Even at her age she still feels the urge to wreathe herself in flowers. No use for you […] you're withered. They are the genital organ of plants" (Atwood 91). Offred's remarks match the cruelty she receives from Serena.

Another example of the disunity between Serena and Offred is Offred's relationship with Commander. Despite understanding the pain of losing a husband—her marriage was nullified by Gilead's laws—Offred develops an intimacy with Serena's husband. Acknowledging the newly developed intimacy between her and the Commander, she takes a perverse pleasure in this shift of power dynamics, relishing the control it affords her: "I now had power over her, of a kind, although she did not know it. And I enjoyed that. Why pretend? I enjoyed it a lot" (Atwood 171). This behaviour goes beyond her designated role and adds another layer of betrayal and animosity between the two women. Offred often threatens Serena's position as a wife by acting beyond her deputed role as a Handmaid annexing more wariness between them. R.W. Connell's theories of gender hegemony, female masculinity, gender hierarchy, and emphasized femininity are vital to comprehend the intersection of inequality across class, gender, race, and ethnicity. Connell's theories provide a foundational framework for analyzing the hierarchy among women in Gilead, the masculine behaviour exhibited by women and the internalization of traditional gender roles that become crucial in dividing women.

The hierarchy among women in Gilead can be understood through the lens of gender hierarchy and hegemony, where specific roles are privileged over others. In Gilead, the most desirable role for a woman is that of a wife. It provides women with a husband, economic security and social status. Wives have only one duty to perform, which is to comply with the state's laws and their husbands' authority. The next most preferred role is that of an aunt. The job of an aunt offers some degree of power to women, though only over other women. Aunts are respected because their job is to train and indoctrinate handmaids. Below them are handmaids, and lowest in the hierarchy are unwomans whose jobs are either to clean radioactive waste in the colonies or prostitute in the state-sanctioned Jezebels. Women in each class try to dominate over one another. Each believes in their superiority and looks down upon the women of another class. Wives hate handmaids and despise the authority the aunts display. Aunts patronize handmaids and scorn wives for their infertility. Aunts believe that they are divinely ordained. Marthas, the servants in the

house of commanders, consider handmaids immoral. At the same time, handmaids' mock wives for their incapacity to reproduce. They also look down upon unwoman as prostitutes. Unwoman, in turn, view women of all classes, especially handmaids, as being complicit with the system and trading their freedom for security.

Each class of women exhibits intense rivalry towards another class within the gender, which exemplifies Connel's concept of female masculinity. Connell's definition of masculinity includes a social location, a set of practices and characteristics, and the repercussions of these practices on bodily experience, personality, and culture. These concepts clarify the dynamics of female disunity in Gilead. The social location of masculinity and its associated practice are unrestricted to men. The adoption of masculinity is distinctly evident in the behaviour of the aunts. They embody masculine authority by occupying and performing masculine roles and compelling women to comply with male expectations and desires. Connell explains that 'emphasized femininity' is the internalization of gender roles by females. Most of the female characters in the story have internalized the concept of traditional gender roles, regulating their behaviour within the periphery of gender norms and vehemently criticizing those women who do not abide by these beliefs, thus perpetuating the cycle of gender discrimination. Gender, as defined by Connell and expanded upon by Mimi Schippers in her research "Recovering the Feminine Other: Masculinity, Femininity, and Gender Hegemony," published in 'Springer Science', can be understood as a practice at all levels of social organization, from individual identities to large-scale institutions, through the "reproductive arena," which includes bodily structures and human reproduction processes.

In this novel, Atwood examines the creation of a matriarchal network that emerges from patriarchal practices and the role this network plays in perpetuating the subjugation of women. She delves beyond traditional forms of misogyny to explore gynocentric misogyny—the hatred of women by other women. Atwood highlights how an extreme socio-religious and militaristic setup fosters the conditions for this form of misogyny to thrive. The social order of Gilead relies on a network of matriarchy to regulate and control women. The Handmaids' training system clearly expresses this destructive matriarchy, where women are indoctrinated and conditioned by other women to uphold oppressive societal norms. At the Rachel and Leah Re-education Centers, also known as the Red Centers, the aunts indoctrinate the Handmaids into complying with Gilead's patriarchal laws. Entrusted with the critical duty of training the Handmaids, the aunts are among the most potent female agents of the patriarchal regime. Fully colluding with Gilead's male leaders, the aunts employ any means necessary to subdue and domesticate the Handmaids during their initiation. Their primary role is to instill a strict code of conduct in them. These Aunts are brutal and fanatical supporters of the regime, fervently advocating for strict moral and traditional behaviour for the Handmaids.

At the Red Centers, Handmaids are coerced into confessing their darkest secrets in public as part of their training and are shamed for it collectively by all handmaids. For

instance, Janine, one of the handmaids, unwillingly recounts her past rape and abortion, standing in front of the other Handmaids while they hurl abuses at her and blame her for the incident. This daily ritual of shaming handmaids publicly is designed to break them mentally and further push them into exclusion. The Aunts' primary objective is to crush the free spirit of the Handmaids and render them compliant. They ensure that Handmaids do not form close bonds, maintaining physical and emotional distance between them to prevent any form of solidarity. Aunts create a culture of distrust and disunity among handmaids and train them to betray one another. During their training, attempts are made to instill a distaste for their former lives. The Aunts go to great lengths to paint the pre-Gilead era as a time of degradation for women. Handmaids are forced to watch hardcore pornography depicting extreme violence and objectification of women to reinforce the narrative that women were disrespected and abused before Gilead's creation. This manipulation is meant to make the Handmaids believe that Gilead has restored their dignity and respect. However, the irony is stark: Wives and Aunts, alongside the male authorities, view the Handmaids as mere resources to sustain Gilead's population.

The state of Gilead and its people are complicit in the very objectification and subjugation they claim to oppose. Punishments for rebellion in the Red Centre are severe and used as public spectacles to terrorize the rest. When Moira's (a friend of Offred from the time before Gilead's inception) initial attempts to escape from Red Centre fail, she is subjected to a brutal beating in the academy's punishment room. In Offred's words," her legs look like lungs, they were so swollen and won't fit into her shoes" (Atwood 102). Such visuals are enough to force other handmaids into capitulation. The Aunts, who have assumed a motherly role in Gilead, are ironically the most fervent enforcers of the patriarchal agenda. They vigorously objectify women. They perceive their mission as noble and essential. They instill a distorted sense of sanctity and purpose in the Handmaids through force and psychological manipulation. They try to convince them that Gilead has elevated and given more significant meaning to their lives. The Aunts, employing physical and mental violence, force the Handmaids to internalize the belief that their bodies are vessels of a divine mission. Gilead's powerfully positioned women, either Aunts or Wives, actively enforce the same misogynistic values and practices that they insist are no longer part of their society, revealing the depths of their complicity in perpetuating the patriarchal regime.

The Handmaid's Tale illustrates the complex and painful reality of women's complicity in their subjugation within a patriarchal society. The novel depicts how women, through both active participation and passive compliance, contribute to the oppression of their gender. However, it would be overly simplistic and unfair to place the blame solely on these women. In the religious, militaristic state of Gilead, women of all classes are subjected to brutal oppression and dehumanization. Such extreme conditions trigger basic human survival instincts. In the face of constant threats to their safety and autonomy, self-preservation becomes paramount. This instinctual drive to survive often overshadows the capacity for empathy and solidarity, making it difficult for individuals to sympathize with

others. Gilead's hierarchical structure pits women against each other in a desperate struggle for survival and limited power. The Aunts, for example, enforce the regime's brutal policies because it grants them a semblance of authority and security. Similarly, the Wives, who are more privileged than the Handmaids, are also trapped in a system that devalues their humanity and makes them act out of fear and insecurity.

Margaret Atwood's narrative tells the tragic irony of internalized oppression. In social justice theory, internalized oppression is when an oppressed group accepts and internalizes the oppressive messages and methods of the oppressing group, often to their detriment. Rosenwasser

(2002) defines it as "believing, adopting, accepting, and incorporating the negative beliefs imposed by the oppressor as truth". This internalization leads the oppressed to perpetuate their subjugation by accepting and reinforcing the demeaning narratives and roles prescribed to them by the dominant group. In her study on internalized oppression, Michelle Mason asserts: Internalized oppression is the out-turn of our persecution. It would not exist without the real external oppression that shapes the social climate in which we draw breath. Once oppression has been internalized, little force is desired to keep us submissive. We carry within ourselves the pain and memories, low expectations, the fears and confusions and the negative self-images turning them into weapons with which we re-injure ourselves every day of our lives. In this study, Mason emphasizes that internalized oppression results from external oppressive forces. The book "Internalized Oppression: The Psychology of Marginalized Groups," edited by E.J.R. David, explains that internalized oppression leads to intragroup fragmentation. This fragmentation prevents group members from connecting and causes intragroup conflict. As a result, members of oppressed groups may begin to discriminate against one another and choose to emulate and identify with their oppressors. This discrimination is not surprising, as in systems where the downtrodden are consistently, aggressively, and systematically devalued and dehumanized, the oppressor becomes the model of acceptable humanity, as is evident in all classes of women in Gilead. Oppressed to emulate the oppressor comes to devalue his peers and reject his culture.

Simon De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* argues that men constructed the notion of the essentialist ideas for women and defined their identity as self-sacrificial, forgiving and loving. She believes that the patriarchal system established the myth of goddesses surrounding women not with the idea of empowering them but to impose restrictions. Unfortunately, this myth has permeated women's perception of themselves. Many reasons have been identified for women shouldering the burden of living up to this image. Most critical of them is that in a patriarchal society, the well-being of women and their power to influence others directly relates to their ability to please men in their lives. The best way to do so is by fitting into their image of a real woman. In this attempt, women renounce their individuality and frequently pressure other women to fit the model of femininity dictated by men, which destroys the solidarity and sisterhood that is possible between women.

Conclusion

Through this novel, Atwood endeavours to address the destruction of solidarity and sisterhood among women. The novel begins by highlighting the deplorable condition of women in the Christian-fundamentalist state of Gilead. She then reveals the underlying causes for women's third-class citizenship status in this society. She begins by emphasizing the role of religion, patriarchy and politics, eventually exposing the role played by women in the subversion of other women, especially by the women belonging to higher social order within the gender, such as wives and aunts. The policing of Handmaids by Aunts, the involvement of Wives in the rape of Handmaids by their husbands, and the participation of Handmaids in the moral judgment of other handmaids are deeply disturbing yet reveal the reality of Gilead. Though Atwood gives some hope to her readers by weaving the moments of budding female companionship throughout the plot, these friendships are fleeting. Atwood demonstrates that extreme marginalization of women in the power structure of Gilead makes them feel so powerless that the tiny fragments of authority given to them compel them to act against the interests of their gender. The inhumanity displayed by women is the outcome of the oppressive atmosphere that envelopes them and does not directly reflect the lack of moral virtue or the presence of natural cruelty in them. The paper concludes that in a society as brutal as Gilead, where one's existence is constantly threatened, the capacity for genuine human connection and solidarity becomes severely constrained. Contention for survival restricts the formation of genuine human connections and camaraderie. The heightened atmosphere of fear and suspicion makes it nearly impossible for women to trust each other, without which they cannot stand against their common oppressor. While exposing the complexities of human behaviour that come to the surface under extreme duress, Atwood also urges her readers to understand the broader socio-political and psychological forces at play before condemning the women of Gilead in amplifying their subordination. ■

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Breaking the Silence: Identity and Selfhood in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*

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This research article explores Jaya's quest for identity in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*. The novel examines the themes of gender inequality and the pervasive dominance of patriarchal structures, emphasizing the silence and submission often imposed on women. Through Jaya, an educated middle-class housewife, Deshpande presents a powerful portrayal of a woman's search for selfhood and individuality. The narrative captures Jaya's journey to break free from a lifelong "silence," shaped by her childhood experiences and reinforced by societal and personal constraints, offering a nuanced insight into the struggles of an ordinary woman finding her voice.

Keywords: Identity, Silence, Patriarchy, Feminism

Introduction

Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* stands as a landmark in contemporary Indian literature, delving deeply into a woman's quest for identity within a patriarchal society. The novel centres on Jaya, an educated middle-class housewife, who is forced to re-evaluate her sense of self when her husband's professional ethics come under scrutiny. As Jaya confronts the silences that have shaped her life—stemming from societal expectations, cultural norms, and her own insecurities—she embarks on an introspective journey toward self-discovery.

The novel vividly exposes the dominance of male-centric ideologies and the expectations placed on women to embody silence, submission, and sacrifice in traditional Indian society. Through Jaya, Deshpande captures the emotional, psychological, and social struggles of women conditioned to suppress their identities to preserve familial harmony. Jaya's silence becomes a poignant metaphor for the collective muting of women's voices in a culture that prioritizes conformity over individuality.

More than just one woman's story, *That Long Silence* offers a broader critique of gender inequality in a socio-cultural system that privileges men while marginalizing women. Combining incisive psychological insights with an evocative narrative, Deshpande explores the rigid constraints of gender roles and the unspoken resistance of women striving to reclaim their voices. This paper examines Jaya's journey as she breaks free from the "long silence," representing the universal struggle for identity faced by countless women balancing tradition and modernity in India.

Literature Review

Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* has been extensively studied for its incisive critique of patriarchal structures, gender inequality, and the psychological turmoil faced by women in traditional Indian society. Researchers and scholars have analysed its themes, narrative techniques, and its contribution to feminist discourse in Indian literature.

R.S. Pathak's *Patriarchal Hegemony in That Long Silence*(2000)analyses the systemic domination of women by male-centric ideologies, while J. Devika 's *Rewriting History* (2002) explores how the novel challenges traditional gender roles and the tension between individual agency and societal expectations

Jaya's quest for identity has been central to many critical analyses. In *The Concept of Identity and Self in Shashi Deshpande's Novels*(2008), Sujata A. Singh argues that Jaya's internal conflict represents the universal struggle of women searching for selfhood within oppressive socio-cultural structures. Likewise, R.K. Dhawan's *Indian Women Novelists: A Feminist Perspective*(1999) includes an analysis of *That Long Silence*, emphasizing how Jaya's introspection and self-awareness mark her journey toward self-liberation.

S. Krishna Bhatta (2011) views Jaya's silence as both internalized oppression and subtle resistance to patriarchy. Similarly, Meena Shirwadkar (2003) interprets Jaya's decision to break her silence as a powerful act of reclaiming her voice and identity.

Jasbir Jain's *Gender and Narrative Strategy in Indian Literature* examines *That Long Silence* as a critique of colonial patriarchy and its effect on women's roles, while Mala Pandurang in *Women and Identity* highlights how cultural expectations shape Jaya's identity crisis, representing postcolonial Indian womanhood.

Feminist critiques of *That Long Silence* highlight its challenge to stereotypes of passive, submissive women. Nilufer Bharucha, in *Feminism in Indian Literature*, argues that Deshpande intentionally portrays Jaya as defying conventional gender roles. Similarly, Veena Noble Dass, in *The Feminist Voice in Indian Fiction*, discusses how the novel reflects women's struggles to break free from societal constraints while balancing familial duties.

Scholars have also focused on Deshpande's narrative style. Suman Bala, in *The Art of Storytelling*, highlights how the first-person narrative offers readers deep insight into Jaya's thoughts and emotions. Anjana Appachana, in *Exploring the Female Psyche*, praises Deshpande for capturing the psychological depth of Jaya's relationships and inner turmoil with remarkable sensitivity.

Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze Jaya's quest for identity in *That Long Silence*, focusing on silence, gender roles, and selfhood. Applying feminist, psychoanalytic, and postcolonial frameworks, it examines Jaya's internal conflicts and societal pressures, positioning the novel within feminist discourse and exploring its critique of patriarchy and gender constructs.

Analysis

The title of Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* encapsulates themes of suppressed communication and the struggle for identity. Through a first-person narrative, Deshpande reveals Jaya's silent struggles, capturing her oscillation between despair and fleeting self-realization. As a housewife and a failed writer, Jaya's introspective journey during her silence reflects her effort to reclaim an identity overshadowed by 17 years of marriage and societal expectations.

At the outset of *That Long Silence*, Jaya reveals her intent to uncover her true self, shedding the facade of taciturnity that has long defined her. To achieve this, she delves into her past, navigating through memories to confront her submissive and docile persona. As noted by Satbir Kaur, Jaya embodies a feminist ethos by engaging in a quest for empowerment through self-expression, resisting the constraints imposed by male authority within the spheres of social and sexual power. Kaur further highlights Jaya's exploration of the "double colonization" of women under the combined forces of imperial and patriarchal dominance. Through this introspective journey, Jaya challenges and critiques entrenched traditions and prejudices in a male-dominated society, daring to question and subvert these longstanding structures.

Shashi Deshpande holds a distinguished position among contemporary women novelists who focus on the challenges faced by women and their search for identity. Her female protagonists often overcome their identity crises by reflecting on their childhood experiences and upbringing. Deshpande adeptly examines the tension between tradition and modernity, particularly as it pertains to women in middle-class society. Although she resists being labelled a feminist writer, her works predominantly address issues encompassing the diverse rights, aspirations, struggles, and triumphs of women, as highlighted by Arshia Sattar (1993). A significant accomplishment of her writing lies in its articulation of the muted experiences of the modern Indian middle-class housewife. While many writers have relegated women to non-entities, crafting unrealistic, sentimental romances or yielding to overt feminist ideology, Deshpande's nuanced approach offers a more authentic and profound exploration of women's lives and silences.

That Long Silence follows Jaya, an Indian housewife, as she confronts a lifetime of silence and self-denial. When her husband Mohan faces a business scandal, they relocate to their old apartment in Dadar, and Jaya begins a journey of introspection. With their children away, she reflects deeply on her life and resolves to break her silence, reclaiming her identity and voice.

Jaya was born into a liberal family, receiving a convent education that shaped her modern outlook. Despite this, she remained deeply influenced by idealized mythological figures such as Sita, Gandhari, and Maitrayee. Her father named her Jaya, meaning victory, symbolizing rebellion and courage, with the hope that she would embody these traits. However, Jaya recalls how even her liberal father suppressed her desires and emotions. In

her childhood, she freely expressed her opinions, often to the dismay of her grandmother, who regularly scolded her inquisitive nature. Her grandmother's warnings about her assertiveness reflected societal expectations, cautioning that "for everything a question, for everything a retort—what husband can be comfortable with that?"(5)

Jaya is further warned by her grandmother that "a husband is like a sheltering tree" (137) and that "the happiness of your husband and home depends entirely on you". (138) This conditioning continued into her adolescent years, often expressed through emotional outbursts and tantrums. Reflecting on her transformation, Jaya herself is baffled, noting, "I'm scared of cockroaches, lizards—almost the stereotype of a woman, nervous, incompetent, needing male help and support. But what puzzles me is this: how did I get this way? I'm sure I wasn't always like this". (76) Her father's insistence on classical music, dismissing her preference for film music as poor and cheap, marked a significant moment of suppression in her childhood. Instead of rebelling, Jaya remained silent, experiencing her first loss of identity. This incident left her deflated, leading her to suppress her emotions and feelings, a pattern that continued into adulthood.

Upon leaving her home after marriage, Jaya's father advises her to always be kind to Mohan, a directive she diligently strives to uphold. However, her first and only emotional outburst with Mohan shortly after their marriage results in prolonged silence from him. As a child, Jaya was prone to quick anger, but marriage taught her to endure her frustrations with quiet resignation. She came to understand that, for Mohan, displays of anger rendered a woman "unwomanly." Consequently, Jaya embraced silence as a means of maintaining harmony in her marital life. Despite becoming a wife and the mother of two children, she continued to exist in an illusory world, detached from the realities of her constrained existence.

At the time of her marriage, Jaya is rechristened 'Suhasini' by her husband's family, a name that symbolizes a soft, smiling, and motherly woman—one that embodies submission. This renaming confuses Jaya, prompting her to embark on a search for her true identity. The pseudonym she adopts as a writer further complicates this sense of self. Jaya rejects the name 'Suhasini' as an act of resistance against traditional expectations, but her identity remains uncertain. She is torn between the person she is, Jaya, and the persona of Suhasini, the ideal wife. Additionally, she grapples with the duality of her roles as both a writer and a wife and mother. Reflecting on her inner conflict, she states, "I was Jaya. But I had been Suhasini as well—the Suhasini who was distinct from Jaya, a soft, smiling, placid motherly woman. A woman who coped" (16). As Jaya revisits her past, she gains insight into her future, feeling suffocated by the traditional role of Sita, yet unwilling to completely relinquish either her name, Jaya or Suhasini. Ultimately, she succumbs to societal pressures, embracing her new identity as Mohan's wife, Suhasini. In her role as the ideal wife and mother, she suppresses her own emotional needs, believing that to love her husband and maintain happiness is a duty she owes both to herself and to society.

Trapped in the conventional roles of wife and mother, Jaya suppresses her existential self. Despite having a seemingly perfect life—a financially stable husband, two children (Rati and Rahul), and material comforts—she is deeply dissatisfied. The monotony and rigid routine of her existence leave her feeling disillusioned: "Worse than anything else had been the boredom of the unchanging pattern and unending monotony" (4). Her husband's inability to understand her emotions further intensifies her inner turmoil, leaving her torn and profoundly alienated from her married life.

Jaya describes her marriage as "a pair of bullocks yoked together—A man and woman married for seventeen years". (18) In this partnership, Mohan dictates the terms while Jaya silently complies. She suppresses her emotions, as her husband reminds her, "My mother never raised her voice against my father however he badly behaved to her". (83) This expectation that Jaya emulate her mother-in-law's submissiveness leaves her deeply distressed, reinforcing her lack of freedom to express herself within her own home. Upon re-evaluating her marital life, Jaya realizes that the happiness she once believed in is an illusion; she feels devoid of individuality and personal fulfilment. Her maid-servant, Jeeja, encapsulates societal expectations with the remark, "Don't forget, he keeps the kumkum on your forehead. What is a woman without that?" (53) Jaya plays the role of the stereotypical Indian wife, sacrificing her true self. While Mohan perceives his mother's silence as a sign of strength, Jaya interprets it as a manifestation of despair, highlighting the stark contrast in their perspectives.

A growing silence emerges between Jaya and Mohan, widening the emotional gap in their relationship. Jaya often responds to Mohan's questions with answers tailored to meet his expectations or please him, driven by her desire to be seen as an "ideal wife." However, she eventually resolves to break her seventeen years of silence, rejecting her role as a passive and compliant partner. Determined to assert herself as an individual, Jaya decides to remain within the family while redefining her place in it. This marks a significant transformation, as she moves beyond the restrictive roles imposed on her by patriarchal society.

Feminists focus on recognizing women as autonomous individuals, encouraging self-realization through introspection. This quest for identity is central to Shashi Deshpande's novel *That Long Silence*. Through the narrative of Jaya and Mohan, Deshpande explores the dynamics of power within a patriarchal structure, highlighting gender inequalities and the challenges faced by a woman striving to overcome her inhibitions and assert her individuality.

Jaya possesses immense talent in creative writing, but she abandons it to appease Mohan, her husband, who disapproves. For every creative writer, the urge for self-expression is vital, and suppressing it leads to suffocation and mental anguish. Jaya's imaginative story about a husband who connects with his wife only through her body is labelled by Mohan as "self-revelation" when it wins a first prize. He reacts with anger, saying, "How could you have done it? How can you reveal us? How can you reveal our lives to the world in this

way?" (144) Mohan's fear of being exposed to public scrutiny drives him to suggest she write innocuous columns like "Sita," depicting the mundane life of a middle-class housewife. Over time, Jaya conforms to Mohan's expectations, moulding her life to his desires, and in the process, she loses her sense of self and her identity. Jaya acknowledges, "It hadn't been Mohan's fault at all. It was merely a coincidence, though it had coincided with Mohan steering me toward that other kind of writing. 'I encouraged you,' he had said, and he was right. Yet, despite my attempts at self-reproach, the truth remained—Mohan hadn't compelled me to pursue that type of writing. I had chosen it willingly, fully aware of what I was doing". (148)

Inspired by feminist movements in the West, some Indian women, in their quest for liberation, strive to detach themselves entirely from their cultural roots. However, Shashi Deshpande's women protagonists seek freedom in a manner aligned with the societal framework they inhabit. This approach is neither blind submission to circumstances nor outright defiance but a thoughtful balance between conformity and non-conformity. Deshpande rejects the notion that women are merely victims, attributing their victimization to a "dependency syndrome" ingrained in their psyche. Her feminism is distinctly pro-woman without being anti-man. Jaya, the protagonist, seeks happiness and self-fulfilment within the familial structure, understanding that severing family ties would only lead to isolation and dissatisfaction.

Jaya advocates for her individuality to be acknowledged and valued equally alongside that of a man. Confident in her identity and optimistic about a shift in Mohan's perspective, she transcends cultural stereotypes. As S.P. Swain aptly notes: "The tragic predicament of Deshpande's protagonists stems from male domination in a patriarchal culture. Their silent suffering has both social and psychological dimensions. In her pursuit of identity, the Deshpande protagonist transitions from despair to hope, from self-negation to self-assertion. Her journey is a continuous struggle to achieve wholeness, completeness, and an authentic sense of selfhood" (125).

An essential phase of the novel is Jaya's friendship with Kamat, an intelligent, middle-aged widower unburdened by typical male insecurities. Kamat encourages Jaya to analyze her individuality and trust in her capabilities, helping her confront questions that had long caused her grief and regret. However, when Jaya finds Kamat dead in his flat during one of her visits, she panics and leaves the scene in silence, fearing the judgment of society. The friendship between a married woman and another man is often viewed with suspicion and disapproval, a sentiment reinforced by her grandmother's admonition that "the happiness of your husband and home entirely depends on you". (138) Overcome by the fear of social stigma and jeopardizing her marriage, Jaya abandons any further thought of Kamat. While she views herself solely as Mohan's wife, she simultaneously struggles with her inability to fully identify with him. The husband, who was meant to be "a sheltering tree" (137), fails to provide the support she seeks.

At the Dadar flat, Jaya feels abandoned when Mohan storms out in anger, leaving her to grapple with the fear of societal judgment as a discarded wife. Overwhelmed, she wanders the streets of Bombay in a daze. However, during the two nights she spends alone, Jaya experiences an emotional breakthrough, channelling her anguish into writing about her seventeen years of suppressed silence. This process brings her to the realization that being a complete woman involves more than fulfilling the roles of wife and mother—it also requires embracing her identity as a writer. She resolves to abandon the subservient role model of Sita, renouncing both her silent acquiescence and the "Sita" column. As she rejects societal norms and the image of "two bullocks yoked together," Jaya understands her intrinsic worth as an individual. She agrees with Rashmi Gaur's insight: "The haunting riddle of the ultimate purpose of a woman's life within the family can be solved when she learns to assess her worth as an individual and shuns being guided by pre-fixed norms" (179). Furthermore, Jaya recognizes her own complicity in her victimization and takes steps to reclaim her agency.

When Jaya receives the news via telegram that Mohan's office situation has been resolved and Rahul is returning, she faces the risk of once again being trapped in the confines of her marriage. However, she resolves to break her silence and no longer allow herself to be led by Mohan's expectations. She decides to pursue her writing on her own terms, no longer seeking validation from him. Her life with Mohan now seems to her like a hollow routine, an empty coexistence, a reality she acknowledges with frustration: "We lived together, but there had been emptiness between us."

Mohan's mother and his sister Vimala are also victims of the oppressive institution of marriage. Vimala suffers in silence from an ovarian tumour for a long time, never confiding in anyone, and ultimately passes away without seeking help. Similarly, Mohan's mother endures relentless childbearing, unable to stop her husband's demands. Despite her exhaustion, she continues to fulfil his wishes even while pregnant. Eventually, overwhelmed by her circumstances, she attempts an abortion without informing her husband, but tragically dies as a result.

Geeta, Jaya's sister-in-law, stands out as a somewhat different character compared to the other women in the novel. Unlike the others, she seems to dominate her husband, Dinkar. Interestingly, their marriage is a love marriage. However, when Dinkar expresses a desire to give a flat to Jaya, he hesitates, worried about how Geeta would react. If Dinkar is unable to speak openly about his decision with his wife, it raises the question of whether their love marriage can truly be considered successful. The answer, inevitably, is no.

By the end of the novel, Jaya emerges as a bold and self-assured woman who refuses to remain merely a reflection of her husband. She resolves to break the silence that has been the root cause of her suffering throughout her life. She declares, "I will have to speak, to listen; I will have to ease that silence between us" (192). Silence, in this context, represents shame, guilt, suffering, and even death. Self-expression, as Jaya recognizes, is a fundamental

human right. By breaking her silence, she writes her story and concludes, "We can always hope; without that, life would be impossible. And if there is anything I know now, it is this: life has always to be made possible". (193)

Shashi Deshpande masterfully portrays the lives of Indian middle-class women, shedding light on their struggles, frustrations, and enduring silence. In *That Long Silence*, she presents Jaya's journey as a woman caught between crumbling traditions and emerging challenges. Through introspection, Jaya reaches a point of compromise, embracing personal growth while holding hope for change in her husband, Mohan, who signals his return through a telegram.

Deshpande, as a liberal writer, advocates for balance rather than radical visions of female autonomy that marginalize men. As N. Sethuraman notes, "Deshpande never supported the radical view of 'Amazon Utopias,' female realms where men have been relegated to secondary roles. The novelist moved a step ahead of the female-dominated vision and portrayed the female psyche" (194). Jaya evolves from longing for disaster to awakening to hope, ultimately deciding to rebuild her life with newfound strength and resilience.

Conclusion

That Long Silence follows Jaya's journey from self-doubt and fear to self-discovery and affirmation. The novel examines how both men and women struggle with societal roles, focusing on Jaya's search for identity after years of silence and emotional trauma in her marriage. Jaya's evolution into a confident woman underscores the importance of self-expression for women and mutual understanding in relationships.

Shashi Deshpande presents Jaya as both an individual and a symbol of modern women challenging societal norms and patriarchal expectations. Avoiding rigid feminist ideologies, Deshpande offers a nuanced exploration of women's struggles, providing a profound reflection on their quest for identity and agency within a patriarchal society.

Significance of the Study

The study highlights the struggles of women confined by societal norms and patriarchal expectations, as portrayed through Jaya's quest for identity in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*. It emphasizes the emotional toll of enforced silence and the transformative power of self-reflection, contributing to feminist discourse on gender inequality and empowerment. By situating Jaya's journey within a broader cultural context, the study underscores the relevance. ■

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Insurgent Female Voices in Kamala Das's Poetry

Manoj Kumar Singh

Kamala Das is one of the most powerful voices of the post-colonial era. She is the first Indian woman to express her revolt against a male-dominated society. She is an image of the women of subaltern society. She ever protests against the subaltern role played by Indian women in their family and society. She treats the theme of love, sex and lust in her poetry bravely. She even shows the love-hate relationship with her husband and other men commonly. Her entire poetry, i.e. *An Introduction*, *The Freaks*, *Composition* and *The Old Playhouse* is an expression of her revolt which reveals what an Indian traditional woman conceals and then makes herself courageous to face all the restraints of the family and society as well. Her poem,*An Introduction* is related to women psyche. It is a comprehensive articulation of the distinct individual and social components. In addition to the poem, *An Introduction*, *The Freak* is a confessional poem which shows the lack of human communication, the failure man-woman relationship. Her poem, *Composition* is a poetic autobiography which is full of felicitous expression. *The Old Playhouse* is also a confessional poem. It reflects the dominance of patriarchy and her struggle against it. In fact, it is like a deserted playhouse having no life of its own. She expresses her feeling here that it is a life of confinement and chaos as well.

Keywords: Post-Colonial Era, Women Psyche, Male-Dominated Society, Subaltern, Sexual Urges, Sexual Exploitation

Introduction

Kamala Das, born on 31st March 1934 in Malabar, the coastal region of Kerala, is an Indian English poet. She is the first Hindu-religion woman to show her interest to the entire womanhood for her right and reputation in the family as well as society. Belonging to an aristocratic family, she tries her best to make all the feminist approaches to the fair-sex living in villages for their position in the family. She believes in Indian culture and tradition where women are worshipped. But she becomes rebellious when she herself is disgusted. It is none but Madhav Das, her husband, a stern man who produces disgust in her mind by narrating his sexual ventures. This behaviour takes a serious turn in her mind and she determines to play crucial roles not only against her husband but also against a male-dominated society where women have no proper place to live in. In fact, women living in

the villages have to spend a hard life under the leadership of the male members. They have to remain under the curtain of their thresh-hold by hook or by crook. They feel shattering their image in the family and society. This stream line does not give them the opportunity to heave a sigh of relief. It is Kamala Das who takes hard steps on a war-level for the welfare of the women.

Kamala Das is one of the most powerful voices of the post-colonial era. She is the first and foremost in women society to express her revolt against a male-dominated society. We find women psyche in her poem *An Introduction*, as a child girl, as a teenager, as a newly - wed wife, as lover, as an adult woman, a voice against sexual exploitation in the following lines:

> I was child,
> And later they told me I grew,
> For I became tall,
> My limbs swelled and one or two places sprouted hair
> When I asked for love, not knowing what else to ask
> For, he drew a youth of sixteen into the bedroom and closed the door.[1]
>
> Again she shows her female expression of emotional shook and says:
> He did not beat me
> But my sad-woman body felt so beaten
> The weight of my breast and womb crushed me.[2]

Love is the recurring theme of Kamala Das's poetry. She is in quest for true love but she doesn't find. Her poetry reflects her restlessness as a sensitive woman on account of a male-dominated society. She raises violently the voice against male autocracy in many of her poems. Her entire poetry is an expression of her rebel, i.e. her love-hate relationship with her husband and other men. She expresses her anger in this way:

I was in love with a husband who did not want love and it was a sweet torment to live with my face buried against his feet while he slept; mine was a crushed love, a beautiful and futile emotion.[3]

Kamala Das is a confessional poet because her poetry is a record of her personal experiences, chiefly in the sphere of marriage and sex. But more than the confessional attitude, it is the brutal frankness of her verse that shocks everyone. She writes about sexual frustration and desire of the suffocation of an arranged love-less marriage, of the futility of lust and of the shame and sorrow of not finding love after much effortsthat stalks women specially. Her marital-love is painfully expressed in many of her poems. She repines for her true love and says:

> Who can help us who have lived so long,
>
> And have failed in love?[4]

Kamala Das is determined to make her room in an anti-faminist society and so does she. She expresses the loveliness of her soul in her poetry. She feels and finds one-sided love which touches her mind in the form of frustration and frantic feeling.

Kamala Das is one of the most popular writers of Indian English literature. Most of her poems are based on her real life, the bitter experience of life. Tolerating and trying, she faces all the predicaments of the society, and ultimately she finds her female identity and dignity in the society. She says:

> …I am sinner,
> I am saint. I am the beloved and the
> Betrayed. I have no joys which are not yours, no
> Aches which are not yours. I too call myself I.[5]

Analysing the poems of Kamala Das, they seem to be pictorial and perpetual in the eyes of the readers while reciting them. Her poem, *An Introduction* is an autobiographical poem which depicts the plight of a woman like her in the family. It traces her taste of gender inequality which appears in the following lines:

> … Why not let me speak in
> Any language I like? The language I speak
> Becomes mine, its distortions, its queerness
> All mine, mine alone. It is half English, half
> Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,
> It is as human as I am human, don't
> You see? It voices my joys, my longings, my
> Hopes.[6]

Kamala Das is an ardent love-seeker. She longs for love in her conjugal life. But she becomes aloof from this imaginative attachment what she finds in the patriarchal social system is resounded in her poem *The Old Playhouse*:

> You called me wife
> I was taught to break saccharine into your tea and
> To offer at the right moment the vitamins. Cowering
> Beneath your monstrous ego I ate the magic loaf and
> Became a dwarf. I lost my will and reason, to all your
> Questions I mumbled incoherent replies.[7]

Kamala Das feels both pain and pleasure in many of her poems. When she is ignored in the world of love, she suffers thoroughly thinking that she is used only for physical satisfaction but later on, she feels pleasure when she is determined that she has to live a life of freedom where women have their own life. *The Old Playhouse* is a poem that reveals the terror of sex. Such a scene is seen in the following lines:

… All –pervasive is the male scent
Of your breath. The cut flowers in the vases have begun
To smell of human sweat. There is
No more singing, no more a dance. My mind is an old
Playhouse with all its lights put out.[8]

Being a woman of multi-dimensional thought, Kamala Das compares herself with a bird. She finds herself in a cage. She feels that she has become the victim of male libidinousness but at the same time, she wishes to fly freely from this cage. She makes up her mind for emancipation. In her poem *The Looking Glass*, one can observe the following lines:

Only be honest about your wants as
Woman. Stand nude before the glass with him
So that he sees himself the stronger one
And believes it so, and you so much more
Softer, younger, lovelier … Admit your
Admiration. Notice the perfection
Of his limbs, his eyes reddening under
The shower, the shy walk across the bathroom floor,
Dropping towels, and the jerkyway he
Urinates. All the fond details that make
Him male and your only man. Gift him all,
Gift him what makes you woman, the scent of
Long hair, the musk of sweat between the breasts,
The warm shock of menstrual blood, and all your
Endless female hungers.[9]

Another trait of Kamala Das's voice is seen in her poem *My Grandmother's House.* She is here in her nostalgic mood. She remembers her grandmother's house in Malabar where she was brought up carefully by her grandmother. In fact, her grandmother showered love and affection on her. But remembering this family home, she is sad because her grandmother is no more. She recalls her grandmother and the day she died. She also remembers her childhood and says that she was too young to read the books. These books seem to be horrible like snakes. There is silence and the snakes are crawling hither and thither in the house. She likes to visit the house to observe closely through the window or listen to the frozen air. She despairs and picks up an armful of darkness to bring it here to lie, behind her bed room. The following lines show the sight and situation she observes:

This is a house now far away where once
I received love … That woman died,
The house withdrew into silence, snakes moved
Among books I was then too young
To read, and my blood turned cold like the moon,

How often I think of going
There, to peer through blind eyes of windows or
Just listen to the frozen air,
Or in wild despair, pick an armful of
Darkness to bring it here to lie.[10]

Das' voice starts trembling when she finds her grandmother's house a deserted place. Her emotion flows in the stream of terror, thinking that there might be a dog standing there. She says:

Behind my bedroom door like a brooding
Dog … you cannot believe, darling,
Can you, that I lived in such a house and
Was proud, and loved … I who have lost
My way and beg now at strangers' doors to
Receive love, at least in small change?[11]

Analysing and illustrating the poems of Kamala Das, it appears an amazing contrast between the past and the present in *A Hot Noon in Malabar*. This poem appeared in *Summer in Calcutta.* It discloses her extreme pining for her childhood days in Calcutta. She says the past very pleasant. It was very peaceful and carefree but the present is unpleasant and unhappy. In spite of the scorching sun in summer, she enjoys to recall the city where baggers, astrologers, bangle-sellers, singers and others used to come at noon. Their arrival and making noises made the poet so pleasant but now their noise seems harsh and unpleasant for her. The strangers even come today to get their shelter from the heat of the summer noon but finding the house dark and empty, they move from there hopelessly. The following lines depict their venture and voice:

This
Is a noon for strangers with mistrust in
Their eyes, dark, silent ones who rarely speaks
At all, so that when they speak, their voices
Run wild, their jungle- voices.[12]

Being the most individualistic poet, Kamala Das maintains the moot point that she will pass her life without fear and favour. She has earned her name and fame by composing poems. She has poetry in her blood as her mother and grandfather being poets in Malayalam. Her poem namely *Summer in Calcutta*is a collection of fifty poems. Her voice, as a woman, resounds in almost all her poems. She has got reputation as a voice of Indian feminism in Indian English poetry.

Kamala Das's*Summer in Calcutta* scatters its fall-out of heat, sweat and weariness over the entire volume. She explores the origin of emasculation and tensions of her life over and over again. In her sense, Calcutta is the 'Continent of Circe' squeezed into little space

and one must confrontto understand Nirad Chaudhuri's connotation of the terms, the "anodyne" of sex and the "Hindu acedia". Love is crucified in sex, and sex pollutes itself again and again. Life is a cruel mocking bird, like the Dance of the Eunuchs:

> Long braids flying, dark eyes flashing, they danced and
> They danced, oh, they danced till they bled …
> Some beat their drums, others beat their sorry breasts
> And wailed, and writhedin vacant ecstasy. They
> Were thin in limbs and dry; like half-burnt logs from
> Funeral pyres …[13]
> Again asking about love:
> Who can
> Help us who have lived so long
> And have failed in love? The heart
> An empty cistern, waiting
> Through long hours, fills itself
> With coiling snakes of silence …[14]

Kamala Das is an image of the women of subaltern. She does not want to see such classes of women with her jaundiced eyes. She violently protests against the subaltern role played by Indian women in their family. She wants to boost up them for their enhancement in the family and society as well. Her thought for them is to uplift their position in the society. She is, undoubtedly, a woman of true stream-line for the women of such category.

To conclude, Kamala Das is considered to be a great Indian English poet. She directed the path of women poets in modern Indian English poetry. She is the representative voice of the women who find their voices subdued by the patriarchal society. She is fond of love on the one hand and there is a love-hate relationship on the other. Love and sex form the main theme in her poetry. She is, of course, a poet par excellence in delineating female sensibility throughout her poetry. ■

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Meena Kandasamy : A Dalit Militant Poet

Mustajeeb Khan

Mangesh Subhash Mohod

MeenaKandasamy has established herself as a Militant Poet in the 21st Century through her anthological works "Touch" (2006) and "Ms. Militancy" (2010). Her focus on Militant Poetical segments within Dalit Poetry emphasizes the importance of literature in advocating for social justice, particularly for marginalized communities like Dalits. Through her poetry, Kandasamy sheds light on the struggles faced by Dalit women and challenges existing narratives that often overlook their experiences.

This paper aims to explore Kandasamy's poetic anthologies "Touch" and "Ms. Militancy," which both showcase her militant approach in poetic expression.

Keywords: Dalit, Dalit Poetry, Caste, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Ambedkarites Thought, Feminism, Human Right, Hierarchical- Hegemony, Hindu-Varna System and Revolt Against Traditional Patriarchal Social Order.

Introduction:

It is already been indicated on the mindsets of the Dalits, that they have been and have had been the slaves of the hierarchies of the upper caste. Hence, they do not have the fundamental rights to thinks not even allows to utter a single word against the Traditional Hierarchical Hegemony as well Hindu Verna System, therefore the poem rebelliously omits the agony of the exploitation which was running ages together over the Dalits.

Therefore, Sambuka says through his poem,
"Through Brahmanism and Varnadharma
In the name of the deeds of the previous life
In the name of fate and destiny
And of one thousands and one pretexts
They overruled my life and commanded me
Drilled nails into my intelligence
And plotted to make me
A permanent slave to the high caste."
(Sambuka, 2016, p. 103)

Meena Kandasamy's reinterpretation of Hindu myths and ancient texts serves as a powerful tool for critiquing traditional norms that restrict women's sexuality and autonomy. Figures like Sita and Draupadi, often seen as paragons of virtue, can be re-examined through a lens that reveals their victimization within patriarchal structures. This perspective invites readers to reconsider the implications of these myths on contemporary gender dynamics and the societal expectations placed on women.

Furthermore, the unique challenges faced by Dalit women—who navigate both caste-based discrimination and gender-based violence—underscore the need for intersectional analysis in feminist discourse. By shedding light on these intersecting oppressions, the author advocates for a broader understanding of identity and rights, emphasizing the importance of autonomy and self-definition.

Throughout the work, Kandasamy not only elevates Dalit voices but also encourages a rethinking of power dynamics in literature and society. The goal is to foster a literary space where Dalit women can assert their identities and rights, ultimately contributing to a more equitable representation in the literary canon and beyond. This exploration is crucial in dismantling oppressive structures and paving the way for a more inclusive narrative that honours the experiences and struggles of all women, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds.

Meena Kandasamy's work embodies a powerful fusion of poetry and activism, establishing her as a crucial figure in contemporary literature and social justice movements in India. Her bold approach to tackling issues like caste discrimination, gender inequality, and linguistic identity nuances showcases her dedication to challenging societal norms and injustices.In her poetry, Kandasamy not only critiques oppressive caste and patriarchal structures but also reclaims narratives that have historically silenced voices like hers. Her collection "Ms. Militancy" serves as a compelling manifesto that weaves personal experiences with broader socio-political themes, urging readers and activists to take action.

She has imprudently exposed the militancy of the women and her anger what she could do and what couldn't do. Throughout the poem she has express her activism which has been disclosed through the poem called **Nailed.**

> **"**Men are afraid of any woman who makes poetry and dangerous portents.
> Unable to predict when, for what, and for whom she will open her mouth,
> unable to stich up her lips, they silence her."
> (Kandasamy, Ms Militancy, 2010, p. 37)

Kandasamy's language is both provocative and challenging, aiming to disrupt complacency and ignite resistance. She prompts a re-examination of traditional narratives, particularly those rooted in Hindu and Tamil mythology, which she reinterprets to spotlight the struggles and resilience of marginalized communities.As a "one-woman, agit-prop literary political movement," Kandasamy demonstrates how art can be a force for change. Her poetry goes

beyond mere expression; it is a strategic tool crafted to confront the status quo and mobilize collective action against systemic oppression. This unique blend of art and activism establishes her as a significant voice in the ongoing battle for social justice in India and globally.

> "Education and the idea of democracy reached many sections of the society, awakeningthe masses all over the country, as well as Dalits, Adivasis, and nomadic and criminal tribes living in and outside villages. The democratization of education enabled its spread among farmers, women and workers. The idea of the equal worth of all people was widely expressed, but social conditions did not change. There was revolutionary transformation in the lives of the nation, society and individuals due to the consciousness of such humanistic values as equality, liberty fraternity and justice. Yet, at the same time, sentiments of pain and revolt were also kindled because of dissatisfaction with an inequitable system. The literatures of the post-independence period expressed these sentiments." (Limbale, 2004, pp. 23-24)

The poem articulates a profound and critical perspective on the experiences of marginalized women, whose realities are shaped by intersecting layers of oppression—class, gender, and caste. This creates a complex landscape of suffering that often goes unrecognized or normalized in society.The normalization of violence against these women, including bodily mutilation and other forms of abuse, reflects a systemic devaluation of their lives and autonomy. Their bodies become sites of control and domination, stripped of agency and voice. This lack of recognition and agency perpetuates a cycle of suffering that is not just personal but deeply political.The invisibility of their struggles often leads to broader societal indifference, where their pain is dismissed as an inevitable aspect of life rather than a violation of their rights.

This marginalization not only silences their voices but also reinforces harmful stereotypes that further entrench their oppression. Kandasamy wrote in her anthology: Ms Militancy with the given poem she throws her anger via "A Cunning Stunt"

> cunt now becomes seat,
> abode, home, lair, nest, stable
> and he opens my legs wider
> and shoves more and shoves
> harder and I am torn apart
> to contain the meanings of
> family, race, stock and caste.
> (Kandasamy, Ms Militancy, 2010, pp. 11,12)

Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that amplifies the voices of marginalized women, challenges societal norms, and dismantles the structures that perpetuate their suffering. It is essential to create spaces where their narratives can be heard and validated,

fostering solidarity and collective action against the injustices they face. Only then can we hope to transform the prevailing narratives around their bodies and experiences from mere acceptance of suffering to a powerful assertion of rights and identity.

> Watching that breast sprout back from its roots,
> the lone woman learnt to outgrow her loss.
> When the scars no longer showed and
> the faraway sea could be smelt between her legs,
> she dissolved in a mist of after smoke.

Throughout the poem she made clearcut exposition of the male psyche and male dominance have been exposed. This poem simply does not execute the male dominance but also highlights the hierarchy of traditional patriarchal social order where women have been exploited since ages together. Therefore, Meena Kandasamy strongly revolts against Patriarchal Social Order and Simultaneously Male Dominance which also responsible to assault them on the basis gender disparity within the structure. Her poetic activism militantly revolts against traditional Patriarchal Social Order.

Conclusion:

Meena Kandasamy's poetry not only challenges male dominance but also highlights the hierarchy of the patriarchal system that has oppressed women for generations. The poetics exposes the male psyche and dominance, shedding light on the traditional patriarchal social order where women have long been exploited. She vehemently protests against this social order and the gender disparities it perpetuates through her poetic activism. ■

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Reflection of Identity in the Nature Poems of Mamang Dai: A Discussion

Subhashis Banerjee

Mamang Dai, a celebrated poet from Arunachal Pradesh, intricately weaves the themes of identity and nature in her poetry. Her works transcend simple ecological narratives, delving into the profound relationship between the environment and cultural identity. This paper explores how Dai's poetry reflects the intersections of identity, history, and nature, drawing upon the cultural heritage of her tribal community. Through an analysis of selected poems, this study examines Dai's portrayal of identity as both individual and collective, shaped by and mirrored in the natural world. Employing an eco-critical and post-colonial lens, this paper underscores the importance of nature in articulating a unique identity in Mamang Dai's works.

Keywords: Nature Poetry, Identity, Arunachal Pradesh, Eco-criticism, Post-colonial literature, Tribal culture

Introduction

Mamang Dai is one of the most prominent voices in contemporary Indian literature, celebrated for her vivid and lyrical portrayal of nature and its deep connection to the identity of her people. Born in Arunachal Pradesh, Dai's works reflect her profound engagement with the region's landscapes and its socio-cultural heritage. For Dai, nature is not merely a backdrop but an active participant in the lives of individuals and communities. This intrinsic connection between nature and identity is central to understanding her poetic oeuvre. Her poetry challenges dominant narratives and foregrounds indigenous voices, presenting a nuanced exploration of identity in a rapidly changing world.

This paper examines the reflection of identity in Mamang Dai's nature poems, focusing on how the poet uses natural imagery to explore themes of belonging, memory, and cultural continuity. Through close readings of selected poems, the paper highlights how Dai situates identity in the context of ecological and historical dimensions.

Nature as a Repository of Cultural Memory

In Mamang Dai's poetry, nature serves as a repository of cultural memory, encapsulating the history, myths, and traditions of her tribal community. For instance, in

the poem *The Voice of the Mountain*, Dai portrays the mountain as a sentient being, imbued with the wisdom of generations:

"I am the one who lives in the sky. / I am the ancient rock, the keeper of time" (Dai, *The Voice of the Mountain*).

Here, the mountain becomes a symbol of permanence and continuity, a witness to the lives and stories of the people who inhabit its slopes. The anthropomorphising of the mountain underscores its role as a custodian of collective identity, reminding readers that the environment is deeply intertwined with cultural heritage.

The use of natural imagery to preserve cultural memory is a recurring motif in Dai's poetry. Her works often reference rivers, forests, and skies as vessels of ancestral wisdom. In the poem *An Obscure Place*, Dai writes:

"The river has a soul, / it holds the stories of the lost and found" (Dai, *An Obscure Place*).

This line highlights the river's symbolic function as a keeper of stories, emphasizing the interconnectedness of natural and human histories. Through such imagery, Dai reaffirms the inseparability of identity from the natural world.

Identity as Fluid and Multifaceted

Mamang Dai's portrayal of identity challenges static and monolithic conceptions, presenting it as fluid and multifaceted. Her poetry reflects the complexities of negotiating identity in a multicultural and post-colonial context. For instance, in the poem *Small Towns and the River*, Dai juxtaposes the timelessness of nature with the transient nature of human life:

"Small towns grow with anxiety / for the future unknown" (Dai, *Small Towns and the River*).

This contrast highlights the tension between tradition and modernity, a recurring theme in Dai's exploration of identity. The small town's anxiety mirrors the struggles of individuals and communities to maintain their cultural identity amidst rapid socio-economic changes.

Furthermore, Dai's poetry often portrays identity as a dialogue between the self and the collective. In *The Balm of Time*, she writes:

"I am one and many; / my voice echoes in the hills" (Dai, *The Balm of Time*).

This line encapsulates the duality of identity—personal and communal—and its rootedness in the natural landscape. The hills, as a recurring motif, symbolize the collective memory and shared experiences that shape individual identities.

Eco-Critical Dimensions of Identity

Mamang Dai's poetry can be examined through the lens of eco-criticism, which explores the relationship between literature and the environment. Her works underscore the

symbiotic relationship between humans and nature, emphasizing the impact of ecological degradation on cultural identity. For example, in *Remembrance*, Dai laments the loss of natural landscapes and its implications for cultural memory:

"The forest whispers no more, / its silence a wound on our souls" (Dai, *Remembrance*).

The poem reflects the deep sense of loss and alienation that accompanies environmental destruction. By portraying nature as integral to identity, Dai's poetry advocates for environmental conservation as a means of preserving cultural heritage.

Additionally, Dai's eco-critical perspective challenges anthropocentric worldviews, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all living beings. In *Earth Song*, she writes:

"We are but threads in the web, / woven into the fabric of earth" (Dai, *Earth Song*).

This holistic view of existence underscores the need to recognize and respect the intrinsic value of nature, beyond its utilitarian function. Through such eco-critical reflections, Dai calls for a reimagining of identity as inclusive of ecological consciousness.

Post-Colonial Perspectives on Identity

Mamang Dai's poetry is deeply informed by her post-colonial context, reflecting the tensions between indigenous traditions and colonial legacies. Her works critique the erasure of tribal identities and histories under colonial and neo-colonial structures. In *The River of Memory*, Dai addresses the impact of historical dislocation on cultural identity:

"Borders carved by strangers / have severed the ties of kin" (Dai, *The River of Memory*).

The poem underscores the fragmentation of identity caused by arbitrary geopolitical boundaries, a legacy of colonialism. However, Dai's poetry also celebrates the resilience of indigenous cultures in reclaiming their narratives. In *The Legends of Pensam*, she writes:

"We carry the myths of our ancestors, / their voices guide us through the dark" (Dai, *The Legends of Pensam*).

Here, Dai highlights the role of storytelling in preserving and asserting cultural identity, positioning indigenous knowledge systems as vital to resisting cultural homogenization.

The Spiritual Dimension of Identity

Another significant aspect of Mamang Dai's poetry is its exploration of the spiritual dimension of identity. Her works often draw upon tribal cosmology, portraying nature as imbued with spiritual significance. In *The Sky People*, Dai writes:

"We are the children of the sky, / our spirits rise with the morning mist" (Dai, *The Sky People*).

This line reflects the spiritual interconnectedness of humans and nature, a central tenet of tribal belief systems. By invoking such imagery, Dai reaffirms the

spiritual foundations of identity, rooted in a harmonious relationship with the environment.

Dai's spiritual perspective also offers a critique of materialism and its impact on identity. In *Invocation*, she writes:

"Seek not the treasures of earth, / but the wisdom of the winds" (Dai, *Invocation*).

The poem calls for a return to spiritual values, emphasizing the importance of inner harmony over material pursuits. This spiritual dimension of identity, deeply rooted in nature, is a recurring theme in Dai's poetry.

Conclusion

Mamang Dai's poetry offers a profound exploration of identity through the lens of nature. Her works reflect the intricate interplay of cultural memory, ecological consciousness, and spiritual heritage in shaping individual and collective identities. By situating identity within the natural world, Dai challenges dominant narratives and foregrounds the voices of indigenous communities. Her poetry not only celebrates the resilience of tribal cultures but also calls for a reimagining of identity as inclusive of ecological and spiritual dimensions.

Through her evocative imagery and lyrical expressions, Mamang Dai highlights the inseparability of identity and nature, offering a powerful critique of environmental and cultural dislocation. Her works serve as a testament to the enduring connection between humans and the natural world, reminding readers of the need to preserve and honour this relationship in an increasingly fragmented world. ■

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Longing for Nature: A Comparative Study of Select English Poems and Tagore's *The Post Office*

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Abstract:

This article aims to point out how longing for Nature has been depicted in various English poems and Tagore's short play The Post Office. Marlowe,Shakespeare,Milton and Wordsworthhave written poems expressing their love for flora and fauna. Similarly, Tagore expresses his longing for nature through the character of Amal.The little boy who was compelled to remain at home, longed to visit hills, valleys and islands and to listen to the songs of the birds and chirping of the crickets. Thus, he revealed his yearning for rustic charm and nature in general. This is a comparative study.

Keywords: Longing for nature, Rustic charm, Flora and fauna, Liberation of human spirit

Introduction

In most of the English poems, one could come across the longing for nature.Milton vividly portrays the beauty of nature in his poem "L Allegro". Shakespeare reveals his love for nature in his poem "Under the Greenwood Tree". While Wordsworth celebrates it in "Up Upmy Friend,"Tagore exhorts the house-bound men to get out of the house and enjoy nature in a song found in his play Nabin.Moreover, Tagore conveys his yearning for rustic charm in his short play The Post Officethrough the character of Amal.

One can understand the longing for nature from the poem entitled"The Passionate Shepherd to his Love"written by Christopher Marlowe. He wants to visit the hills and valleys along with his lady love. Moreover, he would like to enjoy nature by seeing the rivers and listening to the songs of the birds:

Come live with me and be my love/And we will all the pleasures prove/That hills and valleys, dale and field,/And all the craggy mountains yield/There we will sit upon the rocks,/Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,/By shallow rivers to whose falls/Melodious birds sing madrigals(1-8).

Milton speaks about the pleasures of the mornings. There is something energetic and vigorous about the crowing of the cock in the morning. The lark's song, the cock's

shrill crow, the hunter's horns and other sounds pleasure the poet. He also speaks of the pleasures of the evening. People of the countryside entertain one another by narrating their adventures or exploits of the day. They also whisper stories about fairies and goblins. In the poem " L' Allegro", Milton describes the radiance of a Summer morning as follows: 'Right against the eastern gate/Where the great Sun begins his state/Robed in flames and amber light/The clouds in thousand liveries dight (59-62)'.He imagines that he will be rewarded by a vision of the divine: 'And may at last my weary age/Find out the peaceful hermitage/ The Hairy Gown and Mossy Cell,/Where I may sit and rightly spell/Of every star that heaven doth shew,/And every Herb that sips the dew (166-171)'.

Shakespeare too longs for rustic charm. He wants to lie down under the greenwood tree. He wants to listen to the sweet sounds of the birds. In his song "Under the Greenwood Tree," he invites people who want to join him: 'Under the greenwood tree/Who loves to lie with me, /And turn his merry note/Unto the sweet bird's throat,/Come hither, Come hither,/ Here shall he see/No enemy/But winter and rough weather (1-8)'.

In his poem entitled "The Tables Turned,"William Wordsworth urges the people who simply remain at home and indulge in browsing books to get out of their houses and enjoy nature as nature is the best teacher. Moreover, they should listen to the music of the linnet and the throstle:

Up! Up! my friend, and quit your books;/Orsurely, you'll grow double:/. . . . . Come hear the woodland linnet, /How sweet his music! On my life, /There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! How blithe the throstle sings! /He, too, is no mean preacher:/Come forth into the light of things, /Let nature be your teacher (1-2, 10-16).

As English poets stress the importance of nature in one's life, Tagore has also urged the house-bound men to come out of the house to enjoy nature: 'Housebound men open your doors,/ It's swinging time./ In land and water and sylvan spots/It's swinging time./ Open your doors./ Red is the laughter piled in polash , ashok./ A red drunkenness marks the morning clouds.(1-7)'.

The above cited Tagore's poem has close resemblance to Wordsworth's poem entitled "The Tables Turned" with regard to the theme.It may even be considered as an impact of the study of Wordsworth's poem on Tagore.

Tagore's play also stresses the importance of nature in human life. One could find the different expectations of the child Amal in the *The Post* Office. Amal the invalid child, who is ordered to remain within doors, has a limitless hunger for life, and The Post Office greatly exercises his imagination. He sits at the window and makes friends with the passersby, imparting to each a new zest for life.Bayapa Reddy in his article on the play *The Post Office* describes the nature of Amal:

> Amal,in The Post office, is innocent, pure and simple. He is nice little boy, imaginative, observant, full of curiosity and wonder. He would like to be a squirrel,a workman going about finding things to do, a curd seller, the king's postman, a bird and so on. He would love to fly away with the time to that land where no one knows anything.Nothing in sea or mountain or torrent shall stand in his way(10).

Amal is anxious to witness the rural and natural scenery. His longing to go out and witness nature is evident in the following dialogue:

Amal. Mayn't I be out of the courtyard at all?

Madhav. No, my dear, no.

Amal. See, there where Auntie grinds lentils, the squirrel is sitting with his tail up and with his wee hands he's picking up the broken grains of lentils and crunching them. Can't I run up there?

Madhav. No, my darling no.

Amal.Iwish I were a squirrel! it would be lovely. Uncle, why won't you let me go about?

Amal is anxious to see the natural scenery. He wanted to see the hill. Even he wanted to go beyond the hills and right away. Amal also narrates how he saw a man carrying the bamboo staff on his shoulder with a small bundle at the top, and a brass pot in his left hand, and old pair of shoes on. He was making for those hills straight across the meadow. He was searching for some job and he did not know where he was going. Amal also wanted to follow him. When he was asked what he would be if he did not find any job, he replied that he would proceed further.

Amal watched that man slowly walking on with his pair of worn-out shoes. And when he got where the water flows under the fig tree, he stopped and washed his feet in the stream. Then he took out from his bundle some gram flour moistened it with water and began to eat. Then he tied up his bundle and shouldered it again; tucked up his cloth above his knees and crossed the stream. Amal also wantedto walk on and cross so many streams, wading through water. When hearing about dairy man's description about his village Amal was thrilled. He guesses that the dairy man's village is under some very old big trees just by the side of the red road. He also states that cattle used to graze on the slope of the hill. Moreover, village women with red sarees fill their pitchers from the river and carry them on their heads. Amal also wants to sell curds in the village by the Red Road near the old banyan tree. Amal also compares the dairy man's cry to the shrill cry of kites from almost the end of the sky. He tells the watchman that he hears his gong sound when his dog sleeps with his nose in his curled up tail.

Amal meets a flower seller. He wants to gather flowers for the sake of thegirl.He would go right into the dense forest where one could not find his way. And where the honey-sipping humming-bird rocks himself on the end of the thinnest branch,he would blossom into a champa.While talking to Gaffer, Amal collects information about parrot's isle. It is a land of wonders. It is a haunt of birds. No men are there. Only birds sing and fly. There are green hills and during sunset, there will be a red glow on the hill side and the birds with their green wings go flocking to their nests. The waterfalls look like molten diamonds. They make the pebbles sing as they rush over them to the sea. Gaffer wants to build a small cabin in the island and pass his days counting the sea waves. Amal too wants to become a bird there.Thus, Tagore describes his longing for nature through the character of Amal.

Amal announces the visit of the King's postman:

> There, the king's postman coming down the hillside alone, a lantern in his left hand and on his back a bag of letters; climbing down for ever so long, for days and nights, and where at the foot of the mountain the waterfall becomes a stream he takes to the footpath on the bank and walks on through the rye; then comes the sugarcane field and he disappears into the narrow lane cutting through the tall stems of sugarcanes; then he reaches the open meadow where the cricket chirps and where there is not a single man to be seen, only the snipes wagging their tails and poking at the mud with their bills. I can feel him coming nearer and nearer and my heart becomes glad.

Edward Thompson observed: 'The Post Office is beautiful, touching, of one texture of simplicity throughout, and within its limits an almost perfect piece of art'. Even though Tagore's The Post Office has been seen as a symbolic presentation of the human spirit reaching its liberation through a communication with the great spirit beyond the ken of human recognition, one could not gainsay the fact that there is ample evidence for the longing for nature and rustic charm in it. We can even state that Amal saw God through nature.

Conclusion

Marlowe's poem focuses on the plea of a shepherd to a single individual, his love, to accompany him and enjoy the pleasures of nature. But Shakespeare invites everyone who wants to enjoy nature to join him under the greenwood tree, where they can sing freely and lead a life without any worry. Milton's poem reflects his view of nature as a central, harmonious force that enhances human happiness. He finds fields, groves, and meadows to be a source of joy, emphasising a harmonious relationship between humans and nature. Wordsworth's poem exhorts all people who are confined to their houses to come out and enjoy nature, as nature is the best teacher. Tagore too echoes Wordsworth's view in his song included in the musical play Nabin. Moreover, he reinforces his longing for nature in his play *The Post Office* through the character of Amal. Hence, it could be concluded that a deep appreciation for nature and rustic charm is a recurring theme in the works of Rabindranath Tagore and various English poets. ■

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Breaking Barriers: Disability, Identity, and Empowerment in Malini Chib's *One Little Finger*

C. Lakshmi Prasad

Abstract

One Little Finger, authored by Malini Chib presents an autobiographical account detailing a woman's encounter with cerebral palsy. This paper attempts to scrutinizethe text through the lens of disability studies, focusing on the complex interplay of identity, agency, and societal attitudes toward disability. Through an analysis of Chib's journey, the paper highlights her resilience, advocacy for inclusion, and the redefinition of empowerment within the framework of a disabled identity. Furthermore, it investigates the significance of education, familial support, and self-advocacy in influencing Chib's life experiences, while also critiquing the societal obstacles and prejudices that hinder the potential of individuals with disabilities.

Keywords: Cerebral palsy, Inclusion, Resilience, Self-advocacy. Prejudice.

Introduction: Marginal Literature, a talismanfor the oppressedbreaks the glass ceiling byshowing the audacity to bellthe cat. It challenges mainstream narratives by providing alternate perspectives influenced by class, caste, race, gender, sexuality, disability, and regional identity.Chib Chib's *One Little Finger* is a compelling illustration of Marginal Literature because it gives voice to the experiences of a differently abled person, a perspective often overlooked in mainstream narratives. It is an eye-opener, raising awareness and inspiring activism against oppression and injustice.

Chib's autobiography, *One Little Finger*, is a bold attempt to change people's perceptionsabout the disabled across the globe. Chib, a writer and disability rights activist from Kolkata, penned down her traumatic experiences to create awareness about disability issues. Born with cerebral palsy, a neurological illness that limits movement and makes it difficult to walk or perform complex tasks, she overcomes her disability with her grit and strength of mind. She has covered every aspect of her life in the memoir.Her memoir mirrors the spontaneous overflow ofher powerful feelings and emotionsas a disabled denizen.Her activities have inspired and transformed the lives of disadvantaged individuals.

Chib's memoir *One Little Finger* is a powerful narrative of living with cerebral palsy. Through her account, she provides insights into the challenges and trauma associated with physical disability in a world that is not always accommodative.Chib describes the emotional toll of these persistent restrictions. Internalized sentiments of being perceived as "different" or "less than" can lead to self-doubt and uneasiness. Chib's tenacity in the face of suffering is key to her story, as she faces not just social biases, but also her feelings of hopelessness and uncertainty.Trauma theory in disability studies investigates how trauma, both personal and social, interacts with the experience of disability, as well as how society, institutions, and attitudes might exacerbate trauma for disabled people. It combines concepts from trauma theory, which generally focuses on psychological responses to damage or violence, with disability studies' critical frameworks, which question ableism and investigate the social and political dimensions of disability.Chib experiences trauma invarious forms – physical, emotional, educational, andsocial.Disabled people frequently endure trauma as a result of medicalization, in which their bodies and ailments are seen as issues that must be "fixed" or "cured." This medical model can lead to frequent interactions with healthcare institutions that perpetuate the perception of the handicapped body as aberrant or defective. Many people find these medical contacts distressing since they involve painful procedures, intrusive treatments, or dismissive attitudes from specialists.

The novel opens with the words of an Indian doctor who is determined that Chibwill be a vegetable for the rest of her life. The paediatrician reflected, "it was a mistake I should have carried out a caesarean. . . let's see if she survives . . .I am not sure if she will survive . . . at the most 72 hours"(3). Since Indian physicians could not give her parents any hope regarding Chib's health, they relocated to London to safeguard their kid, knowing from her smiles and eyes that Chib was bright and her impairment had not harmed her brain. Chib shares her experience at school in London thus:

> I was happy at the school I went to. From my special school in Cambridge called Ascham School, I moved to a school at Cheyne Walk, Chelsea in London. Cheyne was the best special school for children from infant level to seven years. I had a fairly complex IQ text given to me by a well-known psychologist, Agatha Bowley. One of the complicated tasks involved a pole with six balls (8).

Living in a friendly atmosphere, Chib acquired the desire to study more with the assistance of Cheyne Teaching Hospital, which provided lectures to improve the abilities of the differently abled. Chib's parents and family provided an ideal atmosphere in which she could grow, develop, and pursue her ambitions and objectives. She received extra care from her mother and aunt. They constantly cared for her, encouraging her to excel intellectually: "My mother pushed me a lot, and I followed her unquestionably" (25). Her mother became her friend, philosopher, and guide.Upon returning to India, Chib's family was profoundly surprised by the persistent challenges she encountered seven years ago. Doctors in India approached Chib directly, asking whether she required a collar to support her head. They suggested that homoeopathy might be beneficial for her, but Chib struggles with basic tasks

such as holding a pencil, tying her shoelaces, undressing or dressing independently, and feeding herself.

The societal attitude towards Chibdisheartened her mother who grew reflective about the situation. It was then that the notion of establishing a model school based on her experiences in England occurred to her. Then she founded 'The Centre for Special Education,' which offers both educational and therapy services for the disabled under one roof. Dr Alur established the first model of 'The Spastic Society of India' in Bombay in 1972. This was India's first special school for children with various impairments, and it proved to be a highly effective educational programme. The Delhi Spastic Society was established in 1978. Next, in 1980, the Spastic Society of Bangalore was founded, and they went on to establish the Spastic Society of Madras. The Spastic Society was created in five major Indian cities, including Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, and Bangalore.

A major theme in the book is the trauma of exclusion from mainstream society. Chib shares her experiences of being marginalized and underestimated because of her disability. Throughout her life, she encountered people who were uncomfortable with or dismissive of her abilities, often treating her as if she lacked intelligence due to her physical condition.Chib had her bachelor's degree from St. Xavier's College in Bombay. It was a college based on inclusive education, where both normal students and students with disabilitieswereadmitted. For Chib, it was a different kind of approach to be engaged with normal students, so she worries about herself, "Would I be accepted socially? Would I be able to cope academically?" (49). Chib faced discrimination on the first day when her professor asked her name "Your names please, said the professor, turning to the person next to me. 'ChibChib' I said my name, which I know sounded completely garbled to all around me. No one understood" (51). Chib's speech became the biggest barrier and this prevented her from mingling with her peers:

> It took me a long time to come to terms with it. I began questioning myself. Did I have my personality? Was I just another disabled girl who needed things done for her? I knew that I was different and trapped in a dysfunctional body, but did others realize that I had a spirit and a mind separate from this body? My body did not work like others, but did they realize that my mind was normal? Did they consider thinking that my desires were just the same as theirs?" (54).

Chib wanted to pursue her master's degree, which was welcomed by her family. One of her aunts inquired, "Would Chib be interested in studying women's empowerment? Do you think she would feel more empowered if she pursued a master's degree in gender studies?" (130). But Chib was still unsure whether she was capable of pursuing an MA; she wondered, "Do you believe I can? I replied anxiously. Given a chance, I could only attempt; the worst-case scenario is that I am not admitted or fail" (131). There was a specific method for choosing pupils. Chib was scheduled for an interview at 4 p.m. with Professor Diana Leonard and Debbie Epstein. Finally, Chib completed a double post-

graduate degree in Gender Studies at the University of London, with a concentration on feminism and women with disabilities.

People with disabilities are sometimes perceived to lack empathy and compassion. Disabled individuals, like everyone else, desire love and sex. People with disabilities are typically ostracized and separated from the rest of society. People's opinions about the differently abled are unfavourable, and in this culture, they are seen as burdens. Nobody appreciates their emotions and sentiments. Similarly, handicapped persons, like other people, are attracted to the opposite sex, although this is rarely discussed in writing. Chib expresses this clearly in her book: "I was 21 and desired male attention. All of my girlfriends had boyfriends, and I, too, wanted one. Why couldn't I have a relationship? What was so unusual about me? I couldn't understand my emotions. Despite my crippled physique, I wished for everything normal" (98-99). She has always desired genuine love but was unable to find it. She even reveals her personal experience with her need for male companions, stating that while several boys approached her, none of them were interested in dating her.

Chib did not acquire a job in London despite finishing two master's degrees, which she believed was owing to her impairment. "I was sure, because of my condition. Most occupations need speaking, and mine was hardly the world's greatest" (183). After a few days, Chib received a phone call from her mother, and she was taken aback by what she heard. Her mother informs:

> 'Molls, I think you have a job. It's to be a Senior Event's Manager at the Oxford Bookstore in Mumbai', said Mother excitedly. What I had heard was correct.' The owner of Oxford Bookstore was very impressed with your CV and said that you are fully qualified to be an Event Manager', mother explained. Mother went on to explain about the job. I wondered how I was going to do the job with my poor speech. The more I heard, the more anxious I became (183).

Chib's one little finger assisted her in completing her daily allocated tasks. She had spoken with renowned writers and well-known individuals about their novels. Chib was aided by her friend Theresa, who assisted her with phone calls and negotiations with the writers. Chib believes that a handicapped person should have an aide. So, with the help of an assistant, handicapped persons may work to their full capacity. Chib, a handicapped lady, accepted her condition and succeeded academically. She writes "It made me believe in myself that I can be included in the mainstream of life, despite my disability. I was, for the first time, able to accept my own identity as a disabled woman, and was proud of being one" (150).

Jan Gothard in*Greater Expectations* states, "Inclusion is about the state of mind which sees people with disabilities accepted as valued, significant and worth while members of society: People who have every right to belong"(64). Chib actively fought for the rights of disabled people, participated in various organizations, and highlighted the importance of inclusivity. The slogan "Nothing about us, without us" was popularized all over the world. Chib engaged herself in the organization and began to work for disabled people:

> I had become the trustee of the organization which had 15 members on the Governing Body scrutinizing the society's function within the Charity Commissioner's Laws. I decided to review the objectives of ADAPT. I had initially started it as a recreational club for people with disabilities and able-bodied people, designed based on the PHAB Clubs in Britain (185).

The primary goal of ADAPT was to guarantee accessibility, equal opportunity, and equitable participation as outlined in the PWD. In India, the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act was passed in 1995. This statute created options for non-discrimination, accessibility, reservation, and equal opportunities. Disability studies highlight handicapped people's agency in defining their own lives, rejecting repressive systems, and forming communities. While suffering is a reality, so is the resilience and ingenuity that handicapped individuals demonstrate in navigatingan ableist culture.Crip resilience refers to how handicapped individuals fight and adapt to trauma, fostering community and solidarity through shared experiences. It rejects the notion that handicapped persons are passive victims of tragedy, and instead emphasises their power and activity. Many handicapped people see their experiences through a survival lens, highlighting their capacity to flourish despite the pain inflicted by social and medical systems.The book ends on a positive note with words of inspiration, "I am thoroughly busy. I work at AGR in Oxford. I am participating in my Empowerment Course" (190). These comments from Chib instil trust in the readers. It represents a shift away from the sympathy, charity, or medical models of disability highlighting the right paradigm of empowerment.

Conclusion:*One Little Finger* is ultimately a story of resilience and empowerment. Despite the many setbacks and struggles, Chib's journey is about finding her voice, literally and metaphorically. Her story is one of overcoming the trauma of societal neglect and personal obstacles to become a disability rights activist, author, and educator.One Little Finger reflects on the broader issues of accessibility, inclusion, and the fight for dignity faced by individuals with disabilities, making the trauma she describes both personal and universal in its resonance. Chib's narrative aligns with Marginal Literature in its portrayal of resilience in the face of systemic exclusion. Her story is one of perseverance and success, despite the societal tendency to define people by their limitations rather than their abilities. ■

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Media Trials in Indian Movies: Reading the Gaps and Fissures

Soumya Sangita Sahoo

Abstract:

Media is considered the fourth pillar of democracy and thereby it generates hope and expectations from audience and citizens at large. The role of media has surpassed the boundaries of dissemination of information alone in the current times. Media is everywhere in the current times and journalistic media has confused its role to with intrusive media which has earned the name paparazzi for this reason alone. Media in the past have been an aid to the judiciary system through their investigative journalism where cases got assistance from the media in resolving cases. They provided the clues and displayed the truth hidden in cases influenced by the use of money and power. Media in the earlier days could not be influenced by either power, money or strength. However, the role of media has undergone a transformation that leads to compromising justice for other benefits. Media has been a force that runs a popular opinion that is supported by the larger audience as a result movements are created. Such movements where the news trends as per the contemporary lingo, a single perspective is propagated. Such movements are called media trials and they have been infamous for dictating and influencing the courtroom proceedings and decisions in numerous ongoing cases. While media has been at the forefront of movements taking place, media trial is a movement that is initiated, controlled and guided by media industry. Such events store within themselves opportunities for annihilating someone's life or throwing them in prison forever. This article intends to question the role of media in evaluating an event without premediated bias or prejudice. The article will evaluate select Indian movies to understand the function and detrimental impacts of media trials.

Keywords: media, democracy, bias, judiciary, media trials

Introduction: Media is considered to be the fourth pillar of democracy. The role of media extends beyond information transmission to objective journalism where ethical dissemination of facts and information supersedes the pursuit of truth. Media plays a greater role by influencing the masses and uncovering facts through investigative journalism, it can create a celebrity and declare the end of its celebrity status as well. Indian Constitution Article No 19(a) grants freedom of free expression to all its citizens and media going against the grain, reinforces its statements and narratives on this freedom of expression. However, this freedom of expression has been mis-utilized wherever the ethics of journalism are compromised. One such infamous tag that is associated with media is known as media trial or trial by media where media equates itself with the judiciary.

Trial by media gained popularity in the late 20th century and early 21st century referring to the influence to television and newspapers on the accused reputation, declaring him guilty or innocent. In sensational cases where public access to the information is limited, the media provokes the audience by revealing sensitive facts and intricate and often manipulated details to propagate a biased point of view, thereby passing its judgment. Media trial is apolitical propaganda where the media propagates a prejudiced stance where the accused is declared innocent or guilty even before the court proceeding comes to an end and sometimes even before the proceedings begin at court. Some such cases are the 'Jessica Lal Murder Case', 'Salman Khan hit-and-run case', Nirbhaya's case and Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide case. In such cases, a simultaneous public hearing continues along with the courtroom proceedings. In contemporary situations, these trials take place vis-à-vis the digital media and the social media. Media trials on social media have been responsible for misguiding millions of people and provoking agitation.

Indian Judiciary is a democratic system that upholds its principles of imparting justice to all. Article 21 of the Indian constitution grants the right to a fair trial for all accused. The accused thereby gets the benefit of doubt until the evidence against him/her proves otherwise. Each accused gets an opportunity to represent his case before the court for a fair trial. The dual principles of 'presumption of innocence' and 'impartial judgement' ensure a fair trial for the accused/victim in any case. No external entity gets the opportunity to interfere in the courtroom proceedings.However, the past few decades have witnessed a huge surge in media trials resulting in interference with the court decisions.

Especially, after the introduction of Television Rating Points (TRPs), this dissemination of fake agendas has become more and more prevalent. Every media house wants to produce the spiciest news and facts among its viewers to win this rat run of TRPs.One popular real-lifeexampleis Rhea Chakraborty's involvement in the suicide of heractor-boyfriend Sushant Singh Rajput. Rhea was accused of being a part of a huge drug trafficking nexus and was even portrayed as an agent of this nexus who was involved in supplying drugs to her various co-stars.She became a victim of an unprecedented hate campaign. Her privacy was infringed of by displaying her chats with other individuals on national television. She was addressed with the terms such as - gold digger, murderer, witch and whatnot, even before when she was not subjected to any trial by the court.Finally, she was declared innocent of the case but by them her reputation was completely shattered.

Similar is the case of Aryan Khan arrested for procuring drugs, which could not be proved later on. However, the trauma that individuals face when they are accused on national television and digital media is beyond repair.Media trial is prejudiced propaganda in favour of or against the accused. Such trials take place via media who undertake the self-appointed duty of deciding before the judgement whether the accused is guilty or innocent. Such trials provoke tension and agitation amongst the audience and misguide them to choose a side to the case. And audience having no clue to the actual case chose to rely upon the widely circulated and telecasted stories with highest rating. This in turn

leads to the monetarisation of a regular accused (a victim) in many cases and the damage that they go through is beyond repair.Media trials or trial by the media is a catastrophic tool utilized by media due to unethical journalistic practices. This has aggravating consequences and paves way for injustice and interference with the actual courtroom proceedings.

The increasing popularity of the entertainment industry in India has led to the inculcation of a wide array of subject matter, situations, themes, genres, and characterization into their domain of representation. Films, movies, and web series seem to be grappling with diverse storylines to garner audience appreciation and economic benefits. Family-oriented themes, bildungsroman narratives, romance, horror, dark comedy to heroic themes-Indian films have all of it. Doctors, scientists, farmers, teachers, actors, and tourist guides to criminals have been protagonists in major motion movies. The recent times, especially with the rise in OTT platforms and itsno-censorship formula has unlimited potential for economic growth and experimentation with themes and content. Thereby it exposes one to scenes of obscenity, violence, vulgarity and criminal psychology,especially with web series on crime thrillers, serial killers and heist-based narratives.

Criminality, legal cases, and courtroom hearings have been the subject matter of numerous popular movies. The courtroom scene has been adapted in various scenarios giving it thrilling, suspense, tragic, or humorous undertones. Bollywood movies such as *Aitraaz(2005), Pink(2016), Jolly LLB(2013), Rustom(2015), Section 375(2019)Oh My God(2012)* are primarily based on courtroom proceeding only. While courtroom proceedings are depicted in movies, numerous undemocratic external hindrances to the judiciary are not portrayed with accuracy. Media bias and politicization of cases have also been through media trials that have not been aptly depicted in courtroom dramas.

Popular media cases and trials have been replicated in Indian movies for engaging content. Legal movies, i.e. movies having a theme around the judiciary are a regular in Bollywood and other Indian movie industries. With the rise in the OTT platforms and its consuming audience, numerous seriesand movies on criminality and criminal justice systems and its critique are mushrooming on the web. However, what is also gaining momentum in the genre of legal drama is movies, shows and series with depictions of media trials of actual legal cases popular in India. Disney+ Hotstar's popular series *Criminal Justice (part 1 and 2 and 3)* are web series based on legal court hearings. The second season is the most popular one starring Kriti Kulhari as Anuradha Chandra who is accused of stabbing her high-profile lawyer husband, Bikram Chandra. In the media, Anuradha Chandra is named a monster for attacking her husband.

Media trials pave the way for unjust and unfair trials. The media whether print, social or digital media they assume the responsibility of conducting their own trials with their hashtags, tweets, tags and boycott slogans. The mere attempt at personality sabotage itself being a legal violation of freedom of speech. Media trial can be termed as a trial

beyond the courtroom trial, its intention always malicious and insidious. Media trials where an opinion on the case already circulates in the media, renounces or denounces the accused way before the courtroom proceedings. In majority of the cases these trials function in opposition to the actual hearing and influencing and distracting the courtroom proceedings by gaining attention.

One of such movies depicting media trials and courtroom proceedings is Bollywood movie, *Aitraaz(2003)* starring Priyanka Chopra, Akshay Kumar and Kareen Kapoor. In this movie, priyanka Chopra, the ex-girlfriend and now the boss of Kumar accuses him of molestation when he denies sexual favours to her. Here even before the proceedings, Kumar loses his job and is criticised by close friends and associates. The criticism that he faces starts with the mere filing of the case and not with the judgement where he is eventually declared not guilty. The media trials depict him as a pervert without actually delving deep into the case. However, the movie ends on a happy note after the protagonist is declared innocent and he leads a happily ever-after life with his family. The repercussions of the media trial that he is subjected to and the aftermath of the case and its trauma are left unrepresented.

*Pink(2016)*movie is a backlash at anemerging violent and intolerant society that blames women for being modern and independent. This provocative courtroom drama centres around three girls accused of attacking a high-profile man belonging to a political family. While the women accuse the man of molesting the lead character played by Tapsee Punnu, he accuses them of prostitution and slut shames them for leading independent lives working in metro cities. The controversies around the case and the media trial that blames the victim, all bring about the suffering of these women. The media trial and the political influence and threats to the life of the accused, in this case a woman lead to multiple levels of ostracization for these women. This narrative also reinforces one of the fundamental ideas of our constitution that is consent of the woman.

Jolly LLB is a Hindi courtroom comedy-drama film that stars Arshad Warsi as Jagdish Tyagi, a struggling lawyer, also known as Jolly, who takes on a high-profile case that transforms his career and his personal life. He filed a PIL against a high-profile individual name Rahul Diwan who had killed 5 people sleeping on the pavement. None of the eyewitnesses agreed to give testimony in the court, however, media sensationalization of the event helped Tyagi in resolving the case. Media trials against the accused help gather evidence against him. In this case media trial comes to the aid of the case, however, the courtroom judgement seemed biased.

OMG: Oh My God! Akshay Kumar and Paresh Rawal starer movie grapples with multiple themes of religion, blind faith, and spirituality. It revolves around an atheist and a small-time businessman who owns an antique shop. When his shop gets destroyed in an earthquake, he tries to file an insurance claim, only to discover that it has been rejected because it is an “act of God”. Feeling betrayed and enraged, Kanji decides to file a lawsuit

against God and religious organisations/ temples, demanding accountability and compensation caused by the earthquake.

The entire court case involves the businessman gunning for a more rational understanding of spirituality, with a focus on empathy over superstition. The use of humour and satire in this film brilliantly explores the concept while not delving into insults or rhetoric of any kind. The media trial of Kanji bhai leads to his popularity and he also gets threats to his life for his blasphemous comments on God and religion. Here initially media trial creates an atheist out of him, and later a rationalist.

Section 375 is a Hindi courtroom drama that explores the sensitive subject of rape and the unfortunate legal complexities that compose its current status in the Indian courtroom system. It revolves around a renowned defence lawyer and a determined public prosecutor, as the format takes on the case of a young woman who accuses a popular film director of raping her during a movie shoot. As the court proceedings unfold, the film shows how lawyers use witnesses and characters to develop a story. It also deeply explores the theme of consent, shedding light on the grey areas of the concept. The film also reflects on media sensationalism and power dynamics in high-profile cases like these. The media trial on the accused lead to his losing his job as a movie director and his wife who initially supports him, later in the movie expresses her desire for divorce. At the end the accused is found innocent the victim is found All in all, the aim of Section 375 is to create a discussion around the technicalities of sexual assault and the ethical challenges faced by courts when analysing such cases with media hype built around them.

Conclusion:

Movies are built on aim of projecting ideal solutions to hopeless situations and cases. Their impact being larger and for longer time frames with major economic goals, the larger-than-life and all's well that ends well formula works fine for them. The objective here being giving a sense of conflict resolution and purposefulness to the audience so that the audience feels good and safe at the end. However, that is far from reality as media trials leave no scope for happy endings. At the heart of every legal case lies conflict and media should play a responsible role rather than being aggravating. As said by Jessica Lal's sister, Sabrina Lal, the case cost her more than her sister who was shot, it wiped out half-her family. Media is the medium between people and information. Media should play the role of the facilitator that transmits facts, knowledge and objective impressions of things. Political propaganda, politicalization of information or spreading misinformation for misguiding the audience who rely on the face of media for a glimpse of truth, are highly condemnable whether in movies or in real life. Media trials should be condemned at all costs for being a major hinderance to the delivery of justice and upkeep of the democratic spirit. Can media trials replace the role of our judiciary? Are they efficient or ethical enough to garner our attention even? We need to question ourselves when we mindlessly follow trends popularized by mediahouses, channels through hashtags, slogans and tweets without verifying their

reliability. We must keep a check on ourselves for consciously or unconsciously partaking in media trials ourselves. ■

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Shifting Paradigm of Major Literature in Perspective and Orientation of Science, History, Culture and Civilization

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The shifting paradigm of major literature reflects a dynamic evolution in the intersection of science, history, culture and civilization. As literary studies engage with interdisciplinary approaches, they increasingly draw on insights from these domains, reshaping both the content and form of literary expression. This paper aims to highlight the contrast between Christian myth of God and Satan, Good and Evil, the fall and redemption filled out with the classical vision of the universe. It attempts to highlight the paradigm shifts in perspective and orientation in science, culture, civilization and religious points of views as well thoughts of English literature tracing changes from Renaissance to the Modern age. The holistic view of transition in literary approach touched many writings of the writers of different ages of renaissance and the modern times. Changes in world view, paradigm shifts, are of momentous importance in the history of civilization and culture. The conclusion of the paper aims in the orientation of Modern literature towards a paradigm shift.

Keywords; Paradigm shift, Christian era, Myth, reunion, culture.

Introduction

Changes in world view, paradigm shifts, are of momentous importance in the history of civilization and culture. Before focussing on the palpable and noticeable symptoms of change beginning with the two world wars of the last century, it is necessary to establish the far-reaching implications of such changes in relation to history, civilization and culture in the past, specially to the Graeco-Roman and the radical Christian 'world-view' as earlier instances of 'paradigm-shift' in history, related to what this thesis focuses on. The literary sensibility one accepted as 'modern' expresses in diverse ways the paradigm-shift so notably exemplified by radical changes in perspective and orientation in science, history, culture and civilization and the 'religious' points of view.

It is one of the underlying patterns in modern philosophies of history, in Toynbee and Spengler, that such overlapping and conflicts between mutually exclusive world-views are characteristic of transition and changes in civilization and culture. The first hints of this

paper of 'falling apart' are now seen to have been witnessed at the close of the Middle Ages, in lesser or greater degrees, by Chaucer, Shakespeare, Browne – substituted by single-minded thrust of Reason from Bacon down to Newton and Locke. Art and sensibility survived the levelling down by scientific temper and rationalism, and Blake is a majestic bulwark and milestone of this co-ordination, in his vision of innocence losing to experience. But, the 9incipient questionings – whether the same God made both the Lamb and the Tiger, the Rose and the Worm, the indispensable but antithetical roles of Man and Woman to each other, underline the answer. According to all these, specifically Spengler, civilization follows culture as death follows life; Stone-cities follow mother earth; cosmopolitanism, rootlessness replaces roots in earth. 'A rose is a rose a rose is a rose' (Gertrude Stein) is all right, but a rose is not a cabbage, although both belong to vegetative growth.

In Lawrence, Yeats and Eliot, - dark woods and fecund growth represent instinctive energy that sustains culture, tradition. 'Unity of Being' achieved by these is the perfection of this thrust, 'the force that through the green fuse drives the flower' (Dylan Thomas).Spiritual culture has evolved through myths and rituals of agriculture: 'Cultivation of wild grasses and their development into cereals' has in it the process of acculturation, holding the vegetation symbol as a myth of human potential.

These are obvious symptoms of impending 'paradigm'-shift; it is remarkable that even Darwin and Frazer, regarded in their own times as promoters of the 'scientific method' and 'positivism' are potentially 'futuristic' in their correlation of 'data' relating to man's 'primitive' roots rather than propagating how far he has progressed. It is also necessary to see in Spengler's 'complete identity of results' the shift away from 'progress' and certainties of Newtonian science, towards 'uncertainty' – now a principle in modern physic; uncertainty forced on the world by the wars; uncertainty of the geological sub-structures of the earth and their effect; uncertainty about time-space, subject-object relationship in Relationship – not to mention the uncertainty about light being particles or waves : In the grand design of shifting paradigms Blake had seen the 'atoms of Democritus' in Newton's 'particle of light'.

It was as the First war ended that its effect impacted Western Civilization beyond what the unsettling questions of War Poets implied, much beyond what the Georgians, Edwardians and Imagists undertook. Imagism, of course, precipitated a core-concern with the use of language in poetry just as Forster's 'Only Connect' (*Howard's End*) as the need of a fragmented society, ethos and culture was to merge with challenges to the survival of 'connected' culture and civilization. Above all, what happened to the use and value of literature was meshed up with seminal works on Historiography. Anthropology, depth psychology, Origin and decline of cultures and civilizations. What stands out clearly in this 'convergence' of systems of thought into an implicit and overall relativity of cyclical patterns and structures is 'uncertainty' as a defining principle of order; relativity rather than exclusiveness of dimensions and categories; 'indeterminacy' of time, space, matter and energy. It is not entirely beside the point that Keats had believed the 'fruitful uncertainties' of creative mind had more potential than the philosophers' quest for exclusive 'certainties'.

Now, science itself which had no goal other than exclusive certainties sets up an 'Uncertainty' principle in a universe where Matter and Energy (Newton's Force exclusive of Mass) are interchangeable status conditioned by the critical quantum of the speed of light. $E = mc^2$ is an 'equation' of matter and energy and the determinant is 'Speed of Light'. The leading philosopher of the last century, Alfred North Whitehead, therefore defined Reality as 'Process', accepting change and movement as aspects of ultimate reality, shattering the earlier 'paradigm' of ultimate reality as changeless, unmoving and Eternal. Paradox is central to Reality, reconciling the changing and the changeless, the still and the moving.

It is necessary to take these factors into account right now, before encountering such eloquent paradoxes in modern poetry like Eliot's 'motion in stillness, stillness in motion'; Yeats' 'How can we know the dance from the dance?' or Graves' paradox of doing and being: 'Man does; woman is Incidentally, as an example of the comprehensiveness of this concern, central to contemporary experiences, there is that existentialist theme of 'being and becoming', 'being and nothingness.' Certainly, the new 'paradigm' articulated in Relativity; Spengler's and Toynbee's Cyclism in History; Jung's Collective Unconscious and its archetypes; and anthropological evidences of 'connectivity' man has always sought between 'processes' – natural, mythical, ritualistic and 'biology' of life insists on reality as process underlying all processes, unification of all fields and processes the one way of being a part of it. Quoting Spengler's insight in this regard will lead to a holistic approach and proved right in one respect. Spengler's is an outstanding piece of writing – interconnecting several fields of knowledge to project a 'whole' view of history in relation to existence-

> "I saw the present — the approaching World War – in quite another light. It was... the type of historical change of phase occurring within a great historical organism of definable compass at the point pre-ordained for it hundreds of years ago".

It is hardly surprising that the great American critic Northrop Frye starts his book on T.S. Eliot by observing: 'All modern poets are Spenglerians.' To be a Spenglerian is to perceive a consistent pattern of decline, dissociation setting in under the explosion of ideas related to progress and enlightenment ever since the Renaissance.

Arnold. J Toynbee (1889-1975) a British historian, philosopher of history, research professor at the London School of Economics and authors of myriad books insists on 'Challenge-and-Response' as a principle of cyclical change right from the origin of the universe to evolution in Nature and History focuses on human history. Toynbee does expand on Cosmos and History in his first volume, but once he sets down to history of cultures and civilizations, he runs into as many volumes as the cultures he studies. Toynbee's mass of historical evidence from prehistory to modern civilization has the historian's 'imperative' of leaving no evidence unexamined. Toynbee tracks down 'challenge and response' in all available evidence of human settlements and migrations, whether they grow into a sustained

challenge-and-response semblance of civilization, or abort themselves either because of the 'responses' overcome by hostile or insurmountable challenges such as intractable terrain, scarcity of fertile soil or rains or water as a resource for fertility or transport; excessive or scarce rainfall; forest cover not enough for supporting human survival. Obviously, river-valleys; sea-coasts; arable land favourable to agriculture; base of mountains with perennial water-resources for transport of wood from fallen trees, for flocks of animals or birds to gather for water and for humans to hunt for food; sea-coasts for cross-transporting and trading local produce: such settlements grow into community, society, fishing villages and commercial townships – with sustained support from within and from buying and selling, trade and transport. Toynbee's 12-volume *A Study of History* (Later abridged by DC Somervell), in fact, begins with a parallel between Origin of the Universe and the Origins of Civilization throughout history.

The 'Big Bang' theory of the Origins of the Universe (not entirely abandoned even today) applies to history of civilizations as well. A passive state of our cosmos was challenged by a gigantic celestial body whose gravity shattered the placidity of the sun which fractured and the pieces (planets) constituted fields of gravity around their parent body and thus began our solar system. Such big bangs like the recurring floods or drought, or upheavals in the geological structure of the earth shifting mountains, valleys and rivers are CHALLENGES on the cosmic model to which tribes, races, communities and settlements, RESPOND through migrations or regrouping – as Frazer's *The Golden Bough* amply illustrates. Availability of Water (rivers, oceans), fertile lands or forests, mountains and valleys – sometimes challenges and sometimes shelters – condition settlements or migrations of groups or communities. These are models of rise, growth and decline of human settlements or later civilizations and culture. Sir James Jeans' elucidation of 'Cyclical Universe' (expanding, contracting; condensation of energy into matter and expansion of matter into energy) and a host of other such perceptions of Space, Time, Relativity, Galactic Space by Einstein and others are not only compatible but the receding boundaries of the system Toynbee calls 'Challenge and Response'.

Toynbee's classifications of four phases are closer to man's relationship with Nature, his environment, himself and the Universe. 'Challenge-and-Response'- essence of all processes – in the universe, Nature, human community, culture and civilization, the key to renewal of processes. Four quarters of a culture-civilization cycle are -

- Primitive communities responding to local 'challenges' in terms of patterns of civic life; (1-500)
- Evolution of society, philosophy in consonance to this adaptation-to its peak at the end of the second quarter; (500-1000)
- Stabilization and organization at the peak level, civilization overtaking culture; (1000-1500)
- Decline :'time of troubles'; fissions, disintegration, dissociation, fragmentation, strife-war-dissipation

In addition to this Eliot's "The Waste Land" focuses on sterility, fragmentation of human community, loneliness, and suffering. It might even be Moses on the hill-top seeking revival of his community. It is everyone, all primitive gods who died to seek rebirth: Osiris; Dionysus; Tammuz; Dionysus. To the pattern underlined by both Spengler and Toynbee, Eliot brought the unlimited eloquence of the 'dying and reborn' gods from Frazer and the anthropologist J.L. Weston. In literature, Eliot is at the focal point of a process that includes Joyce, Yeats and several others.

It is interesting, and also imperative, to focus on aspects related to cycles of civilization and cultures. Besides the evidence of cycles of rebirth in W.B. Yeats's chapter in 'The Great Wheel' and 'Phases of the Moon', it is specifically in 'Dove or Swan' that he collates and interprets data of the cycles of classical (Annunciation of Swan-Zeus to Leda) and Christian (Annunciation of Dove to Mary) era, charting out the element of recurrence, periodicity and wondering about his sources. Joyce and his concern were very much in Eliot's mind during the writing of *The Waste Land*; he pointedly stated his heritage of the 'mythical method adumbrated by Mr. Yeats and Mr. Joyce as a way of ordering, controlling and giving shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history'.[1] In the myth of the Holy Grail used as structural base by Eliot in *The Waste Land*, the Quester's journey for the source of life. Eliot says, 'multiplying variety in a wilderness of mirrors' – hardly a quest at all. Incidentally, the same image has been employed by Yeats for man's delusions in search of truth.

Man's first establishment of an 'organic' relationship with his environment– generally, the earth – was his first step towards 'culture'. Thomas Mann, the great modern German classic, has put it succinctly in *Joseph and His Brothers*[2] that 'wild grasses and their development into cereals' was one of the earliest versions of the 'dying God' myth. Spiritual culture has evolved through taming, shaping and patterning of primordial, wildness: 'cultivation of wild grasses and their development into cereals provided the basis of agriculture as patterned cyclical growth that epiphanised into growth and regeneration in spiritual and cultural terms.

From man's roots in the earth to his sense of being a part of cosmic cycles, is one succinct line of acculturation. Agriculture is as vital to culture as towns are to civilization. The recession from civilization to primitism is amply demonstrated the works of Lawrence, Yeats, Eliot and others, compensatory to civilization receding to most artificial, stylized notions of structure and form. Spengler lamented the alienating sequence of human settlements, the split from the earth, the split of masculine and feminine – thus splitting what is basically one.

The waste barrenness in Eliot's poem is a lowest common denominator that almost all of modern literature – Forster, Joyce, Lawrence, Pound, Yeats, Eliot, Graves – seems to underscore as the malady of civilization. As for a summing up, no one could equal Spengler's sweep and penetration – Spengler's modern metropolis is characterized

by 'unfruitfulness, extinction of great art, of great courtesy, … of the great style in all things, but also quite 'carnally' in the childlessness and 'race-suicide' of the civilized and rootless strata'

The compelling pattern of 'interweave between cross-sections of reality and experience in the last century – involving major shifts of perspective in the sciences, psychology, philosophy, history, literature and literary sensibility– establish a fairly consistent transition and orientation towards a consistently holistic paradigm. It includes, by necessity, 'uncertainty' as a mode or principle or value. This, in particular, is the thrust away from what to Spengler, Toynbee, Yeats, Eliot or Joyce is the linear-progress-certainty' syndrome of the last 2000 years, highlighted specially between 1500 and 1900 by dominating line running through Bacon, Newton, Locke to the logical positivism of Comte and the drumbeat of progress by the Victorians.

'Myth' certainly prevails as the modern fabric and network of creative imagination. It is there in evidence in major creative sources like Lawrence, Joyce, Yeats, Eliot, Graves and others. 'Myth' is also the key to the network of all life seen as 'holistic', interrelated and integrated – from Frazer to Jung, Spengler, Toynbee and socio-anthropological studies; the same 'myth' that was dismissed as contrary to Reason and Logical Positivism. History has a cyclical pattern of emerging and declining forms of culture and civilization, like the annual cycle of seasons and agriculture. This 'cyclism' has been engraved in world-history through countless rises and falls of civilization and World-Views. 'Progress' is a 'one-eyed' view of conquerors and first ventures into the unknown like Phlebas the Phoenician in *The Waste Land* – 'a fortnight dead... his body picked in Whispers' by sea-currents'.

Timed with these disaster and delusions was the unmistakeable 'turning point' (Frfitzoff Capra) in history, world-view or paradigm – almost foreseen by Joyce, Eliot and Yeats and rendered in authentic personal and historical images in Eliot's *Four Quarter*. Whereas *The Waste Land* postulated the ancient Indian Upanishad paradigm of five elements – earth, water, air, fire and all containing sky; *Four Quarters* not only returns to the Western four-elements – paradigm, but to archetypal quaternary comprising full-circle; to circle-cycle paradigm; to centre-circumference paradigm (Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold' – Yeats).

The natural consequence of everything connected with science, psychology and philosophy is the radical shift to what Berkley stood for and what any 'observer' in Einstein's relativistic universe is-a point of 'consciousness' without which nothing would happen. ■

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My Proper Ground:
The Uncommon Poetry of Philip Larkin

Ashish Chettri

"To see the Summer sky is Poetry,
though never in a Book it lie
True Poems flee-" **-Emily Dickinson**

Philip Larkin (1922-1985) has often been referred to as the common man's poet. A very important member of the Movement group of poets rubbing shoulders with the likes of Davies and Hughes. But if he has been put up on a pedestal he has also been brought down, has had charges of vulgarity, misogyny and insensitivity thrown at him. Despite the changing times, the changed political atmosphere and tastes of readers Larkin has continued to be cheered not only by his loyal readers but also every new generation of readers who discover him. This paper endeavours to take up new critical writings on his works, employ a qualitative analysis with close reading of his select poems. It will try to explicate the problematic relationship of an artist, the art and the reader. Further the analysis of his poems intends to expose the freshness of his works and perchance the unabated attraction of his verse.

Keywords: productionist, metaphysics, movement, proper ground, common man.

Introduction

Philp Arthur Larkin died on 2nd December,1985 after leading what Laurence Lerner says leading, 'an uneventful life…never married, never went abroad and dislike appearing in public'. Lerner could take Larkin's own verse to testify,

Goodnight World
Your toils I flee
Send no importunate
Messengers after me
Days I resign
Nights leave to you
You will come too
Too true, too true!(CP 300).

The birth centenary has passed and we are approaching the fiftieth death anniversary, yet Philip Larkin (1922-1985) is a prominent figure in the world of English poetry of the post

1950s. Laurence Lerner himself calls Larkin later as, "the finest English poet of his time'(Lerner1). In his own time he has been acknowledged as the unofficial Poet Laureate of his nation. His poetic oeuvre are contained in four volumes - *The North Ship(1945), The Less Deceived(1955), The Whitsun Weddings(1964) and High Windows(1974)*. A librarian by profession, he also wrote novels, reviews of books and jazz, journalistic pieces and essays as also appeared on radio and television. Larkin was acclaimed as a 'canonical author'(Marsh 11) during his life time and regarded as a 'national monument'(Marsh 174). But after his death and especially after the publication of his letters edited by Anthony Thwaite and his biography penned by Andrew Motion, he has been much reviled. Overnight the 'national monument' had changed into the 'sewer under the national monument' (Osborne 15). The two comments stand for two diametrically different points of view and likewise two opposing groups of Larkin's admirers and detractors. The statements of the opposing groups can be read as exploitative bids of appropriation for their respective stand points. But that of the detractors can be understood more as constructing a wide conduit between Larkin's letters and biography and his poems, that they commit the sin of biographical fallacy might not be an understatement.

Such negative criticism, of constructing what was never there; of forcefully filling up a lack has become routine attraction rather an industry in itself. It can only be expressed as the attraction of the moth for the candle flame. But it seems that such negativity is fundamental in that as the Italian thinker Giorgio Agamben says, "all aspects of human existence stem from the fact that the human being is defined by which it but does not have"(qtd. in Murray 13). The action of the two groups and their criticism takes one straight to the genre in a *cul de sac* jostling with the poet, reader, and the critic. This problem, if one may address it as one, has risen as always from an effusion of claims that they have made on, for and from poetry to meet one's own end. This is almost an exploitative attitude. Michael Zimmerman refers to this as the '*productionist metaphysics*' that affects entire human thought and action. The German thinker Martin Heidegger tries to grasp this in his concept of *Deep history, the Geschichte and geschichtlich*. He traces this 'productionist basis' to the classical Greeks at the very beginning of Western thought, where everything was predetermined for use and mastery of humans. This appropriative thought was reinforced into Roman ones in crucial translations from the Greek, perpetuated by the medieval Christianity which gave a theological slant to this productionist basis and finally culminating in things as they stand of now(qtd. in Murray 33).

The Irish Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney in his 1989 essay *The Redress of Poetry* states that the poet, reader, and the critic all are tempted "to show the relation of poetry as an art related to our existence as citizens of society. . . and temptations to do so leads to defences and justifications"(Heaney 1). The critics would like to bring out the 'truth' despite the fact the essence cannot be reached as the French critical thinker Maurice Blanchot says, "every literary text resists in its own particular way any reduction to a single interpretation or meaning"(qtd. in Haase 33). On the other hand the common man would

like poetry to be an applied art harnessed to movements which attempt to alleviate his condition by direct action. All these stakeholders while trying to comprehend the work of art do violence to it while trying to bridge the gap of knowing, as the very word *com+prehendere* in Latin means 'to grasp'(Haase 75). As Heaney says these stakeholders rather 'hecklers' would like in other words the entire weight of poetry on their side of the scale, on behalf of their point of view(Heaney 2). In other words, the congenital exploitative and appropriative nature of humans towards everything, surfaces even in the case of poetry.

Larkin's proper ground

Following the familiar claim-trail we come to a 1954 article in *The Spectator* by its literary editor, J. D Scott titled "In The Movement". In the article he hailed the emergence of a young group of writers and also claimed for them an entire range of characteristics. The initial tribe of five grew into that of nine poets and were comfortably labelled simply as the Movement Poets (Regan 15). In reality these authors were publishing long before the advent of the article, thus it led to a chorus of denials of association from the so called tribe members. Thom Gunn can be recalled saying, "I found I was in it before I knew it existed"(qtd. in Morrison 4). Only Donald Davie the poet-critic acknowledged the existence of a consensus like Movement and his participation in it. In and around the late '50 it was again claimed that the group had ceased to exist and for one of the congenital flaws was given the growing "presence of non-human things apprehended crisply for their own sake"(qtd. in Morrison 31). Despite what critics had to say the poet Peter Levi writing the obituary states that Larkin "was a person whose poetry was admired and read both by the academics and the general reading public"(Osborne 14).

Philip Larkin lost out to cancer in 1985 resting his poetic laurels on just four slim volumes of poetry, yet Anthony Thwaite refers to, "the affection in which Larkin's readers hold him, and the remarkable sense of privilege which they feel at knowing his work. I can think of very few British or American poets whose poems are so substantially known by heart and quote" (Osborne 13). If his earlier works were influenced by W B Yeats, his later works were influenced by Auden, Hardy, and Eliot, finally becoming himself. In his The Less Deceived collection on the basis of which many consider him the best among the Movement, he is able to write about experiences without illusions about his own times-

> A serious house on serious earth it is
> ...Which he once heard was proper to grow wise in
> If only the so many dead lie around. (Complete Poems 36)

This magnificent ending of *Churchgoing* makes him rise like Wordsworth. He shows a fundamental honesty to experience a clear illusion free view of contemporary life and its problems. With a refusal to sentimentalize it comes in a recognizable colloquial idiom of the day free from pedantry.

He sets poetry free to celebrate to show in new light the ordinary happenings of daily life. A young agnostic visits an empty church-

Brewed God knows how long. Hatless I take off
My cycle clip in awkward reverence,(CP 35).

His flippant remark about "Some brass and stuff/up at the holy end" (Complete Poems 35) ends by subduing or reluctantly calling into question the epidemical scepticism.

A serious house on serious earth it is,
In whose blent air all our compulsions meet
Are recognised, and robed as destinies.
And that much never can be obsolete,
Since someone will forever be surprising
A hunger in himself to be more serious (CP 37).

In *I Remember I Remember,* a young man returning to the place where his childhood was 'unspent' recognises but refusing to sentimentalise says-

You look as if you wished the place in Hell,'
My friend said, 'judging from your face.' 'Oh well,
I suppose it's not the place's fault,' I said
'Nothing like something, happens anywhere (CP 41).

All leading to the ontological meaning of existence in *Wants*-

Beyond all this, the wish to be alone...
Beneath it all, desire of oblivion runs
Despite the artful tensions of the calendar,
The life insurance, the tabled fertility rites,
The costly aversion of the eyes from death
Beneath it all, desire of oblivion runs(CP 32).

Larkin's poetry also shows a compassionate tenderness though detached, for the suffering of others as of the rape victim in *Deceptions*-

And light, unanswerable and tall and wide,
Forbids the scar to heal, and drive
Shame out of hiding. All the unhurried day
Your mind lay open like a drawer of knives (CP41).

The image of the rape victim's mind likened to a drawer full of knives is potent despite its seeming simplicity. Margaret Thatcher is supposed to have recalled this poem as one of her favourites and especially the image, during one of her chance meetings with Larkin. The lines rise to the same traumatic height that Eliot brings about in *The Murder in the Cathedral* while describing the feigned unconsciousness of the rape victim unable to throw off the perpetrator, "nothing is possible but the shamed swoon/of those consenting to the last humiliation"(Eliot 74). Larkin exhibits sublime empathy and an almost Christ-like acceptance comes in, "Even so distant, I can taste the grief/Bitter and sharp.../ would not dare/console

you if I could"(CP 41). The care and precision brings to the fore both the 'techne' and the 'technitis' as Heidegger would say.

It is in the evocation of experiences of everyday in a language that all understood that the strength of the volume lies.

In An Arundel Tomb from "The Whitsun Weddings" collection, he writes in the real language of men but that is of urban industrialised Britain.

> Time has transfigured them into
> Untruth...
> Our almost-instinct almost true
> What will survive of us is love (CP 7).

This verse like many others commemorates the nostalgia of the end of an era, the passing away of the familiar, a shift in a way of life.

Very often Larkin's poetry has been flagged for vulgarity, coarseness and obscenity, but ironically the etymology of the word vulgar in Latin means 'common' and points to the common ordinary people. Here perchance one must keep in mind the definite politics in determining what is good and what is bad, the social genealogy of which has been brought out by Friedrich Nietzsche in his work "Beyond Good and Evil". There is also the fact that poets feel the subversive need to poke holes in the language, to suggest it's limitedness, its smugness,as stated somewhere by the bilingual Indian poet Arun Kolatkar. Be it *The Whitsun Weddings* or *High Windows, Annus Mirabilis or Vers de Societe* all put forward the fact that the use of more conventional language would sound contextually unnatural. The poem *Annus Mirabilis* from the collection *High Windows* states the euphoria over new found freedom, the sense of being free without fear of consequences due to the advent of oral contraception.

> Sexual intercourse began
> In nineteen sixty-three
> ...So Life was never better than
> In nineteen sixty-three (CP 90).

The lines proclaim with detachment, yet encapsulate the entire ballyhoo over the pill and the sexual permissiveness of the young finally acclaiming it as paradise. The 'pill' is hailed as a very important milestone in the path to freedom my feminists. With its invention the woman had a choice before her, had power in her hands, all along her biological make-up had turned into a prison, limiting her, which was now broken. The word 'began' signifies the lack of repercussions, the removal of fear and the restoration of the natural process. *This Be The Verse* from the collection *High Windows* unabashedly declares what many feel but seldom document for fear of shame and reproach.

They fuck you up, your mum and dad.
They may not mean to, but they do.
... But they were fucked up in their turn
... Man hands on misery to man.(CP 88

The angry young men and women cursing their parents for their inheritance of misery, which could be the absence of understanding, the communication vacuum, the disciplining and the rigours of conventions. But Larkin is very quick in rescuing the parents and suggesting that they too in their time had 'suffered' similarly at the hand of the previous generation. The generation gap is quickly filled up with empathy when he suggests a common bridge of suffering a solution perchance for the rupture in inter-personal relationships. Regarding this poem James Booth recalls that Larkin "had himself wryly reflected, 'this will clearly be my Lake Isle of Innisfree'"(Booth 1). This also acknowledges the fact that Yeats was a prominent influence on Larkin's poetry.

On one of the most enduring of human emotions Larkin's poetry puts forth the notion that it is not love that is at fault but the extravagant human expectation and failure to understand its real nature. The overburdening that would ultimately break the donkey's back. The speaker here is so different and philosophical than in the Shakespearean sonnet 137, "thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes".

The difficult part of love
Is being selfish enough,
Is having the blind persistence
To upset an existence
Just for your own sake.
What cheek it must take(CP112).

Or as in "Who called love conquering. When its sweet flower/So easily dries among the sour/Lanes of the living?" (CP 276) the anti-romantic hue brings it out all in sharp relief.

Another popular poem of Larkin is The Whitsun Weddings. The poem occasioned by a train journey to London along which the persona gets accosted by twelve wedding processions and newly wedded couples. Suddenly made to realise it was a day for weddings-Whitsun.

And saw it all again in different terms:
The fathers with broad belts under their suits
And seamy foreheads; mothers loud and fat;
An uncle shouting smut; and then the perms,
The nylon gloves and jewellery-substitutes,
The lemons, mauves, and the olive-ochres that
Marked off the girls unreally from the rest(CP 57).

After all that the speaker tags the weddings as, 'a happy funeral…a religious wounding' (CP 58).

Empathy for the common suffering masses is most explicit in *The Explosion* about a noon-day mine disaster. Here one might recall the processional quality of the poem and the ability to turn the commonplace to the universal. Reminiscent of Yeats', 'All changed, changed utterly/A terrible beauty is born' (Jeffares 93) from *Easter 1916*, where simple people by their participation and sacrifice in the insurrection of Easter 1916 metamorphose into immortal revolutionaries and martyrs for the cause of Ireland's freedom. An idea that reiterates in *The Card-Players* from the collection *High Windows* (1974). Similarly Larkin renders that the mine explosions by a strange quirk of fate has transformed the lives of the anonymous miners. That event rather than annihilating them presented them with immortality in the memories of the living as well as resurrection in the Christian theological sense, symbolised by the 'eggs' carried by one of the figures in the apparition.

Plain as lettering in the chapels
It was said and for a second
Wives saw men of the explosion
Larger than in life they managed
Gold as on a coin or walking
Somehow from the sun towards them
One showed the eggs unbroken. (CP 95).

The tender compassion goes out for the loss of innocence at the outbreak of war in *MCMXIV*

Never such innocence,
Never before or since,
As changed itself to past
Without a word- the men
Leaving the gardens tidy,
The thousands of marriages
Lasting a little while longer
Never such innocence again (CP 60-61).

Larkin doesn't mince words when he brings home the stark reality of wars and not just the first Great War and the lost generations. The very first and shattering casualty of war is innocence, the innocence of the youths in the trenches brainwashed by the old lie ' dulce et decorum est propatria mori' as well as the innocence of the people at home. This poem would then fall in the 'pity group' of war poetry, a group lead by the like of Wilfred Owen whose preface reads, "…I write about the pity of war, the poetry is in the pity".

In *Ambulances* from the collection *High Windows,* the poet lays an ambush for the reader with his cleverly counterintuitive comparisons, images and similes rather metaphysical conceits. His novel idea of ambulances as confessionals sets off the dominoes of ideas.

Closed like confessionals, they thread
Loud noons of cities, giving back

None of the glances they absorb.
Light glossy grey, arms on a plaque,
They come to rest at any kerb:
All streets in time are visited (CP 63).

The ambulances might not give back the glances of the onlookers but they do create a turmoil in their pool of complacency, their balance is disturbed, fear and unease is raised by the realization of their own precarity. It is more about how the onlookers feels at the sight of the"Closed like confessionals, they thread/Loud noons of cities"(CP 63-64) .

In *Afternoons* from the same collection the persona feels for the young mothers because, "Something is pushing them/To the side of their own lives"(CP 70-71). But this poem also bears the strand familiar in Larkin's poetry, "summer is fading The leaves fall in ones and twos"(CP 70), the nostalgia for the passing away of a way of life. This was possibly acutely felt by the post-empire, the post-glory generation which was one of the attractions of Larkin's verse. The contemporary nature of his poetry, the resonance on the Brexit population would suggest his continued popularity.

It seems, just now,
To be happening so very fact;
Despite all the land left free
For the first time I feel somehow
That it isn't going to last,
That before I snuff it the whole
Boiling will be bricked in
Except for the tourist parts-
First slum of Europe: a role
It won't be so hard to win
With a cast of crooks and tarts.
And that will be England gone(CP 83).

This eternal fear of the English of the loss of Englishness and England is epitomised in the above lines from *Going, Going.* Much debated is another poem *At Grass* that bears the strand. The image of a retired stallion that was once the toast of the Derby symbolically reminisces the loss of empire and all the fan-fare associated with it.

Do memories plague their ears like flies?
They shake their heads. Dusk brims the shadows.
Summer by summer all stole away,
The starting-gates, the crowds and cries-
All but the unmolesting meadows.
Almanacked, their names live; they
Have slipped their names…(CP 46).

Lerner writes Larkin, “dreaded retirement as much as he dreaded death”,(5) a fear that all and sundry from emperor to clown carefully yet unsuccessfully camouflage, as in *Aubade*

> This is a special way of being afraid
> No trick dispels. Religion used to try,
> That vast moth-eaten musical brocade
> Created to pretend we never die,
> And specious stuff that says No rational being
> Can fear a thing it will not feel, not seeing
> This is what we fear-no sight, no sound,
> No touch or taste or smell, nothing to think with,
> Nothing to love or link with,
> The anaesthetic from which none come round…
> Have always known, know that we can’t escape,
> Yet can’t escape (CP 116).

Conclusion:

. In A short History of English Literature, Pramod K Nayar says that Larkin “is a popular poet for his choice of subject matter (everyday life), style (plain) and tone (ironic, witty). The interest in what is usually uninteresting makes this poetry really different and ironically extends modernist poetry’s concern with the common life of the urban West.” (365). Yet Peter Ackroyd says that Larkin was ‘rancid and insidious and a foul mouthed bigot’ and Germaine Green dismissed him as ‘anti intellectual, racist, sexist and rotten with class-consciousness’(qtd. in Osborne 14-15).But all of it is an informed reading and poetry is almost like the Dickinsonian ‘light’ that exists only in spring. It is not everyone’s cup of tea this is a fact despite the claims of the poets or its readers. Which brings us to the Wordsworthian Gethsemane of the possibility a common mans poetry/poet.

It is precisely Larkin’s profound understanding of and deep compassion for the dilemmas of ordinary humanity makes him an authentic voice of troubled today. Millions live a supposed ‘uneventful life’ like that of Larkin, but through his verse he has plumbed the depths of such lives to illumined, to expose the ‘small gifts’ the ‘passing episodes’ that make it uncommon. David Punter accepts that, “ there was a profound affinity between the characteristic moods and tones of his poetry and the currents of feeling running through England itself in the forty years of his writing career”(6). Thus in reality, few would grudge him the narrow space between this possibility and the impossibility of a close approximation of laureate of the common man. ■

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The Importance of the *Úrîmadbhagavadgîtâ* in our Day-to-Day Life

Laxman Majhi

The *Úrîmadbhagavadgîtâ*, a profound spiritual and philosophical scripture offers timeless wisdom that transcends cultural and temporal boundaries. As a concise guide to life, it addresses the fundamental challenges of human existence by harmonizing the demands of material pursuits and spiritual growth. This research paper explores how the *Gîtâ's* teachings rooted in *dharma* (duty), *karma*(action), and *bhakti* (devotion) provide practical solutions to the complex problems of modern life. It delves into the text's universal applicability emphasizing its guidance on ethical living, stress management, leadership, and self-realization. By presenting the essence of Vedântic philosophy and the transformative power of yoga and meditation, the *Gîtâ* inspires individuals to navigate life with wisdom, resilience, and inner peace. This study highlights the *Gîtâ's* enduring relevance as a holistic framework for achieving balance, purpose, and well-being in our day-to-day lives.

Keywords:- *Úrîmadbhagavadgîtâ*, *Dharma, Karma, Bhakti, Yoga*, Self-realization, Stress management, *Vedânta*, Meditation, Ethical living, Spiritual growth, Leadership, Timeless wisdom, Life balance.

The *Úrîmadbhagavadgîtâ* stands as one of the most revered texts in Indian spiritual and philosophical literature, encapsulating the essence of the *Upanicads* and Vedic thought. Composed as a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukcetra, the *Gîtâ* transcends its immediate context to address universal human dilemmas. It is a practical guide that offers solutions for navigating the challenges of life, balancing worldly responsibilities with spiritual aspirations, and attaining inner peace amidst external turmoil.

In today's fast-paced and complex world, the teachings of the *Bhagavadgîtâ* remain profoundly relevant. Its principles of *dharma* (duty), *karma* (selfless action), and *jñâna* (knowledge) provide a roadmap for ethical living and personal growth. The text's insights into yoga, meditation, and self-realization serve as tools for stress management, emotional resilience, and spiritual fulfilment. Far beyond being a religious scripture, the *Gîtâ* is a universal manual for achieving harmony in all aspects of life.

This paper explores the practical applications of the *Gîtâ's* teachings in our day-to-day lives, focusing on its potential to inspire individuals toward a life of purpose, balance,

and well-being. By integrating its wisdom into daily practices, one can develop clarity of thought, inner strength, and a deeper connection to oneself and the world.

Transcendental Manual

Just like an instruction manual explains how to use a machine, the *Bhagavadgîtâ* acts as a guide for life. It teaches us the purpose of life, the nature of creation, how the mind and body work, and the difference between right and wrong actions.

Faith is the Foundation & Desire is the Key

In the *Bhagavad Gîtâ*:

sattvânurûpâ sarvasya úraddhâ bhavati bhârata /
úraddhâmayo'yaC puruco yo yacchraddha% sa eva sa% // [1]

Lord Krishna says, "A person is made of their faith." Faith is essential for making progress, whether in worldly knowledge or spiritual growth. To decide where to place our faith, we need clear thinking and good judgment. Having faith in God and the teachings of the scriptures helps us find answers to life's challenges and problems.

Gita Teaches - The Art of Living & Leaving

The *Gîtâ* teaches us how to live a meaningful and happy life by following Lord Krishna's teachings. By practicing this, we can find peace and joy in this world and, in the end, return to our true spiritual home, where there is no suffering, only eternal happiness.

Spiritual Beings Having a Human Experience:

We are spiritual beings having a human experience, not human beings having a spiritual experience. In *Bhagavadgîtâ*:

dehino'sminyathâ dehe kaumâraC yauvanaC jarâ /
tathâ dehântaraprâptirdhîrastatra na muhyati //[2]

Krishna explains that just as the soul is never born and never dies, our true nature is spiritual. The body is merely a temporary vessel for the soul, and our ultimate goal is to realize our spiritual essence beyond our material existence.

Part and Parcel of Krishna:

We are part and parcel of Krishna, connected to the divine essence. In *Bhagavadgîtâ*:

mamaivâCúo jîvaloke jîvabhûta% sanâtana% /
mana%cacmhânîndriyâGi prak[tisthâni karcati //[3]

Krishna declares that all living entities are His divine fragments, separated only temporarily by material nature. This connection emphasizes our inherent unity with the divine, guiding us to understand that our purpose in life is to reconnect with Him through devotion and self-realization.

Desire for Independent Enjoyment:

We came to the material world due to our desire to enjoy independently of Krishna. As stated in *Bhagavadgîtâ*:

icchâdvecasamutthena dvandvamohena bhârata /
sarvabhûtâni saCmohaC sarge yânti parantapa //[4]

Our original desire for self-centered enjoyment led us to take birth in the material world, where we are entangled in the dualities of life such as pleasure and pain, success and failure. This desire distorts our true spiritual nature and keeps us bound in the cycle of birth and death.

Influence of the Three Modes of Nature:

We struggle with our mind and senses because of the influence of the three modes of material nature goodness, passion, and ignorance.In *Bhagavadgîtâ*:

mamaivâCúo jîvaloke jîvabhûta% sanâtana% /
mana%cacmhânîndriyâGi prak[tisthâni karcati // [5]

Krishna explains how our material experiences and choices are shaped by these three modes, which influence our behaviour, thoughts, and emotions. Understanding these modes helps us gain control over our actions and strive for spiritual purity.

Laws of *Karma*:

Every action has a reaction what you give is what you get. Our actions can be categorized into *Karma* (right actions), *Vikarma* (wrong actions), and *Akarma* (inaction). In *Bhagavadgîtâ*:

karmaGo hyapi boddhavyaC boddhavyaC ca vikarmaGa% /
akarmaGaœca boddhavyaC gahanâ karmaGo gati% // 6

Krishna teaches that every action has consequences, either binding us to the material world or liberating us through selfless service. The laws of karma emphasize personal responsibility and the importance of living with integrity and righteousness.

Reincarnation:

While the body may die, the soul continues to take on new bodies to fulfil its desires. As Krishna explains in *Bhagavadgîtâ*:

dehino'sminyathâ dehe kaumâraC yauvanaC jarâ /
tathâ dehântaraprâptirdhîrastatra na muhyati //[7]

The soul is eternal and only the body perishes. Reincarnation is the process by which the soul assumes new bodies to experience the outcomes of its previous actions, until it attains liberation by realizing its divine nature.

Controlled Mind:

A calm and disciplined mind becomes the soul's best friend. In *Bhagavadgîtâ*:

uddharedâtmanâ"tmânaC nâtmânamavasâdayet /
âtmaiva hyâtmano bandhurâtmaiva ripurâtmana% //[8]

Krishna teaches that self-control, particularly over the mind, is crucial for spiritual progress. A controlled mind is free from distractions and desires, allowing the soul to focus on its true purpose and achieve inner peace and self-realization.

Victory over Death:

We must realize that true death doesn't come until we have lived our full purpose. Krishna guides Arjuna in *Bhagavadgîtâ*:

tecâmahaC samuddhartâ m[tyusaCsârasâgarât /
bhavâmi nacirâtpârtha mayyâveúitacetasâm //[9]

Helping him understand that death is merely a transition, and the soul is eternal. True death occurs only when we have completed our spiritual journey, fulfilling the purpose of life by connecting with the divine and attaining self-realization.

The Lord is Our Supreme Father:

God is our eternal father, loving us unconditionally, even when we reject or deny Him. In *Bhagavadgîtâ*:

sarvayonicu kaunteya mûrtaya% sambhavanti yâ% /
tâsâC brahma mahadyonirahaC bîjaprada% pitâ //[10]

Krishna reveals that He is the Supreme Father of all living beings, showing us that no matter how far we stray from Him, His love for us remains constant. This understanding helps cultivate humility, devotion, and a sense of divine protection.

Placing Krishna at the Center:

Make Krishna the focus of your life, guiding your actions and thoughts. The *Bhagavadgîtâ* encourages us to place Krishna at the center of all our endeavors. By aligning our actions with His divine will, we can live a life of purpose and meaning, free from ego and attachment, and remain steadfast in our spiritual journey.

Always Remember Krishna:

Keep Krishna in your heart and thoughts at all times and never forget Him. In *Bhagavadgîtâ*:
manmanâ bhava madbhakto madyâjî mâC namaskuru /
mâmevaicyasi satyaC te pratijâne priyo'si me //[11]

Krishna advises Arjuna to always remember Him, surrender to Him, and make Him the focus of all thoughts and actions. By doing so, we can cultivate a deep spiritual connection and experience inner peace, joy, and divine love.

Regaining Clarity and Resolve through Divine Guidance

In *Bhagavadgîtâ*:

nacmo moha% sm[tirlabdhâ tvatprasâdânmayâcyuta /
sthito'smi gatasandeha% karicye vacanaC tava //[12]

Arjuna expresses that, through Lord Krishna's mercy, his confusion and doubt have been dispelled. He regains clarity and is now firm in his resolve, ready to follow Krishna's guidance and act according to His instructions. This passage highlights the transformative power of spiritual insight and surrender, leading to mental clarity and decisive action.

Practical Application of the Gita in Our Lives:

Knowledge (*Jñâna*) becomes true wisdom (*Vijñâna*) only when we apply it in our lives. If we don't practice what we learn, it's of no use, just like not taking medicine after a doctor prescribes it. In the verse of *Bhagavadgîtâ*:

jñânaC te'haC savijñânamidaC vakcyâmyaúecata% /
yajjñâtvâ neha bhûyo'nyajjñâtavyamavaúicyate //[13]

Lord Krishna says, "I will explain to you fully both the knowledge (*Jñâna*) and the wisdom (*Vijñâna*). Once you know this, there is nothing more to be known." This means that true understanding comes from practicing and realizing the knowledge, not just learning it.

Krishna spoke the *Bhagavad-Gita* to Arjuna to show that this timeless message is not only for those who renounce the world, but also for householders who have family and social responsibilities. Even those with occupations can apply the teachings of the Gita in their lives. It guides individuals who are confused about how to properly perform their duties while also pursuing the ultimate goal of life self-realization and love for God, or Krishna *Prema*. The *Bhagavadgîtâ*teaches us how to balance our worldly responsibilities with our spiritual journey.

Conclusion

The *Úrîmadbhagavadgîtâ* offers profound insights that are not limited to a specific group but are universally applicable to all aspects of life. It provides timeless wisdom that helps individuals navigate the complexities of daily living, whether they are renunciates or householders with family and social responsibilities. By emphasizing the practical application of knowledge, the *Gîtâ* teaches us how to integrate spiritual principles with our worldly duties. Its teachings on duty (*dharma*), selfless action (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), and self-realization serve as a guiding light for finding balance, purpose, and peace. Ultimately, the *Bhagavadgîtâ* helps us pursue the highest goal of life self-realization and love for God while successfully fulfilling our everyday roles and responsibilities. By living according to its teachings, we can lead a meaningful, purposeful, and harmonious life, both in the material world and in our spiritual journey. ■

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Linguistic Imperialism and the Globalization of English: A Post-Colonial Perspective

Dnyaneshwar Valmiki Dalavi

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The dominance of English as a global language is a legacy of colonialism that continues to influence cultural, educational, and political systems in the post-colonial world. This phenomenon, known as linguistic imperialism, involves the marginalization of indigenous languages and the imposition of English as a superior form of communication. As globalization accelerates, the spread of English further reinforces existing power structures, embedding Western ideologies and values within non-Western societies. Through a post-colonial lens, this paper examines the historical roots and contemporary consequences of the globalization of English, focusing on its impact on linguistic diversity and cultural identity. Additionally, it discusses the resistance movements that seek to reclaim linguistic heritage in an increasingly Anglicized world. By highlighting the ongoing struggle between linguistic dominance and cultural preservation, this study aims to shed light on the complexities of language, power, and identity in the post-colonial context.

Keywords: Imperialism, Globalisation, linguistic diversity, western Ideologies.

Introduction

The spread of the English language across the globe is one of the most significant consequences of colonialism, yet its pervasive influence continues to shape cultural, political, and educational systems even in the post-colonial era. Linguistic imperialism, a term coined by Robert Phillipson, refers to the dominance of one language over others, often resulting in the marginalization of indigenous languages and cultures. In the context of globalization, English has emerged as the dominant global lingua franca, a language of power, opportunity, and economic advantage. However, this widespread adoption comes at a cost.

From a post-colonial perspective, the dominance of English is not just a neutral tool of communication, but a continuation of colonial hegemony, where Western values, ideologies, and worldviews are embedded and reinforced through language. The expansion of English as a global language raises important questions about linguistic diversity, cultural

identity, and power dynamics in formerly colonized nations. Many of these nations still grapple with the imposition of English in education, governance, and international relations, often at the expense of their native languages and traditions.

This paper explores the concept of linguistic imperialism through the lens of post-colonial theory, examining how the globalization of English perpetuates inequalities and cultural erasure. It also seeks to highlight the resistance against this linguistic dominance, as many nations and communities work to preserve and promote their linguistic heritage amidst the overwhelming tide of English-language globalization.

Literature Review

1. Ernest Joseph M. Garcia's(2021) work on postcolonialism critically examines the legacy of colonialism and its human consequences. By analysing the history, culture, and discourse shaped by imperial powers, the text highlights how postcolonial theory questions universal claims based on Western norms. The study also emphasizes the reciprocal impact between colonizers and the colonized, illustrating how colonial encounters have influenced both parties, such as European adoption of elements from colonized cultures. Garcia's discussion connects postcolonial theory to broader struggles for racial and ethnic equality globally.
2. The bibliometric study by Mushtaq et al. offers a comprehensive analysis of the postcolonialism genre in literary theory from 1900 to 2017. By evaluating 1,404 documents from the ISI Web of Science database, the study identifies trends in publication productivity, most-cited works, and prominent authors. The findings reveal that 2016 was the peak year for postcolonialism publications, with citations seeing a notable rise from 2007 onwards. The *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* emerged as a key source, and Sidway J.D. was identified as the most prolific author. The study provides valuable insights for researchers in literary theory and highlights the dominance of research articles in postcolonial scholarship.
3. Dr. Datta G. Sawant's paper examines postcolonial theory through the perspectives of key figures such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha. The study delves into the roots, development, and critical aspects of postcolonial theory, particularly within the Indian context. Sawant discusses the lasting influence of British colonialism in countries where institutions, culture, and norms were imposed by force, such as India. The paper highlights the complexity of postcolonialism, framing it not only as a political shift but as a deeper cultural and ideological transformation. By referencing scholars like Hans Bertans, Sawant emphasizes the significance of postcolonial studies in global literary, cultural, and historical inquiries, suggesting that postcolonialism has expanded into a broad and influential field.
4. Shovana Ray's paper investigates the evolution of Indian national identity post-independence, drawing on Miller's theoretical framework. Ray identifies key cultural,

territorial, economic, and political elements that have shaped the Indian identity, while also considering the psychological transformation of Indians over centuries of colonization and foreign rule. The concept of *jugaad*, or innovation under constraints, is highlighted as a key trait in the Indian psyche. The paper traces India's journey from a feudal society to a democratic nation, illustrating how traditions coexist with modernity, influencing India's national character in the 21st century. The study applies Miller's propositions to analyse the unique development of Indian national identity in the context of its complex history.

5. SantoshDoipude and Mallikarjun M. Maradi's study critically examines the challenges and issues related to nationalism and national integration in India. The paper explores how India's vast diversity—encompassing race, language, religion, caste, and more—poses both opportunities and obstacles for national unity. Drawing on Anthony H. Birch's argument regarding cultural pluralism and self-governance, the authors address how increasing ethnic diversity complicates integration efforts. The study employs a causal research approach to investigate the tensions between the ideals of unity and secularism in the face of growing regional and cultural identities, offering a nuanced analysis of India's struggle with nationalism and integration in the contemporary era.

6. Pratap Bhanu Mehta's article critically explores the intersection of Hindu nationalism and democracy in India, highlighting how Hindu nationalism, while emerging from democratic structures, ultimately seeks to undermine them. Mehta discusses key concepts such as the distinction between *Hindu Rashtra* and *Hindu Rajya*, and examines the interplay between caste and Hindu nationalism. The paper argues that the authoritarian tendencies within Hindu nationalism erode democratic values and contribute to a broader corrosion of social and political principles. Rather than focusing on the rise of Hindu nationalism, Mehta reflects on how its ideology operates at multiple levels, impacting both governance and social cohesion.

Research Gap

The existing body of literature on postcolonial theory, nationalism, and identity in India has provided valuable insights into the historical, cultural, and political dimensions of these subjects. Studies such as Garcia's (2021) have emphasized the legacy of colonialism and its global human consequences, while others like Sawant (2021) have explored the critical theories of postcolonial scholars such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha within the Indian context. Research on Indian national identity, such as Ray's (2021), has addressed the evolution of cultural and psychological transformation post-independence, and Doipude and Maradi's (2021) work has critically examined the challenges of national integration in India's diverse society. Despite the depth of these studies, there remains a significant research gap in understanding the intersectionality of postcolonial theory with modern nationalism in India, particularly in the context of emerging political ideologies like Hindu nationalism. Mehta's (2021) exploration of the relationship between Hindu

nationalism and democracy addresses key issues but leaves room for further research on how these ideologies interact with global postcolonial struggles and the preservation of India's secularism. Additionally, while previous studies have largely focused on the historical impact of colonialism and national identity, there is a lack of research on the role of linguistic imperialism in shaping postcolonial national identities and the influence of Western hegemonic languages like English in perpetuating neo-colonial power dynamics. This gap calls for more interdisciplinary research that ties postcolonial theory, nationalism, and linguistic hegemony together, providing a deeper understanding of the socio-political and cultural transformations in contemporary India.

Objectives

1. **Analyse Language Dynamics**: To explore how English functions as a linguistic medium in post-colonial societies and the complexities of its role in shaping cultural identity.
2. **Investigate Identity Formation**: To examine how the use of English contributes to identity formation among individuals and communities in post-colonial contexts.
3. **Assess Power Relations**: To analyse the power dynamics associated with English language use, including its influence on social hierarchies, access to education, and economic opportunities.
4. **Explore Linguistic Hybridity**: To investigate the phenomenon of linguistic hybridity, including the incorporation of local languages and dialects into English, and how this reflects cultural resistance and adaptation.
5. **Evaluate Educational Implications**: To assess the impact of English language education policies on linguistic diversity and identity in post-colonial societies.
6. **Critique Cultural Imperialism**: To critique the notion of cultural imperialism associated with the dominance of English and explore efforts to reclaim and recontextualize the language in local settings.
7. **Examine Literature and Expression**: To analyse how post-colonial literature employs English as a means of expression and a tool for challenging colonial narratives and power structures.
8. **Identify Future Directions**: To explore the future trajectory of English in post-colonial societies, including the potential for evolving linguistic identities and the role of technology in language use.

Language Dynamics in Post-Colonial Societies

In post-colonial societies, language dynamics illustrate the complex relationship between linguistic identity, power structures, and cultural resilience. English, a language inherited from the colonial era, continues to play a prominent role as a global medium of communication while simultaneously acting as a reminder of past subjugation and

domination. For many, mastering English is tied to socio-economic advancement, educational access, and international opportunities, but this comes at the cost of marginalizing native languages and traditions.

At the same time, these societies have created dynamic linguistic landscapes where local languages interact with English to produce hybrid forms of communication, such as Creoles, Pidgins, or regional Englishness. These linguistic innovations are expressions of resistance and adaptation, reflecting the local culture's ability to integrate colonial influences while retaining its distinct identity. Code-switching, where individuals alternate between languages or dialects depending on context, further showcases how post-colonial communities navigate and redefine their multilingual realities.

The presence of English in education, media, and governance not only promotes a homogenized global discourse but also offers a platform for marginalized voices to critique colonial histories and assert indigenous perspectives. Post-colonial literature in English, for example, serves as a vehicle for challenging colonial narratives, giving rise to stories that reclaim and celebrate local identities, histories, and languages.

Power Relations in Post-Colonial Societies

Power relations in post-colonial societies are intricately shaped by language, with English often serving as a key indicator of social status, access, and authority. The colonial legacy embedded English as the dominant language of governance, education, and economic advancement, creating a linguistic hierarchy where fluency in English becomes synonymous with power and privilege. This hierarchy reinforces social stratification, as individuals proficient in English frequently occupy positions of influence and wealth, while speakers of indigenous languages face exclusion and marginalization in crucial domains like education, employment, and politics.

The dominance of English, in many cases, contributes to the suppression of local languages, leading to cultural loss and the weakening of linguistic diversity. The imposition of English in formal settings can erode traditional identities, severing communities from their historical and cultural roots. However, the interaction between language and power is not strictly unidirectional. Resistance to this linguistic domination is gaining momentum, as post-colonial societies increasingly promote the revival and revitalization of indigenous languages. This movement seeks to reclaim cultural identity and resist the colonial legacy still embedded in the power structures associated with English.

The dynamics of power in post-colonial societies reveal that language can be both a tool of empowerment and a mechanism for perpetuating inequality. By reclaiming local languages and incorporating them into education, governance, and daily life, these societies challenge the entrenched status of English, fostering a more inclusive and culturally rich environment. This ongoing negotiation of power through language underscores the complexities of identity and self-determination in post-colonial contexts.

Linguistic Hybridity in Post-Colonial Societies

Linguistic hybridity in post-colonial societies arises as a powerful reflection of the cultural, social, and political complexities that followed colonial rule. This phenomenon occurs when languages merge, with English incorporating local languages, dialects, and cultural expressions, forming unique hybrid languages. These linguistic blends, such as **creoles, pidgins**, and **code-switching**, become tools for communities to negotiate their identities in the context of both colonial history and modern globalization. Hybrid language forms serve not only as an adaptation to the dominant status of English but also as a subtle act of resistance, reclaiming local identity and heritage.

Linguistic hybridity challenges conventional views of language purity, emphasizing the **fluidity of language and identity** in an interconnected world. Through these hybrid forms, speakers express their cultural distinctiveness while engaging in global dialogues, allowing them to retain their heritage while participating in the broader, English-dominated global stage. In literature and the arts, linguistic hybridity provides a medium for authors and creators to craft narratives that authentically reflect their post-colonial experiences, resonating both with local audiences and global readers.

By embracing and utilizing hybrid languages, post-colonial societies actively reshape the linguistic and cultural landscapes, creating new avenues for **social interaction**, **cultural expression**, and **identity formation**. Linguistic hybridity thus plays a crucial role in post-colonial contexts, bridging historical influences and contemporary realities.

Cultural Imperialism in Post-Colonial Societies

Cultural imperialism involves the dominance of one culture over others, often resulting in the erosion of local traditions, values, and identities. In post-colonial societies, English serves as a central tool for this process, acting as a conduit for Western ideals and lifestyles that overshadow and marginalize indigenous cultures. The pervasive use of English in media, education, and global commerce establishes a cultural hierarchy where Western norms are seen as superior, leading to the gradual displacement of local languages and customs.

This cultural imposition extends beyond language, affecting consumer habits, political ideologies, and social structures, as individuals in post-colonial societies may feel compelled to conform to Western standards in order to achieve social and economic mobility. While some view English as a means of global participation and empowerment, others perceive its dominance as a threat to cultural diversity and authenticity.

In response to this form of imperialism, movements advocating for the revitalization of local languages and cultural practices are gaining strength. These efforts seek to reclaim and celebrate indigenous identities, challenging the narratives of cultural superiority imposed by the West.

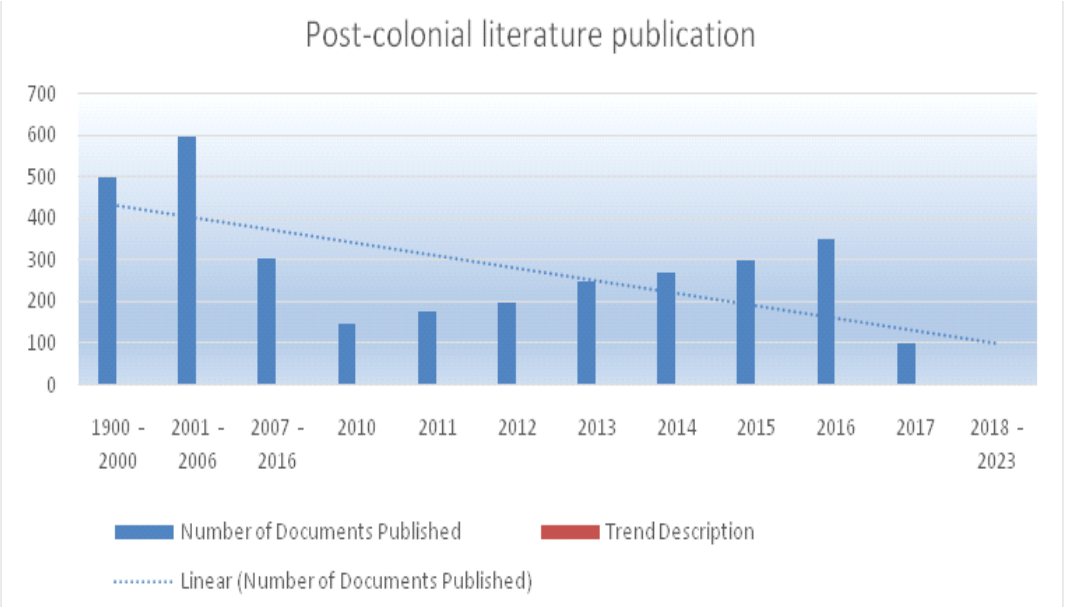
The ongoing struggle against cultural imperialism underscores the complexity of identity in a globalized world, where dominant cultural influences must be navigated alongside the desire for cultural preservation and representation. This tension continues to shape the debates around progress, identity, and cultural autonomy in post-colonial contexts.

Literature and Expression in Post-Colonial Societies

Literature and expression are vital tools in exploring identity, culture, and resistance in post-colonial societies. Through novels, poetry, drama, and essays, authors articulate the complex experiences of those grappling with the legacies of colonialism, cultural imperialism, and globalization. These narratives provide marginalized voices a platform to express local histories, traditions, and struggles that have been overshadowed by dominant, often Western, perspectives.

Post-colonial writers use code-switching and linguistic hybridity to reflect their unique cultural realities, challenging traditional literary forms while fostering authentic connections with their audiences. Literature becomes a space for exploring tensions between tradition and modernity, the quest for cultural identity, and the desire for autonomy in societies shaped by historical oppression.

Beyond storytelling, post-colonial literature serves as a social critique, addressing issues such as race, gender, class, and identity. These works inspire readers to reflect on their own societies and promote solidarity across diverse communities. Ultimately, literature in post-colonial contexts is not just a mirror of societal challenges, but a catalyst for change, pushing for cultural reclamation, social justice, and political empowerment. Through these narratives, authors affirm cultural identities and advocate for a more inclusive, equitable future.



Conclusion

The interplay of language, identity, and power in post-colonial societies underscores the complexities of cultural dynamics in a globalized world. The legacies of colonialism have shaped not only the linguistic landscape but also the socio-political realities faced by individuals and communities. While English is often viewed as a tool for empowerment and global engagement, it also serves as a marker of cultural imperialism, overshadowing indigenous cultures and languages. The emergence of linguistic hybridity and the reclamation of local languages reflect a vibrant resistance against cultural homogenization. Through literature and expression, post-colonial authors articulate their unique experiences, challenge dominant narratives, and foster a sense of identity and belonging. Their works provide insight into the struggles and triumphs of navigating post-colonial realities, acting as both a mirror and a voice for their communities. As societies strive to balance global influences with the preservation of local identities, the ongoing dialogue surrounding language, culture, and power remains essential for shaping a more equitable and inclusive future, where diverse voices and narratives can coexist, thrive, and contribute to the rich tapestry of human experience. Recognizing the importance of these dynamics will be crucial in fostering understanding, respect, and collaboration across cultural boundaries.

Future Suggestions

1. **Promoting Multilingual Education**: Educational institutions should emphasize multilingualism, incorporating local languages alongside English in curricula. This approach not only enriches students' linguistic abilities but also fosters cultural pride and understanding of diverse identities.
2. **Encouraging Literary Diversity**: Publishers and literary organizations should actively promote and support works from marginalized authors and regions. Expanding the visibility of diverse narratives can help challenge dominant literary canons and provide platforms for underrepresented voices.
3. **Supporting Cultural Initiatives**: Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should invest in cultural programs that celebrate local traditions, languages, and arts. Such initiatives can strengthen community ties, enhance cultural awareness, and encourage intergenerational transmission of knowledge.
4. **Fostering Global Dialogues**: International collaborations and exchanges should be encouraged among writers, scholars, and artists from post-colonial societies. These dialogues can lead to a deeper understanding of shared struggles and achievements, promoting solidarity in addressing common challenges.
5. **Utilizing Digital Platforms**: Leveraging digital media can amplify voices from post-colonial societies, allowing for wider dissemination of literature and cultural expressions. Social media, podcasts, and online literary festivals can create new avenues for engagement and visibility.

6. **Conducting Interdisciplinary Research**: Scholars should pursue interdisciplinary research that explores the intersections of language, culture, identity, and power in post-colonial contexts. Such studies can provide richer insights into the complexities of contemporary issues facing these societies.

7. **Encouraging Critical Literacy**: Educational programs should focus on developing critical literacy skills among students, enabling them to analyse and question dominant cultural narratives. This skill set can empower individuals to engage actively with their cultural environments and advocate for change.

8. **Documenting Oral Histories**: Efforts should be made to document and preserve oral histories and indigenous narratives that capture the lived experiences of communities. This archival work can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of cultural heritage and identity.

9. **Advocating for Language Rights**: Activism around language rights is essential to protect and promote linguistic diversity. Advocacy efforts should focus on ensuring the recognition and support of minority languages and dialects within legal and educational frameworks.

10. **Exploring Post-Colonial Theory in Contemporary Contexts:** Scholars and practitioners should continue to explore how post-colonial theory applies to current global challenges, including migration, environmental issues, and digital colonialism. Understanding these dynamics can inform more effective strategies for fostering equity and justice in a rapidly changing world. ■

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ROCK PEBBLES felicitated Prof. P. G. Rama Rao, retired Professor of English, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar and noted Indian English poet at his residence in Hyderabad, Telangana.

Social Mobility and Moral Compromise in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* : A New Critical Exploration

Deepali Singh

Arvind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) presents a nuanced critique of the socio-economic dynamics in modern India, particularly the complexities of social mobility and the ethical compromises that often accompany it. While the novel has been widely discussed in terms of class struggles and corruption, the intersection of social ascent and moral degradation remains an underexplored aspect. This paper examines how the protagonist, Balram Halwai, navigates the brutal realities of India's socio-economic structures, particularly the entrenched divisions between the rich and the poor. While much of the academic discourse on The White Tiger has focused on its critique of the caste system, corruption, and the moral failings of the elite, a critical dimension often overlooked is the moral paradox inherent in social mobility itself. Adiga's narrative goes beyond merely condemning traditional hierarchies; it interrogates the neoliberal capitalist ethos that perpetuates the illusion of upward mobility, while demanding profound ethical compromise. This paper explores the paradoxical relationship between social mobility and moral compromise through Balram's journey from rural poverty to the urban elite, indulging in unethical actions to succeed. Drawing on contemporary discussions of neoliberal capitalism, meritocracy, and postcolonial identity, the paper argues that The White Tiger critiques both traditional social hierarchies and the new capitalist ideologies shaping contemporary Indian society.

Introduction

India's rapid economic transformation, often celebrated as a triumph of globalization and liberalization, serves as the backdrop for *The White Tiger*. However, Adiga's portrayal of Balram challenges the optimism often associated with these developments. The neoliberal promise of success through hard work and entrepreneurial spirit is deconstructed to reveal a system that rewards exploitation and corruption rather than merit or morality. Balram's journey is emblematic of this contradiction—his ascent is achieved not through perseverance or ethical conduct, but by manipulating and ultimately dismantling the very power structures that oppressed him.

This paper seeks to examine how Adiga's portrayal of Balram's rise challenges conventional narratives of success, meritocracy, and the promise of social ascent. By eschewing the trope of a straightforward rags-to-riches story, Adiga instead paints a complex picture of moral decay and systemic injustice. Balram's story lays bare the harsh realities of a society driven by self-interest, greed, and exploitative power structures, revealing the ethical complexities that underpin the pursuit of success in a neoliberal world.

Furthermore, *The White Tiger* prompts critical reflection on the cost of ambition in a deeply unequal society. Balram's journey raises uncomfortable questions about the nature of morality, ambition, and human worth in a system where power and wealth often necessitate the abandonment of ethical values. The narrative explores the psychological toll of climbing the socio-economic ladder, as Balram sheds his identity, relationships, and moral compass in pursuit of his goals. In doing so, Adiga highlights the inherent contradictions in the concept of meritocracy, which often disguises systemic inequalities under the guise of fairness and opportunity.

By situating Balram's individual struggles within the broader socio-economic landscape of contemporary India, this paper argues that Adiga offers a scathing critique of both traditional and modern power structures. While Balram's story appears to be one of the triumphs, it ultimately reveals the profound moral and societal costs of success in an unjust system. Through this lens, The White Tiger challenges readers to rethink the narratives of social mobility and the true price of progress in a world shaped by systemic inequality.

Literature Review

A closer examination of The White Tiger reveals that Balram's ascent exemplifies the inherent contradictions of upward mobility within neoliberal capitalist systems. While his journey is framed as a rebellion against entrenched caste hierarchies, it also unveils the ethical compromises demanded by such a system. Balram's narrative challenges the traditional narrative of success, presenting it not as a linear, meritocratic achievement but as a process requiring moral decay and exploitation. By murdering his employer, Ashok, Balram secures his place in the entrepreneurial world, highlighting the brutal reality that the path to success in a deeply unequal society often necessitates violence and betrayal.

Adiga's critique extends beyond the caste system to interrogate the neoliberal ethos that equates individual success with personal worth while ignoring systemic inequities. This perspective aligns with the works of theorists like David Harvey, who argues that neoliberalism shifts the burden of success onto individuals, sidelining the structural forces that perpetuate inequality. Similarly, Naomi Klein's critique of neoliberalism as a force that commodifies human lives resonates with Balram's commodification of his own identity to navigate India's socio-economic landscape. The novel underscores how Balram must shed his humanity to thrive in a system that rewards ruthlessness over integrity.

Recent scholarship has begun to explore these themes, but *The White Tiger* offers fertile ground for deeper investigation into the paradox of social mobility. It invites questions

about whether upward mobility is truly liberating or merely a reconfiguration of systemic oppression. Balram's story mirrors the neoliberal dream's dark underbelly, where the promise of freedom is contingent upon the exploitation of others. Through this lens, Adiga critiques not just the caste system but also the globalized economic structures that perpetuate moral and social disparities, making The White Tiger a profound commentary on the ethical dimensions of modern success.

Methodology

This paper adopts a close reading approach to The White Tiger, focusing on key moments in the novel where Balram's moral and ethical decisions are foregrounded in relation to his social mobility. The analysis will be guided by theories of neoliberal capitalism, meritocracy, and social mobility, while also drawing on postcolonial theories of class and power. By examining the interactions between Balram and the various social structures he encounters, this paper will explore the moral and ethical implications of social ascent in the context of India's neoliberal transformation.

In addition, the paper will engage with contemporary theoretical discussions surrounding capitalism, ethics, and meritocracy, particularly in the context of post-liberalization India. These frameworks will allow for a deeper understanding of how Balram's actions reflect broader social and political trends in contemporary Indian society.

Balram's rise from the humble village of Laxmangarh to becoming a successful entrepreneur in Bangalore is central to The White Tiger. His transformation embodies the myth of the "self-made" man—an ideal that is especially prominent in neoliberal capitalist ideologies, where individual effort and entrepreneurship are celebrated as the path to success. However, Balram's story subverts this narrative.

Analysis and Discussion

In The White Tiger, corruption and moral compromise emerge as central forces driving Balram Halwai's ascent. His journey from servitude to entrepreneurial success is marked by deceit, manipulation, and ultimately, murder—actions that, while morally indefensible, are framed as necessary responses to a society where upward mobility is reserved for those willing to exploit the system. Aravind Adiga uses Balram's transformation to interrogate the socio-economic structures that perpetuate inequality and critique the moral decay inherent in the pursuit of success.Adiga critiques meritocracy by showing how success is rarely a product of hard work alone. Instead, it often relies on the exploitation of others and the willingness to abandon moral principles. This critique extends to the global neoliberal framework, where the glorification of individual success obscures the human and ethical costs involved.

The "Rooster Coop" and Systematic Oppression

Balram's pivotal act—murdering his employer, Ashok—is the culmination of his realization that hard work and loyalty are insufficient in a society dominated by entrenched

hierarchies. This act of violence is presented not merely as a crime but as a form of rebellion against a rigged system. It symbolizes the rupture required to break free from the "rooster coop"—a metaphor Adiga uses to describe the oppressive constraints of caste, class, and servitude in India. By killing Ashok, Balram seizes the power and agency denied to him within the societal framework, highlighting the desperate measures needed to escape systemic oppression.

Adiga critiques the pervasive corruption that defines both the oppressed and the oppressors in this system. Balram's ascent parallels the broader dynamics of neoliberal capitalism, where success often necessitates the exploitation of others and the erosion of ethical boundaries. In his new role as a successful entrepreneur, Balram adopts many of the exploitative behaviors of the elite he once despised, illustrating the cyclical nature of power and corruption. This transition underscores the moral paradox of upward mobility: the very success Balram sought requires him to perpetuate the injustices he initially rebelled against.

a. The Myth of the Self-Made Man

Balram's transformation from a servant in Laxmangarh to a successful entrepreneur in Bangalore embodies the neoliberal ideal of the "self-made" man, where individual effort and entrepreneurship are portrayed as the pathways to success. However, Adiga subverts this narrative by illustrating the impossibility of true meritocracy in a system riddled with structural inequalities.

Initially, Balram believes education and hard work will help him escape poverty and caste constraints, but his disillusionment grows as he realizes the game is rigged. The entrenched hierarchies of power, wealth, and caste make upward mobility nearly impossible without resorting to drastic measures. This realization culminates in Balram's decision to murder his employer, Ashok. While morally reprehensible, this act becomes his means to escape servitude and ascend into the urban elite.

Adiga critiques the traditional myth of success by exposing the ethical rot underlying neoliberal capitalism. Balram's rise is not a triumph of perseverance but a consequence of his ability to manipulate the system, shedding light on how the ideal of the self-made man often masks the systemic exploitation and moral compromises required for success.

b. The Role of Corruption and Crime in Social Ascendancy

Corruption is not merely a backdrop in The White Tiger; it is the engine that drives Balram's ascent. His journey is marked by acts of deceit, manipulation, and ultimately, murder. These actions, while morally indefensible, are presented as rational responses to a society where success is reserved for those who exploit systemic corruption.

Balram's murder of Ashok serves as both a personal transformation and a critique of social mobility. This act symbolizes the violent rupture required to escape servitude. For Balram, crime becomes a necessary tool, justified by the inherent corruption of the system. His rationale mirrors critiques of neoliberalism, which often highlight how success is achieved

by exploiting vulnerabilities within economic and social structures rather than through merit or hard work. This moral ambiguity challenges readers to consider the ethical costs of success and how the pursuit of ascendancy perpetuates cycles of exploitation.

c. Class, Power, and Identity

Adiga intricately explores the intersections of class, power, and identity through Balram's journey. His interactions with the wealthy Stork family reveal the exploitative power dynamics that define Indian society, where the privileged few maintain control over the lives of the impoverished majority.

As Balram climbs the social ladder, he adopts the attitudes and practices of those he once despised, illustrating how power corrupts identity. His success, while materially rewarding, comes at the cost of his sense of self. By mirroring the oppressive behaviors of his former employers, Balram perpetuates the very systems he initially sought to escape. This shift underscores Adiga's critique of a society that prioritizes wealth and power over human dignity.

d. Moral Compromise and the Illusion of Success

One of the novel's most striking aspects is its portrayal of moral compromise. Balram's actions, including murder and exploitation, highlight the ethical decay often required for upward mobility. His story exposes the illusion of success in a capitalist society, where the promise of meritocratic advancement is undermined by systemic barriers and moral costs.

Adiga critiques meritocracy by showing how success is rarely a product of hard work alone. Instead, it often relies on the exploitation of others and the willingness to abandon moral principles. This critique extends to the global neoliberal framework, where the glorification of individual success obscures the human and ethical costs involved.

e. The Role of the State and Social Structures

The state in The White Tiger emerges as a complicit force in maintaining social inequalities. India's economic reforms, while creating opportunities for wealth generation, have also reinforced existing hierarchies, making it difficult for individuals like Balram to succeed without unethical actions.

Adiga critiques the state's failure to address systemic inequities, portraying it as indifferent at best and actively complicit at worst. Corruption within government institutions further exacerbates these disparities, creating an environment where individuals are forced to exploit corrupt systems to achieve success. This critique of the state's inefficacy highlights the structural barriers that inhibit genuine upward mobility.

Through Balram's journey, Adiga highlights how the illusion of opportunity and the promise of neoliberal success are rooted in systemic inequities, forcing individuals into morally compromising decisions to break free. This broader critique reveals the human cost of ambition in a world that glorifies success without reckoning with the social and ethical toll it demands.

Conclusion:

Arvind Adiga's The White Tiger presents a powerful critique of the social and moral implications of social mobility in contemporary India. By exploring the paradox between upward mobility and ethical compromise, Adiga challenges the idea that success is a result of merit and hard work. Through Balram's story, the novel exposes the deep contradictions inherent in neoliberal capitalism, where success is often built on exploitation, corruption, and violence.

This paper has demonstrated that Adiga's critique of social mobility extends beyond the traditional examination of caste and class. By focusing on the ethical complexities of upward mobility, The White Tiger reveals the dark side of neoliberalism and underscores the moral costs of success in a world driven by greed and self-interest. As such, the novel invites readers to reconsider the true meaning of success and challenges the assumption that merit and hard work are the keys to social ascension in contemporary society.

Thus,this paper delves into a thorough investigation of the paradox of social mobility and moral compromise in The White Tiger, engaging with new critical perspectives on neoliberalism, meritocracy, and class in India. ■

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A Comparative Study of Stress Coping Strategies, CHD and Gender

Sita Kumari Jha

Examining how gender and coronary heart disease (CHD) or non-CHD affect stress coping mechanisms was the goal of the current investigation. The current study included 480 people to achieve this goal. 240 of the participants had CHD, while the remaining 240 were either normal or non-CHD. Next, 120 men and 120 women were selected from among the CHD and normal participants. The Coping Strategies Scale, created and standardised by professor A. K. Srivastava, was used to gauge the subjects' stress coping mechanisms. Two-by-two factorial study designs were employed for the data analysis. According to the study's findings, respondents' usage of stress coping mechanisms is not considerably impacted by gender, however subjects' coping mechanisms are significantly impacted by CHD-Non-CHD.

Keywords: CHD, Non-CHD, Gender, Stress Coping Strategies.

Introduction

Contemporary life is very competitive and acquisitive. That's why we humans are afflictedwith various chronic troubles, strain, stress and pressures. The capability to cope with problematic events is vital to survive. Coping behaviour is a complicated process. It refers to the active efforts, both mental and behavioural, that an individual utilizes to decrease, master, tolerate, or minimize stressful events. Isil (2015) describes coping strategies "as activities and cognitive effort to handle the external or internal demand that is appraised by a person as exceeding and taxing." Coping refers as persons' active, constantly thinking, behavioural and cognitive practice to deal with specific internal and external demands, appraisal as exceeding or toxins their control and resources (Lazarus &Folkman, 1984). It also includes the actions and thoughts we use to handle a threatening and problematic accident. Mainly two types of coping strategy are identified by psychologists. First is Problem-focused or active coping approach, which is described as cognitive and behavioural effort used to change or handle the problem directly and consistsof such strategies as planning, problem solving, active effort, etc. Another coping strategy is an Emotion-focused or passive coping approach, which includes skills that help control or manage the emotional arousal and problem caused by the stressor without directly addressing the problem. It contains detachment, avoidance, self-blaming, suppression etc.

Gender influences many aspects of our life, including the way of coping with stress, access to resources, styles of interacting with others etc. Mitali Pathak (2011) pointed out that men used more problem-focused coping techniques, on the other hand,womenlooked atthe surrounding more stressful and used highly emotion-focused coping techniques. Gentry, L. A. (2011) found that no gender difference in the capability to cope with burnout. However, females were more likely to use adaptive coping style and men usedmore maladaptive style and avoidance of coping behaviour. Matheny et al. (2005) show significant differences between males and females on using coping skills. They also found that woman uses more emotion-focused coping processesthanmen.

Coronary heart disease (CHD) affects people's stress coping approaches. Svensson, T. et al. (2016) finds that more use of approach-oriented or problem-focused coping behaviour was associated witha decline in the chances of occurrence of stroke and cardiovascular problems like CHD. They also found an inverse connection in approach or problem-focused coping techniques and a reduced chance of occurring CHD. Khan (2012)shows that CHD patients have really specific traits, which reflect individuals have low capacity to control the problematic situation and they are emotional. So, they use more emotional focused coping skills. Pourang & Besharat (2011) found that a constructive significant correlation between recovery process and problem-focused coping skills, and a destructive correlation among emotion-focused coping and recovery process. They also concluded that more emotion-focused is found in CHD patients.

According to Koelsch et al. (2012), people with CHD have a difficult time handling stressful situations and experience more negative emotions like anxiety, sadness, depression, frustration, and anger. On the other hand, positive emotions help improve health and slow the progression of CHD. It is obvious from studies reviewed in the relevance of the present study that gender and CHD-Non-CHD variables impact significantly the coping strategies scores of respondents. However, a nominal study has reflected the interaction effect of these two variables. Keeping these points in view, this study was carried out.

Objectives of the Study: The current study was designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To study the effect of gender on stress coping strategies.

2. To study the effect of CHD onstress coping strategies.

3. To study the interactional effect of gender and CHD on stress coping strategies.

Hypotheses of the Study: For testing objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There will be no significant difference between male and female subjects in terms of their scores on coping strategies.

2. There will be no significant difference between normal or non-CHD subjects and CHD patients in terms of their scores on coping strategies.

3. There will be no significant interactional effect of gender and CHD on coping strategies.

Sampling as Method: In the present study, the population contains two types of subjects, CHD patients and normal subjects. The CHDpatientswere selected from the OPD of the different hospitals of Meerut City, and non-CHD or normal subjects were selected from the general population of the same city. The sample of the study consists of 480 subjects, of which 240 were CHD patient subjects, and 240 were non-CHD ornormalrespondents. Both the samples were varied into male (N=120) and female (N=120). The age range of subjects was 30 to 90.

Research Design:2*2 factorial design was used in this study. Details of the division of the sample were as follows:

		CHD (B)	
		Normal or non- CHD (B1)	CHD Patients(B2)
Gender (A)	Men (A1) Women(A2)	A1*B1 A2*B1	A1*B2 A2*B2

Tool-Used: In the current study, the Coping Strategies Scale developed and standardized by profA. K. Srivastava was used to measure the stress coping strategies of respondents. The scale consists of 50 items with afive-point rating scale. The Test-re-test reliability was 0.92 and Split-Half reliability for Approach coping strategies was 0.78 and for Avoidance coping was 0.69.

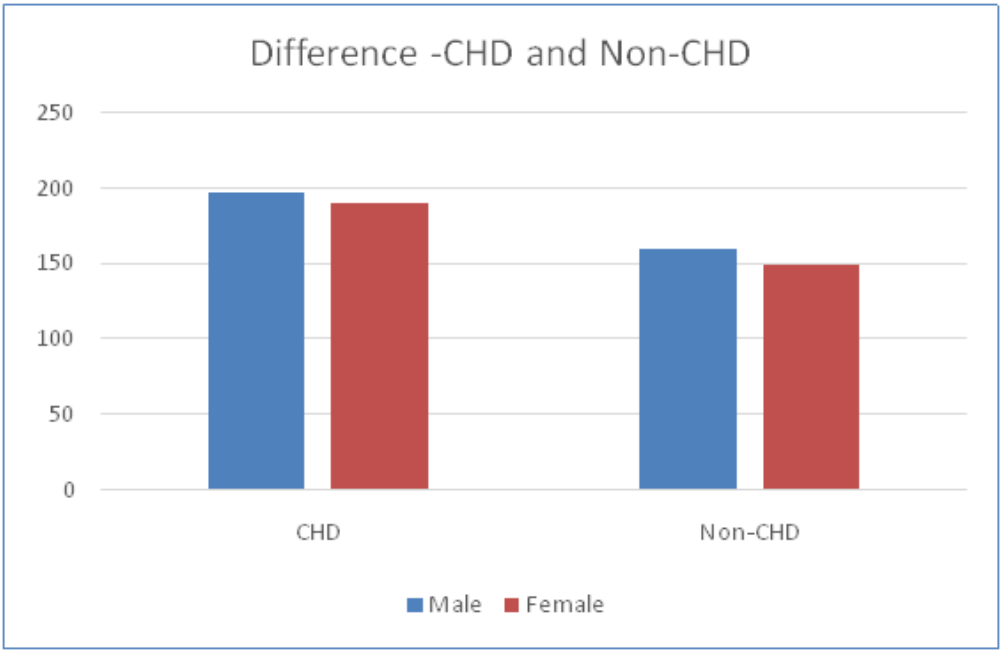
Procedure of Data Collection: Firstly, Rapport was established with the respondents individually. After that, they were told in brief about the study and the selected tool was administered to the subject and about 25-30minutes was given to the subjects to fill it. A proper instruction was given to the participants. Questionnaire was taken back from respondents, when they finished the work. The subjects were thanked for their support and given their valuable time.

Results and Discussion:

Table-1: Showing the summary of two-way ANOVA for 2*2 factorial designs with N-480.

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Gender (A)	23.852	1	23.852	.333	NS
CHD-Non-CHD (B)	26329.2191	26329.219		367.094	.01
Gender* CHD (A*B)	159.8521	159.852		2.229	NS
Error	71.723	476	71.723		
Total	34140.358	480			

Graf -1: Showing the Mean difference between CHD-non-CHD respondents



Data were analysed with the help of SPSS_17. ANOVA findings as presented in table-1 reveal that the main effect of gender was found to be insignificant beyond chance (F=.333.09, df= 1/476, p>.05). However, the main effect of CHD-Non-CHD was found to be significant beyond chance (F= 367.094, df= 1/476, p< .01). While, the interaction effect of both variables gender and CHD-Non-CHD or normal subjects were found to be insignificant even at .05 level of confidence.

Results show that the main effect of the gender variable on stress coping strategies was not significant. It means males and females of both the CHD patients and non-CHD ornormal subjects' groups are showing a similar level of stress coping behaviour. Thus, we accept the first hypothesis. Our findings are not in line with our hypotheses prepared in the current perspective. However, it is supported by various studies conducted previously in the current area (Donaldson et al., 2000; Matud, 2004; Yeh, S.C. J., et al., 2009; Gentry, 2011; Zvauya, et al., 2017;). All investigators found that there is no significant difference in the use of coping strategies between males and females.The main effect of CHD was proficient to affect the stress coping strategies of participants. The findings do not support our hypothesis constructed in this regard. It can differentiate between the scores on the coping strategies scale. Normal respondents or non-CHD have found more use of coping skillsthan CHD patients. Mean difference showing in Graphalso reflects the clear difference between CHD and non-CHD subjects in use of stress coping strategies.

It also shows that both variables do not exert a significant impact to affect the psychological well-being of respondents. It depicted that both males and females of the CHD sufferers and the normal subjects' group, more or less have similar results on psychological well-being. It is also clear from Figure 1 that male subjects of normal or non-CHD group have a higher level of psychological well-being in comparison to CHD patient groups and female subjects. But the difference between male and female groups is not significant.

Conclusion:

Based on the discussion and results above, we can say that respondents' stress coping behaviour can be influenced by the CHD variable, while subjects' stress coping techniques cannot be influenced by gender. Additionally, the interaction effect of both factors has no discernible impact on the respondents' coping mechanisms. Subjects' coping techniques are impacted by both CHD and non-CHD, indicating that CHD influences subjects' coping behaviours. Respondents' coping styles are not influenced by gender characteristics, and subjects' coping techniques are not impacted by the interactional effect either. Psychologists, physicians, legislators, and counsellors can use this study to help people improve their lives. ■

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Tradition and Transformation of Bhuyan Marriages

Pranati Barik

Marriage is an important event in Socio- Cultural life of tribal communities from different corners. The celebration of which is colourful and attractive through dance, music and food. Selection of mate and arrangement of marriage among tribal societies differs in some points and many similarities are also there while detail study is under taken.

Odisha is one of the tribal populated states of India having 64 communities out of which 13 are placed in the PVTG on the basis of aboriginality. As per 2011 census the tribal population of Odisha is 9590756 which is 22.84% of total population of the state.

In Odisha there are six type of tribal groups, considering the general feature of their eco-system, traditional economy, super natural beliefs and practices, recent impact of transformation such as (i) hunting, collecting and gathering type, (ii) cattle herder type, (iii) simple artisan type, (iv) hill and shifting cultivation type, (v) settled agriculture type, (vi) industrial urban worker type. (1) They are also placed in certain group of affinity on the basis of racial, linguistic and cultural point of view by the scholars.

There are three categories of tribal community present in Odisha from the linguistic affinity point of view such as Mundari/Austroasiatic,Dravidian and Indo-Aryan. Many of tribals whether had any language of them are not clearly known. But according to their spoken language they are placed in Indo-Aryan group. Bhuyan community is placed under Mundari group with Juanga, Didayi, Mundari, Santali, Soura, Parenga, Gond, Kandha, Oran, Bonda, Birhur etc. But some scholars had different opinions in considering them in the Dravidian group.

Bhuyan Community

The racial and cultural affinity of Bhuyan is with Mundari group as per sterling which is near to Kolha, Munda, Bhumija, Bathudi, Santal, Khandual etc. (2) But Anthropologist Dalton on the basis of Mr. Campbel's "Ethnology of India" had placed

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(1) Tribes of Orissa – H & TW Dept. Govt. of Orissa. -THRTI ,Bhubaneswar – 1990 – Behura, Prof. N.K – Tribal Societies in Orissa – P-11.

Bhuyans to Dravidian group focusing Pabana Vansi section among Bhuyans, as they worship to Pabanaputra Hanuman. (3) Any how Risley and other scholars had concluded that Bhuyan are to be placed to Mundari group.

The main conglomeration of Bhuyans is in the north Odisha region such as Keonjhar, Bonai, Pallahara, Deogarh etc. (4) But in Bhuyan Pirhs of Keonjharwere their main concentration since long years.Their livelihood, shifting cultivation, forest economy is earlier period were of hill tribe communities but in course of time. They had been under gone transformation to connection with royal family and administration. They had important role in royal coronation in Keonjhar and neighbouring ex feudatory states, with there reference it is said that, u some of the leading Bhuyan families have come to be chiefs of the petty states of Orissa and have merged their identity in the claim to quasi – Rajput descendant. (5) Earlier the Bhuyan villages were located in the plateau, valley or waist of the hill surrounded by forest, and fountain. In the early period the village settlement was temporary and house locations were arbitrary because of shifting cultivation. In the middle of the village there is a Mandaghar which works as boys dormitory, elder's meeting hall and guest house for outsiders. It is important in their social life. Changu, their musical instrument was hanged in the Mandaghar. They were obedient to their community, The fist social organization is the family, then Kutumb and Bansa is a village. Earlier these were separatevillage such as Bandhu village and Kutumba village . But now in some village both categories of people are living together . The marriage is prohibited among Kutumba so they were preferred since very early period is Bandhu family for the purpose. In a village there is a Padhan to look after the village problems and a Dehuri for religious and pujas performance in the village. In this context the aim of the present study is to analyse their marriage system and in connection with dance, music etc. In the course of the important event of their livelihood.

Types of marriage

All tribal communities including Bhuyans , celebrate the marriage event in an attractable and colourful manner. The function have dance, music, food and gathering. Marriage is prohibited in Kutumba so they search a Bandhu family. There are four types of marriage in Bhuyan community such as Dharipala (Elopment),Ghincha or Jhinka (marriage by capture), Phulakh and Magibibha (marriage by negotiation).

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Dharipala (Elopement)

Young man of a Bhuyan village go to a Bandhu gaon for Changu dance with the girls of that village, during the dance some girls may love to some young fellow. The Changu dance infront of the Mandagharstarts by the young (Dhangada) and at that time the elder women who looks after the maidens (Dhangidi) of the Bandhugaon who are in girls dormitory (may be a spare house of someone), advise the girls to join in the Changu dance. During Changu dance the boys and girls share their feeling through smiling, affairs of affection. The dance continues to the late night and the boy and girls who inclines each other may go under the bushes of creepers on a safe described place near it. The young boy presents flower to the beloves. If it is noticed the elderly women who encourages for staying more night for the dance. Late after the gap of one year the young boy takes the girl to his village where other marriage rituals perform by offering Puja and rice to the souls of the ancestors of the boy. "Kanya Suna" one kind of traditional offering to the family of the bride is not given instantly.

Ghincha or Jhinka (marriage by capture)

This type of marriage was common in many tribal communities earlier. It was the mixture of Dharipala and Magibibha. If any boy falls in love with a girl but the family of the boy is not in a position to given "Kanyamula" instantly they send a messenger to the parent of the girl. If the parent agree upon the proposal the boy takes the girls forcefully into a forest and the friends of the girl pretend to protest by throwing brickbat, clod of earth etc. In the meantime,the boys goes to his house with the bride by hiding themselves. The friends of the girl return to the village and tell to the falls of the girl that tiger has taken his daughter and the relatives of the girl search falsely in the in the forest. Late the groom side agrees to pay Kanyamula and the marriage settles such type of false traditional drama ofcourse now rarely occurs.

Phulakhusi

When the boy likes a girl for marriage but she does not choice him, the boy has adopted or different technique of a white or red flower to tuck in conceal to her chignon. In this situation if the girl and her parent in that situation agree for the marriage then Jhinka (by capture) type is to be taken for the purpose.

Magibibha (by negotiation)

This type of marriage was rare, only in some socially developed Bhuyan families. The marriage negotiation imitates by a mediator called "Kendra" . The boy and girl choice each other in the Changu dance. The parent of both side consent for the marriage obtains by the Kendra and the rituals of tradition for the marriage one observed. Now it is familiar among Bhuyan community as non-tribal.

Changu Dance and Music

In the above different types of marriage in the Bhuyan communities were since long periods. The eve of love, choice, like etc. among Bhuyan boy and girl etc. are evaluate

from Changu dance. This Changu dance is important for their socio-cultural life for which the brief description of the dance is given here to supplement the marriage event of the communities. Dance and music is not only their entertainment program but also this is the lifeline of their culture as it is performed in many festive occasions.

Changu dance is not only Bhuyan communities it is there in juanga, Bathudi etc. There is similarity in performing the Changu among Bhuyan and Juanga communities of Keonjhar but the dance of Bhuyan is none attractable because of some Pali (gait). It is said in this connection, "The Bhuyan dances are very closely resembled by those of a hill tribe, the Juanga. The Juangas, however lack of easy grace and revive of the Bhuyans, so that their dances become monotonous and lifeless". (6)

These 'Palis' (Style of dance) derive from the imitation of the nature and forest of their area, they follow the palis from different animals and birds such as Sapapali (Snake), Baghapali (Tiger), Bhalupali (Bear), Hatipali (Elephant), Gilhapali (Vulture), Mirigapali (Deer), Kapta (Parrot), Gunduripali etc. (7)

Pictures of their daily life in folk song are reflected and there are used in the changu dance as musical tune for example:-

"Barapatradhaladhala
Ai guchhamuledekhili Bhalu Nanire
PitaluBainga alu
Khuluthibajebe
Nietimilu, Nanilo
Purba Purusha Kalu"

They collect different kinds of roots and tubers like Pitalu, Bainga for which they expect it may available always to meet their food requirement.

"Bindhanaboamarelepadhunaki
Sambar akhidekhi, kaandekhi
Pet dekhi, akhidekhi
Lepa dhunki"

It means the technique of hunting by arrow. (8)

Transformation

Now Changu dance is rarely performed in the remote area also except by sponsoring through some govt. or NGO. The marriage systems also have changed a lot and Magibibha is widely accepted by the Bhuyan community. Marriage by capture was seen

(6) Projesh Banarji – Folk dance of India – Kitabstan Alhahabad – 1959 , P-108.

(7) Behera, Dr. Binbadha – in odia – Odia upanyasan 1st edition – 2003 – P-61.

(8) Collected from Dehuri, Bishnu Charan, one of Bhuyan leader, Singipur, Bansapal block, Keonjhar.

sixty years back in some weekly market near forest. It is almost vanished. The get up of the manage party is also changed and they follow the general pattern of non-tribal Society. Kanyamula is replaced in some cases by present dowry from brides house. The earlier get up of the bride and groom is also changed to modernity. The Puja and rituals arepartially changed. ■

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A Critical Analysis of Manjula Padmanavan's *Harvest* from the perspective of Voices from the Margin

Sanghamitra Nath

Indian drama in English is myriad-nuanced; part traditional and part experimental, it is a compound of voices and visions. Naturally, therefore, its makers are diversely attitudinized and variously appreciated. However, among the critical rods and yardsticks of assessment, used to measure the reach and depth of Indian drama in English, dynamics of dramatic depiction of margin/periphery/fringe/liminal space, voice of the marginalized, voices from the margin, and marginality/subalternity is prominent. While re-visiting chronicles of Indian drama in English, one cannot but give priority to the contribution of ManjulaPadmanabhan to the repertory of Indian Drama in English, in general, and to the repertoire of Indian English Drama with evident postcolonial moorings and thematic emphasis. Hence in this paper I will try to examine how the characters at the margin either have raised their voices or remained willfully silent / forcefully silent in Padmanavan's play H*arvest.*

Keywords:- Margin, Voices, Voices from the margin, Freedom, Identity.

Harvest is based on the age old theory "Women are the victims" (RajeswariSundarRajan, 1996, 222). However, to the credit of ManjulaPadmanabhan, it can be said that in this play, she has been able to raise women's "consciousness about their oppression" (226). The "long silence" of Jaya, the heroine, has yielded place and given birth to "effrontory of the female protagonist" (MP). As Jaya, the marginalized, has gained some kind of voice and choice of her own towards the end of the play *Harvest*, MP, the dramatist, has "found the audience" for her works towards the end of her career. So Saudamini Jain has observed,

> The writer-illustrator's unconventional work had never found the audience it deserved. The world is finally catching uptoManjulaPadmanabhan. (2020)

That is why, it is inferred that ManjulaPadmanabhan has raised herself from the slough of creative marginality. When *Harvest* won the "Onassis Award" with the cash prize of INR 90 lakh, this play, almost a suigeneris (be it called a science dystopia/ thesis play / Third

World preamble to the constitution of the neo-republics), it confirmed the tenacity and eligibility of the dramatist, since long sidelined, to be on the centre court of public recognition and critical reception.

If Getting There is "a tight rope between the denial and pursuit of physical pleasure, *Harvest*is all about the physical pain-turned- into- pleasure of profit. So both are double-toned tomes on loss and profit, loss of personal autonomy because of the incursion of the marauding cosmopolitanism (capitalism) into the inner world of private space/ intimate space within the four walls of the human family. So ManjulaPadmanabhan has candidly confessed: "I am not a popular writer and I know that…. (But) I've always had high value for myself" (quoted by S. Jain, 2020).

Really ManjulaPadmanabhan has written *Harvest* "with radiant clarity and knowingness" (NamitaAavriti, 16.8.2020). That is why, in this multicultural tangle, there is evident notes of animosity of one group towards the other. The Interplanta in *Harvest* comprises the neo-capitalists. So Ginni and Virgil are the marauders from the super-rich supernova of the technocrats. For these abilists, human organs are saleable commodities and hence, strong and stout males and women with healthy uterus and tempting reproductive organs are immensely purchasable. They are prepared to use their own money bags to buy persons like Ma, Om, Jaya, and Jeetu. Ginni and Virgil are not sooth-sayers; they are the powerful, subjugating the poor with their tempting baits. Ma, Om, Jaya, and Jeetu are the gullible natives of the Third World. Poor, hence in acute need, they are also rapacious. Like Dr. Faustus, they have sold their body-parts and soul to the neo-Mephistopheles. That is why, the deal between these two parties is signed in the blood of the innocent BidyutBai and the urchins, "audible rather than visible" (MP, *Harvest*, 4). Therefore the members of the second party have "no chance to escape". In the cogent cogitation of Simran Mittal, all these human commodities in *Harvest* have been victims of the "Politics of (over)protectionism" (SuchitraMathur, 2015). In the self-propagating structures of transworld trade and commerce, capitalism, and smotherism, they are "excluded from the category of the human and treated as the Other" (2015, 315). In other words, they have been "put at a disadvantage", while ManjulaPadmanabhan has granted loads of privilege to the vendees. The vendors in *Harvest*have gradually lost their freedom, free-choice, and identity, in other words their ontologicalsitus. Naturally therefore, their lives have become entanglements of matter and profits made from the sales ensured. As meaning eludes their materialistic life, they grope in the dark space between the two spaces occupied by the colonizers and the colonized.

In the fitness of facts, mentioned in George M. Gugelberger's " De-colonizing the canon" (1991), it can be said that *Harvest* has experienced what is called liberation from the strangle-hold of epistemic marginality. Till the advent of *Harvest*, as the postcolonial pundits have convincingly demonstrated, the colonized have had no U.S.P. Marginalized and misprized, they have been looked down upon as disposable commodities. So in The Tempest, Robinson Crusoe, Things Fall Apart, Uncle Tom's Cabin,To kill a mocking Bird,

Beloved, and Purple Color, *et al*, they have been used and abused as human dirt, as pieces of door mat and as animals of burden/ human mules. No serious attempt has been made to evaluate their worth in terms of usefulness as potential store-houses of re-useable human organs. In the pristine postcolonial literatures, the bodies of the slaves have been sold and purchased for a dollar/pound or two. Yet they have been treated as cargo, procured and ferried to be sold off in entirety without giving any consideration to the unmeasured worth of the vital organs in their healthy bodies. Put simply, in the world trade centres, the colonized have no surplus value. ManjulaPadmanabhan, in the contrary, has re-written the old histories of colonial laceration and trading in a new idiom: No healthy body in the 3rd World is a bin of wastage; if it is healthy and organ-rich, it is an asset, fit to be procured. So thanks to ManjulaPadmanabhan, not only "the unreceived and marginal quality of colonial literature has been re-assessed, the worth of the people of the Third World has been re-evaluated. In the process, both the "pedagogy of the oppressed" (Paulo Freire, 1970) and "Theatre of the Oppressed" (Augusto Boal, 1985) have been upfronted by ManjulaPadmanabhan.

No longer in the post-*Harvest* world, the poor are pitied as per the poetics of poverty. They might be underprivileged and poor before the proven salability of their vital body-parts. Once found to be some kind of a trove for good and healthy and functionally vibrant human organs, required by the Wealthy imbeciles of the First World, they are coaxed and cajoled. The First World woos them, takes care of them, looks after their health till the human organs are removed from the body of the donor and are fitted into that of the donee. So the TiersMonde is no more continents of darkness and outcasts but is the world determined to end all exploitation and oppression as per their own terms and conditions.

In *Harvest*, Jaya's healthy and charming body is required to beget a healthy child. She has to give an ovum so that the child of genetic transmutation could be born. She declines to be impregnated artificially. She allows herself to share the bed of the marauding capitalist. Jeetu has given up his ideals, his freedoms, and his pride (*Harvest*, 101). So also has Jaya. So Om has cried out from the margin:

> Ahhhhhhh! You have locked us in, you bastards! You have locked us in! (he roars and pounds the door). You can't do this to us. We've not signed any consent forms! You have not taken any permission! (*Harvest*, 101)

Till the "delivery voucher" is signed, no-one from the First world can extract any human organ from the body of any one of the citizens of the Third World.

The First World, represented by Virgil, is "old and sick" (*Harvest* 114) and he looks like a "woman" (*Harvest* 115). So he needs "a healthy body"; that is why, he has been after the vital organs of Jeetu. He, like others in the first World, is "interested in women", "child-bearing women" (*Harvest* 115). So he is after Jaya. Virgil has paid heavy sums of money to OM (Auwm) but has taken "Jeetu's body" (115). The First World has planned to use healthy male bodies and healthy bodies of perfect child-bearing women of the Third World to "live

longer and longer. And healthier each generation" (*Harvest* 116). So they claim that by buying human organs from the Third World, they are supporting "poorer sections of the world". (*Harvest*, 116), but, in reality, they are re-scripting histories of colonialism, "while gaining fresh bodies" for themselves.

Jaya is tempted but is not perverted. She refuses to be naked. She does not want to give herself to Virgil's "virtual touch…. plastic shadow" (*Harvest*, 121). She is determined to hold her head high even while wearing "rags of pride" (*Harvest*, 121). She has already won the heart of Virgil. Virgil has become her admirer and does care for her well-being. Now she dictates her own terms. No more, hers is a voice from the margin. She announces, "Either you have to erase me and start again or…. Accept a new set of rules" (*Harvest,* 122). With these words of Jaya, ManjulaPadmanabhan has underscored the possibility that the colonized could win. Even though Virgils "live only to win" (*Harvest* 122), they could be defeated by "a poor, weak, and helpless woman" (*Harvest* 122). Jaya prefers this emanicipatory death to the obnoxious living with wealth shamelessly earned. Now she orders Virgil to make the sound she would like to hear:

> And if I don't hear the sound of your own hand on my door, I'll take my life (*Harvest*, 123).

With these words, Jaya, the marginalized, bargains hard and tries to get "justice" (*Harvest*, 123).

From this juncture, Virgil is all broken words, ellipses, omissions, stammer and stutter." Zha… Zh… Jaya… Jaya, Jaya… listen to me" (*Harvest*, 123) and Jaya articulates her sermon with tremendous articulation energy. "She looks happy and relaxed" (*Harvest* 124). She "settles down comfortably and "rich joyous music fills the room" in which she is cushioned. With these tactful turning of the table, ManjulaPadmanabhan has showed that in the Third World Literature the voices, made by the marginalized from the margins of their lives in various sites of struggle and predicament, do and can ultimately become resonant and powerful to suggest the desired dawn of resurgence in the offing.

With reference to the ongoing discussion, it is iterated that *Harvest*, a vital specimen of the Third World Literature, is more realistic, more radical and hence adhominem. In it ManjulaPadmanabhan, has not talked about "men and women in the abstract but in the here and now" (Gugalberger, 515). Hence *Harvest* is a causeway linking the past with the future via the present. It belongs to the Theatre of the Oppressed; yet it speaks against the traditional triad of oppression: capitalism, monopoly, and discrimination. By being radical, it is a vital integer of the theatre of resistance, assertion, and comeuppance. *Harvest* has proved apodictically that hegemony could be challenged and the dominant could be defeated. So *Harvest* is a suigeneris: with it, ManjulaPadmanabhan has "decolonized the canon" of postcolonial literature of resistance (Gugelberger, 505). Hence *Harvest* does belong to the established canon of masterpieces of World Literature.

Harvest sheds light on the comeuppance of Jaya, the once- upon- a- time-marginalized chattel at the mercy of Om, Jitu, Ma, and the Interplanta MNC. She represents all the marginalized who are forced to sell their body/body parts to survive. Whether as prostitutes or as vendors of human organs (paid and involuntary donors), they use their physicality as "the very means" to define their existence as social beings in the real space of inexorable and unmitigated agony and deprivation (Srivastav, 2013,57), They do use either maleness or femaleness as promissory notes as per the demands of their own struggle for existence on the outskirt of the society. And they do "identity work" (Brittan 1989, 36) in the real world of exclusion and exploitation. In the virtual space, qualifying superstrides of technology, the neo-constructs of technical brilliance Ginni/Virgil steal the limelight in the "fancy prison" (MP, *Harvest*). So women in the virtual world are not only the product but also are the producers of "narratives of female space" (R. Pandey, 33). Such female bodies in the mould of Ginni are not trashed as mere laboring, child- bearing and child-producing reproductive body. Immensely salable (saleable), such virtual temptresses command a lot because they are not at the receiving end. Ginni commands and Om and Jeetu obey her. Ginni also mesmerizes Ma. For her she is an angel. So it can be said that Ginni manipulates others gaze, voice, and even self-estimate. Ginni has made Jaya pity herself as a Cinderella. So in the virtual world, there is also some sort of marginalization, but this kind of marginalization is less atrocious.

In the virtual world, body parts are given importance. The potential buyers of human organs treat as Aum/ Jeetu "just spare parts in some one's garage" (MP, 1998, 34). Ginni and Virgil ill-treat the family of the donor though they spend money on them and care for them in terms of their propensity to desire the best. That is why, characters like Jeetu experience both "body-death and self-death" (MP, *Harvest* 93). In the contrast, the virtual body of Ginni/Virgil does easily defeat "digital dysmorphia" (Isabella Coy- Dibley, 2016).

In the virtual space, Virgil craves for the body of Jaya, that Jaya who has been abandoned by her own husband. He wants Jaya's ravishing and voluptuous body. He coaxes her, cajoles her, and tempts her. Jaya now bargains. She is no more pliant and patible. She is confident and cocky. She says, loud and clear, "I know you are stronger than me, you are richer than me. But if you want me, you must risk your skin for me" (*Harvest*, 243). Virgil attacks; Jaya remains unfazed and unshaken. She has discovered "a new definition for winning: "Winning by losing" (*Harvest*, 248). She is prepared to die. She claims that Death is "the only thing" that is "still her own" (*Harvest* 248). Jaya is determined to "reclaim her own body through suicide" (Pravinchandra, 15). She resists and wins; no more she is a marginalized voiceless outsider but is a liberator (at least a self-liberator). So BasundharaChakraborty has inferred: ManjulaPadmanabhan has "presented a protest against the marginal status of women in modern India" (2020, 81).

Initially Jaya has no choices. So she has been a captive in the chawl itself, but she has not quitted; she has resisted. She has refused to live a life of denial. So gradually she has evolved; initially a victim of the patriarchal/ matriarchal system, Jaya has gradually graduated

to practice reverse gaze. Initially she has allowed persons like Jeetu and pseudo-persons like Virgil to feast on her body. Slowly but steadily, she asserts her own self-identity, honours her own freedom to choose, chooses her **own** sex-toys/boys, and raises herself above societal impairment.

Carrying forward the on-going postcolonial study of *Harvest* from the perspectives of voice, margin, and voices from the margin, it can be suggested that in this futuristic play, ManjulaPadmanabhan has showed how "financially strong groups/agents use the modern electronic technology to control and govern the financially weak sections of society in the world" (R.T.Bedre and M MGiram, 2013,21). Put simply, the "contact module" in *Harvest* is the nerve-centre of the neo-capitalist power-structure. So in this "cautionary play" (Helen Gilbert 216), ManjulaPadmanabhan has revisited/re-demystified "neo- imperialism" and its cronies (represented by the Guards in *Harvest*). In *Harvest*, so therefore, one detects two different sets of communication, register, code and illocutionary strategy. "The language used by the guards and Ginny is exact, dry, and machine-like, devoid of human concern" (Bedre, 24) but the language used by the marginalized is sentimental, stunted, unassertive, and rumbling. Only towards the end of the play, as Jaya asserts her own autonomy and agency and traverses a long stretch of her life on her own, her language has gained auditorial weightage. Jaya's life-trajectory has touched the following important points/ aspects of her eventful life, "marginality- voicelessness – devaluation – anxiety – stress – life-time decision – comeuppance-and, finally, attainment of self-worth" (Gangadhar Mishra 2018, 89). Hence it is concluded that by the time Jaya has attained her own self-worth, she has discarded her communicative imbecility and so, in the denouement of the play, Jaya's language is arresting and authoritative. As "hidden fires" (MP, 2010, 73) take time to flare up, the volubility of Jaya's articulation energy has ultimately materialized. Of course, it has been amplified by Jaya's own sense and experience of "otherness" (MP,76).

So, in *Harvest*, the subaltern in Jaya has been able to liberate herself. So her earlier speechlessness (indicative of her status as a "domesticated dolorous dolt")(Gangadhar Mishra) and her stunted voice have been supplemented by her booming voice, indicative of "the reasonable deliverance" of the dignity of the women, able to make the desired and desirable ingress from the margin to the centre of her own circle of ontology. (P.K.Mohapatra, 2018, 304) ■

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A Narratological Analysis of *Prophet Song* by Paul Lynch (2023)

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This paper presents a detailed narratological analysis of *Prophet Song* (2023) by Paul Lynch, focusing on how the novel's complex narrative techniques—unreliable narration, temporal manipulation, and shifting focalisation—are integral to the thematic exploration of prophecy, identity, and societal collapse. The protagonist, Jonah, who is burdened by his prophetic visions of an impending societal breakdown, serves as an unreliable narrator, whose fragmented perceptions of reality reflect the novel's larger concerns with the instability of truth and the collapse of individual and collective identity. The novel's manipulation of time, especially through the use of flashbacks and flash-forwards, not only undermines the reader's understanding of linear temporality but also emphasizes the inevitability of societal decay. The shifting focalization in the novel further highlights the disintegration of truth and the multiplicity of subjective experiences within a fractured society. This paper argues that Lynch's narrative strategies do more than tell a story; they embody the novel's dystopian vision, where both time and truth are unreliable, and identity is fluid. Through a narratological approach, this paper explores how the novel's form is inextricable from its thematic concerns, making the fragmented narrative a key tool in portraying a world on the brink of destruction.

Keywords: Dystopian fiction, Identity crisis, Narratology, Temporal manipulation, Shifting focalisation, Societal collapse, Unreliable narration

1. Introduction

Paul Lynch's *Prophet Song* (2023) presents a world in disintegration, where prophecy and identity collapse amid the disordered collapse of society. The protagonist, Jonah, is a reluctant prophet who foresees the destruction of the world, yet his visions, instead of providing clarity, only deepen his sense of alienation and fragmentation. The novel is characterised by its complex narrative structure, employing unreliable narration, temporal manipulation, and shifting focalisation to explore the central themes of prophecy, identity, and societal breakdown. Through these narrative techniques, Lynch conveys not just a story of a crumbling world but also a deep, philosophical engagement with the instability of truth, memory, and identity.

This paper explores the relationship between Lynch's narrative strategies and the thematic concerns of the novel. Drawing on key narratological concepts from Gérard Genette and Mikhail Bakhtin, as well as contemporary scholarship on dystopian literature, this research will demonstrate that the fragmented narrative in *Prophet Song* is not only a stylistic

choice but is central to the novel's exploration of the collapse of both individual identity and the social order. The analysis will show how Lynch's manipulation of narrative time, focalisation, and unreliable narration creates a complex, immersive experience that amplifies the novel's themes and engages with the philosophical and psychological implications of a world in crisis.

2. Theoretical Framework

The analysis of *Prophet Song* is grounded in key narratological theories by Gérard Genette, Mikhail Bakhtin, and contemporary scholars of dystopian literature. Genette's work on *narrative time* and *focalization* will be instrumental in examining how Lynch manipulates temporal structures and narrative perspective to create a fragmented and unreliable portrayal of reality. In particular, Genette's ideas on *analepsis* (flashbacks) and *prolepsis* (flash-forwards) will be applied to understand how Lynch dislocates time to reflect the thematic decay of memory, identity, and the inevitability of destruction.

Bakhtin's theory of the *chronotope*, the intersection of time and space within a narrative, provides a lens through which to analyse the temporal and spatial disintegration within the novel. Bakhtin's concept highlights how narrative form itself can convey the collapse of coherent identity and societal structures.Finally, the research draws on the work of Nünning and Nünning (2010), who discuss how unreliable narrators and fragmented structures are used in dystopian fiction to destabilize truth, ultimately forcing readers to confront the instability and uncertainty that characterize such narratives. This theoretical framework will guide the analysis of Lynch's use of narratological strategies in the service of thematic exploration.

3. Unreliable Narration: Fragmentation of Truth and Identity

3.1. Jonah's Subjective Perspective: The narrative in *Prophet Song* is primarily conveyed through Jonah's first-person perspective, but his unreliable narration complicates the reader's understanding of truth and reality. Jonah's role as a prophet is laden with confusion; his visions of the future are fragmented, contradictory, and often indistinct. His ability to interpret these visions becomes increasingly unreliable as he spirals into psychological fragmentation. The uncertainty of Jonah's perception reflects the novel's larger theme of the instability of truth in a decaying world.As Nünning and Nünning (2010) suggest, unreliable narrators in dystopian literature are often a reflection of a fractured social or personal reality. Jonah's fragmented perception of truth underscores the collapse of societal structures and the dissolution of identity, making his narration a crucial reflection of the novel's broader dystopian themes.

3.2. The Role of the Unreliable Narrator in Dystopia: The use of an unreliable narrator is a central device in dystopian fiction, serving not only as a narrative technique but also as a thematic exploration of societal decay. As argued by Bould (2005), unreliable narration in dystopian novels often reflects the breakdown of objective truth and the disintegration of the individual's understanding of reality. In *Prophet Song*, Jonah's fragmented sense of self mirrors

the collapse of society itself, suggesting that the erosion of identity is linked to the collapse of social order.Jonah's inability to distinguish between his prophecies and delusions highlights the futility of seeking certainty in a world that has lost its coherence. The unreliable narration becomes a commentary on the failure of both personal and societal structures to provide stability or meaning, emphasizing the existential void at the heart of the novel.

4. Temporal Manipulation: The Collapse of Time

4.1. Analepsis (Flashbacks): Unstable Memory and History: Lynch employs analepsis (flashbacks) to delve into Jonah's past, revealing his relationships, his growing awareness of his prophetic abilities, and his struggle with the collapse of the world around him. However, these flashbacks are not presented as a coherent or linear narrative. Instead, they are fragmented, unreliable, and often contradictory, mirroring Jonah's own deteriorating mental state and the unreliability of memory. The instability of memory, as reflected in these flashbacks, is closely tied to the collapse of historical continuity in the novel's dystopian world.

The non-linear presentation of Jonah's past underscores the idea that memory, like time itself, is subjective and unstable. As Genette (1980) suggests, this temporal manipulation reflects a world in which the past cannot be fully understood or trusted, further reinforcing the novel's thematic exploration of the collapse of truth.

4.2. Prolepsis (Flash-forwards): The Inevitable Future: In contrast to the fragmented flashbacks, Lynch uses prolepsis (flash-forwards) to provide glimpses of the inevitable future. These glimpses of Jonah's prophetic visions are presented as preordained, unavoidable events, reinforcing the novel's fatalistic outlook. The flash-forwards present a future in which societal collapse is inevitable, deepening the sense of despair and existential uncertainty that pervades the narrative.These temporal disruptions destabilize the reader's understanding of time, making the future feel as fragmented and uncertain as the present and past. As Bould (2005) argues, dystopian fiction often presents an unavoidable future, and in *Prophet Song*, this temporal fatalism amplifies the sense of powerlessness that defines Jonah's experience.

4.3. The Chronotope of Disintegration: Bakhtin's concept of the *chronotope* is essential for understanding how Lynch portrays the collapse of time and space in *Prophet Song*. The novel's manipulation of time—its fluidity, fragmentation, and intermingling of past, present, and future—reflects the disintegration of both societal structures and individual identities. The collapse of temporal coherence mirrors Jonah's psychological fragmentation, with time becoming a chaotic and unreliable force that mirrors the chaos in the world around him.

This collapsing of the chronotope not only reflects the breakdown of identity but also reinforces the novel's exploration of existential disintegration. Time and space become reflections of the collapse of meaning and truth, reinforcing the theme of a world in which nothing, not even time, can be relied upon.

5. Shifting Focalization: Multiple Perspectives on Collapse

Lynch employs shifting focalization to offer a variety of perspectives on the collapse of society. While Jonah's first-person narrative provides an intimate view of his psychological state, the novel also shifts to third-person perspectives, including those of other characters such as his wife, Brigid. These shifts in perspective provide a contrast to Jonah's unreliable narration, allowing the reader to see the effects of societal collapse from multiple angles. This shifting focalization emphasizes the collective experience of collapse. It suggests that the breakdown of society affects everyone, and the disintegration of identity is not limited to Jonah alone. Through these multiple perspectives, Lynch deepens the novel's thematic concerns with the universal experience of fragmentation and the loss of coherence in a decaying world.

6. Conclusion

In *Prophet Song*, Paul Lynch employs narratological techniques—such as unreliable narration, temporal manipulation, and shifting focalization—not only to structure the narrative but also to deepen the novel's engagement with itscentral themes of prophecy, identity, and societal collapse. Through the use of a fragmented, unreliable first-person narration, Lynch creates a world in which truth is uncertain, time is destabilized, and individual identity disintegrates. The manipulation of time, through both flashbacks and flash-forwards, further emphasizes the collapse of linear temporality, reflecting the novel's fatalistic view of the future.The shifting focalization enhances the novel's exploration of the universal nature of collapse, suggesting that the disintegration of identity and societal order is a shared experience. Through these narrative techniques, Lynch crafts a dystopian world in which both the personal and societal are inextricably linked through their fragmentation.Ultimately, this paper argues that Lynch's use of narratological strategies is not merely stylistic but central to the thematic fabric of the novel. The fragmented, unreliable narrative structure reflects the novel's philosophical engagement with existential uncertainty, making the narrative form itself a key element of its dystopian critique. Through its manipulation of time, space, and perspective, *Prophet Song* invites readers to reflect on the collapse of meaning and truth in a world teetering on the edge of destruction. ■

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Form and Technique in Jack Kerouac's Major Novels

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American literature is just three hundred years old and yet it is an influential literature. The mid-19th century American literature namely the Transcendentalists witnessed a widespread influence upon world literature. Kerouac was a postmodernist writer who introduced the narrative technique with the help of spontaneous prose, sketches and diction from the Beat counterculture movement. This paper purports to evaluate varied nuances of Kerouac's works. An attempt has been made to critically analyse the use of form and technique in Jack Kerouac's novels.

Keywords: Postmodernism, Counterculture, Beats, Spontaneous Prose, Drugs etc.

Introduction:

> Modernism played an important role in American fiction. It is said, Walt Whitman influenced even the forms and techniques of postmodernist writers. Whitman's vagabond lifestyle was adopted by the Beat movement and its leaders such as Ginsberg, Kerouacand Gary Snyder in the 1950s. (Wikipedia, Whitman 8)

The British modernist novelists like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Joseph Conrad and others made use of stream of consciousness narrative technique innovated by Marcel Proust, the French writer. William Faulkner of America used this technique. Poets like W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden and Ezra Pound experimented in verse Libra. Gertrude Stein spoke of automatic writing, "Writing that has been freed from control by the conscious, purposive mind." (Abrams 226) There were trends like Expressionism and Surrealism. The avant-garde is a prominent feature. The modernist writers broke away from the traditional plot, characterization, use of language, dialogue and architectonics. Pound said, 'make it new'.

On the other hand, postmodernism may be viewed as a continuation of modernism or a reaction to it. It all began in the post- World War-II era of the 1950s. The use of atom bomb, spoiling of ecology, over-population, the use of aeroplane, TV and electronics marked the beginning of postmodernism. The literary theories like post colonialism and post structuralism were subsumed under postmodernism.

The so-called postmodernism and counterculture movements in North America were the Beats, Hippie, Technie and Punk. William Carlos Williams was a pioneer for the

counterculture. He was followed by Beat poets Allan Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Kenneth Rexroth and others. The 1960s American postmodern novelists included the Beats like Jack Kerouac, and William Burroughs, general writers like Kurt Vonnegut, Thomas Pynchon, John Barth, Don Delillio, D.F. Wallace, and others.The Theatre of the Absurd was so well-known in British drama. Some of the continental writers are Vladimir Nabokov, John Cage, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Salman Rushdie and others. It is said,

> The American Postmodern writers left the modernist project, the eliteness, and veered towards the popular, using parody, pastiche, scepticism, irony, fatalism, the mixing of high and low cultural allusions, and an indifference to the redemptive mission of art" (*English Literature*797)

The fiction written by Nabokov, Pynchon, Kerouac, Burroughs, John Fowles and Italio Calvino reflects this trend. "Distinctive features of this school include switching between orders and reality and fantasy, resorting to meta-fiction and the playful undermining of objective kinds of knowledge such as biography and history.

Jack Kerouac (1922-69) was a great American postmodern writer. He was a novelist, poet and non-fictional writer. He was born and brought up in Lowell, Mass, and he had certain years of education at Columbia University where he befriended Allan Ginsberg, and William Burroughs. He began writing under the spell of Thomas Wolfe. Such works as his first major novel *The Town and the City* (1950) reflect that. *On the Road* (1957) established his fame as a Beat writer with spontaneous prose. This reputation was consolidated by his next important novel *The Dharma Bums* (1958). Kerouac's friendship with Neal Cassady, later with west coast writers Gary Snyder, Kenneth Rexroth, Gregory Corso and others encouraged him to write *On the Road*, one of the best sellers. *Mexico City Blues* (1955) is his major book of poetry.

This article highlights Kerouac's forms and techniques as he used them in three of his major novels – *The Town and the City* (1950), *On the Road* (1957) and *The Dharma Bums* (1958). If Kerouac used the traditional autobiographical mode of narration in *The Town and the City*, he switched over to experimental style in his later works. He wrote *On the Road* on a scroll of paper describing his cross-country excursions with Cassady. The book has confessional mode, too. He called this as spontaneous prose. *The Dharma Bums* is a true-life-story novel, blurring the border between biography and fiction. Kerouac's two essays "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" (1953) and "Belief and Technique for Modern Prose" (*Evergreen Review*, 1959) explain his forms and techniques.

***The Town and the City* (1951):**

Though this is not a great novel, it speaks of Kerouac's apprentice in the art of writing. He wrote this novel in traditional way, following Thomas Wolfe's autobiographical mode from his novel *Looking Back the Angel!* which turned into true-life-story novel such as *On the Road*, blurring the border between novel and autobiography. "Kerouac was not

just a talented writer, but an original writer" as Michael Dittman thinks (Dittman 27) Kerouac was a born writer.

The Town and the City is a long book, with a plot that spans generations. The novel contrasts with pairs between the town (Lowell) and city (New York), faith and sin, and love and lust. George and Marge Martins (modelled on Kerouac's own parents) are the seniors. The story involves a family of brothers Joe, Francis and Peter, and it begins in 1935. Peter Martin is a 13-year-old boy when the book begins. He is confused about what to do with his life. He is athletic and intelligent and uses those attributes to win a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania. Peter is a prototypical Kerouac hero. He possesses a deep melancholy that is worsened by his inability to express it in ways that others can understand.

The family moves to New York City, and the brothers Francis and Peter argue over Peter's new friends, who resemble Kerouac's New York City coterie. One of these friends, Junky, a habitué of Times Square, utters the phrase that would soon bring Kerouac both fame and misery. "Don't you know," Junky says, "*I'm beat*."At the end of the book, characters, one after another, including George and the family, move apart with no hope of the line continuing. Peter finds himself on a lonely highway on a rainy night. In his mind, he hears the voice of his father carried with the rain, asking him where he is going, but Peter has no answer for his dead father's dreams for him.

***On the Road* (1957):**

The story of the novel *On the Road* is told with great relish by the pair Sal Paradise, a young college student and Dean Moriarty. Moriarty, a good-natured and slap-happy reform-school alumnus, is pathologically given to aimless travel, women, car stealing, jazz, liquor and pseudo-intellectual talk, as though life were just one long joy-ride that cannot be stopped. He is Mr. Kerouac's answer to the age of anxiety and one of the author's real accomplishments is to make him both agreeable and sympathetic. It is said,

> Thirty years ago it was fashionable for the young and the weary-creatures of Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald – simply to be 'lost.'Later, one – the depression and two – the world wars intensified man's alienation.*On the Road* belongs to the new Bohemianism in American fiction in which an experimental style is combined with eccentric characters and a morally neutral point of view. It is not so much a novel as a long affectionate lark inspired by the so-called 'beat' generation, and an example of the degree to which some of the most original work being done in this country has come to depend upon the bizarre and the offbeat for its creative stimulus. Kerouac has written an enormously readable and entertaining book. (Dempsey 203)

Spontaneous Prose: Critics as well as Beats have written about Kerouac's spontaneous prose. Tom Clark explains this hue:

> This artistic self-crucifixion had three essential elements, two of which became important parts of Kerouac's standard procedure as a writer. The first was to write

every day – as "a function, a daily duty." He continued this practice for fifteen years. The second was to write 'holy' works by candlelight. The third and key element of Self-intimacy was the burning of manuscripts. Finishing a page, he fed it to the candle fame. Burning his writings, he believed in the gloomy fall of 1944, would be the one way to assure their purity, because it would prove that they had not been "done for ulterior, or practical motives." Kerouac discovered a more direct method of attaining purity or sincerity: writing straight from the heart, without second thoughts "spontaneously". (Clark 67)

***The Dharma Bums* (1958):**

Kerouac believed in Buddhism as did Gary Snyder, for Buddhism rejected both myth and religion. Whatever myth is there it is added later. Buddha spoke of the Middle Path and said that life is suffering which can be overcome by renunciation and roaming. Kerouac found that this Buddhism was close to his Catholicism and French-Canadian life. Kerouac, Cassady, Ginsberg and Snyder developed this Buddhist interest in the west coast. In this novel, both Japhy Ryder (Gary Snyder) and Ray Smith (Jack Kerouac) wander the country in search of spiritual solace. Kerouac used spontaneous prose to depict it all. The plot has events in Kerouac's life after he wrote *On the Road*. There is outdoor life, mountaineering, hiking and hitchhiking. There is drug, sex, jazz and poetry-reading and love for nature. The protagonist searches for a Buddhist context to his experiences throughout the story. *The Dharma Bums* influenced not only the Beats, but also the Hippies.

Kerouac as a 1960 counterculture writer brought in change in both the form and content of fiction of the times. "Kerouac, author-catalyst of the writerly cataclysm that shook America had a traceable impact on the writing of many writers. He was a great influence on "The Ways of Expression." (Kimelman257)

Critics have spoken at length about Kerouac's spontaneous prose. Kerouac's name is associated with this style and mode of expression. In fact, 1960s counterculture has this as its inalienable feature. Kerouac wrote the article "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" detailing its nature, use and exuberance. The features are,Set-up: The mental object is sketched; Procedure; Method; Scoping; Timing; Center of Interest; Structure of Work and Mental State. Kerouac's spontaneous prose is a writing technique mainly used for novels as we see it in *The Dharma Bums.*It lays stress on freeflow of thought as in stream of consciousness narrative technique. It helps creativity.

Conclusion: *On the Road* is Kerouac's best work, speaking of his leading the Beat movement in America. All his novels including the later one *The Dharma Bums* speak of the Beats' significant experience in search of truth and beauty. *The Subterranean, Tristessa, Doctor Sax and Maggie Cassady* and others too project Beat consciousness. The Beats that way upheld democratic values. ■

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Utkal University, Vani Vihar - 86 batchmates felicitated Dr Udayanath Majhi, editor of ROCK PEBBLES in Hotel Mayfair, Bhubaneswar. Dr Achyut Samanta, Maheswar Panigrahi, Braja Bandhu Bhol, Harekrishna Mahanta, Prabodh Kumar Mohanty, Dr Lipi Pushpa Nayak and Rabi Behera in the frame.

SHORT STORY

The Enchantress's Suicide

Original (Odia): **Bangali Nanda**

Translation: **Surendra Nagarju (Elanaaga)**

This incident occurred sometime between the end of 1979 and the beginning of 1980.

It was midnight in December. The moon was showering moonlight from the clear sky.

Kiran Kumar was unable to sleep. He closed the book and switched off the table lamp. He knew he wouldn't be able to sleep even if he tried hard. "It would be better if I go out and stroll," he thought.

He had come to this city recently, as he was transferred from another place. However, this city is not new to him; he was an old acquaintance. He had returned to this city like a bird that shook off its memories and returned to its nest.

None of the beautiful things could tie him to the old place: the bustling shopping mall of Cuttack, the vast playground in Bhubaneswar, the delectable seashore of Puri, the exhilarating climate of Barampur, and the sweet bonds of amity forged in Sambalpur.

Why was he growing so affectionate towards this city? Despite relentless attempts to resist the idea of leaving the old place, he returned to this city!

He had stayed in many towns before. When he was transferred, the locals wanted him to stay back. He, however, gently spurned their request. Somehow, an unknown attraction pulled him here.

With a furrowed forehead and his handsbehind his back, Kiran was strolling from one end of the room to the other.

He had declined many marriage proposals. His bud-like tender love had vanished into oblivion long ago. From that day, the doors of his love mansion had remained closed and are still closed today.

Old memories stirred in his mind. His heart is still searching for the smiling face of his beloved.

He had met Triveni in the second year of his graduation. She was his junior in college. Compared to other girls, Triveni used to be more cheerful. She would also make others laugh. He was very fond of her smile, which resembled a flowing river.

Kiran won first prize in the elocution contest conducted on College Day. Triveni stood second. They became friends while receiving the honours. Before that, they had seen

each other but hadn't had many opportunities to talk. There wasn't any need for it; science was her optional subject. Yet, the College's Annual Day brought them closer.

Later, as their hearts mingled, they roamed together. They used to walk long distances along railway tracks, talking with each other. In the evenings, they would immerse themselves in variegated dreams. They enjoyed all the comforts and pleasures.

Then, he had to leave the city for higher studies, forcing them to separate. Later, interviews, postings, etc. followed. Cell phones were not in vogue then. Many homes had no landline phones either; Triveni's home was one among them.

When he was posted to Bhadrak, he had to travel straight from Rayagada. After moving from one place to another in Odisha, he described his experiences in detail in his letters to Triveni without omitting anything worth mentioning.

Replies to his letter were supposed to come in eight days. However, ten, twelve, or even fifteen days elapsed while he waited. He would get goosebumps and long for sweet experiences the moment he saw the postman. Yet, not many letters came from Triveni. Therefore, his heart was often filled with disappointment.

Travelling to that city is difficult, as it was at the southern end of Odisha. Hence, he had to live a cheerless life. He exhaled a long sigh, which mingled with the cool weather.

After spending time in that manner, Kiran returned to the same city. Anybody disciplined and methodical would be loved by all. Since Kiran was that kind of person, the locals tried to get his transfer revoked to retain him there. Even some political leaders tried that but failed.

Thus, with a determined heart, he came back to this city, finally.

He locked the door of his house and started walking.

The moonlight was pervading everywhere. The city was becoming calm. He reached a lonely place on the outskirts of the downtown. Extreme silence prevailed there.

He liked such midnight times the most because heart-moving poetry was born only on such occasions. The memories of sweet moments he had spent with Triveni came to his mind.

He used to compose poems in those days. Love induces one to write poetry. Doesn't it? After penning many books of poetry, he carved a niche in literature. Naturally, every poet's lover likes the poems written by that particular poet. So, Triveni liked Kiran's poems immensely.

After joining the job, Kiran's poetic skills waned due to the complicated circumstances at his workplace. Yet, he was a poet; his main aim was to compose poems. This is similar to how a sculptor's skill never dies. Though he was completely immersed in work and always attentive to it, he used to pen poems whenever he could steal time. Every time thoughts came to his mind, he wrote stories.

As black clouds shrouded the moon, darkness permeated the area. Strange thoughts swarmed him.

Walking with short steps, he reached the bridge at the far end of the city and felt relieved from the onslaught of his thoughts. A huge lorry passed by his side, making a frightening blare. He glanced at its red tail lamp. The truck sped away as if in a wonderland.

Then, calmness filled the area. As the clouds moved away, the sky became clear. Kiran sat on one of the stone walls of the bridge. The shining moon's image was moving tortuously in the water flowing under the bridge. The gurgles of the stream gave rise to myriad musical sounds.

All of a sudden, a chilly breeze blew and he shivered. At once, he pulled his coat up to cover himself fully. He buttoned the top button and pulled the coat up to his neck.

Later, the cold breeze disappeared, and moonlight started to sway. He felt like screaming. He wanted to soar like a bird and float in the white moonlight.

Suddenly, he was startled by the appearance of a woman near him. She was wearing a white sari. Since her face was turned to the opposite side, he could not recognize her properly. It appeared to him that she was waiting for someone.

"Who could she be?" he thought and felt perturbed. Thinking his privacy was disturbed, he rose to leave.

"Listen," she said. Her words seemed to echo, banging the surrounding hills and blending with the white moonlight. He felt as if somebody had pressed all the keys of a musical instrument at once.

Thinking that she had called him, he glanced at her. She gestured for him to follow her. So, he started walking behind her.

She was treading on the main road, and he followed her. They went past many gardens, plains, mounds, and slopes. The ramble seemed to have no end. She paused whenever he stopped. When he moved a step ahead, she did the same. Slowly, he felt that she was the most affectionate person to him, someone who had known him for a long time. He could not leave her.

His heart beat fast. "I have been waiting for this lady for so long," he thought. Her rhythmic steps emitted a dazzling light. He wanted to call her and know all her details, but it wasn't possible.

She was moving ahead with ecstasy in that lonely, silent night. The moon had set long ago in the sky, and night descended on all sides. It seemed as if walking was her sole goal. Kiran was moving behind her almost in a hypnotized state.

Cleaving the dense darkness, a beam of bright light appeared. It gradually came nearer.

But she soon disappeared into the darkness. He was greatly panicked. A jeep whirred beside him and stopped a little ahead. It came in the reverse and stopped beside him. The

intense glare of its headlights and the smell of petrol vapour brought Kiran into the real world.

Two people got down from the jeep.

"It's you, Sir?" one of them asked in surprise.

Kiran was startled when he recognized the person as contractor MadhuBabu.

"Where are you heading so early this morning?" they asked him hesitantly.

What would he say? Could he tell them that he had been following a woman!? What would they think about him if he did so?

"Have you come this far on your morning walk?" asked one of them.

"Yes, yes," he said pretending seriousness to cover his guilt.

"Okay, let's go," they said.

Kiran's body movements betrayed restlessness. Since he could not see the woman, he had to get into the jeep.

He went home, attended to his morning activities, and headed to his office. He worked absent-mindedly.

At the closing hours of work, the office telephone rang. He lifted it nonchalantly. The collector instructed him on the phone to come urgently with election files. He had to comply with the order. He headed towards the collector's bungalow listlessly.

In the following days, he was fully immersed in the election files. He had no time at all, not even to breathe!

Elections were over. The new government came into power.

In the meantime, one month had elapsed.

* * *

It was January. Watching the cool moonlight, Kiran was recollecting the past. His eyes moved in a dreamlike circle. They searched for the lady dressed in a white sari.

Countless questions were moving in his mind, like waves in the sea. "Who was she? Why did she roam in that deserted place at midnight? Where did she want me to go? Why was I so strongly attracted to her?" he reflected.

He tried to get rid of the doubts that surrounded him like a whirlpool. "If I go there now, can I see her?" he thought, pacing inside the hall. This was the whirlwind of doubt and bewilderment, in which he had been getting entangled lately.

His wristwatch showed midnight. "A new day will arrive, and in minutes, the date will change," he thought.

He heard howls of foxes in the distance. Then, he was startled by the frightening hoot of an owl.

He recovered his senses a bit after drinking a glass of water. He felt as if somebody were urging him to start at once. He picked a cardigan and a babushka without any conscious effort. He drifted in the stream of moonlight without his knowledge and reached the bridge in the city's suburbs.

Feeling an obscure invitation, he looked towards the other end of the bridge and was shaken. An apparition-like figure was beckoning him from there. He breathed deeply and moved towards it.

No sooner had he reached her than she started strolling. He experienced the endless torment again.

Kiran felt as if some supernatural force entered his legs. He tried very hard to catch up with her but to no avail. His whole body was drenched in sweat.

They passed a footpath after treading the main road. Crossing many fields, forests, plains, hillocks, and snow-capped mountain peaks, they trudged along a main road. He was trying his best to catch up with her. At last, he got into her immediate vicinity. His legs were filled with extraordinary energy.

"Eureka," he shouted suddenly.

A loud sound was heard. Startled, he looked in that direction. A woman slipped from his hand and plunged into the river.

"Suicide," he screamed. He realized he was standing near the riverbank. His limbs trembled. He felt dizzy. The muscles of his face seemed to have hardened.

"Where is the woman I have been following? Is she the one who just committed suicide? She walked a very long distance. What does it mean?"

The geographical precept that the Earth is round came to his mind. He realized he had reached the same place where he had started! "Does it imply that I revolved around the Earth?" he thought.

Kiran looked around and realized he was the only person standing on the bridge.

The moon was showering cool, white light on rivers, mountains, trees, and vines.

Later, he came to know this: unable to withstand the pain of separation from her lover, Triveni had committed suicide by jumping into the same river where they had spent time together, where he had recited his poems! ■

Sri Bangali Nanda, well-known Odia story-teller, Central Sahitya Akademi Award winner, lives in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Dr. Surendra Nagarju (Elanaaga), Central Sahitya Akademi Award winning translator, lives in Hyderabad, Telangana.

POEMS

Ode to Bicycle

*** Bibhudutta Sahoo**

Once the darling of masses
Still the favourite of children
Got so many get ups
Although they are in down graph
Among the seniors
Yet they are non to second my dear

Once most popular dowry gift
So they move smooth and swift
When sat the newly wed on the top tube
Her husband in seventh heaven

Attached a dynamo on the rear tyre
To supply power to the head lamp
So elegant designed with tiny bell
In weekly bazaar they the loaded camels

Yet uncommon scrotum pain occurred
When bumped on rocky roads
Still the joyful rider regretted hardly
As the gifted bicycle so lovely ■

* Headmaster, Govt UG High School, Buromal, Dist. Balangir, Odisha.

Thirst for Travelling

*** Satya Sundar Samanta**

The world is a tourist spot
In various colors and forms,
Sometimes, it looks like black hills
That encircle the green valleys.
Again, it looks like a white mountain
That gives shelter to the foamy fountain
That charmingly attracts
The thirsty tourists.
Sometimes, it like an oasis
Comforts thirsty travelers,
Again, it like jumping waves
Roll upon the bathing tourists.

Like an orchard the world
Timely provides fruity food,
Again, as a hued garden of flowers
It serves food to inner beings.
Sometimes like an ocean of snow
Or as a garden of morning dew
It absorbs the hearts
Of the wandering travelers.

You all may live with red thought
Of religious, national, caste,
class conflict.
But, definitely I can't.
Because after all-devouring death
I will be turned into mist,
Hence, I desire to travel the whole planet
Without any poisonous conflict,
But, with love and thirst in heart. ■

* Research Scholar, NOU, Baripada, Odisha.

Ash Whispers

*** Saroj K. Padhi**

Oft' I feel
I have done nothing
to save the girl child
in this wide world
that day by day goes wild,
throwing conscience
into dustbin of science,
as gender games

in many a subtle form
still go on
pushing nearly half of humanity
into a frozen, frigid form !
In such times of dark
I have nothing to do
but to pray aloud
even when none does hark...
as the tones of all my prayers,
it seems,
have turned sad like
the sorrowing Kash flowers
in Mahanadi's banks
after heavy every wicked coastal storm.

In their dull looks
for days and hours
when white wishes
for a better world
are belied by a few nations
who still believe in war
and keep raining fires.
We aren't anymore
safe on this earth,
in threshold
of war and shadow war,
with drones lurking in air,
AI sans conscience
wounding the just and fair,
with climate, gone nuts
spilling carcasses every where !

As I sit praying to my Lord,
to thirty three crore gods and goddesses
(who are in fact one God)
to come out of their sky high citadels
land on earth
and see how we are stricken with
mindless destruction
sounding death knell
for the creation!

But look how My lord
smiles with a shade of sarcasm
brimming beneath
His still rotund eyes
ridiculing the flawed male ego,
and male gaze
of our lost, silly civilization ! ■

* Prof. of English, JKBK College,
Cuttack, Odisha.

You are Heavenly

*** Dipika Bhatt**

Girls!
God's most beautiful creation you are
Seek within and observe your strength
Polish your brain with the light of education
Don't waste your smile
on the folk of scandals
Object and ignore their alluring appreciation
of your eyes or something like that !

Keep your eyes on your elegant existence and deed
Cause you are not an object
You mean a lot and not like of eyes soothing puppets for an unknown
You should possess feminine existence
Your presence in public is not for bearing jokes apart
As often they use many as a tool
of lusty craft!

Stop them through your dignified silence
Never allow them to be personal
You are heavenly Angel
Not reside on this earth merely
for others entertainment ! ■

* Asst. Prof. of English, HVM (PG) Colllege, Raisi, Laksar, Haridwar, U.K.

Life

*** Sujata Dash**

I despised life like any mortal does
But it took me a while
Rather quite some time
To realise what life has in store

While teetering on the brinks
of fragmentation
where my cries and afflictions
echoed non stop
Silent puddles in tired eyes
Showcased angst and anger
A flicker of conviction
A gentle quiver
Whispered in my ear
"Life's endearing moments
are not over dear!
life will rattle along amid aural chaos
being a quaint mix of happiness
and sorrow
be not perturbed by winks and nudges
or, by chidings and reprimands
that at times it throws at us"

I was like a weary hearted hollow moon
Felt like a discarded tune,
Motley remains of an old song
When confronted by utter rejection
Like any ordinary mortal does
But then....
My core realised
The crux of the matter
Whistled away worries
like a steam engine does
And I blushed deep crimson

No more was I engulfed in abashment
or self pity
Having realised
" A bloom has to brown about edges
when time ripes
Even the sun plays a second fiddle
when darkness hedges
But rises again from ignominy
and deep slumber
life is the greatest leveler
All encompassing in nature
It hems torn borders when time is just
Our trysts with brightness and lackluster
Are aptly devised
To fortify our discernments forever." ■

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Reverie

*** Bishnu Charan Parida**

I kept gazing on,
At the countless sea waves
Ebbing on a desolate shore
Over the sands that out-stretched
to the horizons…
Looking upwards to a promising sky,
Listening to the whispering winds,
In anticipation,
You will come back, someday…

I can't forget,
How the sweet sunshine
touched the seashore
With light lipstick kisses,
Rippling in my heart,
My desires faded into the horizons
Your memories precipitate
In the dark evening stretch
of the silent sands…

Today the city smells

Of your evanescent memory
With a gust of summer afternoon rain
Dazzling so thrillingly
Hailstones clatter on the streets,
As I drive past the city square
Where we often met,
On scintillating Sundays
And happy holidays
The past stands present for me. ■

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* a bi-lingual Poet, lives in Jajpur Road, Odisha.

The Arrival of Newborn

*** Moloy Bhattacharya**

I
After half an hour
The red light goes off
And the eager eyes,
The beating of heart
Feel the wait is over.
II
After a moment
The newborn appears
In a crib, smiling
Like a rose that spreads
Its smell everywhere.
III
The baby girl struggles
For her existence
To the world of experience
From her world of innocence
With a promise for tomorrow. ■

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* poet, story-teller, playwright, translator.
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An Unusual Rhapsody

***Ashutosh Satpathy**

I cannot but eulogize you
for you taught me a lot.
…And I learnt
counting stars in the sky,
counting waves in the seas.
But alas! I forgot
-deliberately forgot
for forgetting sake,
all the formulas you taught me.
You symbolize absurdity;
but realism is
in my blood,
in my respiration.
Your classical approach
appealed me;
but my realism appalled you.
I,that is why, could not
snatch you from you.
You endeavored to make me
a twinkling star –
a dancing wave.
But… I am rational,
I am existence.
I am what I am.
Still, I don't know
why I feel melancholic
but for you.
Can we meet each other,
if I affirm your words,
and not your ideas,
where sky ends with his stars,
and earth ends with her oceanic waves? ■

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Two Poems by - * **Prof. Keshab Sigdel**

(I)

An Evening

(In memory of the people disappeared during a decade long civil war in Nepal)

Each day before the sun sets
Cows return to their sheds
Blowing dust along their trails
The goat's kid that had parted
from its flock
Comes hopping at the yard of the house
And looks reassured.
Somewhere around the guava grove
The soft sound of the beetles
Grow into a strong melody.
In its hide-and-seek movement
through tiny clouds
The moon glitters.
After keeping safe his slippers
with the blue straps
Chádani's father sits with his legs
crossed at the porch
He takes out a leaf-wrapped tobacco stick
And with a loud voice
Asks for a coal-fire to kindle it.

This way, since many years,
This old house has composed a melody
Of its happiness.

Unexpectedly, today
The cows did not return
through their dusty trails
Nor did the goat's kid arrive hopping
as usual.
The frogs croak incessantly
Probably to invite rain in the village
Chádani's father's slippers are found
With their broken straps
Below the guava tree nearby our house.

Due to some unknown fear
I am sweating.
At the edge of a paddy field
There is a cloth, completely drenched.
As the moon grows dull
covered by the clouds
I am unable to discern
Whether that piece of cloth
Is a flag of victory
Or an indication of my despair! ■

(II)

The Child and the Butterfly

(In memory of Palestinian children who lost their lives in war)

A child playing in the field
Halted in front of a wiry fence
The butterfly flying alongside him
Slipped through and soared skyward.

With a slight lift of the head
The child looked affixed at the sky
And saw in place of the butterfly
A smoke tailed missile
Coming straight at him.

And the child was lost amidst the smoke
But the fumes held steady
Farther and farther
Higher and higher
Like a butterfly
Like the child's dreams

The aftermath saw no butterflies
on the field
Neither the children
Tragedies came though
So did sky mystifying hatred
And the remnants of the ruptured dreams

The sun rose the same today
The Mediterranean summoned
a tidal wave
That whisked away the smoke clouds
A thousand larvas are now growing
in my head
And I now have a feeling
The child will resurrect again
To play with the butterflies!
But he must be a teen by now
So instead of a butterfly
He might brandish a flag
And say—Inquilab Zindabad! ■

---

* Prof. Keshab Sigdel is a Nepali Poet,. editor, academic and rights activist. He teaches Poetry and Literature of War, Conflict and Trauma at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Last Meeting

Original Odia : **Ratnakar Rout***
Transcreaton : Saroj K Padhi

Why does Time defer
me from the world to deliver
when unbearable is life's torture ?

Now it's an endless night
as i listen to the swan's song
with my eyes in painful blight .

It seems all tall talks of love
are a bundle of lies
when life in the deluge lies.

Blood flows like a dying river
limbs are out of gear
Flowers look dull and queer!

Wishes hardly ease the mind
Festival of lights fades with a hiss
as powerless is the wind.

Pain chokes the drooping spirit
as living is but drinking poison
and unquenchable is the thirst.

I pray to Lord, me to forgive
and from fruits of bad acts
me to fully and finally relieve.

Businesses of life have their turnover,
leaving the wayfarer back on track
to receive the final release order .

Return I must sans any fear
after all give and take are over
without caring for pitiful tear.

The element of air within
waits for the final blast
for light of life to give in.

Nights go, there comes blackest night
eyes wait sans a dinhle fall of broow
for the fall of bow off of stage light.

All my kins are eagerly waiting
to wish the last bon voyage
till i utter ' This is our last meeting'. ■

---

* Ratnakar Rout is a bi-lingual poet and novelist, lives in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

My Friend

Original Odia : **Dr. Rajkishore Padhi**
Transcreaton : Santosh Kumar Behera

My friend was in my mind
And I too in him,
But no such prospect
Did we ever nourish
As to meet each other.
When the king of Mathura
I was
And he was merely
a poor Brahmin
How could a chance we avail?

His wife often persuades him
To meet me, saying-
"Your friend is a King
Very kind and a great-giver, you say
Why don't you meet him.
He may redress our griefs".
My friend, my childhood mate
Every time feels a little ashamed
And her plea is always turned down.

However once again
When his wife insisted
My friend could resist no more
And came out
Absolutely hesitant and dejected
So shy he was
So shameful he looked!
Somebody might have informed me
I came to know
He was coming

I greeted him on his way
Kept him in deep embrace,
Washed his feet,
And wiped them
With utmost care
In my upper garment.
Took him by his hand
Made him sit beside me
On my royal bed
To his innocent curiosity
And to the great astonishment
of my queens.
They looked at me
In utter surprise
As if something had gone astray
As if my conduct
Was beyond my royal descend.

I fanned him
And arranged for him
foods-sweet and delicious.
In course of my conversation
Did I ask him in just
About his wife
About the gift
She might have sent for me
About her not accompanying him
About the urgency of his meeting,
was it cordial
or a purpose behind it?

My friend told nothing
He could give me no reply.
Sometimes many things
seem to be saying
more in their silence.
At last with a heavy heart
He took leave of me
looking miserably perplexed
As if was unable to say
what he had intended.

Same was his condition
At the time of returning
Perhaps thinking what to reply

To his wife waiting at home.

In friendship, if true
Many things are implicit
without utterance
A handful of rice is served too
without asking.
I know not
What he gained,
But I got
An easy and inexpensive
A rare privilege
of meeting my friend. ■

---

* Dr. Raj Kishore Padhi, a noted Odia poet, lives in Jaraka, Dist: Jajpur, Odisha. The translator Dr. Santosh Kumar Behera is a retired Prof. in English.

I am Well

Gajanan Mishra

See me
I am well.
Not in heaven
Not in hell.
Here I am
See me
In your black eyes.
Recognise me
I am not
In any photo.
About me,
Nothing is there
To know.
I am moody,
True to say
On this cloudy day,
I am liar,
If you are clear
Show me
A right picture.
If you so like,
See me
I am blind,
Also deaf.
I am with
Justice.
Am I a myth! ■

---

* Gajanan Mishra, a bi-lingual poet, lives in Titilagarh, Dist. Bolangir, Odisha.

Madam Madhavi Latha is Retiring

K.V. Raghupathi

Madam Madhavi Latha is retiring
as a professor of English
with streaks of mercury hair,
streaming through from the forehead,
over the scalp
and down the back, flowing
like autumn leaves;
she looks half bald already and old enough
with her two prominent gold coated
upper teeth on the right
as if dangling, paving the way
for the depressed cheeks.

Madam Madhavi is retiring
in her favourite cotton pink saree
and a matching blouse and a bindi
in the center of her eyebrows
shining as the sinking
sun on Saturday evening
with a cornucopia of memories,
her accolades, her accomplishments,

her frustrations, her despair
she has to shed at the gate number
one of the campus
before reaching her home
to make herself reconciled
with what she left behind.

Several things she needs no longer
like makeup accessories, a pink handbag,
stylish chappals,
blue thermos, copper bottle,
dark green lunch box;
now obsolete, no set time to eat and sleep,
appropriate now she requires to suit
her unencumbered life
free from racing against time, schedules,
time clocks,
university rules, academic meetings,
unrealistic deadlines
and all that daily grind,
now they are the things of the past.

Madam Madhavi is retiring,
with dozens of sarees and blouses
need to be replaced
by two pairs of sarees, blouses, frocks,
and chappals,
a violet umbrella to shield from the sun
and rain
and last, yet not the very least
a memento, a shawl,
and an elegant gilded citation
recalling her unflawed services
to commemorate and cherish the joyous date
of exit from the department
to fit a life of absent of haste and waste;
though emotionally bankrupt,
she has time free
to make her dreams come true
from strife and tumult.

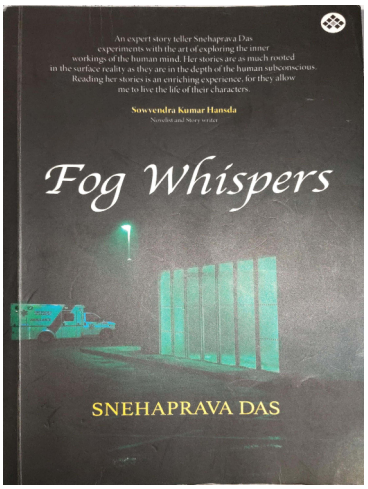
Now, no one cares about the positions
she held
in service with pomp and conceit;
her constant ringing pink-framed
mobile ceases,
now she can sing and muse aloud;
eat, laugh, and sleep naturally,
walk and talk with no restraint,
stop making stale, sterile jokes.

'Let me be alone and bask
in the bright sunshine of the sky",
but she can't, amidst her losses
and health issues;
her restless and wandering memories
prick in sleep.
Yet, a new lifestyle awaits her
galore without an expiration date.
All she needs to do is step inside
to a new world of freedom, fun,
and discoveries,
enjoy reprieve from the daily grind,
and time to live those dreams
as sparkling jewels
she did not share in service. ■

---

* Prof. K.V. Raghupathi, a former academic, poet, story-teller, novelist, critics, columnist, book-reviewer, lives in Tirupati. Emailm - drakvraghupathi@gmail.com

Book Review



Fog Whispers

A Collection of 10 Stories

Author: Dr. Snehaprava Das

Reviewed by: Dr. Chittaranjan Bhoi

Publisher: PEN IN BOOKS

Page: 306, Price : Rs. 499/-

In *Fog Whispers*, Snehaprava Das delivers a rich tapestry of stories that delve into the complex intricacies of life, human emotions, dreams and the supernatural. A collection of ten stories, this book traverses diverse themes ranging from love, loss and ambition to the mystical and phantasmagorical. Spanning over 306 pages, this compilation under the publication of PEN IN BOOKS exemplifies Das's deft narrative style and her ability to blend surface-level realities with the profound depths of the human subconscious. Through her evocative prose, Das explores both the mundane and the extraordinary, bridging the tangible with the intangible. The stories are a reflection of life itself-its unpredictability, its complexities and its poignancy.

The opening story, "Rose is a Poem in Red" sets the tone for the entire collection. It is a poignant tale of love, loss and serendipity where the protagonist Chirag, struggles to reach his love, Chitra under the shadow of an impending tragedy. The story weaves a delicate narrative of their romance, one marked by the symbolism of a red rose-a motif that recurs throughout the narrative to signify their connection. The central theme of unfulfilled promises coupled with the tragic accident that shatters Chirag's memory, invokes a sense of melancholic beauty. Yet, through the rekindling of love in a familiar place, the story shows the resilience of human connection echoing the idea that love, much like art is eternal and self-renewing. The metaphors surrounding memory and identity resonate deeply making this one of the most compelling tales in the collection.

The title story, "Fog Whispers" captures the essence of the collection. The story of Bunty, a young boy in the cold embrace of December is a delicate exploration of childhood, familial love and the haunting presence of memory. Bunty's deep connection with his mother, his grandmother's village stories and his growing resentment towards his sister's marriage reflect the emotional turbulence of adolescence. The tension between the innocence of childhood and the complexities of adult life is palpable making the story both poignant and

relatable. The story also captures the shift in family dynamics as the death of the grandmother creates emotional fissures that manifest in seemingly trivial moments like the request for cake. This subtle narrative of emotional dislocation is what makes "Fog Whispers" so powerful- a reflection of how small moments can hold immense emotional weight.

In "The Lady in White" Das explores themes of personal growth, self-actualization and the pursuit of passion against the backdrop of familial expectations. The protagonist, a woman who has led a comfortable but unfulfilled life, embarks on a journey of self-discovery by learning to play the sitar. Her nervousness before her first performance and the eventual triumph serves as an allegory for the creative journey, filled with self-doubt and the courage to overcome it. Her success and the approval she receives from her teacher and husband not only mark the fulfillment of her personal dreams but also a broader narrative about women's empowerment and the importance of pursuing one's passions even in the face of societal norms.

"Zero" is another standout piece that addresses the themes of perseverance, personal growth and redemption. The titular character, Krishna is a poor, underachieving boy who struggles to rise above the academic shadow of his successful sister. Das's portrayal of Krishna's journey is heartfelt showcasing his transformation from failure to success. The story masterfully interweaves the cultural and societal expectations that often weigh heavily on young minds. The mystical element introduced through the encounter with the saint and the mysterious smoke adds a layer of magical realism that enhances the narrative's emotional depth. Krishna's eventual success is not only a triumph over academic adversity but also a metaphor for the power of belief and self-discovery.

One of the more imaginative stories in the collection is "A Trip to Moon on Gossamer Wings". The story throws light on Chandrayaan-3 where a young boy dreams of India's historic achievement of landing on the moon. The boy's journey to the moon, greeted by a shower of flowers and a princess serves as a beautiful metaphor for the aspirations and dreams of modern India. The narrative takes a surreal turn when the boy, separated from the princess, is left stranded on the lunar surface, crying for help. This dream sequence can be interpreted as a commentary on the disillusionment that follows great accomplishments, reminding readers that even the most extraordinary feats often leave a sense of emptiness in their wake. "A Trip to Moon on Gossamer Wings" thus blends national pride with personal longing, offering a thought-provoking exploration of the dual nature of dreams-both fulfilling and forsaking.

What stands out across all of Das's stories is her seamless blending of realism with the supernatural, the mundane with the mystical. In "Fog Whispers" Das explores a range of emotions, from the fleeting nature of time to the perpetual struggle between the dreamer and the dream. The supernatural elements in the stories are never fully explained, often leaving readers with more questions than answers. However, this ambiguity enhances the stories' emotional resonance, offering readers the space to contemplate their own experiences with the unexplained.

The characters in Das's stories are richly developed and the emotions they experience feel authentic and true to life. The collection as a whole highlights her deep understanding of human nature as well as her ability to craft narratives that resonate on both an individual and universal level. Das's prose is poetic and evocative, creating a dreamlike quality that permeates the entire collection. Her mastery of language allows her to effortlessly transition between different genres, whether it's the poignant love story in "Rose is a Poem in Red," the magical realism of "Zero" or the contemplative exploration of childhood in "Fog Whispers."

There are a few occasions where the transition from the real to the supernatural feels somewhat abrupt, leaving readers momentarily confused. However, such shifts are typical in stories that explore the depths of the human psyche. Under no circumstances it detracts the overall power and splendor of the stories.

In conclusion, *Fog Whispers* is a masterful collection that showcases Snehaprava Das's skill in blending the real and the unreal. The stories are deeply evocative exploring the human experience in all its complexity. Through themes of love, loss, ambition and the supernatural, Das crafts narratives that will resonate with readers long after they've turned the last page. It is a book that invites contemplation, urging readers to delve deep into their own subconscious and reflect on the mysterious ways in which life, memory and emotion intersect. For anyone who seeks a profound literary experience, *Fog Whispers* is a collection that should not be missed. It's certain that this collection will be met with readers' approbation. ■

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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.

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