

ROCK PEBBLES

December - 2020 Vol. XXIV No. IV



A Peer-Reviewed Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies

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A Peer-Reviewed Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies

UGC - CARE listed vide Sl. No. 168, Gr. D

December 2020 Vol. XXIV No. IV

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Design & Layout

Sri Hemanta Kr. Patra. Jajpur Town
Print-Tech Offset Press, Bhubaneswar

Cover Art

Art form : Madhubani
Artist : Baua Devi (b. 1945), Bihar, India.
Source : Facebook

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about the Journal

ROCK PEBBLES
R.N.I. No: 48173/89
ISSN: 0975-0509, E-ISSN: 2230-8954
UGC-CARE No. 168 (Gr-D)
is published monthly.
Editorial office at - Naranpur,
Post: Kodandapur, Via: Devidwar
Dist - JAJPUR, Odisha, India - 755007
e-mail: rockpebbles2007@rediffmail.com
rockpebbles2010@gmail.com
website : www.rockpebblesindia.com

Subscription Fees

Annual - Rs. 1000/-
Lifetime - Rs. 10,000/-, (12 years)
Subscription fees should be deposited through
NEFT or online in the following SB Accounts of
ROCK PEBBLES:-

Canara Bank, Rambagh Branch, A/c No:
1676101011729, IFSC - CNRB0001676.

Bank of India, JAJPUR Town Branch A/c No.
51201011000396, IFSC - BKID0005120.

Indian Bank, Ankula Branch, A/c No:
6008953666, IFSC - IDIB000A080

Indian Overseas Bank, JAJPUR Town, A/c No:
262901000000067, IFSC - IOBA0002629

We also accept Bank Draft in favour of ROCK
PEBBLES payable at State Bank of India,
JAJPUR Town Branch, IFSC - SBIN 0000094.

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International Money order to the Managing
Editor. We receive research papers prepared as
per latest version of MLA guidelines. Deadlines
for submission of papers:- for January, February
& March issue - 1st January to 10th January. For
April, May, June issue - 1st April to 10th April.
For July August, Sept issue - 1st July to 10th
July. For October, November, December issue -
1st October to 10th October. On principle, we
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Editor speaks.....

Use of creativity as a healing agent by
voicing the human woes and agonies has been a
practice since a very long time. In literature, it
requires a sympathetic as well as psychological
study of the characters. And it is humanitarian
too. Sometimes the author expresses personal
pangs, leading to Confessionalism and sometimes
those of the others are expressed. Hunger, want
and fear of death make the work appealing.
American poet and essayist Louise Glüce has won
the Nobel Prize for literature 2020 for “her
unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty
makes individual existence universal”.

Glüce was born in 1943 and had
developed anorexia nervosa during her teenage.
During the process of treatment, she had
struggled to live a life. Consequently, she did not
enroll in any college as a full-time student. But
she learned many things from the period of seven
years therapy which seems to have influenced
her poetic career to a greater extent. In the poem
“Dedication to Hunger” she writes:

*It begins quietly
in certain female children:
the fear of death, taking as its form
dedication to hunger;
because a woman's body
is a grave; it will accept
anything.*

Her works contain many emotional
records and the ‘fear of death’ plays a vital role.
Owing to the frequency of the first-person mode
in her poems with intimate subject matters, often
inspired by events in her personal life, she is
termed as a confessional poet by some critics
and autobiographical by others. Her poems deal
with diverse themes such as death, trauma, desire,
loss, isolation, suffering, failed relationships and
nature at large.

A virtual intellectual congregation
“**International Webinar on the Creative Works
of E. M. Forster**” is scheduled to be held on 27th
December 2020 remembering the scar of the agony
of the year. With the dawn of the New Year, the
deadly COVID-19 is expected to extinguish with
the successful invention and application of the
vaccines. We wish all our contributors, readers
and well-wishers a Happy, Healthy and Creative
New Year 2021.

-Chief Editor

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Growing Up : A Study of the Role of Childhood in Shaping Adults through Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

Nandini C Sen
Prachi Behrani

Children have been omnipresent across the works of Toni Morrison. Apart from the lives of children, Morrison succeeds in presenting their journey to adolescence, adulthood and sometimes, to death. Walking along with the characters, the readers are sure to notice an immense intensity of traumas, life-shaping events and mental as well as bodily changes. In order to understand the role of the extraneous environment in shaping adults to be the way they are, it is essential to investigate their childhood. Thus, this paper seeks to analyse numerous characters in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* in order to recognise the significance of the events witnessed by a child in his coming-of-age, the contribution of a child's family, friends and the social environment in his emotional growth and the process and course of a child's growing up. The text presents not only children but also the flashes into the childhoods of adults, which assists in the comprehensive understanding of the complexity of growing up.

Keywords: Toni Morrison, Racism, Gender, Childhood, Trauma

The role of the child, its upbringing and the subsequent formation of the adult mind remains one of Toni Morrison's favourite topics. She delves into the psyche of the child whose existence is defined by racism and suppression. She follows this child into adulthood and tries to decode how brutal racism plays havoc with one's mind. The Black child is not allowed the luxury of the childhood innocence but her/his entire life becomes one long journey of living with the scar of being coloured. *The Bluest Eye* begins with a "Dick- and- Jane" narrative divided into three parts, seemingly narrated by a child. While the first section of the narrative is written in Standard English with correct grammar, the next section lacks punctuations and the final section lacks both punctuation and spaces between words. Here, the amount of cohesion keeps decreasing as the sections proceed. The narrative foreshadows two things; first, that the novel would be from the point of view of children and second, that it might get confusing or lack cohesion. Klotman believes the three versions to be "symbolic of the lifestyles that the author explores in the novel either directly or by implication." (123) He compares the first coherent version to the 'alien-

white world' which not only alienates the lives of black- children and their families, but is also responsible for violating their rights. Their lives, like the text, are simple, comprehensible and easy. The second version is compared to the life of two black children, Claudia and Frieda MacTeer, "shaped by poor but loving parents trying desperately to survive the poverty, the Northern cold and Northern style of racism they encounter in Ohio." (Klotman123) Their life isn't as privileged as the white children, but neither is it completely deformed. Their life, like the second section of the prologue makes some sense due to the loving family they live in, but lacks a few essential elements due to the racist beauty standards of the society, the projected hatred of the community and a lot of mental and material insecurities. The final, incoherent section is compared to the lives of Breedloves, with their child Pecola living in a 'misshapen world which finally destroys her.' The text, like their lives, is completely distorted and lacks meaning. (Klotman123)

Talking about the children in the text, it would be next to unfair if one began with anyone except Pecola, because she, "the protagonist of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, is an archetype of the black children in America courageous enough, though subliminally, to search for and to parse out an identity that validates them." (Hyman 256) She had internalised the society's love for white skin, blue eyes, curly and golden hair so much that she, like everyone else, loved the appearance of Shirley Temple (an American child actress). She is the perfect example of the ideology imbibed by children, especially African American children. The fact that she disliked her own skin and constantly wished to have blue eyes is definitely a result of the hatred projected by the White Community on her, and the self-hatred created by the fellow black community. She, unlike Claudia, loved playing with dolls and drinking milk out of her blue and white Shirley Temple cup. The way she looked fondly at the cup, spoke lovingly to Frieda about how 'cu-ute' Shirley Temple was and drank a lot of milk greedily just to handle the mug with Temple's face on it, to have more opportunities to see her face show that the racist ideas of beauty had been instilled in her. (*The Bluest Eye* 17-21)

Pecola is sure to remind one of the children in Doll Tests conducted by Kenneth and Mamie Clark in the 1940s where they used multiple dolls, identical apart from their colour (complexion) to understand the racial perceptions that the African- American children were growing up with. The children ranging from three to seven years were asked to decide which dolls they preferred, and according to the results, the children preferred the white dolls - "A majority of the children preferred the white doll and assigned positive characteristics to it. The Clarks concluded that prejudice, discrimination, and segregation created a feeling of inferiority among African-American children and damaged their self-esteem. Similar to the children participating in Clark's tests, Pecola preferred and accepted the notions of beauty which rejected her own skin colour. "For Pecola, the blue eyes she yearns for are a surrogate for whiteness. In her young mind, whiteness avails entrance into a cultural hegemony that is affirmed and empowered." (Hyman 256) Meaning, that by wishing for blue eyes, she somewhere wished for a white skin, and behind this wish

resided the need to be accepted by the society, the community and most importantly her own family. Moreover as Hymen states, “Her yearning for blue eyes is simply a desire to be free of oppression by renaming herself; she wants what the African brought to America wanted: freedom. Slavery was put on the African. Ugliness is put on Pecola.” (Hyman 258)

Rejection, the lack of love and humiliation was all that Pecola had witnessed in her family. Contrary to their ironic surname “Breedlove” it was hatred that was bred. Her father, Cholly only knows how to express his feelings of love through sex due to which he also rapes his own daughter and makes her pregnant. Thus it isn’t love which led to this breeding, but rape. Her mother, Pauline never expresses maternal love to her daughter either. They have constant fights and project their own self-hatred on their daughter. Maybe, it is due to this rejection faced at home that she felt a need to be accepted, whereas Claudia did not.

Claudia always felt a strong dislike towards the idealised white beauty standards portrayed in actresses and dolls. She states, “Younger than both Frieda and Pecola, I had not yet arrived at the turning point in the development of my psyche which would allow me to love her. What I felt at that time was unsullied hatred. But before that I had felt a stranger, more frightening thing than hatred for all the Shirley Temples of the world” (*The Bluest Eye* 17) Meaning, that she believed that later when she was grown up enough to understand the ways of the world she might too, like everyone else, absorb the ideas of beauty that the world preferred. Thus, considering these notions to be the universal ideas, and her own viewpoints to be childlike. Claudia talks about her hatred towards dolls and the adults who thought that she would like to be gifted a doll. She says, “I was physically revolted by and secretly frightened of those round moronic eyes, the pancake face and orange worms hair.” (*The Bluest Eye* 18) The dolls, which were a source of pleasure for other little girls did the exact opposite to her – made her cringe. She hated the fact that all the kids, the adults, the toy stores, the newspapers, magazines and everyone else treasured these dolls and considered the ‘blue-eyes yellow hair, and pink skin ‘beautiful. Her abhorrence of dolls extended to such an extent that she began destroying and dismembering ‘white baby dolls’. In fact, this hatred wasn’t just limited to dolls, it also transferred to ‘little white girls’. Claudia wonders about the magical effect that these dolls had on people, she’s full of spite and ponders “What made people look at them and say, ‘awww,’ but not for me?” The plight of a little black girl can be clearly seen. She is not only hurt due to the society’s preference of something totally distinct from her, but she also feels a tinge of jealousy. This jealousy converts to insecurity and a certain form of self-hatred. The hatred is then projected on little white dolls, the source of her pain, and transferred to little white girls. She pictures pinching the little white girls, watching their eyes fold with pain like those of dolls and hearing their cries of pain. However, she understood that this kind of violence (even if it existed only in her thoughts) was repulsive. Full of shame, Claudia finally seeks refuge in love and succumbs to accepting the notions of beauty that the society propagated, beginning with Shirley Temple. She states, “I learned much later to worship her, just as I learned to delight in cleanliness, knowing even as I learned, that the change was adjustment without improvement.”(*The Bluest Eye* 21)

Another example of Coming-of-age or physical maturity can be seen when Pecola finally begins menstruating. Though she experiences a coming-of-age of sorts and her period is a symbol of her approaching womanhood, she is still a little girl who doesn't even know what it means. Though Frieda knew that this blood wasn't a symbol of death but of fertility, she couldn't pronounce menstruating and said that Pecola was 'ministrating'. (*The Bluest Eye* 25) The reader might laugh at the sheer innocence of the little girls who were on the verge of growing up. Their innocence can also be seen when their mother takes Pecola to wash her, Claudia wonders if she would drown her. If the English word 'ministration' suggests the act of helping or caring for somebody unwell, could it be possible that Morrison used a similar word to suggest that menstruation required love and care, especially when it felt like a new malady for the little girls experiencing it for the first time.

Though Mrs. MacTeer apparently loved children, her way of addressing them was akin to comparing them with objects. When Rosemary tells her that the girls were up to something nasty, Mrs. MacTeer is infuriated and states that she would rather raise pigs than these girls because at least then she could slaughter them. (*The Bluest Eye* 28) When the girls, Frieda and Claudia were introduced to Mr. Henry, they were simply pointed out like mere objects- "Here is the bathroom; the clothes closet is here; and these are my kids Frieda and Claudia; watch out for this window..." (*The Bluest Eye* 13) Mrs. MacTeer seems to point out to her children just as if she'd point out to a piece of furniture- with complete lack of emotion.

Not only the adults, but the other children mistreated the ones of their kind as well. Once while walking back from school, a group of boys circled the innocent Pecola, and made jokes about her skin colour, and her family- two things over which she had no control or ability to change. They harassed her saying, "Black e mo. Black e mo. Ya daddy sleeps necked. Black e mo. Black e mo. Ya daddy sleeps necked." The narrator believes that it was the 'contempt for their own blackness' and their 'exquisitely learned self-hatred, their elaborately designed hopelessness' that resulted in such an outrage. They danced around her as if it were a macabre ballet and they were willing to sacrifice her. (*The Bluest Eye* 63) Pecola's friends, Frieda and Claudia stood by her side trying to make the bully- boys stop, showing the strength of sisterhood among women. Morrison emphasizes the sisterhood as that's the only way the Coloured woman can exert some agency in the society which treats her like an outcaste.

Maureen, another child in the text is described as a 'high- yellow dream child', a rich girl blessed with care, comfort and good clothes. Claudia seems to be completely enchanted with her and states "There was a hint of spring in her sloe green eyes, something summery in her complexion, and a rich autumn ripeness in her walk." (*The Bluest Eye* 60) Meaning, that she was the idealised 'sunbeam', a beautiful, well dressed girl, who had mesmerised everyone at school, made the teachers smile, was liked by the white kids, admired by the black kids and was never short of friends. She was never troubled, tortured or bullied by any other student, black or white. This is probably why Frieda and Claudia felt like hoydens in comparison to

her and along with fascination felt a sense of irritation. Their jealousy and insecurity was heightened due to her presence, making them want to look for flaws in her, and like every other child full of low esteem, they tried to make fun of her, in this case, by ‘uglying up her name- changing Maureen Peal to Meringue Pie’ (*The Bluest Eye* 61)

It is also to be noted that the dysfunctional family that Pecola was a part of, was again a result of self- hatred sprouting from within. In the narrative about Cholly’s adolescent days, he recounts the time after he was cursed by his estranged father, Samson Fuller. Cholly had defecated in his pants and was worried that if he stayed there any longer, his father ‘would surely emerge and see him and laugh. Oh, lord. He would laugh. Everybody would laugh.’ (Morrison 155) This fear of embarrassment shows that he was tired of feeling ashamed, inferior and misfortunate all the time. Not only this, he had also been forced to continue having sex with Darlene while two voyeuristic white hunters watched. (*The Bluest Eye* 144) It is after these incidents that Cholly completely changes into an indifferent and a reckless man who beats women, rapes his own daughter, kills white men and is fickle with his jobs. Thus, it may not be wrong to assume that his experiences of childhood were the reason for his behaviour as an adult. Maybe it was a form of defence mechanism to repress the torture he had faced as a young man, and now was projecting his self- hatred on others. Cholly’s story is the transition from a sensitive child, who wanted to be loved by his family to an indifferent man, incapable of love. Pauline too, projects no love to her own child simply because she’s a mirror to her own ugliness. She seems to invest all of herself to the white people- the Fishers family as a domestic servant instead of caring for her own child. “Through Cholly and Pauline, Morrison suggests that parents who emerge from histories of oppression might reproduce that degradation within the family unit.” (Werrlein 61)

In accordance with Hyman, it would be correct to believe that Pecola’s life and outcome was a result of the world around her. “Assisting in the realization of the self that Pecola becomes is the community that births, nurtures, educates, psychically dismantles, and rebirths her.” (258) The community that births her, meaning her parents, give birth to pain, insecurity and a lot of self- hatred in her providing her no form of familial love. The community that nurtures her is the MacTeer family. A place where she moves forward on her path towards discovering herself, and intensifying her wish for blue eyes. Hyman believes the three prostitutes to be the community that educates her. They are called the ‘priestesses’ who show Pecola that she could always define her own reality, and it was the most important aspect of life. The women joked about men, other women and even about each other, living a very happy and carefree life. The community that dismantles her is a part of the community that gave birth to her- Cholly, her father. After the incestuous rape, Pecola doesn’t even understand that she has been raped, all she feels is a pain. A pain of the ‘spiritual rape by a world that has dumped all of its waste on her, a world whose representatives are her parents.’ (Hyman 261) The Soaphead Church is called the community that rebirths her just before she receives the blue eyes she had always wanted. However, the eyes come at the cost of her own sanity. She seems to be the only one who can see the colour of her eyes and appears

to have lost her mind. While creating a dialogue with her imaginary friend she wonders why no one would ever look at her ever since she got the blue eyes, when people should be praising and complimenting her for looking so beautiful. The kind of a childhood that Pecola receives completely contributes to her condition. She is now completely distanced from the outside world, its laws and customs.

Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* makes one realise that it is the entire community that works together to raise a child a certain way. Every adult is made of tiny pieces put together by one's family, society and the community in his childhood. And every child is fed notions, ideologies and feelings which he takes with himself to adulthood as he comes of age. The characters mentioned in the text are mostly, either children being repressed to form dysfunctional adults, or dysfunctional adults having a history of repression. Every new generation to come attains its character from the existing generations, and forms the basis for the upcoming ones. It isn't just one family that raises a child, as the African American Proverb goes- It takes a village to raise a child. ■

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A Search for Self through Resistance: Enlarging the Subaltern Voices in *The Blue-necked God*

Jalendra Phukan

Women have been suppressed since ages. Though they had been resisting their pain in passive ways, no one was ready to listen to their voices. Their voices remained unheard due to the existence of extreme patriarchy in society. But now women's voices are being given space in our society. Up to a considerable extent, women have been able to support themselves. Though passive in nature women characters in *The Blue-necked God* equally has a sense of resistance to protect themselves. The three protagonists in the text namely Saudamini, Sashiprova, and Mrinalini suffer from the traditional norms but they do not continue to stay mum. Though they suffocate, their efforts to get rid of the traditional oppression continue at every time. The subaltern characters try to speak for their freedom which could only provide them with a happy life. In the novel, the women have attempted to attain freedom from the clutches of the orthodox society through different modes of resistance.

Keywords: Women, Patriarchy, Widowhood, Subaltern, Resistance, Education.

Women's freedom has been a crucial topic across works of literature. With the advancement of time and implementation of modern ideas in society, they have been able to find spaces for themselves. They no longer remain dependent on male members of their family. At present, women are considered important members of a family. Their needs and demands are being taken care of by the heads of the families. Today, women are taking part in every field, from politics to sports, music to dance, business to services, etc. Many initiatives have been sensitive in the course of women's empowerment as a whole. The introduction of Democracy in the third world countries brought a drastic change in the governing system. It gradually granted rights to the people with respect and reservation for women. Democracy provided a platform for the 'subalterns' to raise their voice. One of the most important steps towards women's empowerment is the growth in girls' education. The women characters in the novel are educated and therefore do not want to accept the orthodox caste rules and tradition. Women were not allowed to get education in the past ages. But

now they are allowed to acquire education. Many Feminist movements and organisations actively worked for women's freedom. The three stages are namely categorised as First Wave Feminism, Second Wave Feminism, and Third Wave Feminism. Postcolonial feminism is yet another significant feminist movement in third world countries. This movement began in the 1980s as a response to Western feminist theorists. It has been very influential in championing the cause of women.

Indira Goswami is one of the greatest modern Indian women writers. She had primarily written her works in Assamese language but many of them have been translated into English. As an influential writer, she was awarded many prestigious awards like the Sahitya Akademi Award (1983), the Jnanpith Award (2001), etc. Most of her works explore feminist sensitivity. Her novel *The Blue-necked God* (1976) is originally written in the Assamese language and has been translated from Assamese into English by Gayatri Bhattacharyya in 2013. It is a semi-autobiographical text based on Goswami's experience in Brindavan. In the novel, Indira Goswami attempts to portray all those agonies of widowhood of women living in Brindavan.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to study the voice of subaltern women through analysis and interpretation of the select text. There are many rebellious women in the text who speak for their rights and want to overthrow the prevailing rules and religious beliefs. The voice of women protagonists is highlighted in this paper. Moreover, the application of various modes of resistance by subaltern women has been analysed thoroughly. There has been a proper analysis of primary and secondary sources to reach the final conclusion. Furthermore, relevant theories and perspectives have also been applied to the select text.

The Blue-necked God is about religion and orthodoxy. In a way, it is about following the religious norms to attain salvation. Whatever is prevalent in society is followed by the characters strictly. In another way, the text questions all the orthodoxies which are in a form of religious rule that punishes women living in Brindavan. The novel is a conflict between religion and rationality where the older generation tries to pull the younger generation into tradition. But the younger generation is conscious enough not to accept the tradition blindly. They interrogate and refuse to accept blind faith. The novel has a similar idea like the 'Victorian Conflict' between 'Science and Religion'. There was a huge Biblical criticism in the Victorian Age in England, and due to the scientific and technological development, the faith in God and religion began to be questioned. The three protagonists Saudamini, Sashiprova, and Mrinalini are dragged into a similar position to accept the prevalent religious tradition. But, as they are educated and conscious they refused to adopt the culture prevalent in the Brindavan. They observed the pitiable conditions of the radheshyamas in the Braj and questioned the tradition. After knowing all the oppressive characteristics of Braj, the protagonists realised the exploitation done to the women in the name of tradition. Therefore, they tried to develop a resistive sense to oppose baseless religious practices. They refused to follow the religion which suppressed and exploited

women. Thousands of radheshyamas fight for their everyday life. Women are exploited by the male power in the Braj. Men in the form of priest, panda, saint, baba etc threaten the radheshyamas at every moment. The women characters in the text go through a dilemma. In the beginning, they try to adjust themselves in the Braj, but after observing the conditions of the radheshyamas they come to realise the prevailing inhumanity in the Braj. They started exploring the things in detail, thinking perhaps they might be wrong. But their consciences have always answered the questions in their minds.

The first thing they did to develop their resistance is questioning. While exploring the everyday life of Brindivan, Saudamini and Mrinalini started questioning their abilities. They tried to resist that they cannot accept such a worst way of living a life in Braj. Although they had misfortune in the past, still there is time to start a new life. Tradition and patriarchy direct them to mingle with the demand of time. It projects them to maintain widowhood and pass a simple life by becoming radheshyamas. On the other hand, their physical urge and understanding instruct them to start a normal life. Since Saudamini is a young widow, she can still start a new life with her Christian lover. Goswami writes, "Sometimes she would scrutinize her own body. She had a lovely, soft young body. Even the mental imbalance and torture of the past seven years had not been able to leave any permanent mark on this lovely body" (24, Bhattacharyya). Saudamini defends her youth and beauty by asking several questions. She rejects the idea of embracing widowhood. When they go to visit a temple, she asks many questions to Charanbehari. "Why, do you not feel any desire for me?...Have I really become like an old women, then?" (78, Bhattacharyya). As an educated girl she firmly believes in the idea of living a meaningful life. Her inner self never allows her to be a radheshymis. Similarly, Mrinalini too develops a resistive sense by questioning her ability. She expresses, "Could I not have become a mother? Could I not have given birth to a 'divine' child?" (141, Bhattacharyya). Mrinalini rages against her parents because they have been the reason for her sufferings in the Braj.

Secondly, the characters in the text develop a resistive sense by negotiating their feelings with each other. Sashiprova is also a young widow. But unlike Saudamini and Mrinalini, she has been passing her days with a priest named Alamgari. As the temple where they stayed for years is about to be sold by Thakur Sahib, Sashiprova is quite disturbed. She thinks about her livelihood and protection. Sashiprova discusses her relationship and feelings about Alamgari with Saudamini. "But you can still get married," consoled Saudamini. Sashi almost shouted out the words, Alamgari is a eunuch! "This is not the end of the world for me. But the problem is that I have started to fall in love". (63, Bhattacharyya). Like Saudamini, Sashiprova too expects to live a conjugal life with a male partner but it is not possible since Alamgari is a eunuch. Here, Sashi tries to prevent herself not to be like those helpless radheshyamas who starve. She cannot reject everything like Saudamini, but if she stays with Alamgari at least she will be protected and not starve. She thinks for a better life within the Braj as she doesn't have any other option whereas Saudamini and Mrinalini want to prevent everything happening in the Braj.

With the advancement of time, the concept of 'subaltern' is changing. Due to the political and economic growth in the third world countries 'subalterns' are now taken into consideration. Various social and political setups have provided them with a small platform to stand. These small platforms have become agents for them to support their voice. Earlier, those agencies had their own interest in supporting the subalterns. But now, due to their growth in education and transparency in institutions, they do not come under the trap of the agencies. Hence, both the subaltern and the agencies have an equal interest in raising their voice. Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak in her well-known essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* mentions that "subaltern cannot speak on their own" and they need agencies to speak. In the select texts, the characters try to speak but they are actually 'not allowed to speak' by various societal forces. Whenever they have got any chance and channel to speak, they have raised their voice. In the novel, *The Blue-necked God*, the central characters Saudamini, Mrinalini and Sashiprova have attempted to speak many times. Though their ways of speaking are different they frequently speak for their resistance.

Silence is one of the regular manners through which the characters resist. Many times, it has been observed that they do not reply and remain silent to protest. In a visit to a temple when Charanbehari assists Saudamini and her mother, he passes a bad comment. Responding to it Saudamini doesn't reply anything. Goswami mentions, "There are hundreds of young women like you who come to stay at Braj. Do you know what people say about them? They say they are mentally ill and in need of psychiatric help.....Saudamini did not reply. The chameli flower with which she had decorated her hair had withered. She wrenched them off and threw them away" (54, Bhattacharyya). Saudamini through her silence and action made it clear to Charanbehari that she is certainly not one of them who needs mental care. She does not want to be like those radheshayamas in the Braj. In a different proceeding when Sashi and Saudamini come back after bathing Sashi asks Saudamini, "Tell me, have you really found any peace after coming to Brajdhama?.....Saudamini did not have an answer....Saudamini tried to avoid Sashi's question" (62, Bhattacharyya). She is unable to make her understand her feelings to Sashi. Hence, by remaining silent, she makes it clear that she is not interested in passing the days in Braj.

Thirdly, the characters in the text attempt to resist through expression. This is one of the regular modes of defending. Expressions are of various types like rebuking, shouting, anger, tearing clothes, breaking things, crying, accusing, etc. Anupama wanted her daughter to be a traditional widow. She wanted her to maintain all the traditional norms of widowhood. Therefore, Saudamini sometimes tries her best to follow the instructions of her mother but, she fails in accepting the norms. Saudamini refuses to take part in an event of parikrama. Failing to console her daughter she herself takes part in the event. After participating when she returns back home, she found Saudamini in an unhappy and depressing situation. Saudamini's facial look reflected her mental agitation. She cried with emotion,

"I cannot spend my entire life like this, doing charity work... I am not a devi, I am an ordinary girl, and I cannot pass all my years in serving society like you ... I am an

independent person, and I fear no one and nothing! If you are thinking that I have changed then.....” Pointing and accusing finger at her father, she screamed, “You are all hypocrites. You are like butchers” (71, Bhattacharyya).

Through her painful words and cry, she tries to resist herself from the cruel clutches of widowhood. In anger, she points to her parents as hypocrites and butchers. Generally, the first duty of parents should be protecting their offspring from any trouble. But, here the situation is different. Instead of protecting her, her parents are busy pushing her daughter into the traditional hell. This sort of showing irresponsibility turned Saudamini’s anger against her parents. She started raging and accusing them by calling butchers and hypocrites. Similarly, Mrinalini is compelled to come in the Braj for supporting her parents. Like Saudamini she is also fed up with the ideology of her parents. Her parents want her to live in the Braj like the radheshyamas. Mrinalini is frustrated taking care of her old parents. She is very anxious about her father because he is the reason behind their present situation. All through his life, he kept on losing all his money by enjoying and drinking. In Braj, Mrinalini has to arrange food for them by begging in the temples. Therefore, from time to time she keeps on roaring on them to resist from this daily routine. Goswami writes, “Mrinalini’s voice could be heard. She was screaming like a tigress who had lost her cubs. You see this blind old man? He is responsible for ruining our prosperous and happy lives. He left us to starve while he squandered all the money on liquor. And now, see, how liquor has taken its revenge and kicked him down into this life!” (141, Bhattacharyya). Mrinalini shows her frustration to make it clear that she cannot accept such a dull life.

Fourthly, the action plays an important role in resisting suppression. In the text, the action is portrayed as one of the modes of resistance. The characters in the novel go through various actions like tearing clothes, becoming naked, attempt to suicide, etc. In a rage of anger or unable to bear the suppression they dare to undertake such fearful activities. There are two intentions of exposing their bodies while scolding others. By exposing, they completely deny accepting the traditional rules of widowhood. They resist and express their anger. Mrinalini’s mother exposes her body while scolding her husband Thakur Sahib. Secondly, by exposing their bodies they try to prove that they are still young and can start a new married life again. Mrinalini exposes her breasts before the radheshyamas and interrogates about her ability to become a mother. Most importantly, Saudamini attempts to commit suicide and dies at last. After the rejection of social norms for several times by Saudamini, Dr. Roychoudhury finally agrees with her to marry her with the Christian lover. He no longer can bear the pain of his daughter. Therefore, Saudamini is accompanied by Dr. Roychoudhury at midnight to meet the Christian lover. But, when they finally meet, she has a sense of repentance within. She feels that by marrying a Christian boy she would disobey her parents and religion. Her parents did not want her to marry a boy who belongs to the Christian religion. On the other hand, traditional and religious rules also obstruct her to bond this relationship into marriage. At the moment when they reached nearer to each other, they seemed like two pure flowers. But, when Saudamini comes to think about those

barriers, she began to weep in sorrow. One question troubled her that, if she marries her lover she would hurt her parents. She could not bear that pain of hurting her parents and asks her lover to go back. “She wishpered a few words, intended for that Christian youth, whom she thought she had loved with her whole heart, “Forgive me and go back. Forgive me, please forgive me”” (181, Bhattacharyya). Saudamini thinks but fails to get any answer to the question, “Why? Why did this have happen?” (182, Bhattacharyya). Finally, she allows herself to be drowned by the river water. As she was unable to change the mind of people she commits suicide to resist the tradition and patriarchy. She answers to the whole world that death can be accepted but the misery of widowhood is not acceptable to her. The consequences of resistance in the text, *The Blue-necked God* are of a considerable level to leave a message in society. Though the characters in the text are passive in their behaviour at the climax of the novel they convey a powerful message in the Braj as well as to the readers.

In summing up, the women protagonists in the select text are though suppressed, they dare to speak for their rights. They are surrounded by various social and religious barriers. But, it has been noticed in the study that the so-called tradition and religion have failed to stop them from raising their voices. Perhaps, at first, all the men and women in this world are human beings who need some space and freedom to live. Howsoever, the cruel clutches of men made rules may be imposed in the name of caste, religion, and sex, it will not exist for a long time. The reality of every defective and destructive rule imposed on humanity would be exposed out one day. Women in today’s world have come to realise about the oppression done to them for ages. They will no longer remain silent and not allow it to continue on the future generations. ■

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Deconstructing Gender Roles: The Female Body as the site of Resistance in Selected Fiction of Saadat Hassan Manto

Smitakshi Chowdhury

Conventional research on Manto tends to focus mostly on the issue of partition. A close reading of Manto reveals the recurring motif of the female body. The proposed paper intends to trace how Manto uses the symbol of the female body both as a means of exposing and challenging patriarchy, as well as uses it to deconstruct gender roles. The paper intends to trace specific instances when the female body is used to challenge or even nullify patriarchy. Interestingly, Manto also uses the female body to portray female sexuality unapologetically. Early feminism looked at gender from both essentialist and anti-essentialist perspectives. Either way, it laid emphasis on slotting. However, Manto continuously negates, obliterates, and refuses to recognize gender. Women take control of their own bodies, using them to negotiate power equations or to satisfy carnal desire. The body is no longer male or female- as an entity. It is just human body. Gender roles are deconstructed by bringing the woman's body down to a primal, biological, human level. Slotting into male-female roles is continuously negated, bringing to mind Judith Butler's assertion that gender is performative.

Keywords: Deconstruction, feminism, female body, Gender, patriarchy.

Introduction:

Saadat Hassan Manto is a towering figure in the field of Partition literature. In most of his stories, Manto portrays the futility and horror of Partition. However, he is also known for the sensitive portrayal of women, ranging from sex workers to city-bred women in his work. Manto mostly took inspiration from his own life and as communal violence worsened, his stories increasingly took a darker form. But they are foremost in their honesty in depicting the impact of Partition on women. Manto wrote extensively about women, not with a voice of condescension or superiority, neither was he attempting to appropriate their stories and struggles. He spoke as an ally, who was opposed to how they were treated, dehumanized, commodified, and disposed off.

Research on Manto's work has been primarily in the context of Partition, but in recent years, researchers have attempted to situate his work in the context of Gender Studies, particularly, Feminist Theory. Manto writes movingly about women in his stories. Some women are shown as victims of patriarchal society. Many of Manto's women stand out as strong, life-like characters. The stories show how women rebel against patriarchy and take control of their lives, refusing to bow down, even if they are extremely marginalized characters. An initial reading of Manto's stories renders certain characters to remain etched on the mind of the reader. A closer reading reveals a recurring motif in Manto's work: that of the female body.

Manto uses the symbol of the female body both as a means of exposing and challenging patriarchy, as well as uses it to deconstruct gender roles. The paper intends to underline the literary strategies through which he achieves this. The female body is not just used as a representation of communal violence during Partition. Nor is the ravaged female body merely used as a metaphor for the ravaged, partitioned subcontinent. There are specific instances when the female body is used to challenge or even nullify patriarchy.

Interestingly, Manto also uses the female body to portray female sexuality unapologetically. Manto never used indirect or figurative language to describe parts of the female body, but rather described it in vivid detail. Women are seen appropriating power over their own bodies in several instances. Throughout Manto's fiction, gender roles are continuously deconstructed. Early feminism looked at gender from both essentialist and anti-essentialist perspectives. Either way, it laid emphasis on a slotting. In both cases differences between the genders are recognized. However, Manto continuously negates, obliterates, and refuses to recognize gender. Women take control of their own bodies, using them to negotiate power equations or to satisfy carnal desire. The body is no longer male or female- as an entity, it is just human. The woman is simply a human being. Gender roles are deconstructed by bringing the woman's body down to a primal, biological, human level. Slotting into male-female roles is continuously negated. This brings to mind Judith Butler's assertion that gender is performative.

Several of Manto's stories like 'A Wet Afternoon and Odour (which goes by the name 'Boo'), have faced charges of obscenity. However, Manto used stark language because he did not set much store in figurative language. The parts of the female body are addressed in a straightforward manner in Manto's fiction. He had no qualms about calling the breast, 'breast'. His writing betrays an "androgynous sensibility and extraordinary sensibility".

Manto does use the female body to underscore the senselessness and brutality of partition violence, although his strategy is nowhere limited to that. In what is perhaps his most chilling tale, 'The Return' or "Khol Do", an abducted girl is found lying in a refugee hospital. When the doctor asks someone to open the window, the girl, who is obviously in shock, pulls down her trousers. The effect is horrific: she seems to have been raped by both her abductors as well as the volunteers in Pakistan who rescue her. She now equates every

man's motive with rape. The doctor breaks into a cold sweat when he sees this incident happening in front of his eyes, although he is by no means the only one- we as readers also freeze.

A similar strategy is adopted in the story 'An Old Fashioned Man' where the man in question, Khan Bahadur Muhammad Aslam Khan, only likes cleaning his teeth with a 'miswak', a teeth cleaning twig of a medicinal plant. It also describes a new house help, Shadaan, who ends up being very close to his children and something of a playmate to his daughters. Shadaan's youth is in stark contrast to Khan Bahadur's set ways. The story is suggestive and it is evident that the man ends up raping Shadaan with the miswak. She succumbs to her injuries. The brutality of the act is chilling and it is said that the man never uses a miswak again. Though much later, the horror of the act ends up paralyzing the perpetrator.

In the story "Colder than Ice", several complex issues are brought to the fore. It talks about a man named Isher Singh who joins roaming bands of looters and ends up raping a woman after killing six other members of her family. He comes home in a daze to his lover Kalwant Kaur. She is a woman who is in complete control of her sexuality. Her physicality is described in much detail. However, when Isher Singh is unable to make love to her, she suspects that he has cheated on her with another woman. When Isher Singh accepts that there is another woman involved, she plunges his kirpan (an obvious phallic symbol) into his neck. It must have been this short blade which he would have used to kill people. In his last moments, he confesses to killing six people in a family and carrying away the girl with the intention of raping her. He initially thinks she has lost consciousness, but he soon realizes that she had long been dead. After this incident, he is rendered impotent. What is obvious is the paralysis of the perpetrator once again. Women's body in this light, does not simply act as the site on which violence is inscribed, but it also becomes an important site of resistance, even in death.

In another story 'Mozail', a man named Tarlochan is in love with a Jewish woman named Mozail. She resists his advances and he gives up, eventually settling for a simple girl from his community instead. When a band of bloodthirsty looters attacks the building in which Tarlochan's fiancé lives, Mozail rushes to her aid. Asking Tarlochan to dress like a Muslim, she exchanges her Jewish garb with Tarlochan's fiancé so that they can escape safely. Mozail herself climbs down the stairs naked and this distracts the angry group of protestors. She slips and falls down the stairs, and as she is bleeding, a man tries to cover her body with a sheet. Her words to him seem to be that of Manto: "off with it, your blasted religion!". Here the naked body is neither male nor female, it is simply human.

The figure of the sex worker is a recurring one in Manto's fiction. Manto does not just portray the utterly hopeless lives they led, but also shows the dignity and resilience in them. They take control of their lives, even within the circumstances they are in and thus become figures of feminist interest. The first story that stands out in this category is 'A

Woman's Life', describing the life of Saugandhi, a sex worker. She is shown to be a woman who has long made peace with the conditions she has to live in, and yet, never stops falling in love. She is portrayed as a woman who has infinite capacity for love and frequently helps out others, all out of her own meager earnings. The men in her life treat her badly, whether it be the pimp, who cares little more than business, waking her up at odd hours when she is expected to work despite a splitting headache, or her lover, Madhu, who swindles her of her income and never gives her anything. She is rejected by the businessman who comes to look at her. He utters a grunt of disgust and drives off. This serves as a rude awakening and she comes to realize that the men in her life have only taken from her. When Madhu comes back, trying yet again to cozen money out of her, she smashes his framed picture on the wall, taunting him harshly, finally calling him out for being the disgusting, selfish and opportunistic man that he is. She goes back to sleep, with throwing an arm around the mangy dog who is her companion, thereby signifying that she prefers the company of a dog over that of opportunistic men any day.

In the story named "The Room with the Bright Light", an unnamed prostitute begs her pimp to let her sleep as she is exhausted. He does not relent and threatens to be violent. She is forced to go with the unnamed narrator, who, having witnessed the pitiful circumstances she is a victim of, treats her with respect. He does not do anything to her and instead takes her to have tea, intending to find out more about her, but she does not reveal anything. Her most prominent feature is her red-rimmed, sleep deprived eyes. When the narrator seeks her out a few days, he is greeted by a harsh, bare light in her room and her sleeping form on the floor. As his eyes adjust to the light, what he sees shocks him beyond anything: the figure of a dead man beside her whose head has been smashed in with a brick. The woman finally caved, she could no longer take the torture and finally slept in peace.

The story 'Khushia' is about a sex worker named Kanta who is unapologetic about her sexuality. The pimp, Khushia is flabbergasted as she does not react to his male gaze. She stands comfortable in her own skin, with a flimsy towel wrapped around her in front of him. When he suggests that she dress properly, she dismissively shrugs off the suggestion, saying that it is only him in the room. This nullifying statement hurts his pride and he feels she does not acknowledge him as a man. The punishment he has in store for her at the end of the story for this apparent blow to his male ego is left vague as Khushia picks up Kanta and signals the driver to drive off. Although she faces the consequences, she successfully nullifies the male gaze and ego. The story 'Ten Rupees' is like a breath of fresh air. In it, the young girl, who works as a part time sex worker is taken out for a ride by two young men. They end up going to the beach where they have a memorable time. When returning, she gives back the ten rupees she had been paid for her services, which leaves the men bewildered. Women like sex workers are seen as human beings capable of more generosity and compassion than the men who exploit them. In the short story 'Sharda', the woman is intelligent and capable of sacrifice. Although devoted to Nazeer, she senses that he cannot fathom the love she has for him. Additionally, she can sense his guilt for cheating on his wife and ultimately leaves him.

Two very interesting stories also talk about characters not in the prime of their lives anymore. In 'The Woman in the Red Raincoat', a woman is forcibly picked up by a young man during a riot. He presumes her to be a young, her face being hidden by the hood of her raincoat. As they get home, her face is not visible until much later. Although initially resistant to the man's advances, she relents once he assures her that he would not take advantage of her. As he views her face in the light, it becomes clear that she is a much older woman. The man, disgusted, asks her to leave if she wants. Later, narrating this tale to his friend, he comes to know that she happened to be an artist whose paintings he had often attempted to copy in school. He learns she is no more. His friend adds that she had apparently hated men. What is significant is, that night, she had seemed to change into another woman, just with a bit of appreciation- signalling that it is a human being needs to open up- being loved and appreciated for who they are. In the story 'Mummy', Manto describes another woman past her prime who maintains an establishment in Noida, where she hosts several gatherings. Manto visits her house with his friend Chadda. While the narrator himself is disgusted by her flashy clothes and the wrinkles showing through her badly painted face, he soon discovers that she is indeed a woman to be admired. She helps people in need and serves as a mother figure to many of the narrator's friends. When Chadda behaves inappropriately with a girl, she saves the girl, causing Chadda to admit at the end of the story that she had cured him of his lust that night.

Manto's use of the female body is three-fold- he used it as a powerful symbol to portray female sexuality and to deconstruct gender roles, he used the female body (in some instances, ravaged and lifeless) to subvert patriarchy, and he used to the female body to show the locus on which Partition violence was inscribed. His strategy however is not limited to that alone. He challenges the prevailing notions about women in many of his stories. In most of them, the reader is made to look beyond the surface to acknowledge the humanity of the person. The following lines by FahmidaRiaz, a Pakistani poet and activist become relevant in this regard:

"It is strange that other writers, specially in Urdu, are so blind to the reality of women. They would not even notice bravery or intelligence in their female subjects. On the contrary, they are capable of giving the most perverse 'psychological' twist to the most remarkable traits in a woman. Even today, Manto stands more or less alone in the position that he takes on women. After Manto, there is none like Manto." ■

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Re-visiting W.H. Auden as a Modern Poet

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The present research paper analyses Auden as a modern poet. Modernism happens to be a great epistemological trend in the history of our times. Both arts and social science initiate modernism. The evolution of social sciences with Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and Frederick Nietzsche resulted in socio-psychological modernism. Dada, Cubism and Abstract Expressionism led to aesthetic modernism. Then Imagism, stream of consciousness narrative technique and automatic writing led to literary modernism. The present paper aims at understanding modern poetry and Auden who changed his modernist stance later. There is not much literature about the western modernism in India.

Keywords: Cubism, Dadaism, Imagism, Christian humanism, Socialism.

Introduction:

The 1930s English modernist poetry was dominated by the late Victorian poets Thomas Hardy, Robert Bridges, A. E. Housman and G. M. Hopkins. The new group was called Modernist and they were the expatriates Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, 'HD,' and the English poets who came to be called the Auden Circle (W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice). The new poets learnt much from the older poets like Hardy and Hopkins. It was in this context Auden's modernist poetry needs to be analyzed.

Review of Literature:

India achieved independence in 1947 and the Indian languages began producing modernist literature in the 1970s while postmodernism came into vogue in the West. In fact, some of us have bypassed modernism. W.H. Auden began writing poetry in the 1930s. He paid less heed for public criticism. He felt that 'critics write for the public, not for me.' They write on the basis of their reading, but not experience. Critics like Golo Mann and Ursula Neibuhr testified the fact that Auden was an individualist. Auden's self-assurance began early. He felt at Oxford that "poetry must be classic, clinical and austere." (Auden, q.t. Isherwood) Stephen Spender, poet- friend of Auden who published Auden's first book *Poems* in pamphlet form in 1928 believed in Auden's pride and inborn security. Eliot who liked Auden's poetry directed Faber to publish *Poems* in 1930 that included his verse play 'Paid on Both Sides' and 30 poems. The verse play was a 'charade' and it defined the attitude of the 1930s generations.

Both readers and critics considered Auden as if a young prophet. His circle that consisted of Spender, Louis MacNeice, Cecil Day-Lewis and Isherwood was called the Auden Generation. Naomi Mitchison who reviewed *Poems* praised the book, but added that there is obscurity. She said,

They may be romantic, may be obscure, but they have the curious, archaic maleness which seems to me to fit in with three things: the fifth century before Plato came and muddled it, the heroic age in Iceland, and the modern youth movement in Germany.' (Mitchison 119)

The Cambridge periodical *Granta* agreed with Mitchison and called Auden's circle as a gang. As Spender thinks *Poems* show some disconnection between sensibility and technique. Auden introduced a new psychological and political mood and awaited his development with bated interest. Critic John Lehman felt that Auden's contemporaries formed a revolutionary movement in arts. They became a front when they published *New Signatures* (1932) from Woolf's Hogarth Press. The other poets represented were Cecil Day-Lewis, William Plomer, Spender, and others. The front published the next volume *New Country* in 1933. Auden who respected individuality and differences said: 'People of the same age, living at the same place, are exposed to similar influences. But to me that would be the least interesting thing about them. Differences are more important.' (Auden qt. Raichura 28)

Auden's next book *The Orators* (1932) consolidated his poetic stature. Radical, fiercely satirical *The Orators* spoke for that new mood, of the times. In *W.H. Auden: The Life of a Poet* (1980), Charles Osborne has written, 'Despite the now almost celebrated Auden obscurity, it was immediately acclaimed by its mainly young readers, who seemed able to penetrate to its meaning without difficulty.... It was ... certainly a work which spoke directly and reassuringly to its audience.' (Osborne 91) *Poetry Review* hailed the book as the most significant work since Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*. Auden's poem spoke of the failure of personality. It was about what was wrong with life and what life should be like. Graham Greene felt the book sympathized with socialism. It was experimental poetry with communist ideology. Henry Bamford Parkes added: 'Communism, perhaps, if it is accepted as a technique for making the necessary changes and not as a dogmatic religion, is the best available method of regeneration.' (Parkes, Lehman 171) Auden's poem 'A Communist to Others' evinced his alignment with communism. The 'new verse' made the people believe in preaching as the communist writers in Russia.

The Dance of Death (1933) is Auden's next book. This was a verse play. The play became a success. Critics felt Auden's play can destroy the sad garbage of the contemporary theatre. The Group Theatre, London staged it in 1935 along with Eliot's *Sweeney Agonistes*. Then Auden and Isherwood wrote three plays, namely *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, *The Ascent of F6* and *On the Frontier*.

The period from 1936 to 1939 has many of Auden's poems on the theme of love and satire. Auden published *Look, Stranger!* (1936, the American title being *On this Island*).

George Woodcock felt that the book voiced the mood, feeling, and image of the 1930s. F.R. Leavis did not appreciate Auden, while MacNeice said the book is a mixture of politics and psychology. Edmund Wilson felt Auden imitated his seniors Hardy, Housman, Hopkins, Yeats and Eliot. The book has such interesting poems like 'A Summer Night,' 'Our Hunting Fathers,' – 'O What is that Sound, and 'On this –Island.'

In 1936, Auden and MacNeice visited Iceland and wrote the travelogue *Letters from Iceland*; and in 1939 Auden and Isherwood visited China and wrote the travelogue *Journey to a War*. Auden's poetry in both books is revealing of his socialist ideology and radical politics. Like the contemporaries, Auden noticed socialism in ascendancy in China as well as Russia. Later it spread to the East European countries like Poland, Czechoslovakia and others. In 1937, Auden visited Spain in order to participate in the civil war, which he could not do. Then he wrote a long poem called *Spain*.

The book has many poems. The book ends with the poet's description of an ideal state called 'Tomorrow, perhaps the future.' Auden felt, 'Man must be concerned with understanding things, close to home.' *Spain* became a controversial book. Critic John Wain said, *Spain* is a committed poem. Auden received King's Gold Medal for his success as a poet with *Look, Stranger!* in 1937. *Letters from Iceland* became a choice of The Book Society. Critic Geoffrey Grigson added: "Auden is the first English poet for many years who is a poet all round, traditional, revolutionary, energetic, inquisitive, critical and intelligent." (Grigson 26)

Somehow, Auden of Icelandic stock was not happy with democracy in England. He disliked capitalism, old, worn-out traditions and people's lethargic attitude. So he eschewed socialism, which too did not work in European countries as he saw it in Spain. Then Russia, China and other countries adopted socialism. Even the Labour Party did not fare well in England. So he migrated with Isherwood to America. The context was that the fascist regime in Spain, Italy and Germany persecuted the Jews, forgetting their very humanity. English imperialism in the colonies did not please the 1930s poets. So many Europeans migrated to America.

Auden closed his English chapter. As John Haffenden thinks he spelt out his secession from poetry as political insistence in 'In Memory of W.B. Yeats'. He felt poetry makes nothing happen. His famous poem 'September 1, 1939' has this stanza,

The 'low dishonest decade' of the thirties:
'All I have is a voice
to undo ... the lie of Authority
... There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
... We must love one another or die.' (CP 211)

In a way, the 1930s modernist English poets were divided writers as Virginia Woolf tells. Gertrude Stein called the 1920s American writers as a 'lost generation'. Roy Campbell

called the Auden's Group 'Mac Spaulday'. As the critics thought the group was not hypocritical, but confused and yet it was a liberating group. Auden too regretted as this:

To be forced to be political is to be forced to lead a dual life. Perhaps this would not matter if one could consciously keep them apart and know which was the real one. But to succeed at anything, one must believe in it, at least for the time being, and only too often the false public life absorbs and destroys the genuine private life. Nearly all public men become booming old bores.

While Left-wing critics had often accused Auden of betraying his origins in his work of the thirties, it is doubly ironic that he himself subsequently believed that political expectations had led him to betray his gifts. (Auden Prolific 7)

Another Time, which gathered up all of Auden's poems of the later 1930s, reversed the usual order of publication by appearing first in America (1940), as did most of his later books. Reviewers certainly took it as a transitional volume- as David Daiches put it.

Auden dedicated *Another Time* to Chester Kallmann, a young poet he first met in April 1939 who subsequently became his friend, lover, and collaborator, and to whom, as Robert Craft and Edward Mendelson have testified, Auden submitted his unpublished work for literary censorship. In a late interview with the *New York Quarterly*, Auden acknowledged that he did submit his work to friends whose judgments he valued - 'They have to be poets because other people's comments wouldn't be useful'. The book has such good poems as 'Capital,' 'As I walked out one evening,' 'Refuge Blues,' 'The Fall' and 'School Children'. These poems clearly speak of Auden's transition from his English phase (socialist radical political) to his American phase (Christian humanist).

W.H. Auden's American stay from 1941 to 1951 is referred to 'The American Anglican.' The point is that Auden's devout catholic mother died in 1942, and that strengthened his Christian humanism. Auden's next volume *The Double Man* (1941; the English edition *New Year Letter*) showed the American Auden's drift towards spirituality. Critics agreed that Auden fulfilled the promise of his rhetoric and narrated his wit, intelligence and bravura technique. Louise Bogan wrote:

The two poems (*Another Time* and *The Double Man*), taken together, constitute the most minute dissection of the spiritual illness of our day that any modern poet, not excluding Eliot, has given us.... Auden's change occurred on a non-Romantic level, in a region where the beliefs of Christianity and the proofs of modern psychological knowledge intersect. (Bogan 23)

The next important single poem *For the Time Being* is noteworthy. The consensus of critical views accordingly held that *For the Time Being* manifested a rational rather than an emotional conviction of faith. Auden's next important volume *The Age of Anxiety* (1947) fetched him the prestigious Pulitzer Prize. 'We have in Auden a master musician of rhythm and note, unable to be dull, in fact an enchanter, under the music of indigenous gusto. *The Age*

of *Anxiety* assures us that fear and lust have, in faith and purity, a cure so potent we need never know panic or be defeated by self.

Nones (1951) that appeared soon after had such fine poems like 'In Praise of Limestone.' It fared better with the reviewers. This is at first glance a demoniacally gifted, strangely allusive, witty, brilliant, and tantalizingly suggestive collection of poems. Auden is undoubtedly the most gifted of living poets, flawless when he wants to be and only faltering over his own prodigious virtuosity. One does not remember his poems: one is impressed, overawed and a little dumbfounded by them. After all the layers are peeled, there remains a core of solid idea and purpose.

The last volumes were *City Without Walls* (1969), *Epistle to a Godson* (1972). *The Shield of Achilles* (1955) and the posthumous *Thank You, Fog* (1974). Auden's posthumous standing has been well served by the scholarship of his literary executor, Edward Mendelson, who established the canon with *Collected Poems* (1976), a volume which unavoidably roused reviewers to write sweeping synopses of Auden's career.

Methodology: The present paper makes use of the research methodology that is used for writing research thesis.

Conclusion: This is how the present paper reassesses W. H. Auden as a modern poet with difference. The difference consists in his use of the traditional forms of poetry like sonnet, ode, lyric and ballad and the traditional metres. Auden was not a romantic poet. Yet was he a modern poet fully. He used socialism and radical politics earlier and shifted to Christian humanism. ■

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Spatial Environment- Seasons, Landscapes and Lives: Towards an Eco-critical Reading of Anthony Doerr's *The Shell Collector*

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The thrust area of the paper is the theoretical discussion of ecocriticism in *The Shell Collector*. The way Doerr employs the features of ecocriticism in his characters and locations have been thoroughly analyzed and updated. The short stories that will be discussed are chosen because of their richness in ecological implications. His characters can be labeled as 'eco-citizens' because of their nature-oriented lifestyle. The settings, seasons, geographical accounts, the professions of characters, and their identification in the society are investigated. This paper captures the portrayals of eco citizen and their identification that includes the interrelated social, cultural, political, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainability, and acknowledges humans and other species, intergenerational and indigenous aspects, and critical use of resources. This holistic notion is addressed by the writer in all of the stories in this collection as 'being' and 'becoming' eco-citizens is the theme underpinned in each story.

Keywords: Eco-criticism, Environment, Landscapes, Seasons, and Professions, Animals,

INTRODUCTION

Eco-literature is the cohesive field of study which conceptualizes environmental ideas in literature. As an emergent tradition environmentally-oriented study couched in a plethora of genres such as colonial writing, canonical writing, and romantic poetry. Environmental literary criticism, simply eco-criticism divulges the greenway of living through the greenway of writing. It is otherwise called "Green writing". The canon of eco-criticism is simply defined as to preserve nature from its exploitation as feminism flags to protest against dominance. But in the wider spectrum, it's not only preserving nature and its resources but tries to preserve the hidden primordial bandage of human- nature in the

envisioning world. The trajectory of this binary bandage is perpetual but what evidence is this bondage is strained as a dichotomy because of human's misdemeanours. The voices for environmental concern are audible from all walks of the world because of the global crisis and uncertainties of climate change. Through this, the growth of eco-criticism is rapid and occupies an indispensable room in the literary world.

The origin of the term "eco-criticism" is attributed to William Rueckert's essay written in 1978 titled as "*Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco-criticism*" in which the term has used for the first time to explain the ecological concepts and their application in literature. The term ecocriticism has emerged as a study of the relationship between literature and the natural environment in the mid nineteenth century. Cheryl Glotfelty defines it in her introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) :

What... is Ecocriticism? Simply, put, Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and physical environment. Just as Feminist Criticism examines language and literature from a gender conscious – perspective, and Marxist Criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies. (Glotfelty xix)

This literary theory showcases the ecological perspectives and concepts in the texts and contexts. But recently it emerges as interdisciplinary because of the collaboration with scientific studies such as chemistry, biotechnology which tries to trace the contemporary environmental problems with the lens of science. Environmental catastrophes in the current scenario accentuate eco-criticism a prominence one. This form of criticism emphasizes the reevaluation of man's relationship, his attitudes, and his reaction towards nature.-The green tradition in American writing commands Anthony Doerr's attention. Designated as an American writer Anthony Doerr, a prolific and celebrated Pulitzer awardee grants his contribution in the field of ecological writing immense. Through his desperate personalities and perspectives, he ensures riveting flash for ecology. His works are served as an adequate documentation of ecology which embraces imagination intertwined projection of experiences.

Illumination of landscapes, nature-oriented protagonists evoke eco-consciousness among readers and occupy the thought that Doerr's nature intricate crisscrossing lines are paying homage to the grandeur of nature. The astonishing fact is that he prompts this eco-consciousness from a wide range of characters such as from teenage girls to sixty years old. He as an eco citizen diagnosed his love for nature in all walks of his life and he entralls it in his diction.

LANDSCAPES:

The essence of place which Embedded with the local is very significant in eccentric life. In *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, the connection between the landscape and humankind is explained as places are "centres of felt value" (Tuan 4). This

short story collection is brimming with testimonials of challenging, diverse, and dynamic landscapes, and with personal and philosophical accounts of rugged individualism in the face of such fierce countryside, it makes sense that nature factors heavily into the American literary tradition. Doerr humanizes the world around us, by contextualizing life into the story. The stories bind together with the thread of nature with which all can interact and worship. The richness of detailed landscapes and the characters' history with the uniqueness is the soul of this collection. He rambles to describe some endless feature of a forgotten nature in which he succeeded without any ounce of doubt. He introduced a vast buffet of ecological themes that provoke interest to celebrate ecology. His writings exposed intimate connections with not just local people but with nature. The descriptions of beautiful and dangerous landscapes strengthen the plot as nature obsessed. These stories explore place and landscape at different stages of decay, positioning them as fighting grounds for death and renewal. Most of his stories revolved around the exotic landscapes and people who are similarly unheralded and neglected. Each story travels through dense forests and deep rivers, so the natural world abounds, presenting both beauty and danger at the same time.

Each story is divided up into the regions and continents where the stories are imagined, with a few at the end that has no map point. The short stories transport us from the coast of Kenya to the Montana winter, from Liberia in West Africa to Oregon, from Tanzania to Ohio. For example, the title story *The Shell Collector* captures the entire incidents in a place which cannot be easily traceable. This world offers natural riches to a man who has endless enthusiasm for sea life and who has recoiled. The whereabouts of the blind biologist are described as "...he retired early from his professorship and moved to a thatched-roofed kibanda just north of Lamu , Kenya , one hundred kilometres south of the equator in a small marine park in the remotest elbow of the Lamu Archipelago"(Doerr 13). Lamu enriched with the heaving presence of nature, the abundant wildlife, the smallness of the individual human in the vastness of the natural environment.

Doerr offers an almost unimaginable diversity of landscapes and wildlife within eight short stories "The Hunter's wife" tale has circulated winter which is ruthless and not tolerable. The hunter thinks while seeing the ice bars in every nook and corner as "Snow fell incessantly. He wondered if some ice age had befallen the entire world "(Doerr 58). African coast to the pine forests of Montana to the damp moors of Lapland, charting a vast physical and emotional landscape.

The field and location of each story ventured in a wide spectrum and they served as a basement to build a further story. In "So Many Chances", the sea strand becomes the inevitable locality for the story's nourishment in a plethora of way as Dorothea's father becomes the shipbuilder, Dorothea wants to be a fisher and Dorothea's mother is in the process of changing her rigid nature with the sight of the limitless sea. The astonishing view of the sea in the early morning time is described by Doerr in his own style.

In the morning she drags her mother to the sea by the wrist. To confront her with the sea dressed in fog. To show her that this place is not empty. Wings of mist drag

through the treetops. The fog shreds everywhere; flashes of pure blue wink above the sea undressing. A wide-brimmed hat crammed over her mother's hair. Gulls turn in a high noisy wheel above the gliding tide. Cormorants dive. (Doerr 82)

"For a Long Time, this was Griselda's Story" sets in Idaho where trees and grass are flourished in green color, and rain never forgets to visit often. Griselda travels widely with his loveable metal-eating husband. Through her letters to her family, her world tour is mentioned in this story. She visits Sicilian, Mazatlán, Nairobi, Fiji and Malta. The passion for landscapes made Griselda to fall for him.

There is such vivid imagery in all of his natural environments - forests, rivers, oceans, the changing of the seasons. "July Fourth" captures the beauty of River Neris and the story "A Tangle by Rapid River" is abundant with descriptions of local nature. Both stories entirely propelled by natural surrounding especially the location of the river is picturized with crystal lyricism. His language flows with a whimsicalness as appreciated the sound of language as much as its ability to convey a message. "The carpet of the forest is clotted with leaves...spent leaves drifting, the river's whisper from the depth of the woods"(Doerr177).

Doerr does not fail to hail the wilderness of nature; the dark and deep forest in "Mkondo" stirred the heart with thrilling. It reminds Robert Frost's experience in the woods which is filled with snow while here the wood is occupied the gothic features which provoke the horror and suspense.

It was twice as dark under the canopy of leaves; exposed roots laced the path; branches lashed his chest. He caught one glimpse of her; leaping deadfall, dodging saplings. Then she was gone. It was so dark. He fell once, twice. There was a fork in the trail, then another; like arteries the trails branched out from the central trunks, subdividing into a hundred times; he had no idea which way she might have gone. He listened for her but heard only insects, frogs, leaves shifting. (Doerr)

SEASONS:

Eco-literature in general entailed the fact to rethink the human role in the climate changes but Doerr attempts a novelty attempt in which he propelled the investigation of how the climate changes impact his characters and its catalytic features throughout the short story collection.

Like landscapes, the seasons are having a pivotal position in this short story collection. Generally, the seasons are used as symbolism in eco-critical studies. With descriptive language, including compelling adjectives and picture-perfect adverbs, Doerr helps readers visualize the seasons in a vivid spectrum and understand how much the seasons intertwined with their lives. Doerr uses symbols related to seasons to express ideas such as feelings, the passing of time, and age. By noticing keywords related to the time of year, anyone can get a better understanding of the meaning behind his expressions.

Winter is one of the most significant seasons in this short story collection which refers to death, old age, pain, loneliness, despair, or an end. The season provides the setting for painful messages, as well as messages of renewal, rebirth and hope which can be found in “The Hunter’s Wife” story. The winter in the valley of Montana teaches how dying and living have similarities and both are inevitable to all living creatures. The winter made everything as frozen solid and the result of it will be either living or dying in the future. Winter gives despair with ice like skeletons which spread all over the valley. The winter gives pain and loneliness to the couple who are suffered because of hunger during snowfall. The hunter hardly tried to feed his wife with anything available in the winter. He drilled the river ice to get fish. He did everything to prevent death because of starvation.

Sometimes he brought back a trout, frozen stiff in the short snowshoe from the river to the cabin. Other times they ate a squirrel, snare, once a famished deer whose bones he cracked and boiled and finally ground into a meal, or only a few handfuls of rosehips. In the worst parts of March, he dug out cattails to peel and steam the tubers. (Doerr 59)

The hunter feels guilty about the strange behavior of his wife and blamed winter for making her crazy. He strongly believes that the winter season in Montana has a significant influence on his wife’s illness that is in the illusion of viewing dying animals’ dreams. But she thinks everything is vivid in the winter and she affirms that winter is the only thing that helped to realize her talent of reading dreams of dying one.

Winter comes in the dream of Dorothea in “So Many Chances” who dreamt of a sea which covered with snow as the sun is buried in the sea and snow creaked in the seashore. Winter makes the ocean and the river as empty one without fish which are fled somewhere. The winter tangled the entire world in the dream of Dorothea according to whom the winter symbolizes the despair and loneliness.

Joseph Saleeby in “The Caretaker” is assigned to do duties specifically for the winter as installing storm windows, clearing ice from the walkways and the housetop, and so on. Though Saleeby does not want to see the snow, he watches the flakes melting from the crystal shape to water. Here the snow is the symbol of Saleeby’s guilty feeling which he tried to avoid. The flake melting represents his redemption from the feel of guilty because of his clandestine act of burying the hearts of beached whales. The scenery of winter is beautifully drawn in this story as “winter. Sleet sings through the branches. The ground freezes, thaws, freezes again into something like sludge, immovably thick” (145).

In “Mkondo”, Naima loves the winter season because every winter she brought something into Ward’s house as a companion to her. In one winter, she brought workers from a farm to set up a bee’s hive which made her happy though she gives up because of the pressure of neighbours. Another winter she has the hawks as her guests and enjoyed their wilderness which attempts also ends futile in the act of neighbourhood.

Rain symbolizes multiple things depending on the context. Rain is the symbol of blessing from God which can be found in literature as a common one. In this short story collection rain symbols signified renewal, fertility, and change which promote good prospects in the future. In *The Shell Collector*, the rain depicts emotions and calmness because the rain came on the very next day of his son's sad demise which is aptly used by the writer as the symbol of calmness which is the outcome of sadness. The worst thing is he can predict the arrival of the rain as he foresees the venom of cone shells which leads to death but both the foreknowledge seems futile because no one is ready to listen to him. As he expected, the rain came and the force of the rain is described as "the rain came, a monsoon assaulting the thatched roof. Frogs, singing somewhere under the floorboards, hurried their tremolo, screamed into the storm"(31), which parallel to the mind of blind biologist in which a silent storm is crossing because of his only son's death and his past divorce life.

In "For a Long Time this was Griselda's Story" the rain is magical water which vanishes the grief of the human mind. The natural death of Mrs. Drown kindles the sadness of Rosemary because she loses her all the blood relations as Griselda eloped with metal eater and eventually her mother's death. But when she sprinkled the ashes of her mother, the sudden rain washed everything which symbolizes Rosemary's grief is also run like the ashes. Thunderstorms in "July Fourth" made the Americans in trouble when they wanted to go to Helsinki at the eleventh hour as planes are cancelled because of bad weather. Because of rain, the air around them was heavy which symbolizes their inner mind which is in a state of heaviness. In "The Caretaker" the rain is defined as "cold, earnest drops" (163) which runs over the garden and nourishes it.

The rebirth and renewal often use symbols from the spring season. Spring also refers to love, hope, youth, and growth. The end of Griselda's Story has a bit of hope which can be identified with the description of Rosemary who enjoyed her spring with pencil and paper to play 'Find a Word' game in the newspaper.

The usage of spring leaves the hope among the readers as Rosemary's life has the renewal which is flourished with love and hope. In Hunter's wife's story, the spring is the symbol of rebirth. The hunter's heart is bubbled with joy when he receives the spring season in Montana Valley. He thinks "spring was coming; the valley was dressing up. Look there, he wanted to say, those geese streaming over the road. The valley lives. Even after a winter like that" (60).

Summer symbolizes freedom and growth for the characters as they search for love, self-acceptance, and their identities. In "So Many Chances" the sun represents the change and self-acceptance. The teenage girl Dorothea who longed for freedom and self-growth feels the summer as a positive change in her life. She accepts the summer in the seaside Maine where she feels "as if the sun here was a different sun altogether" (75). The Portland sunrise gives new energy to the entire family. They enjoyed the scene of the sunrise behind the slabs of clouds which is the symbol of self-rising amidst all the obstacles of life. Life

should be forwarded towards growth in silence then only the success will be celebrated louder as Dorothea's father has done which is comparable with the line " The summer rolls forward in silence "(86).

The summer has something unpleasant feature which teaches life is full of pleasant and unpleasant events which are balanced by the attitude towards life. The sweating is the symbol of struggling but the fruit will be very tasty as the hotness and the sweating of the summer seems unworthy but without heat, the goodness of shadow cannot be enjoyed. At the seaside, the heat of summer is quite unbearable which is exhibited in this story.

A July night arrives, hangs heavier and wetter than any night Dorothea can remember. The air heavy all day, waiting for a storm that won't begin. The ocean pewter and flat. The horizon erased in a smear of gray and the sky hung so low it seems to the rest on the top of the rented house; any moment it might collapse on the roof. Night comes but does not break the heat. (Doerr 88)

In "Mkondo" the summer sky is compared with the furnace because of its healing effects. Ward Beach thinks because of the blazing sun his skin becomes more darkened than the river which flowed in Tanzania. This is indirect exposure of his love for his native land's 'steady seasons' which is unfavorable to Naima and this leads to their separation.

Autumn may refer to ripeness, change, maturity, beauty, sadness, or preparing for an end or decline. In "A Tangle by the Rapid River" the effects of the autumn season in over night are well explained as "it seems; autumn was ridden out of the trees, the branches stripped, the yard buried under leaves" (Doerr 175). The decline of nature during the autumn is a part of nature but it underpins the fact that this destruction is not permanent and the desired change will happen soon. The seasons are compared with the life of Naima which had plenty of memories when she was in Tanzania but emptiness filled the memories in Ohio which is depicted as "spring passed, summer and fall. Naima did not get out of bed until noon or later. With the slow revolution of seasons only the tiniest memories" (Doerr 205).

LIVES:

Eco citizens in Anthony Doerr's *The Shell Collector* addresses the theme of nature and have been catalysts for change in public consciousness concerning the environment. In the title, the story carries a nameless protagonist of 63 years old biologist. The intention of Doerr is evident while he remains the title character without any identity even no one knows about his name. Like *The Shell Collector*, the hunter does not have any individual name as he often tagged with 'the hunter' which comes in the title of the story itself. His profession is often misunderstood by the others as killing animals and birds for the sake of living but the truth seems different. No one can lovebirds, animals, and the valley like him. When his wife thinks of him she accepts that she hardly understands what he did in the forest but she confessed one fact that "he loved the valley and needed to move in it, to watch the ravens and kingfishers and herons, the coyotes and bobcats to hunt nearly everything else" (Doerr 55). Thus, the characters are called or identified by their profession

which is relying on nature. The anonymity is commuted with his perception of nature.

He showcases the people who belonged to the lower hierarchy. They are not famous even people who do not know their names until their life has triggered by nature. They have different professions and different ambience. He accommodates marginalized individuals. They are identified as *The Shell Collector* whose livelihood is dependent upon his gathering shells and sent to university as a sample to do research and the hunter whose perception of hunting is different from the common people who have all imagined hunting is killing animals for the sake of livelihood, the volleyball player is none other than Griselda who is “a terrifically tall girl with turnkey thighs, slender arms” (Doerr 96). “The Caretaker” who initially a soldier and then a sneaker and eventually ends up as the caretaker of his garden. Apart from this, there are fishermen, magician’s assistants, metal eater, museum keeper, and plenty of characters doing various jobs. The worlds are devoted to fly fishing, photography, and the study of shells, fossils, winter in Montana; and the myriad of life forms that surround us all.

Doerr used the names for a particular purpose. In some stories, he labeled some names for reinforcing their attitudes of the characteristics in the story. In “For a Long Time This was Griselda’s Story” he symbolically put names for his characters. Griselda is the chief personae whose name reminds Boccaccio’s *Decameron* and Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. Her sister’s name Rosemary indicates the plant rosemary because she doesn’t do anything except alive like rosemary; Rosemary’s husband has known by his name Duck Winters as has the characteristics of cold, ridiculous and barren. Mrs. Drown, the mother of Griselda has killed herself by drowning with her paranoia and humility which leads to trauma. Weather bee is the character that appeared in “A Tangle by the Rapid River” whose name is ironically placed because he is unlike bee loved to sleep and enjoy his retirement. According to him, retirement is for sleeping. Ward Beach is in “Mkondo” has the features of the beach as he pulled Naima from Tanzania to his Ohio by his love tides. Like Beach, he has hidden richness inside but seems very pacific. His perseverance in pursuing Naima will be compared with tireless tides.

Titles of the short stories are also significant and posit the tension of the readers as they have some purpose. “Mkondo” is a story of a fiercely independent woman seeking peace and solitude the title given by Doerr in the form of a noun that carries the meaning of current flow or runs. The symbolism lies beneath this title which denotes Naima, the important character runs like air or flow of water. In the story, ‘Mkondo’ comes as a game name which is invented by Naima at her young age. The rule of the game is to take a path that is not traveled before and should walk until the path ends. It gives audacious experience to Naima and this ‘Mkondo’ has changed the entire life of the characters in this story. The thrilling of life is based on the twists and turnings which can be chewed by people during an unexpected journey. Unplanned travel is always remembered in the heart lesser than planned trips. Thus, ‘Mkondo’ is a game not for leisure time but for our lifetime.

“A Tangle by the Rapid River” is based on fishing in the banks of river Rapid, as the title suggested. River Rapid suggests the speed of the river in which humans live on the earth. Mulligan, the retired man traced the path of the river from the stream to the ocean as our life started from the dot to travel towards eternity. The tangle in his fishing rod provides the lesson that life cannot be predicted and we should be prepared to accept twist in life that can change everything.

“July Fourth” portrays the Americans as they are blinded with excessive wealth and modern civilization attitudes in the story. The soul of the story lies in the betting competition; the born of betting is because of showing hegemony over others. Each team of American and Britain sailors tries to get the biggest fish which indirectly represents the act of controlling nature on a large scale. This story evaporated the idea of nature which is used to construct or reinforce social ideologies - gender, class, and race. Here, nature would construct the superiority. “July Fourth” is the deadline for their competition of fishing and that day will judge their fate.

“The Caretaker” is the title aptly suggested by the author which does not denote the job of Saleeby as a caretaker in which he fails to do. But the caretaker is the label that can be suited for him when he rescued the deaf girl from suicide. He takes care of the whales’ hearts and he takes care of the garden every night with almost concern. As a job of caretaker he fails to do with responsibility but as an eco citizen, he succeeded in his life as a caretaker. Heroes who dream of a better day and do what they can to survive and conquer.

Like Dickens’s Micawber, Anthony Doerr has created a character full of optimistic attitude though he is not a successful businessman in his life. As Micawber suggested ‘everything will turn up’, San Juan in ‘*So Many Chances*’ fondly utters the saying “A Man only has So Many Chances” (Doerr 73). As the title suggested the characters are given a chance to change as eco citizens by nature that started to live a life at the seaside.

“*For a Long Time this was Griselda’s Story*” is the title in the viewpoint of Rosemary who becomes the Centre of the story after the elopement of her sister Griselda. The collection has the protagonists who are all not famous in their land but in this story Rosemary even not famous in her own story. Though ecological aspects in this story are very little, it addresses the exploitation of nature through the act of metal-eating.

“The Hunter’s Wife” is a chilling story, which dabbles in magical realism in which the characters encounter unusual happenings and experiences strange events in unlikely situations. This story stays genuine and interesting as it concentrates on the lives of its characters. He projects the solid point that magic is always rooted in the reality of common life. The entire plot is dependent upon the geographical landscape of Montana which is governed by nature.

Doerr is usually fond of a differently abled person which reflects in his characters as well. The beachcomber in *The Shell Collector* is blind who was affected by Retinoderma at the age of nine. This blind man who is on a verge of losing his eyesight develops the love

for smooth and delicate shells on the beach of Florida. He then decides to devote his entire life to searching and studying various kinds of shells all around the world, becoming thus one of the wisest men in the field. There is Saleeby who is represented as the central figure in "The Caretaker" is physically sick and mentally disturbed with the traumatic views of the war. He is closely associated with the deaf and dumb girl who is the daughter of his master. Apart from this short story collection his novel *All the Light We Cannot See* also has blind protagonist Marie-Laure.

Some characters are enough to make others astonish with their beyond nature personality. They are atypical, bizarre, eccentric, or non-conforming, especially one having beliefs that are unusual but harmless. "The Hunter's Wife" who declared herself as the reader of dreams of humankind and animals where Doerr touches magical realism tone. In *Griselda's Story*, there is a metal eater who can eat airplanes and car accessories in front of people through these he attains the attention of people. Joseph Saleeby confessed the beached whales which requested him to bury their hearts. The willing suspension of disbelief should apply to understand their intentions. In "Mkondo" Naima, the girl from Africa can run faster like the wind and communicates with the wilderness.

Ecofeminism encompasses the idea that women are innately more linked to nature than men. This short story collection glimpses the ecofeminism through some characters like Naima, Mary Roberts, and Dorothea San Juan which seeks to highlight the interconnectedness of the isomorphism that exists between women and nature. Tumaini is the German shepherdess of the blind shell collector whom he thinks the understanding company to him in the shell collecting. She learns everything about the unusual place and his master's mind as well. She can lead the blind shell collector to the places which filled with utter mystery. Despite getting bitten from the shells and injured in her palm, she could not stop her invade to the sea because "the ocean she loved so dearly" (Doerr 29).

The survival instinct of the female characters is delineated through the language of ecology and emblemizes the dismantling of boundaries in nature. Mary Roberts started her life as a magician's assistant and transferred herself to the reader of dying animals and men is served as the ecofeminist throughout the story. She has an intimate relationship with animals rather than the hunter who lived in Montana throughout his life. Hunter merely knows the things related to hunting tactics and characteristics of animals but she knows the animals' mind and their world. She is capable of seeing the animals' world in her own eyes. Her influence on nature reveals in her poems which are occupied with flowers, animals, and so on. Her ability to see the dreams of dying animals is an innate gift to her. An outcast with magical powers and can enter the spirit realm, where she explores the mysteries.

Dorothea San Juan is a girl of the teenage who feels the bubbling in her blood when her life is associated with sea life. She thinks that the seashore is the "threshold of paradise" (Doerr 75). She can feel the different sun in the seaside and she decides to be independent by depending on nature in the means of fishing. Griselda has a strong resemblance

to Naima, who married the metal eater to travel throughout the world as Naima married Ward Beach to play her 'Mkondo' in different countries. Wandering is in our very blood which is a part of an ecological perspective. Joseph Saleeby's mother is independent because she made a garden as her identity which is also acted as her livelihood. Her love for nature is revealed with an orderly garden. Naima is the best example in this category because she has the ability of nature's wilderness. Her love for nature and its wilderness picturized in the entire story and her conversations with nature made her different from the rest.

They are the eco citizen who is away from the manmade world and the hurrying lifestyle. They observe nature keenly than anyone. These characters help to define and identify the circumstances, the context, and the environment where the scene unfolds blind beachcomber has the vision to see the natural world in his way; the collector lives in harmony with nature, aware of its wonders and respectful of its dangers. Joseph Saleeby can make the garden which is the tribute to his mother's death. In the final story, Doerr elucidates the character of Ward Beach in "Mkondo" as following :

He hadn't seen that what he had in common with the world — with the trunks of trees and the marching columns of ants and green shoots corkscrewing up from the mud — was life: the first light that sent every living thing paddling forth into the world every day. (Doerr 217)

The human dilemma is one of the common factors among the characters of Anthony Doerr's *The Shell Collector*. The blind biologist was in the dilemma that whether the cone shells cure malaria or pluck the soul. He had an inner conflict whether he should use the shells to protect the girl Seema or prevent her from the poisonous shells. In "July Fourth", the failure of the camera made the Americans on the edge of a dilemma whether they are going to kill the fish as proof of their victory in the bet or let the fish monster free and lose the bet consequently. Joseph Saleeby has the inner conflict in the act of burying hearts of beached whales. The hunter was in the dilemma of whether he can believe his wife's magical skill or not. Ward Beach in "Mkondo" had the dilemma that whether he should follow the wind like an African woman or not.

The characters of this collection have reminded Dryden's words of "Here God's Plenty" whose participation circumstantially complements the story within this collection; Protagonists or antagonists - secondary, tertiary, referential, and environmental. Each one fulfils an important function: they carry out the actions that develop and shape the story, fanning it with their individual conflicts. Heroes are people who have been broken by the world they live in and then rescued, and mended by nature. They are as steely as they are fragile, and they never surrender. They are those that allow the environment that surrounds the characters in the plot to be shaped and felt, which allows the general environment to be something concrete.

Animals have held an important place in the backdrop of works of literature. Doerr recognizes and treasures the intrinsic friendships that animals and humans can have. He

instead using anthropomorphized animals or animals' narrative stories wrote stories in which animals play indispensable roles. He believes animals are inseparable in this world and with them, he provides some strong ecological alerts to mankind. His animals are not talkative like animals feeble or children literature represents but through the animals the author's intention can be revealed in every story. In *The Shell Collector* story, the world of shells is solidly unwrapped in which the cone shells became the trigger of the blind biologist's life. The blind shell which is found by the blind protagonist represents him as both are the randomness of nature. In Hunter's Wife story Montana valley and its animals and birds have occupied a reasonable place in the entire story because without those animals the story cannot stand its leg. From the frozen bear to clever wolves are run with the plot often. In fishing tales of "A Tangle by the Rapid River", "So Many Chances" and "July Fourth" fish became the central figure because all are strived to get fish for various reasons. Joseph Saleeby's life is entailed with the beached sperm whales which changed his entire life. "Mkondo" is a story filled with different creatures such as bees, hawks, cats, dying dog, geese, and so on. Thus, the non-human creatures in this short story collection are helpful to create an ecologically oriented world.

The form of short stories is dicey because of its exotic locations and eccentric characters stick with some hypothetical situations which are not experienced before. The minds of characters moved in the tangent way which is free from languishing narrative. The alignment of characters, plot, dialogues, and juicy phrase usages are perfect. The oddball protagonists, free will women, matured children who are in the splinter alliances, inner dilemma, aches of fractured relationship provide the equipoise which invariably imbued with a sense of calm and serenity. This short story collection combines different people, different walks of life, and different pasts and memories but the common thread to connect all is the natural world. They allow discovering the beauty and diversity of its most iconic and majestic ecological perspectives throughout the book.

CONCLUSION

The Invention of nature reveals the myriad ways in this collection which promoted Doerr as a better artist and a more attentive naturalist. In straightforward text complemented by step-by-step illustrations, dozens of exercises lead the hand and mind through creating accurate reproductions of plants and animals as well as landscapes, skies, seas, rivers, and so on. There is such vivid imagery in all of his natural environments - forests, rivers, oceans, the changing of the seasons. Thus, these outcast characters of Doerr established him as an environmentally conscious writer and have given a widening scope and perspective of environmental literature. The stories capture a distinct perspective from the margins. ■

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The Disciplinary and Experimental Apparatus of Jenni Fagan's *The Panopticon*

Ritu Ranjan Gogoi

This article attempts to read Jenni Fagan's debut novel *The Panopticon*, through a Foucauldian lens that brings a picture of the model-structure that Jeremy Bentham originally proposed. Ms. Fagan tries to project the panopticon as a kind of metaphor for life in today's Britain, where the proliferation of institutionalized forms of authority and power has led to growing complaints about a surveillance state. The focus of the article is to read *The Panopticon*, such as it is, an unrelenting picture of the very system that psychologically brutalizes the youthful subjects by imposing discipline and regulation upon their lives whom they are supposed to rehabilitate and take care of. Fagan portrays a heroine who upends the controlling apparatuses of the system with audacity and would rather choke, than ask for our pity, and the objective of the article is to find out the patterns through which the power mechanism operates, and in turn dilutes the individual and personal identity of the people whom it is supposed to protect and govern.

Keywords: Authority, Control, Discipline, Foucauldian, Panopticon, Power, Surveillance, System.

1.1 Introduction

The panoptic gaze and surveillance in the wake of current technological advancements play an important role in the schema of discipline and power which Michel Foucault describes. While Foucault also speaks of inverting and eliminating the sovereignty of the gaze, he also analyzes the virtualization and automatization procedures whereby the modern politics of power remains indiscernible to the physical eye.

Jenni Fagan in her novel *The Panopticon* critiques the surveillance structure of the panopticon in terms of its social and cultural vision. The institutional criticism which is explicit in the views of the spunky protagonist Anais is anti-authoritarian at best that describes the panoptic complex as machinery experimenting upon the modern individual's manner of being. The idealization of a welfare state which is articulated in the programs of education,

science, prison regime, policing, are instrumental in penetrating deeply into the psyche of an individual and his/her subjectification. It is in this respect that the power mechanisms play a decisive part in the techniques of examination, tests, probations, and sexualization of the individual in relation to the self and the other.

Fagan's novel is notable because it differs from the standard crime novel; there are no detectives, no murder mystery, and no psychopathic killers. Instead we find a teenage girl taken to the correction facility called the Panopticon in charge with the crime of assaulting a police woman. Even then, there is a sense of vagueness about the whole affair, and the protagonist's surreal mode of thought and explanation gives it a Kafkian air of absurdity, trapped in her own mind, her hallucinations, her hopes and fears. The panopticon in Fagan's novel is more of a symbolic architecture than the strict prison house model, where the inmates are allowed to go out, smoke, and do certain things bound by a set of loose rules. If the situation is analyzed with a Foucauldian view, the disciplinary procedures along with the typical partitioning of the detention institution comes into focus, which above all is characterized by 'transformation' of individuals in the socio-political and criminological paradigm of delinquency.

1.2 Research Analysis

The postmodern era has a precisely complex structure that initiates the pathologization of the criminal, undertaking corrective and therapeutic processes when necessary, with the systematic exercise of discipline that requires the individual to look at oneself and give a report to the authorities. Anais, the heroine of Fagan's novel is in constant conflict with herself and the system regarding her identity and fate she believes herself to be a part of some experiment conducted in order to observe and frame the individuals into some automatized model that acts at the voices of the observers. She says –

The experiment have to raise the game, ay. They have to break you. That's the point, and they've not managed it yet. Everything that has been, every single thing, and I'm not totally broke. They dinnae like that. (Fagan, 143)

Anais is a rebel at heart, feisty and imaginative, and she has little regard for rules or conventions. But, she is compassionate, lovable, and full of life. Through Anais the author gives us a view of what it means to be lonely, and kept in 'check' by the rigid conditionings of the state. When we first meet Anais, she is apprehended by police; her school uniform covered in blood, and she is being taken to the Panopticon, an institution for young offenders. Fagan depicts the high and lows of juvenile delinquency through Anais' story, and her life in the rehabilitation facility located deep in the forest. The most striking feature of the novel is Fagan's description of the facility which is a 'C' shaped building four floors high, and in the centre a watchtower with glass windows that looks out into every cell, every landing, and every bathroom. It is easily recognizable as the omniscient prison architecture that Jeremy Bentham proposed, and which was later developed into a metaphor for the oppressive gaze of late capitalism and the power of the state by Foucault. Anais being a

veteran of several care institutions describes the building at a quick glance, the floors, windows, the third floor bedrooms and all –

Right in the middle of the C shape, as high as the top floor, is the watchtower. There is a surveillance window going all the way around the top and you cannae see through the glass, but whoever, or whatever, is in there can see out. From the watchtower it could see into every bedroom, every landing, every bathroom. Everywhere. This place has experiment written all over it.(Fagan,15)

One significant question can be raised here – in what manner does Fagan’s Benthamite structure fit into the ‘big brother’ scale or the critical theorization of Foucault’s concept? The answer is, it emerges somewhere in the middle. In the novel we find that the inmates are locked up at night, but during the day everyone is free to roam outside the building, in the lounge area, dining space, and the gaming room, all brightly coloured by well-meaning staff members who offer their humble opinion like – “we practice a holistic approach to client care at the Panopticon.” Anais is brought to the Panopticon because she is suspected of bludgeoning a policewoman into a coma, a crime for which she is regularly interrogated, but with no possible reasons of finding the actual truth of what happened. There is more than absurdity in the manner of Anais’ thought process. There is a realization that reality itself is absurd. In this regard she says –“in all actuality they grew me, from a bit of bacteria in a petri dish. An experiment created and raised....a nobody from nowhere can take.” (28)

At one level, Fagan’s novel perfectly matches with Foucault’s idea of the panopticon, where the gaze is inverted and along with it, the medicalization and the psychiatrization attempts, where the intensified relations to the self and the other are brought into focus, and at another level, the panopticon in the novel remains just a rehabilitation facility, defined in terms of its physical structure, a means to watch over young chronic offenders who are under interventional and necessary supervision. However, it provokes a response of paranoia in Anais appropriately, since she is being constantly watched. In the panopticon she and her fellow inmates are free to wander, to go on boat-trips, double dates, and occasionally even spending money, and therefore it does not truly strike an Orwellian note. And, if it is, then it is the well-intentioned Orwellianism of the modern European welfare state. The prison complex here seems to cater to a voyeuristic vein more than abject control. In Fagan’s novel we find instead an existential concern of the self in a societal system that harkens back to *Jane Eyre* and the Dickensian view where the protagonist is an orphan, where children are hardened survivors of the streets or tracing their parentage through a perilous maze of orphanages, workhouses, and the gothic hulking soot stained establishments. The only palpable difference is the retro prison design, brightly coloured and well-lit, which works as a modern day detention center and rehabilitation facility with its own organized spaces.

Fagan’s novel implies a kind of adult cultural and philosophical foundation as the title suggests, but, other than replicating the panopticon and using it as a symbol, very little

exposition is given to the concept as a whole. Physically Anais lives in the panoptic building designed after Bentham's model, and consciously she internalizes the metaphor of panopticism as proposed by Foucault and suffers from identity crisis and the moral relativism which itself is the product of a restrictive and observant society. Anais feels afraid because she is exposed, and she retreats into herself, because in the panopticon there is little difference being watched and being seen. In fact, Fagan subtly indicates that Anais's sense of morality remains fractured, chaotic, and case specific to the point that whether she is guilty or innocent seems inconsequential. In spite of the system's best efforts to normalize her, the violence and her anarchic nature could not be redressed, or so it would appear as the very categories that define her as deviant are also defined in terms of a deterministic system bent on control and discipline. Throughout the story Anais remains as a voice that despises authority, and sees the institutions as uncaring or corrupt, and apathetic to the plight of the poor and vulnerable.

Anais's paranoia about being experimented upon by some all-seeing scientists that constantly observe her fuels the dislike for the heartless institutional systems that does a poor job of really caring for the subjects in an empathetic way. Anais frequently refers to a shadow conspiracy in the novel as 'The Experiment' which she thinks is manipulating her, and believes the same group killed her foster mother Teresa, and is responsible for her incarceration at the panopticon. The experiment which she refers to constantly has in truth created a psychological trap which feeds into her sense of dispossession and disenfranchisement, and has made her into a person that treats the system with contempt. Being a girl who has spent her entire teenage years in foster care, Anais has a riotous recklessness to her that is viewed as delinquency, wrongdoing or lawbreaking, dealing with drugs, street fighting, and committing arson. Anais depends on her escapist persona to overcome her fear and anxiety of being a prisoner and a mere experiment of power, both of which are justifiably evident by the incarceration at the prison:

The experiment, Angus. That is who would be there. They're closing in. I can feel them all the time. The police have been quiet, but, they're biding their time.....They're coming for me next. (Fagan, 157)

Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* notes that in the panopticon, inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers, but in Fagan's novel, it is not so simple in the case of Anais and the other inmates. Power is not decentralized, in fact, Anais and the other kids are well aware that the people who are meant to care for them are the ones who exercise power. Their defiance to the supervisors and caretakers is not diffused, but rather clever and subtle, and when they demand a change, they do so in a group forming resistance, like the riot at the end of the novel, even if the communal bond lasts only for a few hours at best. Even someone like Angus, who is genuinely concerned for Anais is not on her side, because at the end of the day he still answers to a system of power that goes beyond his individual acts of kindness, and when Anais is almost on the verge of being sent to the secure unit for a crime she didn't even remember committing, Angus has to comply to the regulations that is passed to him.

In Fagan's novel, the panopticon is an ordered space, an enclave of safety, meant to keep away the urban threat of violence by a system of security and surveillance. The setting of the novel offers a better angle for analyzing the relation between violent crime as well as the psychological modifications which occur in the minds without the inhabitants knowing themselves. This engineered form of social segregation makes Anais and her other inmates defy the uncertain conditions. Although Anais finds a sense of warmth and friendship among a few other inmates, she feels that she has paid for it in the currency of her freedom, the right to be herself, and she is frequently engendered in tension, confusion, vexation, and fear which prompts her reckless urges and fantasies of a normal life. The panopticon is a completely artificial and experimental simulacrum as is hinted often by Anais in the novel, which is filled with a false sense of ease, stability, continuity, and safety. Here, it can be argued with Foucault's idea that the role of panopticon was not only to punish, but also to 'educate', to condition, as Fagan's choice of setting in the novel shows the unusual characteristics that allows the inmates free time, outdoor space, along with the supervision of the social workers. There is an ambiguity concerning the panoptic power which is not explored sufficiently in the novel, rather it is blurred between care and inescapable coercive methods of soft exercise in power.

The panoptic power is also evident in the process of normalization that makes everyone feel free in the confined but spacious grounds of the facility in the novel. The central watchtower is a constant reminder that despite the freedom being granted to the inmates, they are being observed and watched, which brings the idea of visible but unverifiable surveillance as said by Foucault in his theorization of Bentham's architectural model. Foucault emphasizes that disciplinary power is invisible power, and discipline is directed towards the small things. Fagan in her novel points out the hierarchized network of mutually supportive power in the figures of 'men with shiny shoes and no noses', policemen and policewomen, the social workers, and the nurse, who are all individually dispensed with power to carry on the responsibilities of the system from authorities who remain elusive and for the most part, unseen and unspecified. Anais can be said to fill the gaps in the manner of the projection of power through her own narratives, and even if such narratives border on the fantastical and paranoid, the kernel of truth that power is exercised thus, as pointed out by Foucault, cannot be discounted. The effects of that invisible power exercised is still a compelling force which is systematically brought into effectiveness by the building and the watchtower itself, and the inmates, the guards, who are all integrated into the mechanism, and that automatically falls under the disciplinary arrangement. It is experimentation, where the knowledge of being seen inwardly affects the individual by enforcing self-constraint, self-observation, and self-control, in submission to the guardian's gaze that is invisible but invasive. What it perpetrates is an eyeless technique of control which turns the individual's own body into a "physical" prison of behavior.

The experiments are like the watchtower: they can see in everywhere, but nobody can see them. But they're even cleverer, they can see you anywhere

you are. It's always something bad. The experiment are like that.(Fagan, 91-92)

In the final sections of *Discipline and Punish* Foucault says that regarding the question of the modern sense of criminality, the response is 'delinquency.' The deviant behavior in individuals or in entire social groups whether they are environmentally conditioned or inherited, when detected on the bodies or in behavioral patterns becomes a target of the application of power. This can be said to be the case of Anais and her inmates who are in the facility, the Panopticon. Anais has a hefty track record for acts of vandalism, violence, trafficking, and more. When she is brought before the hearing panel, she is threatened by the judge to be placed in a secure unit of the maximum security wing at the Panopticon until she is eighteen, and then interred in an adult prison because they believe that she is a danger to herself and the society. Fagan's novel is not just an account of an individual, in fact there are many children like Anais, Tash, Isla, Shortie, who had a rough start in life and are stuck in the system ever since, kids who have suffered badly in the wrong hands getting punished and judged by the system, labeling and shelving them as criminals which insidiously reveals the desire to sanitize the simulacrum of society, a kind of gentrification that sweeps under the carpet anything that is seen as deviant or abnormal. The very panel that is set to decide Anais fate is proof of the unsympathetic and harsh attitude of the system. Anais's friends and the adults she knows are all people trying to survive in a society beset by materialistic demands which spurs a response of so-called delinquency. They take drugs, paint pictures of penises on walls, have sex change operations, live by stolen goods, and talk about gender and the true state of the world. And, the society that narrowly defines the systems of living sees them as destructive, dangerous, subversive and freakish, which challenge the existing status quo and order which the system wants to keep moulding as deemed fit which also invariably suits their purposes for control and stability.

Fagan in this sense transcends the panopticon as a theoretical metaphor and gives a problematized picture of the disconnected and semi coordinated nature of disciplinary surveillance. In the novel, a parallel can be drawn between the objective of control and care, where the panopticon is portrayed as a facility that takes care of kids who are delinquent. In the story, care and control co-exist and are predicated upon the notion of asymmetries of power, and the author in fact gives an astute criticism of the panoptic condition that is being normalized in the society. The utilitarian rationalization of moral accountability and the disciplinary notion of 'correcting' in the definition of behavior and performance are seen in their deeply entrenched way where the inmates are afforded time, space, and freedom of their own to be scrutinized by and reported to the networks of authority. The panopticon in Fagan's novel is enclosed and segmented, but inside it there are no prohibitions and rigid control that is suggestive of oppressive power being exercised. It however reflects Foucault's idea that in dealing with multiplicity of individuals for the purpose of rehabilitating or correction in behavior, some necessary modifications are applied to the mechanism which sometimes is in sharp contrast with the notions of absolute power and absolute control. It is

a mixed mechanism in this respect, because there is no heavy constraint that is being forced upon the inmates, but rather, it is subtly present in the roles of the supervisors, and the watchtower that seems to overshadow every nook and every corner.

The panoptic schema, according to Foucault, serves as generalized function throughout the social body without losing its edge of power, but it is also malleable enough to become a subtle coercive design that penetrated every institution in the society, be it schools, the barracks, workshops, factories, hospitals, and the prison. In the novel *The Panopticon* we see that the mechanism is broken down into flexible methods of control, which are transferred and adapted according to situations. The power in the novel which symbolically manifests in the watchtower remains invisible, but an omnipresent faceless gaze seems to pervade it which Anais describes as the 'experiment.' In the novel, the concept of the panoptic structure is reviewed through the protagonist Anais' eyes and her narrative suggests a Kafkaesque sense of helplessness which individuals often experience in the face of overwhelming forces, of institutions seeking to confine life within regulatory conditions of bureaucratic jargon which compels the individual to construct one's sense of being and identity in a manner deemed fit by external forces. The sense of knowing that she is being watched without her being able to confront the observers becomes a source of anxiety, terror, and discomfort, even as there remain examples of many others who have submitted to this structure of power. Hence, in Fagan's novel, the panopticon is not a visible or overt structure, or a rigid power mechanism, rather, it is a structure comprising of socio material assemblages that arranges and classifies social categories and individuals so that they can be seen and understood.

In the Foucauldian framework, there is always a resistance to power however subtle it might be, and we can see that in the final part of the novel where a riot breaks out in the panopticon. The resistance of the inmates is not against the tyranny of power; rather it is the resistance against the despotism of narrowly defined conventions of care, for the soft power exercised by the panopticon in the name of love and care is curtailing their freedom of choice and the life they want to live. The architectural and psychological overwatch of Fagan's novel thus induces in the inmates a conscious state of permanent visibility that permeates a sense of automatic functioning of power. The Panopticon in the novel is meant to ensure safety, not intended to frighten, but as Foucault says, "the practice of placing individuals under observation is a natural extension of a justice imbued with disciplinary methods and examination procedures." (227) This obsession with discipline and order limiting human potential is characterized by a negative view of power, in part a reflection of the modern institutions based on clear categories and sharp boundaries even if some of the institutional constraints make way for more flexible, albeit covert control mechanisms.

Jenni Fagan in *The Panopticon* provides interesting commentary upon the formation of identity in the private and public sphere, and as Foucault says in *Discipline and Punish*, "visibility is a trap" (200), similarly, Fagan makes her protagonist critical about the platforms of visibility that are commonplace in modern life, such as the internet, and social media.

According to Anais, one's identity begins to blur in the spaces of social media, which feels unsafe for a person like her diagnosed with borderline schizoid personality disorder. Through the entire book we see and feel through Anais eyes and perceptions, which give the panopticon a surreal aura where the modality of power is systematically fragmented and distributed, and the watchtower remains at the center with its unwavering gaze. Fagan's novel presents a very unrelentingly negative picture of the institutions and systems under the control of the state, and by having chosen the panopticon as the setting, the narrative goes at length to expose the layers of hidden power mechanisms of the state that operate in the guise of reform and programmes of welfare that grinds the powerless subservient to the needs and whims in the interests of the state, giving the subtle indication that the characters may appear free, at best as 'bodies' but with severely limited mobility, and at worst, not at all in every sense, as unique persons with individual traits and psyches who are psychologically and physically subject to the conditions of the world over which they have little or no control save for the little acts of resistance.

1.3 Conclusion

Jenni Fagan's novel critiques the panoptic schema and its basic functioning in the form of programmes and institutions, and describes how the compact disciplinary methods are broken down into more flexible and adaptable modes of control that supervises the individuals, gains information on their life, their resources and their morals. The resistance to control and authority is apparent in the narrative itself, where the author creates Anais as a character that defies the entire purpose of normalization in a post-modern society that is obsessed with order and control. In fact, Foucault says in *Discipline and Punish* that discipline should not be identified with an institution or as an apparatus; rather it should be seen as a type of power, a modality for its exercise that includes all the instruments, techniques, and procedures at its disposal to reinforce its authoritative ideal of order.

While Fagan depicts the panoptic schema in juxtaposition with the law and the juridical system, she presents the entire concept of discipline as a social experiment that is manifest in 'power of the mind over the body' of a criminal. We get to see this process happening in the case of the protagonist Anais, where she is interrogated, and her case investigated with an extended and meticulous observation. The author makes Anais feel the judgment of a system and a society that considers her a threat, an anathema to be examined in the curious confines of a penitentiary, an object on whom calculative leniency of a penalty should be imposed with efficiency, so that the society does not have to face the danger of anarchy. Fagan portrays the character of Anais as a figure weathered down by the ruthless and asymptotic norms of a materialist society that refuses to let her out of control. ■

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The Bhagavad Gita and the Holistic Dharmic Ethos

R.Subramony

The Gita is essentially a spiritual text. The three Acharyas have commented on it. Sri Aurobindo has throughout his book on the Bhagavad Gita given us the integral vision of Lord Krishna. His book on the Gita deals with all the dimensions of this spiritual classic. He brings out the spiritual sadhana in the Gita. He is against any one sided interpretation of the book.

Key words- Brahman, Acharyas, Sadhana, Maya, Prakriti, Guna

Introduction

The Bhagavad Gita is a timeless classic. All the three Acharyas have written commentaries on it. Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita* is perhaps the best commentary on the Gita. In this masterpiece he integrates the different aspects of the Gita and provides us with a holistic vision of the classic. He unifies the three parts of the Gita – Works, Knowledge, Love- and provides us with a grand synthetic interpretation. Sri Aurobindo deals with all the aspects the Gita in this book. He endeavours to bring out the Sankhya, Yoga, Advaitic, Vishistadvaitic, Dvaitic aspects the spiritual text.

Discussion

After his entry into India in 1893, Sri Aurobindo started translating the Mahabharata from Sanskrit to English. He also translated the first six chapters of the Gita. In 1908-09, in the Alipore jail he had the vision of Sri Krishna in the Uttarpara speech he stated:

He (Sri Krishna) placed the Gita in my hands. His strength entered into me and I was able to do the sadhana of the Gita. I was not only to understand intellectually but to realize what Sri Krishna demanded of Arjuna and what he demands of those who aspire to do the work, to be free from repulsion and desire, to do work for him without the demand for fruit, to renounce self-will and become a passive and faithful instrument in his hands to have an equal heart for high and low, friend and opponent, success and failure, yet not to do his work negligently. (SABCL, Vol 2. 3)

In the Alipore jail, Sri Aurobindo had the VasudevaDarsana. Maheshwar states in “The Gita and the Indian Ethos,”:

Sri Aurobindo’s crowning experience was the VasudevaDarsana seeing everywhere the Immanent divine, Narayana, his Beloved Krishna, an experience of the rarest merit, according to the Gita, which declares that rare is the great soul to whom all, everything, is verify the immanent Divine All this distinctly speaks of Sri Aurobindo’s realization of the Gita much above its scholarly study. It is after this realization that he started writing on and in the light of the Gita in the Karmayoga and the Dharma, respectively his English and Bengali weeklies. (254)

Sri Aurobindo’s *Essays on the Gita* is a classic work. It is an in-depth study of the Gita. They throw light on the profound secrets of the Gita. The work is a yogic truth.

In the first essay, “Our Demand and Need from the Gita,” Sri Aurobindo states that the Gita is required for spiritual guidance. He states:

We approach it for help and light and one aim must be to distinguish its essential and living message, that in it on which humanity has to seize for its perfection and its highest spiritual welfare. (SABCL, Vol 13, 8)

The three Acharyas of Vedanta have written commentaries on the Gita in their prasthanatraya.

The Gita is essentially a spiritual text. It also deals with metaphysical, philosophical issues. The three main Acharyas have found support for their ideology in the Gita. Sri Aurobindo brings out the spiritual sadhana of the Gita in his book. He is not interested in dry as dust intellectual study. Sri Aurobindo states:

.... the Gita with its rich and many sided thought, its synthetical grasp of different aspects of the spiritual life and the fluent winding motion of its argument lends itself, even more than the scriptures, to one-sided misrepresentations born of a partial intellectuality. (SABCL, Vol 13, 26)

Sri Aurobindo is against any one-sided interpretation of the Gita. He states:

The thought of the Gita is not pure mission although it sees in one unchanging, pure, eternal self the foundation of all cosmic existence, nor Mayavada although it speaks of the maya of the three modes of Prakriti omnipresent in the created world, nor is it qualified monism although it places in the one his eternal supreme Prakritimanifested in the form of the Jiva and lays most stress on dwelty in God rather than dissolution of the supreme state of spiritual consciousness, nor is it Sankya although it explains the created world by the double

principle of Purusha and Prakriti; nor is it Vaishnava Theism although it presents to us Krishna, who is the Avatara of Vishnu according to the Puranas, as the supreme Deity and allows no essential difference nor any actual superiority of the states of the indefinable relation less Brahman over that of the Lord of beings who is the master of the universe and the friend of all creatures. Like the earlier spiritual synthesis of the Upanishads this later synthesis at once spiritual and intellectual avoids naturally every such rigid determination as would injure its universal comprehensiveness. (SABCL, Vol 13, 6)

Sri Aurobindo's book on the Gita helps one to comprehend the Gita's synthetic teachings. It also prepares us for a new future. His book reveals to us about Brahma – Vidya and the Yoga. The 'Essays' open our consciousness towards a great future.

Maheshwar states:

The Teaching and the Yoga of the Gita is not for renouncing life and its problems, it is a mastery of life and its situations and turning it Godward in complete surrender to the will of the supreme so that our entire personality becomes an instrument and a chance for the fulfillment of the Divine plan in the universal writings. This conquest of life and its surrender to the Divine is very different from disgust with life and its worthlessness and seeking for an escape from the world into some heaven beyond. Hence, to pursue that aim of the Gita demands a heroic venture in life and its spiritual seekings." (258-59)

Conclusion

Sri Aurobindo states that the central teaching of the Gita is not exclusive. It includes the path of Jnana, Bhakthi and Karma margas. Sri Aurobindo observes that each stage is important and mutually complimentary. The Gita gives importance to one's Svadharma, the law of being. The appeal of the Gita is broad.

Certain commentators quote from a verse of the Gita to depict it as a scripture of a particular ideology. It is wrong. Sri Aurobindo observes that the Divine Teacher himself declares what his supreme word is:

What the great, the supreme word of the Gita is, its mahavakya, we have not to seek, for the Gita itself declares it in its last utterance, the crowning note of the great diapason. With the Lord in the heart take refuge with all the beings by his grace thou shalt stand. So have I expounded to thee a knowledge more secret than that which is hidden for this hear the most secret, the supreme word that I shall speak to thee. Become my-minded, infallibly, thou shalt come to me, for dear to me art thou. Abandoning all laws of conduct seek refuge in me above. I will release thee from all sin, do not grieve. (SABCL, Vol 13, 34)

Our entire being has to be tuned to the Supreme word. The entire human personality has to be turned to the Divine, Maheswar states:

As one proceeds with the Essays on the Gita, thereafter opens itself as in course of the original colloquy, sometimes in response to doubts and questions and inquires and imploring of the human disciple, sometimes in the grace and living compassion of the Divine Teacher, initiating and conducting the disciple's consciousness into higher and still higher wisdom, deeper mysteries, into truth after truth of cosmic dimensions marvellous vision, into revelations of his eternal divinities and its Supreme personality even beyond the immutable impersonality. The essays of Sri Aurobindo proceed as the Gita advances and such essay takes no deep into the meaning and significance of its rich contents. (261)

The Mother observed about Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the Gita:

From the time of its first appearance, the Gita has had an immense spiritual action, but with the new interpretation that Sri Aurobindo has given to it, its influence has increased considerably and has become decisive. (CWM Vol.10, P64) <

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From the Supernatural to the Uncanny: Defiance through Macabre in Fay Weldon's *Remember Me*

Vidya Rajagopal

Fay Weldon's novel, *Remember Me* depicts the world of the uncanny and the supernatural. Madeleine, the heroine re-appears as a revenant with a twin motive – one is the welfare of her daughter and the other is to wreak havoc and bring about a change in the life of her husband who ill-treated her when she was alive. Weldon, by introducing the revenant as a powerful force is striking a blow against the patriarchal structures of society.

Key words: revenant, macabre, uncanny

Introduction:

Fay Weldon, one of Britain's most admired and translated writers depicts with remarkable dexterity the troubled relationships of women with one another, their children and with the men who exercise control and power over them. Motivated by a sense of righteous indignation at female suffering, Weldon brings into focus the painful realities of women's lives with truthfulness and originality.

Fiction with undertones of realism and social criticism does not usually have much scope for witchcraft and supernaturalism. Fay Weldon makes skilful use of the macabre and exploits its potential, bringing it into interaction with the lives of the chief protagonists in some of her novels. However, the element of the uncanny and bizarre, if dexterously adapted, may serve to intensify the effect and to make the natural more natural in its appeal. By the technique of introducing visitations from the world of the dead, Fay Weldon makes a character more alive than when she was alive, contributing to the development of the plot towards its catastrophe.

In her novel *Remember Me*, Weldon deals with the theme of death and how death brings in its wake, power and strength for Madeleine, the female protagonist of the novel. In this novel, there is the ghost of Madeleine, the much-abused and greatly wronged first wife of Jarvis Catkin, the architect. Madeleine dies in a car accident, which takes place

exactly when Jarvis drinks a toast for the damnation of all ex-wives. Her husband, as is his wont, heaps words of abuse on Madeleine who silently suffers the insults with remarkable forbearance, suppressing the agony that eats into her heart. All foul epithets that the flight of his fancy provides are showered upon the helpless wife. His new wife, Lily, joins him in his endeavor to ill-treat the poor woman. She is compared to a vampire, an ogre, a leech, a succubus and a hag. In addition, she is spoken of as a dirty creature sucking men's blood, destroying their life forces. Madeleine's body lies uncovered on the site of the accident, exposed to the sight of all and sundry. The same is the case when it is brought to the hospital and to the morgue before its final burial. All the while, she remains a revenant, and true to the vampire legends she splits into two. Though her body is devoid of the symptoms of life, it being just a corpse, her face bears the semblance to that of a person fast asleep. There is something uncanny about the whole body, which creates the impression that it opens and closes its eyes off and on. The onlookers feel that her face from which every drop of blood is drained has not lost its charm altogether, "It is as beautiful as it has ever been" (Weldon 91).

A number of strange, unnatural occurrences take place at the time of Madeleine's death. The clocks that ticks away the minutes come to a standstill. One could hear the doors and windows banging in the wind. A chilling rattle breaks the silence. The son of Jarvis's second wife, Lily, is affected with a sudden fear, which does not abate till the corpse lies interred. What is more striking is the manner in which Madeleine's spirit gets into the body of Margot Bailey. Interestingly enough, Margot turns out to be Madeleine's body double. She undergoes the pain that Madeleine would have endured, had she been alive, with a leg broken and a chest severely damaged. It remains as long as the deceased lady transcends death in a sense and makes her presence felt.

The transformation of Madeleine into a revenant serves the purpose of airing her subversive views on the way women, particularly housewives, are subjugated under the patriarchal system. Margot, is in fact, endowed with a twofold advantage. Having the dead woman within her, she finds herself exhorted to articulate the grievances that Madeleine has, in addition to voicing her own concerns and complaints to her husband, in a manner quite against her real nature.

Madeleine's spirit though it defies Jarvis, has an axe to grind and it is to advance the interest of her daughter, Hilary. Surprisingly enough, she gets rid of all her ill feelings to her husband when she breathes her last, and it is thoughts about her own responsibilities as a mother that haunt her mind. Her return from the domain of death, in conformity with the vampire lore, is motivated by her genuine desire to see that her child is perfectly at ease in a household where she has a stepmother and stepbrother to be put up with. Hilary is fully conscious of the benefit that her mother's death brings in the form of a welcome change in her father's attitude to her. This is the reason why she confesses that her mother's death is to her a blessing in disguise, "the best thing she could do for me; this was her best and final gift" (Weldon 230).

What Weldon tries to substantiate here is the fact that a woman, when alive, is insignificant and ineffective, whereas she is quite able to assert herself and prove her points when she is physically dead. This is perfectly true in the case of Madeleine, who becomes really powerful only after her death, powerful enough to defy her husband and exert pressure on the survivors to have her ways. It may be noted that she lies unburied for an inordinately long period; the freezing unit of the morgue is packed full and her corpse lies on the trolley among the living, sheeted as it is and apparently harmless. It seems that Weldon is interested in showing death to an excess, for Madeleine's corpse as the undertaker drives its way, is subject to another accident, and is brought back to the morticians. Apart from lying still, she revisits her house and takes possession of the survivors, amidst constant exits and entrances, oblivious of the wrongs done to her. The purpose of her visitations is to draw attention to the injustices meted out to her when alive.

Madeleine's uncanny corpse has another function to perform, and it is to remind us of the brutalities and indignities to which women are subjected under a patriarchal culture. The voices that, Clarence and Goliath, the two mortuary attendants, seem to hear express concern and anxiety about the nature of Madeleine's death. They ask why she is dead and who has driven her to such a state. The voices fill the attendants with a sense of guilt and they come to the inescapable conclusion that some man is behind the tragedy. They seem to feel that they too have a part in the crime. In other words, they find themselves in a position to admit some moral responsibility for her tragic death, and their words reveal some vital truths about the plight of women suffering in a male-dominated society. However, Madeleine's body, which had very little regard when it had life, becomes highly powerful in death and it is the focal point of great energy that paves the way for the betterment of women in general under patriarchal tyranny.

The influence that the revenant Madeleine exercises on Jarvis is such that it makes one feel that Margot, who acts as the medium for the articulation of the views of the deceased, has a chance for being powerful, only when she too is no more. Does Margot speak in her own voice? Does her voice attain sharpness simply because the revenant invests it with a preternatural gravity? There are the questions that remain unanswered. To quote Margot's words, "I am Margot and Madeleine in one, and always was. She was my sister, after all, and she was right, her child was mine, and mine was hers" (Weldon 232). Here is a strange unification of the two selves – the self of the dead Madeleine merging into that of the living Margot, making the frontiers that separate life and death cease to exist.

It is interesting to note that *Remember Me* bears semblance to R.K. Narayan's *The English Teacher*. Both the novels take the readers to certain unfrequented domains. Sushila, the wife of Krishna, the English teacher dies, but her presence is felt throughout the novel, though the way she appears is different from the manner in which Madeleine makes herself felt. The upbringing of her daughter becomes uppermost in Sushila's mind, as in the case of Madeleine. Krishna is able to establish spiritual communion with his wife and this is a point where Weldon's novel differs from Narayan's. But the dead wife makes her presence

felt in both the novels. The motive force behind their visitations is their great concern for their daughter's future. In both the novels there is a continuance of life even after the death of the wives. Though Jarvis and Krishna lose the physical presence of their wives, the spiritual presence of the two women pervades the novels and one feels that even death fails to destroy their concern for their daughters. ■

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The Narrative Technique of Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman*

Niharika Lal

The primary objective of a novelist is to achieve verisimilitude in art and with this end in view he makes use of various tools of narration such as point of view, focus, atmosphere, characterization etc. The most common method of narration adopted by novelists is the third- person omniscient method. In her novel, *A Married Woman*, Manju Kapur, too, uses the third person omniscient method of narration. Set in the time of political and religious upheaval of the Ram Janma bhoomi- Babri Masjid dispute, the narrative traces the journey of Astha who evolves from a girl living in a world of fantasy, vulnerable and easily swayed by others' opinions into a woman, independent and able to remain firm on her own decisions. Though the novel is written in the third person, yet at times the narrator shifts from the third person to the first person, the focus shifts from Astha to Pipeelika. Objectivity is imparted to the narration by the inclusion of diaries and profuse use of dialogues. All these results in making the narrative rich and varied and makes interesting reading as well as broadening the understanding of Manju Kapur's world and perceptions.

Keywords: narrative technique, shifts in consciousness, objectivity, verisimilitude.

Since the primary objective of a novelist is to achieve verisimilitude in art, hence the manner in which he narrates or presents his story is very important. In a novel, the novelist seeks not only to create an Illusion of life but to present it in a realistic manner. As Miriam Allott says:

“It seems true to say that the novelist, if not the reader, has always been very much alive to the importance of selecting an angle of vision from which he will best be able to illuminate and interpret his material and most of all make it seem authentic.”(186)

As a narrative art developed, new ways of presentation were envisaged which were quickly combined with newer ones to allow still further refinements. As a consequence, a number of narrative techniques are to be found all around the world. As Roland Barthes observes:

“There are countless forms of narrative in the world... Narrative is present in myth, legend, fables, tales, short stories, epics, history, tragedy, drama (suspense drama), comedy, pantomime, paintings, stained glass, windows, movies, local news, conversation... There is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative; all classes, all human groups have their stories, and very often these stories are enjoyed by men of different and even opposite cultural backgrounds... Like life itself, it is there, international, transhistorical, transcultural.”(1)

A detailed and critical analysis of the works of various novelists reveals that each novelist adopts a narrative technique best suited for his purpose and the greatness of a novel depends upon its style and clarity of expression. The consciousness and language selected by the novelist to represent his world view gives to the novel its tonal quality. Whether the novel is realistic or romantic, social or political, depends on the art and artifices of language used by the novelist and in order to do so he has to make experiments that depart from the simple narrative and straight forward dialogues.

The novel, *A Married Woman* opens with an ironic note: “Astha was brought up properly as befits a woman with large supplements of fear”(1) which reminds one of the opening statement of Jane Austen’s “Pride and Prejudice”: It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.” The narrator continues and says:

“The infinite ways in which she could be harmed were not specified but Astha absorbed them through her skin and ever after was drawn to the safe and secure.”(1) The remark not only sums up Astha’s character in the early part of the novel but is also a pungent comment on the condition of girls belonging to middle class families in India.

Though the narrator is heterodiegetic i.e. the narrator is the omniscient author outside the narrative and tells the story in third person, yet at times the omniscience is restricted and multiple consciousness are used to convey the immediacy of experience. Astha, being the only child of her parents is caught between the traditional and modern views of her mother and father respectively. Her mother wants to see her safely married and the narration shifts to her consciousness:

“The mother sighed. The girl was good, only she got these moods sometimes. And how much she fiddled with brush and pencil, no wonder her father got anxious, there was no future in art. If she did well in her exams, she could perhaps sit for the IAS, and find a good husband there. You met all kinds of people in the administrative services, and the girl was not bad looking. She must tell her to frown less. Frowns

mislead people about one's inner nature.”(3)

Similarly the father's hopes and aspirations for his daughter are presented through his consciousness:

“He didn't want his daughter to be like himself, dissatisfied and wasted. You have so much potential, you draw, you paint, you read, you have a way with words, you do well academically, well the maths is a little weak but never mind, you must sit for the competitive exams. With a good job comes independence. When I was young, I had no one to guide me, I did not know the value of time, did not do well in my exams, had to take this job, thinking later I can do something else, but once you are stuck you are stuck.”(4)

The narrative traces the efforts of Astha, the protagonist, who tries to establish her identity and assert her individuality in a male- dominated society as well as come to terms with herself as a woman. In the first three chapters, the focus is entirely on Astha and the narrator tells us how first two affairs are doomed to failure and she eventually marries Hemant, “the MBA, foreign- returned son of one of the bureaucrats who lived in the larger houses bordering Lodhi colony, (and who) had seen her and wanted her.”(33) She slips into the role of a perfect and dutiful wife and daughter-in-law. She also takes up painting and writing poetry. After some time, however, the marital bliss wears off and she becomes restless. Quarrels over petty issues ensue between Hemant and Astha and she becomes frustrated. Under the pressure of her mother and husband, she becomes a teacher. It is while organising a school play that Astha meets Aijaz Akhtar Khan, a noted theatre activist. Aijaz, along with his troupe, is brutally burned to death in a communal riot at Raipur during the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy. Despite Hemant's disapproval, Astha becomes a social activist and joins the Sampradayakta Mukti Morcha to fight for justice in the memory of Aijaz. She decides to go to Ayodhya to agitate against communalism and meets Aijaz's wife, Peepalika or Pipee.

In the fourth chapter, though the narration is still third- person omniscient, the focus shifts between Astha and Peepalika. Peepalika is a Brahmin girl who loses her father early in life. Her mother raises her and her brother, Ajay, singlehandedly. Ajay wins a scholarship to MIT and never returns from the USA. Pipee joins Ujala, an NGO, dealing with alternative education for slum children. She meets Aijaz Akhtar Khan at a conference and falls in love with him. The relationship is disapproved of by her mother but Pipee goes ahead and marries Aijaz. On their honeymoon, she reveals to him that she had been in love with a girl during her school days. When Aijaz decides to go to Raipur with his Street Theatre, Pipee tries to dissuade him unsuccessfully. It is at Raipur that Aijaz and his troupe meet their tragic end and Astha comes in contact with Pipee.

Astha enters into a lesbian relationship with Pipee and decides to go away with her for three weeks on a journey or yatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir to witness the political and religious unrest unfolding in the country and to record them. Pipee now occupies centrestage in her life in place of Hemant.

In chapter VIII of the novel, the narrator sheds the omniscient stance and adopts an objective one. The entire chapter is in the form of entries in a diary. Regarding this, Manju Kapur said in an interview:

“Astha in love sounded like a Mills and Boon heroine- when I switched to diary entries she was more convincing.”

The use of diary is an ingenious ploy adopted by the novelist to depict the psychological condition of Astha. She is caught between her family and Pipee. Though she wants Pipee's company, at the same time she cannot free herself from her familial bonds. Pipee is unable to understand her feelings and Astha is agonised:

“Doesn't she realise what I go through because I want to be with her? I am in the same city as my children and I cannot meet them... Why is she like this? I wish Aijaz were still alive but then she would never have been interested in me. They had the perfect marriage, she hankers after that wholeness. What can I do? I live my life in fragments, she is the one fragment that makes the rest bearable. But a fragment, however potent, is still a fragment.”(264)

Astha's relationship with Pipee comes to an end when the latter asks her to leave her husband and come to live with her along with her children. Astha does not agree to do so and as a result Pipee decides to go to the USA to enroll for her PhD degree. Astha is devastated but firm in her decision:

“What would it like to be painfully separated having known togetherness? How would she live? But she had to go, she had that rock of stability women had, her husband and her children.(285)

She ultimately comes to her own self and finds solace in her paintings:

“As her brush moved carefully over the canvas, her hand grew sure, her back straightened, she sat firmer on a stool, her gaze became more concentrated, her mind more focused. A calmness settled over her, tenuous, fragile but calmness nevertheless. She thought of her name. Faith. Faith in herself. It was all she had.”(299) Her transformation from a meek, vulnerable girl to a woman independent, and able to face life on her own terms, is complete.

Thus, in the novel, the narrative successfully and artistically traces the journey of the protagonist, Astha, who comes out of her shell of a protected life and world of fantasy, vulnerable and easily swayed by others' opinions into a woman who does not hesitate into entering a relationship not easily acceptable in society and not giving in under the pressure of various relationships. Though written in the third-person, the narrative at times shifts from the third-person to the first-person, from one consciousness to another as and when required by the author, thereby bringing in the element of verisimilitude. Objectivity is imparted to the narration by the inclusion of letters, diaries and the profuse use of dialogues. This is an

artistic requirement as the emotions, trauma, agony, indecision faced by the character can be revealed in an authentic manner. All this helps in making the narrative rich and varied and Manju Kapoor succeeds in giving an adequate narrative form to the novel. ■

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Exploring the Social and Cultural Context in Folk Literature: A Reading of the Fictional World of Manoj Das

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The aim of this research paper is not to show the surface area of the society alone as depicted in folktales especially of Indian context, but to explore the terrains of mindscape of the common people in rural society where all are connected by the chain of tradition, belief and feeling of belongingness. The concept of folk literature is mainly to draw attention to the rural society and the rural people. In other words, folklore is the mirror of the people passes or regains through one generation to another with varied tones. Folklore can also be understood as the body of expressive culture, tale, music, dance, legend, oral history, proverb, joke, popular belief and custom. Folklore is created to be seen or evaluated the exploitation of landowners on lower castes and classes. Indian folklore is very rich impregnated with local myths and religious customs. Manoj Das (1934—) has shown strong affinity to Indian tradition of story-telling. As he says, “Folklore was an intrinsic part of the rural atmosphere in my childhood. Their classic compendiums, the *Panchatantra*, the *Jatakas* and the *Kathasaritsagara* continue to fascinate me”. (Das xv)

Keywords: Folk Literature, Zamindari System, Molestation, Hunger, Social and Cultural Contexts, Customs and rituals.

The Indian society has been traced many social evils like feudal tradition, prostitution, domestic violence, dowry, female infanticide and other burning issues since a remote past. Every author does always adopt the ideas from the cultural manifestation of society wherein he/she lives and encounters the surroundings. Manoj Das has projected the crisis with varied tones in several of his short stories like- “The Concubine” is the symbol of a reactionary feudal tradition and a reminder of autocracy and exploitation! Sati Dei is a concubine of late king and baby-sitter of the prince. Her character was steeped by a deep emotion that she made her promise to take care child- prince who was handed on by the queen in her little breath. Das depicts Sati Dei in oxymoron way; first he addresses her

concubine a dark spot of society and gradually presents her as a generous soul. Makhan Roy a member of the '*Progressive Club*' with vengeance snubs her publically by saying, "You were a concubine of the late Raja" but she replies humbly to him, "I was what, my son", and serves him to eat as; "Give my children a pair of laddoos each". (Das 115)

Folk writers like Manoj Das, who present societal spirit consciously or unconsciously in their works, are highly influential in political, social and the evolution of people's economic condition. In folk literature, we get the prominent source of socio-cultural studies like custom, festival, traditional procedure, morality and ethnicity et al. Manoj Das has been living in the literary scenarios since his birth among scholarly family- members where he is aware of fictional canvass of socio- cultural rural India- enriches his short story and attracts the readers in wide range. The aspects of socio- cultural provide the new way to the literature especially folk literature and true accounts of the folk people: "Cultural studies has challenged the idea of canonical literature, and affected the way literary texts are theorized and read." (Waugh 245)

The stories of Manoj Das have mostly delineated the collective rural community life- individual study, proper alignment of the people towards the varied circumstances to assess the social and cultural contexts with the faces of transition- from '*Zamindari System*' to a new social system of modern India. All his short stories are outstandingly depiction of the typical Indian sensibility bringing with the whole structure of social aspects that is obviously visible in his story, 'The Bridge in the Moonlit Night', a college professor's love with his student- girl Meena. He had also written the love letter to her in his youth and shown a spiritual love that had no space for physical desire. On the other hand, Meena like another Indian girl loves him silently and traditionally and never show her true lover to him. But after spending his sixty years, professor gets the reality that Meena responds his letter all the times but the mediator of both lovers Sudhir proves himself as a villain and eradicates the sign of love that can make the perfect matching. Das through this story also presents an emotional and heart- touching love story.

Manoj Das has shown a tremendous faith in Indian tradition. He is fascinated by classical compendiums like '*Ramayana, Mahabharata*', and other myths of India. They impregnate his stories with the traditional values through their ancient ideologies and epical characters. Most of his stories deal with same practices. The people of Indian village are much overprotective about the traditions or social norms and consider them as the signs of their forefathers. For this, Mahapatra defines the tradition in a suggestive tone as:

Perhaps Indian tradition is one which more than any other, has sought to establish a remarkable continuity between the classical, the folk and even the tribal; between the desi and the margi: between scriptural religion, folk religion and tribal religion. (Mahapatra 116)

'Farewell to a Ghost' focuses on human beings' strong and blind faith either known or unknown superstition that can be eerie fascination for them. The common people of the

village show the emotional affinity and sympathetic attitude for ‘darling daughter’, a suggestive person of the story (ghost of the little girl) that concerns their unshaken beliefs in the presence of the spirit among them. They accept the holy and invisible spirit theirs and regard it as their family members, participating it in every festive ceremony by offering food and drinking the milk or water. But with time, they grow more and more anxious for her new residence, blink and covering land by inhabitants. Further it becomes discernible and a strained condition of ominous and auspicious by its sagacity when a wise pundit says, “Unhappy girl, here is your share of the feast which has been held by the benevolent so-and-so on such- and- such occasion. Be satisfied with this. And, we ask you to guard the village from evil to the extent of your capacity”. (84)

The inhabitants at the village strangely felt the ghost innocent and make it vital creature to the society. The only one place ‘palm tree’ where the ghost dwells, one day it found dead by the lightening. The superstitious nature of the villagers seems to depart with the images of invisible spirit that declines cultural credence and makes the people emotional and disintegrated. It is not the farewell to a ghost but the farewell to culture and unbroken belief of the people, who had once made complete picture of the god within the ghost. Like so, the story gradually moves into a new ideology with the abolition of bucolic tradition swamped by modern trend. People were connected with ghost by emotionally attachment and considered it as their natives but a gust of transition as the young generation so careless has changed the society completely, the narrator says, “And the new generation of the village boys was so different, so ignorant. They were just afraid of ghosts”. (87)

‘The Owl’, is the depiction of Post- Independence pre conditioned, exploring the abolition of *Zamindari system* with the news of young landowner’s death at the end of the story. It provides the immense pleasure to folk people who find themselves free from clutch of slavery that should be a sign of the radical social changes. After awaking from prolonged sleeping people become conscious for their rights and social norms and able to intervene in matters, if any require. Das says, “The villagers realized the insignificance of their words before this mighty commotion in nature”. (26). With the notion of abolition of *Zamindari System*, Das puts many examples of the folk- people from ignorance to knowledge or from dark to light and, they can revolt against them directly in new society. Many stories deal with same socio- cultural contexts like- “The Marital Expedition”, “The Concubine”, “The Birds”, “The Naked”, “The Gold Medal”, “A Time For a Style”, “The Candle” “The Irrational”, The Strategy, et al. in this group.

‘The Hunger’, is the true accounts voice of poor and helpless woman Shobha on the sexual exploitation, lust and cruelty. It seems as through; the story is based on real life-story of someone and any village of Orissa can be the spot of incident. The story is purely spirited in rural atmosphere but filled with melancholy tone. The situation becomes more tensed when Shobha is sexually assaulted by her distant- relative Lala. Her plea for her chastity, Das demonstrates:

“I will prostrate myself at your feet. Please go and call him. I will remain grateful to you for ever!

Lala gazed at her. Her cheeks were beginning to glisten with tears.

Shobha! I will adore you, worship you; I will drink the water with which you wash your feet. But please do as I say now”. (173-174)

Consequently, she gets out his clutch and gets stuck in strangers’ hand. They have cruelly exploited and killed her, “like a bear that was hungry yet unable to bite a dead body for some reasons, circled the senseless Shobha, merely snorting and gasping”. (175). Das has depicted a woman in miserable condition and sketched its complete details by using words, ‘Bosom’, ‘Naked’, ‘Hunger’, ‘Concubine’, ‘Poison girl’, etc that can be harmful for the traditional women.

In ‘Lakshmi’s Adventure’ Das explores the psychology of a little child and childhood impressions and images with hard core adventure. Through her intense devotion she communicates with god. Despite her premature age she can feel the problems that are going on in her family. In other moves of the story, it is also a unique aspect of intensity and dealing with sublime thoughts of six years old girl. Das provides us a clear picture that a girl in her childhood can not face the world as she is physically and psychologically not prepared to it. Thus all images of her put a clear insight that she has struggled much in her life.

The prominent terrains of his fictional world are the very keen observation of the rural India and its folk people in picturesque way. The stories with behavioural sense of these people, “Mystery of the Missing Cap”, “The Crocodile’s Lady”, “The Tree”, “The Storm”, and “Cyclone”, etc present in this group. Besides the author’s concern in his stories to depict the human- relationship that is the perfect combination of human’s relationship with nonliving. The trees and the animals are the main elements of them. The story ‘The Tree’ is as steady and as worthy as Grandpa. It has a concept of its accomplishment as well as its concert way of social evils.

‘Banyan tree’ receives the great reverence of the people in Indian tradition and it is adored as god. The folk people worship and care it most. Das says, “The tree was taken to be immortality by all without anybody having to be told about it. Immortality being an attribute of the gods, it was godly”. (48)

The stories of Manoj Das are the pre and post-text of independence era and indicate India’s socio- cultural in transition. Along all the changes it brings the situation with fear and sympathetic tone of the folk people especially in rural areas. In another sense transition is the actual face of time that can not be avoided and on the other hand the rural people are strictly follower of traditional values and do not like the changes. The story ‘The Submerged Valley’ are based on the same concern, presents the construction of dam and its impact on the village people who are connected with lands and regard theirs as mother. They live in

fear and think industrialization, a destructive work by government. Time has changed but they do not allow that their old assumptions and attachment to their lands would be transformed by any developed activity. They regard this, a destructive work to reduce traditional values and ancestral heritages that are pious and unchanged for them. Of course, development is complicated to traditional people or rural societies and they remain always under puzzled situation 'to be or not to be', if they make connection to time faces then it would be the destruction of traditional values or if they keep holding old things then they would be considered rustic and uncivilized, saying: Where the Harappa is today and where is the Babylon? Time has linked them off- just for the sake of change. On other hand if we are losing our lands, it is for a change for the better, for the welfare of the large population". (72-73)

Thus, the study has explored the socio-cultural contexts in Das's fictional world through special and varied tones. It covers many social aspects and lives of the people especially folks who are the actual souls of his stories. Undoubtedly, his stories are the realistic and true presentation of rural India.

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L1 Interference in the Acquisition of Voiced Sounds of English on L2: A Case Study of Ao, Naga Language

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Rosaline Jamir

Native speakers of Ao language face a number of problems in their attempt to acquire English language. One of these problems is encountered in their attempt to use voiced and voiceless sounds in English. This paper begins by discussing the English language situation in Nagaland and then goes on to underline how L1 interferes in the acquisition of L2. In this case L1 is Ao language and L2 is English. L1 interference is also known as Language transfer. Language transfer is the application of linguistic features from one language to another by a bilingual or multilingual speaker. Ao learners also of English encounter difficulties in the production of voiced sounds due to language transfer. Ao language has a sound system which functions differently from English. The notion of voiced and voiceless sounds is encoded differently than that of English language. This paper mainly focuses on the interference of mother tongue in learning English as second language specifically in the area of voiced sounds in Ao language.

Keywords: L1 Interference, L2, Voiced sounds, Bilingual, Multilingual Speaker, Language transfer

1.1 Introduction

Anthropologists regard language as a form of cultural behaviour, Sociologists as an interaction between members of a social group, students of literature as an artistic medium, philosophers as a means of interpreting human experience, language teachers as a set of skills. L2 or second language is not a mother tongue but it is used for certain communicative functions in a society. A Second language is typically an official or societal dominant language (e.g. English). It is needed for education, employment and other basic purposes.

1.2 Status of English Language in Nagaland

It is important that we give English its due place in the context of the other Naga languages especially Ao language. The Nagas belong to multi-ethnic groups and sub-groups.

All the major Naga tribes have their own language. In actual practice, the language, even within one tribal area, varies from village to village. In Nagaland, there are 14 major tribes viz, Angami, Ao, Sumi, Lotha, Rengma, Chakhesang, Khiamniungan, Chang, Konyak, Phom, Sangtam, Yimjungru, Pochury, Zeliang and numerous sub tribes (State Human Development Report: 2016). With their own language and various cultures, these tribes are found spread in 11 districts. Naga languages in the Tibeto Burman family is divided into three groups, the Western sub-group, the central sub group and the Eastern sub-group. With emergence of Naga statehood came the spread of rapid education. English continues to be the language of the educated and the link language among the Nagas. The multilingual composition of Nagaland necessitates that each tribe speaks a distinct language which has further dialectal variations. The peculiarity of Nagaland lies in the cultural and political features of the Naga society which has created a highly complex linguistic environment. This has seen English declared as the sole official language in Nagaland. In 1967 the Nagaland Assembly proclaimed English as the official language of Nagaland and it is the medium of education in Nagaland.

1.3 Naga tribes and its different dialects

“Though the Naga languages have developed from the same Tibeto-Burman language family, the historical isolation in which the tribes lived have led to the languages becoming mutually unintelligible from tribe to tribe. Most of the tribal languages have further divisions into dialects.”(As quoted in Chubatola’s Unpublished Thesis p:124).

Each Naga dialect has accents and tonal patterns of its own. The Ao or Ao- Naga language falls in the Tibetan - Burmese group of languages. Some regional dialects like the Mongsen, Chungli, Changki etc. are prominent among the Ao-Naga language family. Among all the dialects, Chungli is the most widely spoken one and efforts are on to make it the standard Ao- Naga language. The inhabitants of the Mokokchung District mainly converse in this language. Ao-Naga has written script that maintains its own codes of grammar”.

The importance of pronunciation in communication cannot be denied. Yet the evidence of mother tongue (L1) influence is very obvious. The writer being a teacher by profession and a native member of the Ao tribe with opportunities to teach spoken English in colleges and also to render extension services to churches, schools & NGOs can justifiably claim that observation and study have been long term and an ongoing process. A common impression among the people is that Ao’s are an advanced tribe and are generally good in English. “They therefore, cannot see the point of taking up language and low proficiency in English pronunciation as a research problem.”(Chubatola’s unpublished thesis pp 143).

1.4 Contrastive Analysis Theory

It is important that we look at the two main approaches on which the present study will lean on. Throughout several years of its influence on the field of Applied Linguistics, Contrastive analysis has proved to be one of the most important studies ever made in

describing systems of languages. What we mean by the target language is the language the learner is aiming to learn (L2). (Contrastive Analysis: 2015).

Contrastive Analysis is a method that was vividly used in the 1960s and the early 1970s to explain why some features of a target language were more difficult to learn than others (Mazlan 2015). Contrastive Analysis is used to explain why certain features in second language acquisition are more difficult to learn than others. This method is based on the idea that the more difference between the learner's mother tongue and the target language, the more difficulty the learner will face in acquiring these structures or items. (Contrastive Analysis. 2015).

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) comes in two versions, the strong version and the weak version. The strong version suggests that the number of errors a learner of a target language will face could be equated to the degree of difference between the learners L1 and L2. The weak version suggests that errors a learner of a target language faces depends on the degree of interference a learner faces. (Contrastive Analysis. 2015).

1.5 Language Transfer Theory

The second approach is the Language transfer theory. Language transfer is a major process in L2 acquisition. Although the notion has been around for almost a century, its significance has been reevaluated several times within the last few decades. Transfer from the native language was thus considered as a form of influence of L1 habits on L2 learning.

Fries (1945), one of the foremost behaviourists argued that L1 interference is a major problem for those who are learning a second language. He further argued that comparisons between a learner's native language and the target language are essential for both L2 theory and pedagogy. (Lado.1957) also stressed the importance of the native language, considering it a major cause of lack of success in L2 learning. There are two major types of transfer as given by Selinker (1983): positive and negative transfer. Positive transfer refers to the processes whereby L1 knowledge facilitates the acquisition of an L2. Negative transfer refers to the processes whereby L1 knowledge interferes with and thus negatively impacts L2 acquisition.

Schachter (1983) pointed out that transfer is a strategy with the learner playing a constructive role in the whole process. Furthermore, with renewed interest in the view of the learner as an active participant in learning, language transfer has been seen as a learner-driven process similar to any other processes involved in language acquisition. In this view, in addition to L1 and L2 differences and similarities, factors such as learner expectations, goals, attitudes and his or her learning style and preferences have all been considered to be important factors affecting the role of L1 transfer in the process of language learning.

1.6 Case Study

Ao language has a sound system which functions differently from English. The notion of voiced and voiceless sounds in Ao are encoded differently than that of English

language. The problem that Ao speakers encounter in the production of English voiced and voiceless sounds can be in line with Lado's approach that those elements that are different will be difficult for the learner to learn.

1.6.1 Method

A qualitative approach is being followed in this paper whereby focusing on obtaining data through open-ended and conversational communication. As such, this paper depends on the study and analysis of the production of voiced and voiceless sounds in both English and Ao language.

1.6.2 Observation and Results

To validate this, a case study was conducted wherein two groups of people were tested. Group A comprised of Ao speakers and Group B comprised of Non Ao speakers. Two columns of words in Ao language were listed down categorised into voiced and voiceless as presented below. The bilabial plosives [p, b] alveolar plosives [t, d] and velar plosives [k, g] only were taken up for this study.

	Voiced Sounds		Voiceless Sounds
/b/	benden bangjem bilem bushir		/p/ pei parnok peria pai
/d/	den kidangi kidong jakdang dang adianu	/t/	tanemi tai tashi tamen tamashi talang
/g/	agutsu agujang anogo	/k/	kidangi kibong kilem

The two groups took the test on separate days to ensure that one does not influence the other in matters of pronunciation.

This test was developed to access the performance level of Group A and Group B respondents. Group A consisted of Ao speakers and their performance level was in line with the rules governing the Ao language. Findings for bilabial plosives were listed as follows:-

For [p, b] the air passage in the mouth is closed by the two lips and the soft palate is raised to shut off the nasal passage hence producing oral sounds.

The air from the lungs is compressed and when the lips are separated, it is released with an explosion.

The vocal cords are held apart for [p] but vibrate for [b]. But in the case of Group A respondents, all the sounds made are voiceless [p]. Words like benden, bangjem, bangdak, bilem, bushir will be heard as penden, pangjem, pangdak, pilem, pushir. This is the normal way of speaking and hence intelligibility is not lost.

In British R.P, [p] is aspirated at the beginning of accented syllables as in pair, pin, pray etc. But [p] is not distinctly aspirated in Ao language.

For Alveolar plosives [t, d]

For [t, d] the air passage in the mouth is closed by the tip of the tongue making contact with the teeth-ridge and the rims of the tongue touching the upper side teeth. The soft palate is raised to shut off the nasal passage thus producing oral sounds.

The air from the lungs is compressed and when the tip of the tongue is suddenly removed from the teeth-ridge, the air escapes with an explosion.

The vocal cords are held apart for [t] but vibrate for [d]. But it was found that [d] was produced without audible vibration hence dang, kidangi, idangi were heard as tang, kitangi, itangi etc and it does not create any problems in understanding the word when used in connected speech.

Findings for Velar plosives [k, g]

For [k, g] the air passage in the mouth is closed completely by the back of the tongue making a contact with the soft palate. The nasal passage is also shut off by raising the soft palate producing oral sounds.

The air from the lungs is compressed, and when the tongue is suddenly removed from the soft palate, the air escapes with explosion.

The vocal cord should be wide apart for /k/, but vibrate for /g/.

But when Ao speakers pronounce words like agutsu, agujang, anogo, it is heard as akutsu, akujang, anoko. Though all voiced sounds are produced as voiceless, yet meaning is not lost and interpretation still takes place. These sounds are applicable and accepted among Ao speakers only in the spoken form but never in the written form.

The second group of respondents, consisting of Non Ao speakers pronounced words in both columns as it should be done. They were guided by the rules governing English language and so all voiced sounds of [b, d, g] were produced with vibration which sounded awkward and clumsy to an Ao speaker.

From the above case study, we can see that there is no distinct voiced plosive sound in Ao language. The conclusion therefore is that Ao speakers are unable to distinctly produce the voiced sounds in English because there are no distinct voiced plosives, alveolar and velar sounds in Ao language. This study also indicates that Ao speakers tend to unconsciously transfer the rules governing Ao language in the pronunciation of L2 language

i.e English. Hence, we see a pure case of negative transfer happening here. Negative transfer occurs when the rules of L2 and L1 of the learners conflict with each other. This is the cause of numerous mistakes that the L2 learners may encounter. So long as the transfer of sounds takes place within Ao language, there is not much cause for concern. The problem begins when the same is carried over to L2 (i.e. English). This will be demonstrated in the second study below.

In the second study, Ao speakers were made to produce the English voiced and voiceless sounds. Most of them had problems producing the sounds. There were no distinct voiced and voiceless plosive sounds produced due to negative transfer. Clearly the rules pertaining to Ao language were unconsciously/consciously applied while producing English sounds.

The problem begins as stated above when the same rule is applied to English language. Inconsistency in pronunciation may happen as given in the chart below: -

Serial no	Word	Frequently pronounced as
1.	<u>b</u> in	pin
3.	<u>b</u> ride	pride
4.	<u>b</u> ond	pond
5.	<u>b</u> ull	pull
6.	<u>b</u> rick	prick

Voiced bilabial plosive [p] is pronounced as voiceless bilabial plosive and vice versa hence creates misinterpretation.

1.	<u>d</u> rip	trip
2.	<u>d</u> in	tin
3.	<u>d</u> ie	tie
4.	<u>d</u> o	two

The above voiced alveolar plosive [d] and voiceless alveolar plosive [t] is interchangeably used hence loses intelligibility.

1.	<u>g</u> lass	class
2.	<u>g</u> ate	cat
3.	<u>g</u> oat	coat
4.	<u>g</u> ap	cap

For e.g. I want a glass of milk. can be heard as, I want a class of milk.

The gate closes at 6pm can be heard as Thecat closes at 6pm.

These are some examples of how mispronunciation leads to misinterpretation among many Aospeakers. The conclusions which we draw after reviewing the above-mentioned case study is that, there is no distinct voiced sounds in Ao language. It is also apt to quote Robert Paul in his book “The Second Language Acquisition”. Robert Paul states, “When

the learner learnt his first language i.e. his mother tongue, he felt the universe directly and learnt to clothe it with speech but when he learnt a second language, he tended to filter the universe.”through the language already known.

1.7 Conclusion

This study indicates that Ao speakers tend to unconsciously transfer the rules governing Ao language while speaking L2 i.e. English. Hence, we also see a pure case of negative transfer which refers to the processes whereby L2 knowledge interferes with, and thus negatively impacts L2 acquisition (Selinker 1983). Negative transfer occurs when the rules of L2 and L1 conflict with each other leading to inconsistency in pronunciation as shown in the case study. Native speakers are unable to distinctly produce the voiced plosive sounds in English because there are no voiced plosive sounds in Ao language.

Therefore, Ao speakers have to be accustomed to pronounce distinctly the voiced and voiceless sounds of English and to be alert not to lead to misinterpretation due to mispronunciation.

Thus it is concluded that L1 interferes in the acquisition of voiced sounds in English as L2. ■

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Heathen Reconstructionists and Neopagan Writings and the Fiction of Amish Tripathi

M. Aishvarya

In Amish Tripathi's *The Immortals of Meluha* Shiva wants to know the meaning of the amulet he sees Nandi wearing. The response from Nandi quells all the misinformation that he has been told about the caste system in India. By quelling the misconception about the caste elements MrTripathi revives interest in the ancient. Halloween is the day when evil spirits move about. This is what we are told. Miss Morgan Dailmeras neopagan quells this misconception and tells about an ancient Irish festival dealing with ancestor-worship, which was later demonized as devil-worship and called the Halloween. This is how Miss Morgan, too, revives interest in the ancient. The article aims at showing a link between the writings of the neopagan writers and the works of Amish Tripathi. The data have been collected from the books *Pagan Portals:-Irish Paganism : Reconstructing Irish Polytheism*, and *Pagan Portals- The Morrigan: Meeting the Great Queens* by Morgan Dailmer, *Rodnovers Book 1: World of humans*, and *Rodnovers Book 2: Earths and Stars* by DmitriyKushnir , *Pagan Portals- Gwyn ApNudd. Wild god of Faerie guardian of Annwfen* by Danu Forest, *Pagan Portals- Gods and Goddess of Wales : A practical Introduction to Welsh Deities and their Stories* by Halo Quin, and *The Immortals of Meluha*, *The Secret of the Nagas*, *The Oath of the Vayuputras* and *Ravan: Enemy of Aryavarta* by Amish Tripathi

Keywords: Heathen reconstructionist, neopagan, AmishTripathi, Morgan Dailmer, Danu Forest, Halo Quin, DmitriyKushnir

Introduction

The very concept of the word paganism or neopaganism, which in more recent times has variously been referred to as “modern paganism” or “contemporary paganism”, sounds nothing but something exotic in the Indian context. There is hardly any trace of any of these terms anywhere in the Indian English literature. Reconstructionist neopagan movements have been launched in various western countries during the later half of the last century. These movements claim existence in different forms with their own characteristic identities. Circumstances congenial for a similar movement are prevalent in India, but some

way to activate the consciousness latent in the people is required. In India the writings of Amish Tripathi may be called Indian neopagan writing, although he never claims to be a neopagan writer. Grounded on mythology and ancient Indian faiths, his novels have things as well as beings, which have close affinity with the love and worship of nature, the Mother Earth. And neopaganism is this Earth-centred religion.

In this paper we will have a look at the writings of certain neopagan writers and then try to find their link with the writings of Amish Tripathi

What is Neopaganism and Heathen Reconstructionism?

Before we understand the term 'neopagan', we must understand what the meaning of the word pagan is. For a lay man any faith or spirituality that has no Abrahamic monotheistic element is called pagan. There are many terms for the people who follow non-Abrahamic faiths. Some of these terms are: 'Satan worshippers', 'idol worshippers', 'ancestor worshippers', 'infidel', 'apostate,' and 'heathen'. The term 'pagan' derives from the Latin root *paganus*, which means 'country', 'rustic', and 'rural'. It was used by the Christians in the fourth century AD for the Romans who were worshipping the Roman gods. The word was used to insult the people who were trying to withhold the faith of their ancestors in a time when Rome was under Abrahamic Monotheistic hegemony. After Abrahamic monotheism went elite in the Roman Empire the ancient deities of the Romans were turned into demons. The Romans *did* show resistance to defend their ancient faith, but their temples were pulled down. Greece, which was under the Roman rule, too, witnessed the destruction of its ancient temples and ancient rituals in the form of Theodosius I. The latter is responsible for the destruction of several Hellenistic temples and the effective implementation of Nicene Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire. He had banned the Olympics in Greece. Theodosius I, who destroyed the ancient Hellenic and Roman temples, is considered a saint by the Eastern Orthodox Church.

How did this misfortune befall the Romans and the Greeks?

After Constantine the Roman emperor (272 AD-337AD) allowed recognition to Abrahamic Monotheism in Rome, the Roman faith began to face issues and a hegemony got formed when the Abrahamic monotheists began to take control of the administration. Julian the Roman Emperor (331AD-363AD) decided to revive the faith of his ancestors. Unfortunately, the emperor died untimely and the Roman faith as well as the Greek faith got doomed. In the Christian records, Julian the Emperor is named Julian the Apostate. Let us now know about the term 'neopaganism' or the 'neopagan movement'. This movement has various names, like modern paganism, reconstructionist polytheism, reconstructionist heathenism, and so on. These are attempts made by groups and individuals to revive the ancient faiths of Europe and in other locations. It is like reviving the cultures that got lost in these two thousand years. The neopagan and reconstructionist writers have also an emancipation task at hand because they are dealing in giving information about things which the Abrahamic Monotheists have tagged as devil worship. The neopagans and

heathen reconstructionists are making attempts to get rights for the worship of their ancient gods and their ancestors in their lands. This can also be seen as a form of emancipation. In order to give the examples of neopagan literature, I have taken the works of Dmitriy Kushnir, Morgan Dailmer, Helo Quin, and Danu Forest.

Morgan Daimler

Morgan Daimler is a blogger, poet and a witch. She is a pagan writer. She has published more than a dozen books under Moon Books, a publication house, and she is one of the world's foremost experts on things dealing with paganism. She lives in Connecticut. In her book, *Pagan Portals-Irish Paganism: Reconstructing Irish Polytheism*, Miss Morgan describes what this reconstructionist movement is all about.

Reconstruction is a methodology that uses a variety of sources including archaeology, anthropology, mythology, folklore and historical texts to reconstruct what an ancient belief or practice most likely would have been like. It is an understanding of the old pagan religion so that we can envision what it would have been like if it had never been interrupted by foreign influences and had continued to exist until today (*Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 03*).

Reconstructionism is a method that is applied to different ancient pagan faiths including Norse, Anglo-Saxon, Minoan, Egyptian, Irish, Gaulish and Indo-European. The end result of different reconstruction movements of the same culture will not be identical, but will be similar. Reconstructionism is not about recreating the ancient religion exactly as it was, but about understanding how it was in order to make it viable today.

The Immortality of the Soul

Morgan writes on the topic of immortality. In the Irish legends, there is the tale of Tuan mac Cairill in the *Lebor na hUidre*. In the story, Tuan narrates of the tale of Ireland which he has witnessed in various births as a man, as a stag, a wild boar, an eagle, a salmon and once again as a man. (*Pagan Portals-Irish Paganism 30*)

Cosmology

Here the material is taken from the *Lebor Gabala Erenn* to get hints of the ancient creation legends. Several authors are involved in various versions of the Irish or Celtic creation story. The common legend is the end of the world, the legend, which is about a prophecy made by Morrigan in the *Cath Maige Turied*, which predicts a time of great trouble and disorder.

Rituals

In the rituals circling the shrine is done sunwise for blessings and counter clockwise for baneful reasons (McNail, 1956). Sacred places were circled three times sunwise before being entered. (Evans, 1957; *Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 33*)

The rituals have their simple rules. A sacred place is made and the powers are invoked; offerings are made; there is a bit of thanks giving and feasting. It begins with respecting the sacredness of a place and the burning of a sacred herb. The offerings are made into water and fire. About Ireland, the author writes the offerings are made in water. The items are broken before being offered as they belong to the other world (O hOgain,1999). During feasting some part of the food is given to Gods and spirits(*Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 35*).

Offerings

The author mentions about offerings with milk, butter and bread, which is left outside the doorway or at the roots of a fairy tree. A bit of whatever one is drinking is poured out onto the ground (Evans,1957). Offerings to ancestors are done by offering a part of the meal eaten by the family, clean water, or lightening of a candle(Danaher,1972).Milk and bread are also offered for the ancestors as a ritual(*Pagan Portals –Irish Paganism 36*).

Daily Worship Methods of the Irish Gods

Daily worship methods included prayers, small offerings, and devotional study. Singing of prayers was most common.(*Pagan Portals –Irish Paganism 37*).

Altars

Irish pagans did not have permanent altars; they choose small stones or tree grooves, and some make a place for rituals in their home. The offerings for the Gods are left in a pit or in water or are burnt. At times the offerings are left at the altar for a short time and removed as the Powers take the substance of the offering and leave behind the material. The author writes about the method of making an altar for the ancestors. One needs to put together the pictures of the ancestors and tokens to make the altar(*Pagan Portals –Irish Paganism 39*).

Holidays

The major holidays for the Irish reconstructionists are Samhain, Imbolc, Bealtine and Lunasa(*Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 41*). Imbolc is about celebrating the return of fresh milk and is celebrated when the new lambs are born. Bealtaine marks the beginning of summer when herds are moved to eat pastures. Lunasa marks the beginning of harvest (*Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 42*) and Samhain is the beginning of winter(*Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 43*).

Now let us focus on the method in which the festivals are celebrated. In Imbolc Goddess Birgid is worshipped. The older daughter of the house is revered as the Goddess. She reaches to the door with reeds to weave the cross of Brigid. The girl would knock three times. The family would invite her and have a feast (*Pagan Portals –Irish Paganism 46*). There is another ritual where the girls move from door to door in the village and do blessings and in return they get food as donations(*Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 47*).

Samhain-calling the Ancestors

It is a three-day celebration where fires are extinguished and re-lit from one central sacred

fire. The spirits of the dead are believed to return to their homes on Samhain. It is a practice to leave offerings and light a candle to welcome them (Danader, 1972). The festival is celebrated in November as it marks the end of harvest. (*Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 44*)

Bealtaine

It is a three-day celebration that has many folk activities associated with it. The fire is extinguished and re-lit. It is an old practice to build two fires and drive livestock between them for blessings (*Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 48*). In the pagan period, fires were lit at home and put then re-lit from a central fire by the Druids in the morning. In the modern age, the pagans make a bonfire and jump over it as a show of courage and to increase fertility (Evans 1957; *Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 49*). The festival is celebrated in May. In Ireland, the custom is children gather flowers on May eve. These flowers are then hung up or strewn around the home for luck (Danaher, 1972). Flowers are tied to the bridles of horses and the horns of cows. A female effigy called ‘May Baby’ is made and paraded around the town or village (*Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 50*).

Lunasa

Lunasa is a holiday celebrated over several weeks beginning mostly around August 1st. The Irish name for the festival is Lughnasa, which is broken down to LughNasadh. It was created by Lugh as a memorial for his foster mother Tailtiu after her death and the assembly of Lugh is thought to refer to the many athletic games and competitions linked to the harvest fairs of that time. The older name of the festival was BronTrogain, which meant Earth’s sorrow. The earth was thought to be burdened by the rich harvest during this time (*Pagan Portals – Irish Paganism 51*). Lunasa celebrates the beginning of the harvest and the new abundance of food being gathered (*Pagan portals – Irish Paganism 52*).

DmitriyKushnir

DmitriyKushnir is a Ukrainian neopagan writer. Before understanding what he writes we need to understand the meaning of the term Rodnover because that is the movement with which he is linked to. What is Rodnover? or who is a Rodnover? An individual who follows the teachings, the beliefs and the faith of his ancestors and is not influenced by foreign religious teachings and dogmas that are forced onto him through various channels (*Rodnover Book 1, 1*) is a Rodnover. The works of MrDmitriy helps us understand the Slavic faith. The Slavic lands of Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, and Serbia were once called Kievan Rus. Their faith was called Rodnover. They had their own pantheon of deities and their own *swastika*, which is called the Kolovart, which can also be called the running swastika. The native faith was followed in the Slavic lands till the 10th century when Kiev came under the rule of Vladimir. The king allowed missionary activities in his region. The natives were given the choice either to convert or die. MrDmitriy claims that some elders say two-third of the entire population was slaughtered in the christening. MrDmitriy tells about the current condition of the ancient Slavic faith (*Rodnover Book 1: World of Humans, 5*).

He goes on to write how many of the people have the ability to know about their ancient heritage. He complains that many who know about their heritage try to resist the knowledge to keep the status quo. Such people keep using words like fascism and racism in order to demonize those who try to influence change and spread the truth about their ancient faith. MrDmitriy believes in the unseen energies that he feels are bringing a change. He claims the energies of the cosmos are changing. Many are waking up and trying to search the truth about everything around them, beginning from the clothes they wear to the way they think. These awakened people are a small minority. Sometimes such individuals are called extremists even if they did nothing more than spreading the truth they have learnt. But just as all of us wake up in the morning at different times, we all will wake up to the truth: some of us sooner, some later. (*Rodnover Book 1, 6*)

Once Christianity overtook a pagan nation, the church always turned the native gods into devil and demons. In his book *Rodnover Book 2: Earths and Stars* MrDmitriy tries to bust once such concept of the devil, which is the number 666 that is often linked to the beast or the Devil in the Abrahamic monotheistic texts: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man and his number is Six hundred threescore and six" (Revelation 13:18).

In his book *Rodnover Book 2 Earths and Stars*, MrDmitriy mentions the above line has a different meaning when written in Greek. He mentions the word 'beast' is absent in the ancient writings. If the Vedic way of looking at the triple six is done, then it has a different meaning. The Christian clergy began a battle with the Vedism and told 666 to be the number of the devil. MrDmitriy uses ancient Slavic texts to know the meaning of 666. In the Slavic Bukvitsa (600) six hundred means divine order and balance. Sixty (60) means spirit and six (06) means beyond understanding, highest.

He states the possible interpretation of 666 in ancient Slavic can be the Spirit that is beyond our understanding, who protects the Divine order. If we turn 666 upside down, then it becomes 999. Now the meaning changes even further (*Rodnover Book 2: Earth and Stars, 20*). Nine hundred (900) means goal, the system of aspirations. Ninety (90) means beauty or beautiful. And nine (09) means Unity. Hence, the number 999 means the Unity of Spirit, the power by which an individual is able to walk his path in life.

Hence, MrDmitriy claims there are no negative connotations in the number and the superstition regarding the number was created either to enslave or demonize someone. The idea of a devil has always been created by those who fear Vedic knowledge and wisdom (*Rodnover Book 2: Earths and Stars 21*).

Danu Forest

Danu Forest is a Celtic Shaman, Witch and Druid Priestess with over 20 years experience in the Celtic Mysteries. Danu runs the Druid group 'Grove of the Avalon Sidhe' and teaches workshops and successful online courses on Natural magic, Celtic

shamanism, Faery tradition and Seasonal Celebrations. She also runs a magical and shamanic consultancy in Glastonbury, UK.

Pagan Portals – Gwyn ApNudd: Wild God of Faerie Guardian of Annwen is about Gwyn Ad Nudd who is an ancient Welch deity. Gwyn ApNudd is the guardian of Annwfn which is the brythonic underworld. He is the king of TylwythTeg who are the Welsh fairies. Like every other pagan god this god, too, was turned into a thing of fear and evil during the Christian era. The Christians called this god to be the keeper of demons and Annwfn was changed into the Christian Hell (*Pagan Portals – Gwyn ApNudd : Wild God 4*). The name Gwyn means White or Blessed. In the Celtic traditions anything enlightened was being connected to the colour white. Gwyn has various versions. His Irish counterpart is Fionn, whose name means Fair. The Welsh word Gwyn when translated into Gaelic is fionn; it is Find in the Irish and Vindo in Gaulish language. It is interesting to know that the word Vindo has its roots to the Indo-European language which is Weid “to see, to know”. Weid is also the root of our English word Wisdom (*Pagan Portals – Gwyn ApNudd : Wild God 5*).

The Underworld

Annwn was called Anoon in the earlier version of the word Annwfn or Anoooven, which means deep space and is the Welsh name for the spirit realm or the underworld. Gwyn is considered to be the guardian of this realm. This realm was called Hell during the Christian era, the Welsh version of Hell.

Mrs. Danu Forest states the Welsh underworld, or the Celtic underworld, is not a place of the dark or the place of the judgement as the monotheistic faiths view it (*Pagan Portals – Gwyn ApNudd: Wild God 12*). The realm of Gwyn is a paradise with delight and beauty. It is a realm of spirit inhabitants, the fairies with gods (*Pagan Portals – Gwyn ApNudd: Wild God 12*).

Halo Quin

Halo has been a practising Faery witch since she was a child and is the author of *Your Faery Magic*. She is a devotee of the Faery Queen, a lover of the Welsh gods, a storyteller, philosopher, artist and the Ringleader of The Goblin Circus, where Faery magic manifests in art and wonder-tales in the modern incarnation of the old bardic traditions of Wales. She lives in Lampeter, South West Wales. For this article her book *Pagan Portals - Gods and Goddesses of Wales: A Practical Introduction To Welsh Deities And Their Stories* has been taken. The Mabinogion is a collection of mediaval Welsh tales. There are four tales that interweave with each other (*Pagan Portals - Gods and Goddesses of Wales: A Practical Introduction To Welsh Deities And Their Stories part 1 chapter two sources, History and the present day*). Mrs Halo Quin writes Christianity came to the country and converted the pagans. Today there has been resurgence of interest in non-Abrahamic religions of our ancestors embodied in the Neopagan. Many people are finding home in this movement. They believe in nature worship. Neopaganism is heavily based on Wicca. There is a lot of Neopaganism for developing your own way of doing things, for finding what works for you

and your community [Pagan Portals - Gods and Goddesses of Wales: A Practical Introduction To Welsh Deities And Their Stories](#) (Part 1 chapter two sources, History and the present day).

In the above examples of various neopagan writers we found each writer mentioning about festivals and rituals about their ancient faith which was damaged by the church or misrepresented by it. These writers create an interest towards the faiths that were lost with time.

Amish Tripathi is born in India, where the ancient civilisation has somehow managed to thrive even though most of the Indian youths have no idea of their roots due to the lack of knowledge, due to the faulty history books taught to them, and due also to the faulty books that were intentionally written to make them have an inferiority complex towards their own culture. Mr Amish just creates an interest in the Indian legends as it is evidenced in his books.

The Immortals of Meluha

In this book we find Shiva being a migrant from Tibet, who comes to Srinagar with his tribe of Gunas for a change in life. He befriends Nandi who is a captain of the Meluha, an Empire that upholds virtue. The author has worked on network things in the book, beginning from the Somras to the meanings of terms like Chandravanshi and Suryavanshi. But here we are taking the example of the way he has described the caste system of Meluha. Many anti-national elements in India try to maintain the caste division in the Hindu community, as if the Hindu community has recognised it to be a problem that has to be done away with. In the book Shiva asks Nandi about the meaning of the symbols of the ornaments worn by the latter. Nandi begins to describe how the caste works in Meluha, individuals from each caste carry an amulet that carries a particular sign which marks their expertise or the tribe they are linked to; like the Brahmins have the amulets having the head of the Paramatma and the Vaishya having the symbol of the thigh of the paramatma. The Meluhans wear a second symbol which marks their tribe. Nandi had the amulet having the mark of a bull. The people face examinations and the Allocation Board allocates the tribe according to the skill of the individual. In a manner Amish tells us about the *varna* way of life where occupation was skill-oriented. This counters the idea that the caste system is rigid and the upper castes always harm the lower castes. From the way Amish narrates the caste element it is clear the caste mark is done according to skill.

There is also a class of untouchables called Vikarma, who are told to be suffering due to sins of their previous births. Sati belongs to this group. Shiva solves the problem by marrying her.

The Secret of the Nagas

In this book, too, Amish has described a number of things, like who is a Vishnu and who is a Mahadev and who is a Vasudev. In this book we come to know about what a Deva

or an Asura is. The Devassandthe Asuras are groups that follow different methods of life. The Asuras follow a rigid masculine way of life which tells them to stick to the rules come what may, while the Devas have feminine way of life where diversity and freedom are encouraged and creativity is given importance. The problem is, when civilisations based on the masculine wayof life fall, they grow rigid andwhen feminine ways of life decline, they lead to corruption. This kind of description helps us understand the terms Asuraand Deva in a different way.The communists always maintain that their agenda be enforced and observed,according to which Asuras were the lower caste and the Devas were invaders . The result of this is thatan internal chaos is created. The regional fights,as between the Aryans and the Dravidians , north India and south India, are provoked by the break-India forces.

The Oath of the Vayuputras

Here the author writes about locations like Pariha and Egypt. At Pariha , Shiva meets Mithra the head of the Vayuputra Tribe. In the novel assassins from Egypt are called by Daksha. The tribe of Aten is mentioned in the book.

Ravan the Enemy of Aryavarta

This book tells about Ravan from his childhood to the monster that we know him to be. When we read the book we find he was just a pawn in the whole game and there are two contesting Vishnus in the form of Ram and Sita.While Ram is backed by Vashista, Sita is backed by Vishwamitra. The book also mentions about a goddess named Ishtar when Kumbhakarna goes to the Middle East for a visit.

Neopagan elements in the works of Amish

Neopagan orreconstructionist writers try to help us understand pre-Abrahamic cultures and their rituals. They write to invoke interest in the ancient faiths that were damaged by the rise of Abrahamic monotheism. Amish Tripathi's books also do the same work. For example,Halloween is referred to as a night where evil spirits roam about.But this almost the idea thechurch has to give. The reality about the Halloween is that it is a pagan festival which is celebrated to honour the ancestors. Theneopagans honour their ancestors onthat day. This is how neopagans remove the misconception that is created about Halloween and evil spirits. In India caste issue is raised asa topic in order to demean whatever we have achieved as an ancient civilisation. When the topic of the ancient civilisation of India comes to the question,the anti-India elements keep showing misinformation about the varna system.In effect, the youths feel they are very backward,and it is the colonisers who actually taught them to be civilised. Amish in the book *The Immortals of Meluha* explains how the caste or varna system busts the misinformation about the caste or the varna system. The neopagans talk about deities and rituals of various pre-Abrahamic or non-Abrahamicfaiths. For example, the Irish neopagans at times do mention about Hindu gods and goddesses in their writings., In Amish Tripathi's books we find these elements when we mention about Mithra, Aten, Swuth and Ishtar. Certainneopagans worship the deity named Mithra even

today and the Egyptian neopagans worship Aten. Goddess Ishtar is still worshipped by certain neopagans as fertility goddess.

Neopagan Links with India

There are certain links between the contents of the neopagan writers and the eternal faith of Bharat. In the book *Pagan Portals-Irish Paganism: Reconstructing Irish Polytheism* Mrs. Morgan mentions about the immortality of the soul in the ancient Irish faith (*Pagan Portals - Irish Paganism* 30). The immortality of the soul is the integral element of the Dharmic Faith of India.

The festival of Imbolc (*Pagan Portals-Irish Paganism* 46) includes the practice of the eldest daughter of the house taking on the role of the Goddess and being venerated. There is also the ritual of girls going from door to door in the village, blessing the household and getting gifts in return. These rituals of the Irish faith have their resemblance with the rituals of the Indian Dharmic faith where nine girls are worshipped in the house on certain festive occasions. The festival of Samhain (*Pagan Portals-Irish Paganism* 43) is about reverence to the ancestors to seek their blessings. This festival occurs in the month of November. This is the time when the followers of the Dharmic faith of India have the *Kartik Maas* or the month of Kartik where various rituals are done for the ancestors. In her book, *Pagan Portals-The Morrigan Meeting the Great Queens*, which is about an Irish Goddess, Mrs. Morgan mentions about the value of cattle in the Irish faith. In (*Pagan Portals-The Morrigan* 52) of the book, the author writes about the Cow being valuable to the Irish society. The cow is called Bo and the bull is called Tarb in Irish. The cow was the backbone of a person's social standing. It was the basic monetary unit (MacCormick, 2008). The milch cow was ranked the highest. Cattle appear in artwork, symbolising prosperity and reflecting the herding culture of the Celts (Green, 1992). There is the evidence of forts being built to protect cattle from cattle-raids (MacCormick, 2008). The cows were pivotal for the Irish society. They were money; they were social standing; and they were the source of a main food product (*Pagan Portals-The Morrigan* 52). Everybody knows how the Dharmic Faith of India values cattle. Mrs. Morgan also mentions about the Goddess Danu, the Irish Goddess. She writes the term Tuatha De Danann, which means "people of the Goddess Danu" (*Pagan Portals-The Morrigan* 36). The word Danu is there in the holy texts of the Dharmic Faith of India. Danu is called the originator of the race called the Danavas.

Conclusion

In the books authored by neopagan and heathen reconstructionists, we find the voice for a revival, a voice to know the roots, a voice to seek the ancestors, and a voice to get the courage to break free from the Abrahamic world-order. In the books of Amish Tripathi we find a revival of interest in knowing our civilization. He tries to take us out of the inferiority complex that we have been taught by the faulty history books at school. The followers of the neopagan movement take inspiration from the eternal faith of Bharata and are using the ancient knowledge of Bharata to revive their own long lost native faiths. With

the way in which the neopagan writers and Amish are trying to remove all the misconceptions that have been created against ancient cultures, we can conclude that the neopagan writers and Amish Tripathi have a link. Their works are the voice of a revival movement. ■

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Deconstructing the Domestic Space: Depiction from *The Dark Holds No Terror* and *Country of Goodbyes*

Nancy Paul

Domestic space constitutes a space that provides security to the women. In the ancient times women were safe in the domestic space. In the contemporary era the notion has been changed. The domestic space has become vulnerable space for women in the society and it has taken the shape of domestic violence. The power politics is demeaning the woman's identity day by day in order to maintain the honour of their family. The socio psychological behaviour of a person creates the situation of domestic violence. It includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal, emotional or economic abuse which are also explained under the definition of domestic violence, Shashi Deshpande and Mridula Garg explore the condition of a woman in their novels *The Dark Holds No Terror* and *Country of Goodbyes* that a woman has her own existence and place in the society and therefore she should not be reduced to the level of a breeding machine. She also dares to expose, question and challenge the tradition values and prejudices in the male dominated society. Women in their novels are subjected to continuous physical and sexual assaults in the society. This paper presents the condition of suffering of women in their domestic space who belong to the Indian middle class family and struggling to liberate them and seek their identity and independence in the novels of Shashi Deshpande and Mridula Garg.

In the *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millet opines that "Women are part of a minority group, they are treated like slaves because they do not have a lot of rights and they are not equal to men they live with for differential and unequal treatment" (55). Females in their domestic space are belonging to the Indian middle-class family and struggle to liberate themselves and seek their self-identity and independence. Domestic violence describes the violence as to how the violence endeavoured in the families. The violence comes with the physical force, rage and all kinds of destruction. It can be conventional violence, community violence and structural violence. Violence can be on one person, on community or on a particular group. It may have many reasons i.e. conflicts, disparities, anger etc. It can be violence against women, Dalit's, poor people to overpower them, or with anyone with whom one has some grudges. It also can take place the domestic violence which has become the

offensive phenomena all over the world. Domestic Violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviours, including physical, sexual and psychological attacks as well as economic coercion that adults or adolescences use against their intimate partners. Therefore, Simon de Beauvoir describes that females are not supposed to appear weak, futile, and docile. In this way she says:

The young girl is supposed not only to deck herself out, to make herself ready but also to repress her spontaneity and replace it with the studied grace and charm taught her by her elders. Any self-assertion will diminish her femininity and her attractiveness. (359)

Simon de Beauvoir opines her view on the women's self-assertion which can reduce all myths which are related to women's subordination. As society makes them weak by imposing the culturally constructed norms and women feel that they have some kind of deformity in them. In this way, Beauvoir exposes the spontaneity of women in the patriarchal society which can overpower the feudalism and cultural norms which are demeaning them. This violence creates such disturbances which make the obstacle to establish one's identity. Helen Cixous in her influential Book *Laugh of Medusa* says:

If woman has always functioned "within" the discourse of man, a signifier that has always referred back to the opposite signifier which annihilates its specific energy and diminishes or stifles its very different sounds, it is time for her to dislocate this "within," to explore it, turn it around, and seize it; to make it hers, containing it, taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of. And you'll see with what ease she will spring forth from that "within"-the "within" where once she so drowsily crouched-to overflow at the lips she will cover the foam. (887)

Therefore, Helen Cixous describes that a woman should not be defined within the discourse dominated and controlled by males. She explores that a woman should raise her own voice for their rights and their own world in which they can establish their identity. In the context of the *Dark Holds No Terror* Anne Kiome encapsulates the psychobiological reality of culture in which an identity forms on the bases of sexes. She defines how the cultural social and religious ideologies humiliate the females in the domestic space. Shashi Deshpande's first novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* which explores the gender-specific socialization which is the major cause of domestic violence which explores Saru's sufferings at her parent's home and after her marriage. Shashi Deshpande explains protagonist Saru's consciousness, suffering, sorrow, anxiety in which she was suffered in her childhood and in her married life as well.

The Dark Holds No Terror exposes the dilemma of a woman who strongly represents her identity and individuality. The protagonist Sarita still remembers her mother's bitter words that are "Why are still alive.....Why you die" (56). In this situation, she remembers

her mother's words which makes her emotionally, and, psychologically weak. She thinks that her mother has not supported her in her childhood for being a girl child and after her marriage, her husband exploits her throughout her life. At the beginning of the novel, she recollects the trauma of her life in her nightmare which she pronounces as:

At first, it was a nightmare of hands that brought me out of a cocoon of a blessed unreality..... I'm- dreaming – this – is not real Into the savage reality of a monstrous onslaught. And then nightmare was compounded of lips and teeth as well. Hands and teeth? No, hammers and pincers. I could taste blood on my lips. (11)

The *Dark Holds No Terror* explores past experiences of rape at the hands of the strangers who are none other than her husband as she realises eventually. She is explaining here her nightmare in which she sees the hands that hurt her. At the beginning of the novel, she thinks that she has left her husband because of his sadistic tendencies. She has faced her husband's violence as she finds herself pinned under his body:

It was a monstrous invasion of my body. I tried to move, twisting my body wriggling under the weight that pinned it down. It was impossible. I was pinioned to a position of an abject surrender of myself. I began, in sheer helplessness, to make small whimpering sounds, piteous cries....I could not, I would not near it. I began to fight back, hopelessly, savagely. (10-11)

Her all suffering, fears and desires were struck in her unconsciousness which comes out in her dreams and which hurts her in a psychological way. Saru suffers from psychological violence in life from childhood to her married life. In her childhood, her mother discriminates her as she is a girl child and she is not good looking. Apart from that her childhood and her married life were also extensively disturbing as she says, "We come into this world alone and go out of it alone". (208). Thus, she is longing for the emotional security which she is lacking. As she was not considered as a lovely daughter and a successful wife. As her mother blamed her that:

You killed your brother. I didn't truly I didn't. It was an accident. I loved him, my little brother. I tried to save him. Truly I tried. But I couldn't. And I ran away. Yes, I couldn't. And I ran away. Yes, I admit that. But I didn't kill him how do you know you didn't kill him? How do you know?. (146)

Thus, Saru's condition in the novel *Dark Holds No Terror* describes the mother-daughter relationship which is not established because her mother is possessive for her son and scolds her for being a girl. In this context, Graham-Bermann explains the situation of the mother in the family that mother's behaviour can change the behaviour of a child and he says:

Perhaps even if the mother is able to maintain adequate parenting, the changes in her affect and mood could have deleterious effects on her

children's emotional well-being. For example, the child may worry more about the mother. (184)

In this way, Saru has an inferiority complex throughout her life. She suffers the emotional violence in her childhood as Mihalic and Elliot state:

During childhood and adolescence, observations of how parents and significant others behave in intimate relationships provide initial learning of behavioural alternatives which are 'appropriate' for these relationships. If the family of origin handled stresses and frustrations with anger and aggression, the child who has grown up in such an environment is at greater risk for exhibiting those same behaviours, witnessed or experienced, as an adult. (21)

Therefore, in the adolescence, a child needs proper attention and care from their parents. Childhood experiences lead them in their future aspects as well. The psychological violence on the children as Saru suffered throughout her life. According to Walker gender discrimination is also invites the intimate violence as he says: The socialisation process of assigning male and female sex-role behaviour is also seen as contributing to violence against women. It is suggested that battered women are rightly socialised into female sex-role stereotypes(2). Thus, she has always been in this guilt that she killed her brother as per her mother. Gender discrimination in the novel has also been the major form of psychological violence she experiences in her life. In this way, Carden describes the gender stereotypes and says "Gender-role stereotyping, women's oppressed position in the family and workplace, the political significance of lesbianism and critiques of male violence in terms of power" (Carden 12). *The Dark Holds No Terror* describes the sexual violence that Saru has been the victim of sexual violence as she narrates her experiences with her husband. She opines:

The hands became a body. Thrusting itself upon me. The familiarity of the sensation suddenly broke the shell of silent terror that had enclosed me. I emerged into the familiar word of rejection. My rejection that had become so drearily routine. I struggled to utter the usual words of protest, to say... No, not now, stop it. But the words were strangled in my throat. The face I had never seen. A man I did not know. (11)

Saru the protagonist an educated middle-class woman and from her childhood she has gone through the discrimination, rejection, exploitation and she was emotionally insecure and her all disparities went her in the dilemma that where her individual entity. In this way, *The Dark Holds No Terror* describes Saru's sexual violence in the Indian middle-class family whereas she educated and carrier oriented women but the cultural ideologies and patriarchal phenomena make her situation vulnerable. As it is to say that If a female is educated and independent she has all the powers but this novel describes the psychological violence of Saru who has been inferior all her life. As she says that "He had been the young man and

me his bride now I was the Lady Doctor and he was my husband. She says, “We’re on different planes and I try to choose the one he would like to be on....It humiliates me” (70).

In the above quote, she opines that there is nothing between me and my husband. She wants to say that her relationship between him and I are the formal relationship which has no emotions, love, care. As she says that I have heard about the love marriages these are for only a few days because her husband always exploits her mentally physically emotionally. In this way, she wants to change the monotonous life and the role of a good daughter, honest wife and caring sister. Therefore, the domestic violence that she has been through becomes the major obstacle in instituting her identity. As she says:

She realises that as a woman she has a separate existence of her own: They came to her then, all those selves she had rejected so resolutely at first, and so passionately embraced later. The guilty sister, the undutiful daughter, the unloving wife persons spiked with guilt. Yes, she was all of them, she could not deny that now. She had to accept these selves to become whole again. But if she was all of them, they were not all of her. She was all these and much more. (220)

In the domestic violence patriarchal manifestation impose all the rules to exploit the other one. As she questions the patriarchal manifestation and is trying to find out her own answers. Now she thought:

who wrote that story? A man, of course. Telling all women for all time ... your duty to me comes first. And women, poor fools, believed him. So that even today, Madhab’s mother considers it a punishment to be deprived of a chance to serve her husband. And yet ... if I could believe in that ... if I could put my duty to my husband above all else?.(207)

In the patriarchal milieu, Shashi Deshpande explores one more ugly aspect which demeans female existence that is sexual violence. Sexual violence is a major paradox that makes women vulnerable. In Indian society, females are facing this problem such a way that makes them annoyed for everyone. In Indian society, females are going through sexual violence in the form of rape, marital rape, and child abuse. In this way taking the consideration of the text Saru faced emotional, psychological, sexual violence throughout her life.

In the novel *Country of Goodbyes*, Mridula Garg projects Smita as a very strong persona. She has been discriminated right from her childhood days. She loves the wood rose which was her childhood memory which haunts her psychologically throughout her life. Her brother in law raped her and exploits her very badly. She has to beg her brother in law for her fee that was her biggest helplessness. After that, she went to America where a psychiatrist Jim Jarvis exploits her mentally physically and economically. She has to abort her child because of him. Therefore, she says another rape which was on her identity. She is throwing her heart out in front of Marianne and says:

Another rape. First on my identity, now on my baby. My cry reverberated through the hospital. It had been imprisoned inside my body ever since my girlhood rape, with my body, bound and my mouth gagged. After that, I had sealed my lips. Balled my fists and held all the terrible cries rising within me. Saving my energy for revenge. Revenge! Like a gunshot, that word resounded in my brain. (48)

Smita's Brother in law raped her in a dark room and he forced her to see in the mirror. In the night she struggled desperately all night but was unable to loosen her bonds. She still can't decide what was terrifying – the bright lights, the tall mirror in front of her, or the helplessness of being tied up. She faced sexual violence in the family which deny the fact that a girl is safe in the four walls of the home. In spite of all the trouble, she has to suffer throughout her family. Her husband exploits her which makes her situation vulnerable. The protagonist Smita describes her situation and explaining the situation of all-female who is being a victim of domestic violence. Smita revolts against the social structure of Indian society that why females are not taking initiative for them. In Indian society, most of women are not aware of their rights. As Smita says that women are their own abuser. As Namita's sister scolds her for going to the police and she says:

If you go to the police you will only end up ruining your reputation. You're all alone; they'll also try and exploit you. No, that's not the thing to do. Listen to me," Namita moved closer. Smita pulled herself away but Namita caught hold of her. Listen to me. Take whatever house money I have and leave for Baroda. I will say that the money was stolen along with the gold chain and the ring. (16)

Mridula Garg describes the situation of two sisters one is raped by her brother in law and second restricts her to go to the police station for the family honour. As Beauvoir says that woman's lot cannot be ignored, "She shuts behind her the doors of her new home. When she was a girl, the whole countryside was her homeland: the forests were hers. Now she is confined to a restricted space. . ." (Beauvoir 23). In this way, Simon de Beauvoir describes traditional ideologies which construct the inferiority complex in a woman. On the name of security what they have given them the restricted space which made their area to do something for them. In this way, they exploited physically, psychologically, emotionally. These novels are the depiction of the anguish and the conflict of the modern educated middle-class women who are losing their identity by facing violence which makes them mentally sick. ■

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Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead: Reflections on Theatre, Death and Freewill

Sneha Sawai

This paper discusses the idea of metatheatricality employed by Tom Stoppard in his play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. It explores how through the use of metatheatrical elements Stoppard discusses the themes of theatre, death, freewill and existentialism. It also addresses the question whether theatre can represent reality and whether human beings have freedom to change their fate.

Keywords Metatheatre, existentialism, marginal characters, freewill, theatricality

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.

William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

Literature cannot be divorced from the concept of metalanguage. The concept of 'meta' means looking beyond the actual meaning of the text. In the age of theories both literary and otherwise one finds oneself to be surrounded by theories not just about physical entities but also abstract things conceived by the human mind. The word 'meta' is used as a prefix to describe the application of a theory to the unexplored world implied by the written word. The prefix comes from the Greek word 'meta' which refers to several prepositions such as 'after', 'several', 'beyond', 'with', 'among', and 'adjacent' – all referring to the additional level of meaning that can be associated to or that transcends the primary meaning of the text. In the field of epistemology the prefix 'meta' refers to self reflection or self reference which provides a basis for critical analysis of the text's own abstract nature.

The term 'Metatheatre' or 'Metadrama' was coined by Lionel Abel in his book Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form in 1963. It refers to a drama about drama or a play which employs devices to draw attention to its own fictional status as a theatrical

performance. A metatheatrical play, according to Abel, is “a comparatively philosophic form of drama.” Breaking the conventions of traditional understanding of drama (which treated the stage and the audience as separate entities), modernist metatheatrical plays aimed at disintegrating the barriers between the spectators and theatre. One notable dramatist out of many who opposed this idea of dissolution of the barriers between the audience and theatre was, Konstantin Stanislavski (Russian theatre practitioner), who proposed the existence of the fourth wall to separate the stage from the audience. He regarded the presence of the spectators as a hindrance to the creative energy of the actors which according to him “have been dislocated by the circumstances of an actor’s having to work in public.” In complete contrast to Stanislavski, modernist theatre considered the audience as constitutive element of the theatrical performance rather than an external factor that needs to be removed or neutralized. By constantly referring to itself as a piece of art and by mentioning the artistic device used by the playwright, it breaks the illusion of reality created by the play and forces the audience to actively and critically engage with the performance. Elements of metatheatricality can also be seen in Bertolt Brecht’s epic theatre. Brecht’s epic theatre aimed at creating an alienation effect i.e. to create an attitude of critical detachment in the audience rather than a passive submission to the realistic illusion enabling them to rationally analyse, reflect and participate in the performance, thereby constantly reminding them about the relationship between the theatrical performance and the real world. Patrice Pavis calls metatheatricality as “a form of antitheatricality”¹ where the demarcation between fiction and real life gets dissolved.

In order to produce alienation effect and to evoke aesthetic insights in audience, modern dramatists use various techniques such as direct addresses to the audience in prologues and epilogues, role playing, multiple levels of performances, use of metaphors and the use of play-within-a-play. According to Richard Hornby there are five distinct techniques used by metatheatrical dramatists i.e. “play within the play, ceremony within the play, role playing within the role, literary and real life references and self reference.”

Tom Stoppard’s play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966) is an excellent example of metatheatrical play. The very title of the play exhibits Stoppard’s artistic creativity to weave a story within the constraints of the plot of William Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet*. Stoppard in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* brings together the Elizabethan and the post-modern world which depicts the ‘human predicament’. He presents the Shakespearean world through the perspective of the two minor characters, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who are complete non-entities caught up in the complex political world of Hamlet. Shakespeare’s Hamlet depicts Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as minor characters with mean preoccupation. They are presented as spies, employed by King Claudius, who exploit their friendship with Hamlet to further their status in the royal court. However, Stoppard rejects this marginalized characterization and presents the plot of *Hamlet* in a way that shows the trajectory of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as tragic. Employing the modernist themes of alienation, confusion and helplessness, Stoppard portrays the two

characters as the modern 'everyman' figure who have lost all sense of self and direction. They are shown to be "modern antiheroes" [Pinheiro] living in a world where the distinct boundaries between good and bad have collapsed and become vague and relative. The postmodern concern of the play further places the text within the ambit of the theatre of the absurd. Like any absurdist drama, the play philosophically presents the themes of confusion, absence of identity, disorder, loss of memory and helplessness that results out of lack of absolute values, the problem of freedom and the uncertainty of life and knowledge. Through the illustration of two minor insignificant characters, Stoppard then presents the master-slave relationship that operates at two levels – one that is symbolized by the playwright's relation viz-a-viz his characters whom he employ as his slaves and second is the relationship of fate/death and human beings.

Stoppard reworks and rewrites the canonical text *Hamlet* to not only show how minor characters like Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and the Player become 'puppets' in the hands of the 'God-like' playwright but also provides space and freedom for these characters to speak up and express their anxiety and to explore their existence both as actors and human beings in the larger cosmic world. By giving voice to the marginalized characters, Stoppard provides an alternative narrative of the story of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* forcing the readers and the audience to reflect upon the issues of power and hegemony that silences the marginal world. From the very beginning of the text, Stoppard expects the audience to be familiar with Shakespeare's tragic play as he locates his play within the script of *Hamlet*. This kind of intertextual reference becomes a constant reminder to the audience of its fictional status. According to Tim Brassell, Stoppard presents Ros and Guil² alternating between the 'onstage self', where they enact scenes from *Hamlet* and the 'offstage self' where they are left to their own devices to contemplate and understand the complex workings of the court world and the instructions being given to them. The shift from the onstage self and offstage self can clearly be seen in the switch from normal colloquial English language to the Elizabethan English where direct lines are taken from the text *Hamlet*. By juxtaposing characters and scenes of his play with the passages of *Hamlet*, Stoppard parodies the canonical text of *Hamlet*. As pointed by Cesar Brites in his essay 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead: A Metaplay' Stoppard's play "takes place in the *Hamlet*'s backstage and that everytime the Shakesperian text is left behind an entrance in the modern text is automatically implied."

Like Samuel Beckett's absurd play *Waiting for Godot*, the play is set in a location which has no specific details and Ros and Guil are shown to be passing their time by tossing coin while travelling to Denmark. Though critics like Douglas Colby, who in his essay 'The Game of Coin Tossing', considers Ros and Guil as essentially two sides of the same person, Stoppard clearly present them as two distinct characters with different characteristic traits. Guil is shown to be more philosophical who constantly strives to find meaning in the signs that he gets to see in the given world. Ros, on the other hand, is shown to have a relaxed and casual attitude. Ros and Guil's helplessness in both the corrupt world of *Hamlet* and the larger play *Hamlet* where their roles have been predefined by the

playwright is demonstrated through the use of passive voice “we were sent for... that’s why we are here”. Debashree Basu in her essay ‘One Step Beyond Logic: Chaos and Metatheatricality in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead’ points out how the act of being sent for results in the creation of the two said characters. They do not choose to exist themselves instead are called into existence by someone’s order. This provides an insight into the nature and the experience of being a character in fiction that are shown to be at the mercy of the need of the playwright.

Ros and Guil’s encounter with the tragedians in the first act is Stoppard’s invention which further develops the theme of theatricality where the role of actors, performance, dramatic techniques, limits of theatre and the process of composition of the play gets explored. The player becomes an important character in the text who reminds the audience of the significant roles of the actors who transport the audience into “the world of intrigue and illusion.” Player is shown to be someone who has internalized his social role of being an actor. Player’s self awareness of being an actor can be seen by how he articulates his sense of joy at finding “an audience” in both Ros and Guil and the larger audience watching the play. For Player, his identity emerges from two things one that of his performance and second the presence of an audience. Player’s reference to Ros and Guil as “fellow artists” also brings forth the element of metatheatricality where both the characters and the audience are repeatedly reminded of the fictional nature of the text.

Through the character of Player, Stoppard also laments about the degradation of art in both Elizabethan and the modern age that has emerged due to the increase in the competition in the theatrical world. Player constant mention to the indifferent times throws light at the problematic conditions of the actors in the society. As actors they are subject to the whims and fancy of the Patrons in the Elizabethan Age and to the masses in the contemporary era. In order to sustain themselves, they constantly strive to “stoop to anything” to impress the elite.

Further, Player’s exploitation of the young boy Alfred reiterates the idea of vulnerability of minor characters at the hands of the playwright. Ros and Guil completely identifies with Alfred who is shown to be struggling with his costume and his role, enabling the audience to reflect upon the complex issues of theatre. This also refers to the theatrical techniques used by Elizabethan dramatist where young boys were made to cross dress in order to enact the roles of female characters and were exploited by their masters.

In addition to this, the performance of the Tragedians adds another layer of metatheatricality. Where Shakespeare in his play *Hamlet* employs the metatheatrical device of play-within-a-play to give a brief insight into theatricality, Stoppard goes further in handling the technical device. What Stoppard presents in his play is not play-within-a-play but a play-within-a-play-within-a-play. The play Murder of Gonzago gets enacted in the play *Hamlet* which in itself is shown to be a part of Stoppard’s play. The multiple levels of performances allow the audience gauge into the crucial act of role playing.

Emphasising the existential philosophy, Stoppard's play can also be linked to Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Like Vladimir and Estragon, Ros and Guil, the minor characters-turned-protagonists, are presented to be constantly yearning for meaning and some structure in their life. While waiting for a non-entity, Godot, Vladimir and Estragon try to pass their time and to deal with their existential crisis. The title of the play *Waiting for Godot* emphasizes not on Godot who is speculated to be either God who brings hope and salvation or Death but the process of 'wait' and what Vladimir and Estragon do while waiting. Taking cues from Beckett, Stoppard depicts Ros and Guil as oblivious to their circumstances as they seem to have no memory and constantly try to derive some meaning of the larger structure. The idea of ceremony, as pointed by Hornby, plays an important role in absurd drama that signifies the character's desperate attempts to repeat events and engage in activities such as games to reassure themselves that their life has some meaning. The verbal banter, the game of coin tossing and the game of question and answer through role playing becomes an important trope for Ros and Guil to deal with their anxiety and loss of control over their life. The constant repetitions of words to describe events that have happened become a means for the characters to deal with the meaninglessness of the absurd world.

Ros and Guil's frustration with the limitation of their roles and the absurdity of their situation is depicted through Ros's desire to go back home and Guil's statement – "Never's a moment's peace! In and out, on and off, they're coming at us from all sides." [Act II] The desperate yearning for meaning, for significance which is denied to them as insignificant characters is also expressed through the parody of Lord's Prayer – "Give us this day our daily mask."

On one hand where Ros and Guil are constantly struggling to find meaning, Player, on the other hand, is shown to have embraced the uncertainty of the chaotic world. He sees his dramatic performance as something that provides meaning to his life. Player then becomes the spokesperson for Stoppard who tries to pacify the anxiety and the existential crisis that both Ros and Guil and the audience face. He reminds them that uncertainty is the normal state and hence the only way to deal with it is to accept the situation and the finality of death rather than questioning life itself. Stoppard also emphasizes how the onus of creating meaning in one's life is upon an individual. This gets illustrated in the final act of the play where both Ros and Guil are provided the freewill to choose their fate.

As pointed by Charles Marowitz "Stoppard displays a remarkable skill in juggling the donnees of existential philosophy." Through the use of metatheatrical elements, Stoppard constantly reminds the audience or the readers that they are also actors "who have their exits and entrances." The inevitability of death becomes a major theme in Absurdist drama where birth is seen as the only beginning and death as the only end. The finality of death is also signified in the title of the play which declares their final end predestined by the playwright in the play and God in their lives. References to Death can be seen from the beginning of the text. Ros, for instance refers to how fingernails grow even after death. Furthermore, the dress rehearsal of the Tragedians for their play *Murder of Gonzago* in Act

II provides another opportunity for Stoppard to discuss the idea of death and to expose the limitations of theatre or art and forces the audience to reflect upon the question whether art can represent reality. Guil gets enraged when he sees the enactment of death by the Tragedians–

Guil – Actors! The mechanics of cheap melodrama! This isn't death! You scream and choke and sink to your knees, but it doesn't bring death home to anyone... You die so many times; how can you expect them (audience) to believe in your death?

Death according to Guil is an abstraction that cannot be defined. It has no pattern and is arbitrary. It is an exit, an absence that cannot be acted out. According to him, trying to find a structural analogy to death is impossible. The only thing that the actors can express is the fear for death. Guil's objection to the enactment of death by Tragedians as realistic challenges the idea that art can reproduce reality. According to Stoppard art can only create an illusion of death at a superficial level through a performance of death. This gets exemplified in the last scene where Ros and Guil's death is not presented on the stage rather is merely told to us through other characters. It is through their absence on the stage that Stoppard attempts to present the idea of death to the audience.

Through their process of waiting and enacting their roles in Shakespeare's Hamlet the primary aim of Ros and Guil is to avoid death. Their anxiety over meaninglessness emerges out of their fear for their end i.e. their death as Ros states "I'm afraid... Immortality is all I seek." The impossibility of escaping the finality of death becomes clear to them at the end of the text where they passively resign themselves to their predestined fate. In Act III Stoppard gives freedom to his characters to choose and change their fate or their end by letting them read the letter that Hamlet had changed. However, Ros and Guil choose not to act upon the little freedom being provided to them as they become aware of the futility of the so called given 'choice'. They realize that they are 'little' insignificant men placed within the larger powerful structure and it's their marginal status that refrains them from attempting to act towards changing their fate. Knowing what the script entails, the actors willingly resign to enact their roles according to the playwright. They are not only afraid of defying the higher authorities/Fate/God/Playwright but are also tired of living an uncertain life in the fear of their end "like being alive in a box."

Challenging Shakespeare's narrative, Stoppard therefore provides alternate perspective to the story and posits larger questions on issues of death, theatre, representation in art and freewill. Player's words resonates with the title of the play that life is a "gamble with terrible odds." ■

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Adultery, Guilt and Suffering in Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter*

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R.C. Sheila Royappa

Graham Greene is one of the renowned novelists of the 20th century literature. Industrialization and urbanization lead the people to accumulate material wealth rather than moral values. Hence Greene focused upon the 'ordinary' human beings who become 'sinners' after committing a deadly sin. The novel *The Heart of the Matter* is one of the best sellers. It won 'James Tait Black Memorial Prize' for fiction. The novel was chosen by the Time magazine as one of the best hundred novels in English starting from 1923.

Adultery is extramarital affair that is considered objectionable on social, religious, moral or legal grounds. Historically many cultures considered adultery a very serious crime some subject to severe punishment, mutilation or torture. Since the twentieth century criminal laws against adultery have become controversial with most western countries decriminalizing adultery. (www.wikipedia.com) Guilt and shame are caused for an adulterer. The person involved in adultery may become a constant sufferer unable to redeem one's guilt.

Key words: Adultery, guilt, conscience, marriage, suffering.

The novel *The Heart of the Matter* is a typical example of twentieth century literature. The novel brings out the theme of man's feeling of alienation and the anxiety for modern life, the significance of faith from human love and suffering, insignificance of institutional Christianity and it places Greene in the company of Kierkegaard, Marcel, Buber and Trilling. (773, Gangeshwar Rai)

The plot focuses on the protagonist Scobie and his wife Louise. Scobie works in an unnamed West African colony during the Second World War. He loves his job rather than his family. Louise is a city-bred woman who loves literature especially poetry. But she is poor in socialization. She likes to befriend only the elites and the learned. She thought her husband would quit the job but he does not. Scobie works as Deputy Commissioner and has earned a good name in his profession. He is passed over for the promotion as the commissioner. Louise always takes pride in the achievement of her husband. When Scobie

does not get the post of Commissioner Louise feels miserable. She feels her friends would tease her. Hence she plans to go to Africa on a tour. Scobie is unable to arrange the huge amount yet he takes the risk of borrowing the money from Yusef in order to get the necessary funds. Louise became more childish after the death of their nine year old daughter Catherine. This has brought in the inadequacies in personal and professional life of Scobie.

Viewed as a whole, 20th century literature has three outstanding characteristics which have their counterpart in the life and changing pattern of the historical period itself. First it is an age of search; secondly, it is a stimulating and adventurous age, thirdly it is an evaluating age. Twentieth century literature is an intimate part of the life of the century itself. (89, B.L Yadav)

The evaluating age helps us in better understanding of the 'concepts in literature and there is a lot of real life situations for the readers to learn the 'moral' aspect. 'Adultery' is not a healthy sign in a happy family. It indirectly tells us that there is lack of love and affection between the couple. Sometimes it also happens out of 'temptation' or 'lust'. Graham Greene has pointed out the weakness of human beings. Scobie's love for his wife fades away after fifteen years of marriage life. He ardently admires the beauty of a black woman named Miss Wilberforce. "He thought how beautiful she is. It was strange to think that fifteen years ago he would not have noticed her beauty.... In those days he thought his wife beautiful". (12, *The Heart of the Matter*)

It is psychologically proved that person who had committed 'adultery' suffers out of guilt. The protagonist 'Scobie' had committed adultery with Helen Rolt a young widow. Readers can witness that Scobie has been pricked by his conscience. Hence he tries to justify his action by telling the motive behind it. Scobie repeatedly confuses his good intentions with good action, although strict Catholicism insists that a good motive cannot make a bad action good. "Despite how catholic doctrine advises Scobie about the wrongfulness of his action; (i.e) adultery is sinful regardless of the motive, Scobie improperly justifies his actions by focusing on his worthwhile intentions. (66, Bierman, Lisa Crumley).

One can understand that Scobie and Louise try their level best to sustain their marital bond. But in reality there is no love and affection. But he feels responsible for Louise. "He prefers only to care for Louise in sickness, not health. He pities her when she is weak and unattractive; he hates her when she is strong" (69, Bierman, Lisa Crumley). There is no conjugal relationship between them. There is emptiness in their relationship. Scobie feels like "a spy in a foreign territory" in the company of Louise. Louise is likened to animal in the eyes of her in the husband Scobie when he found her in the bedroom under the mosquito net. She reminded him of a dog or a cat, she was so completely out (21, THM). "He never listened while his wife talked" (17, THM).

According to William Shakespeare,
"Let me not to the marriage of True minds

Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark”(Sonnet 116)

Shakespeare is of the view that union of two minds in a marriage does not happen easily. We have to admit and accept the difficulties, obstacles and hurdles in our life. True love is unchanging; it must stand the test of time. The protagonist Scobie is a typical representation of ‘married men’. Most men are loyal and loving towards their partner during the initial years of marriage life. Later on when they face some hurdles like misunderstanding, deterioration of health in the life partner, poor sexual relationship, lack of emotional bonding, they tend to tear off their true relationship. Scobie too loved his wife more deeply and sincerely. Later the transformation of Louise after the death of their daughter made him feel empty. He finds no empathy from Louise. Though self –centered, Louise is always faithful to her husband. She strongly refuses the proposals of Wilson who is a colleague of Scobie. She says “I’ m not a nursing sister who expects to be taken whenever she finds herself in the dark with a man. You have no responsibilities towards me Wilson: I don’t want you” (68, THM). Here Louise becomes the perfect example of ‘true love’.

Guilt and shame are big components of adultery both for those who cheat and for the wounded spouse. When infidelity is discovered in a marriage and brought out in the open by the couple usually there is an overt or covert agreement not to tell or hide the fact from others. Infidelity can be a factor in the development of mental illness and can have consequences for a person’s physical health. (<https://www.beliefnet.com>)

Scobie always faced dilemma like Shakespeare’s Hamlet. When he had affair with Helen, he finds solace and comfort with Helen. He had not experienced this with Louise. So he willingly commits adultery knowing that it is a sin. The tragic flaw in Scobie’s character is excess pity for others. He feels pity towards Helen and Louise. When recalling their wedding vows, Scobie explains that he had promised to make her happy. He does not say anything about the traditional vows of “to have and to hold”, “in sickness and in health” and so on.

Scobie is torn between guilt and faith. He tried to maintain his relationship with Helen a secret. But he felt wounded when Louise came to know about their relationship. He suspects upon Ali, his longtime servant. When he tells about his suspicion casually to Yusef, Ali is been murdered by Yusef’s men. The murder of Ali pricks his conscience to the core. When Louise asks him to attend the mass, he did it. This is also a sin because one must not attend the Holy Communion unless they seek redemption. But he does it for the sake of Louise.

Mental agony and guilty conscience probes Scobie to commit suicide. He knows that catholic religion does not approve of suicide. It considers suicide as a sin. Hence he tries to create a false image of “heart-attack”. He even kept a record of prescriptions of his

visit to the doctor. His frustrated mind says that “I am trapped... trapped” (220, THM). Scobie’s mind gives him the only solution that he has to commit suicide.

Thus the novel *The Heart of the Matter* focuses upon the act of adultery and its implications upon the families-psychologically and sociologically. The portrayal of Religion as backbone for retaining morality on this world is amazing. ■

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An Exploratory Study of the Pedagogical Knowledge of Teachers of English at Secondary Level in Bihar

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Competency in English has become vital to have a good career, relatively better social status and prestige, upward social mobility, etc. in India. English is taught as a discipline and as a medium to learn other disciplines. English language teaching has now a long history in India if we include the colonial period as well. One of the burning questions is “has English language teaching failed to cater the demand of Indian learners?” The answer to the question would be “no” if we look at it from the elite urban people’s point of view. The answer would be “yes” if we approach the question from the perspective of the majority of Indian population who live in villages and small towns. One of the reasons behind this failure is the teachers of English whose responsibility is to linguistically, professionally and academically empower the learners of English who belong to the poor section of Indian society. One of the gaps in the implementation of the curriculum (NCF 2005) is whether the teachers/instructors were pedagogically prepared to accommodate themselves to the new curriculum. The present study explores pedagogical knowledge of teachers of English at secondary level in government schools in Bihar. It tries to find out how much pedagogical knowledge they have acquired from their pre-service and in-service training with reference to NCF 2005.

Keywords: Pedagogical Knowledge, Teacher Education, ELT, NCF 2005

Introduction

UNICEF head, Henrietta H Fore, has recently warned that more than half of Indian students would not have skills for the twenty first century jobs (Soni). However, the concern was shared in the context of all the essential skills required for employability in the twenty-first century. Command of English language and good communication skills have become one of the key skills in the global job market. Competency in English has become vital to have a good career, relatively better social status and prestige, upward social mobility, etc. in India. Unfortunately, knowledge of English has become synonymous

to intelligence which may not be true in all the cases. English is taught as a discipline and as a medium to learn other disciplines (medium of instruction). Good competency in English not only guarantees a good career but also opens a window to a great repository of knowledge of science and technology. English is the only medium of instruction for most of the programmes related to Engineering, Medical, Commerce, etc. in Indian higher education institutions. Yet the majority of Indian population does not have access to English language. As per Census 2001, only 12.16% people claim that they know English (Census, 2001). However, there is no exact data available to tell what the current percentage of people who know English is. It may be around 15 to 20% (as claimed by some of the websites).

English language teaching has now a long history in India if we include the colonial period as well. One of the burning questions is “has English language teaching failed to cater the demand of Indian learners?” The answer to the question would be “no” if we look at it from the elite urban people’s point of view. The answer would be “yes” if we approach the question from the perspective of the majority of Indian population who lives in villages and small towns. One of the reasons behind this failure is the teachers of English whose responsibility is to linguistically, academically and professionally empower the learners of English who belong to the poor section of Indian society. One of the gaps in the implementation of the new curriculum (National Curriculum Framework hereafter NCF, 2005) is whether the teachers/instructors were pedagogically prepared to accommodate themselves to the new curriculum or not. The document says, ‘All teachers should have the skills to teach English in ways appropriate to their situation and levels based on some knowledge of how languages are learnt’ (NCF 39-40).

It is interesting to know whether the teachers were given enough training to meet the demand or not. However, British Council report says, ‘Forty-six per cent of teachers are described as professionally trained a figure which compares unfavourably to that of 83 per cent nationally’ (16). It means more than half of the teachers do not have professionally trained. The present study explores pedagogical knowledge of the teachers of English at secondary level in government schools of Bihar. It tries to find out how much pedagogical knowledge they have acquired from their pre-service and in-service training.

Aims and Objective of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore and assess the pedagogical knowledge of teachers of English at secondary level in government schools in Bihar. The objectives of the study are:

1. to know the methods, approaches and techniques used by the teachers in the classroom,
2. to know whether the teachers use any audio-visual aids and activates in the classroom to teach English or not,
3. to find out the extent to which they are aware of the recent development in the area of ELT,

4. to know whether they are given any in-service training or not and if they are given in-service training, whether such training are sufficient for them or not,
5. to find out the problems and hindrances in the teaching of English,
6. and to find out to what extent the learners are able to communicate (speak and write) in English.

Methodology

The study uses cross-sectional research design and the research strategy is qualitative. The study has been conducted in the district of Gaya, Bihar. Twenty-five teachers of English from both urban and rural secondary schools have been selected with the help of 'convenience sampling method' (Bryman, 174). Semi-structured interviews have been conducted by the researcher at select secondary schools in order to know their knowledge of pedagogy of English. An effort has also been made to know the learning outcome of the students at secondary level. The students of standard 9th and 10th have been asked, first of all, to give their oral introduction in class room and then asked to write their introduction in at least ten sentences. An effort has been made to know their competency in English language.

Discussion

On the basis of the analysis of the data collected from interviews and class observations, it can be interpreted that most of the teachers use teacher and teaching-centered approach to teaching. The students are given little time and space to interact and participate in the teaching-learning process. The learners remain silent listeners almost throughout the class. The learners provide feedback in 'yes' or 'no' whenever they are asked for. It has also been observed that they feel quite hesitant to speak anything, even if the researcher or the teacher tried to interact in Hindi. They have a sort of anxiety. They lack motivation to interact with their teachers or any outsider. It seems that the teachers have failed to motivate the students for speaking and interaction.

As far as the method of teaching is concerned, most of the teachers primarily use 'Grammar Translation Methods' of teaching (Larsen-Freeman. 01). Both class observation and interview confirm that Grammar Translation Method is the only Method the teachers rely on. The emphasis is given on the teaching of words and their meaning (primarily from English to Hindi), teaching of grammar, sentence structure, translation, etc. The interesting fact is that most of the teachers use Grammar Translation Method without knowing the terms. It seems they use the same method of teaching English as they were taught by their teachers.

When the teachers were asked what they knew about the methods of teaching English. Most of them said that they had read about method of teaching English in their B. Ed. programme but they forgot then. However, some of them know what method of teaching is and they know at least name of the Grammar Translation Method. Another interesting

fact is that 9 out of 25 teachers have accepted that they have completed their B. Ed. Programme in face-to-face mode but they never attended the class and somehow they managed to pass the examination. They have also accepted that they have very little knowledge of pedagogy of English. All the teachers under investigation failed to name even a single method of teaching English other than Grammar Translation Method.

The use of English is very minimal in the teaching of English. There are two reasons for the minimal use of English in the classroom. First, as claimed by most of the teachers, if a teacher uses only English in the classroom while teaching English, student will not be able to understand. The second reason, as the researcher has observed, is that most of the teachers find it difficult to communicate in English. The NCF 2005 document says, 'All teachers who teach English should have basic proficiency in English' (58). For example, before the interview every teacher was given options to make a choice between Hindi and English. All the teachers preferred Hindi to English for the interview. However, some teachers can communicate in English but they lack fluency and sometimes struggle to find expressions.

In-service training

The government of Bihar provides in-service training to the teachers. A report of British Council stipulates, 'Sixteen per cent of teachers receive in-service training each year' (16). The report is about the entire teachers including higher education. Most of them confirmed that the government of Bihar provides training to the teachers of English at secondary level. Only the teachers who have joined recently or the teachers who works on contract said that they have not attended any in-service training. They have claimed that they attend in-service trainings in every two or three year. However, when they are asked to comment on the quality of in-service trainings, most of them were dissatisfied with the training. One of the reasons for their dissatisfaction is that the trainings are based on the assumption that the government schools have all the modern facilities and good students-teacher ratio. Most of the teachers said that whatever they learnt from in-service training cannot be implemented in the actual classroom. Primary reasons are the students-teacher ratio and the number of students in a section or class. In a section, the number of students ranges from 70 to 130 students. Most of the schools from where the data was collected have very less number of teachers and high enrolment. During the collection of data, the researcher had to exclude two schools from the study because there was no teacher of English available. In such schools English is taught by teachers of other subjects or sometimes no teaching of English takes place. The teachers are also given induction training at the time of recruitment or a few months after the recruitment. However, this claim was made by only a few teachers.

Use of audio-visual aids and activities in the classroom

Some of the teachers in the interview have claimed that they use audio-visual aids and some activities in the classroom. When the same questions were asked to the students they rejected the teachers' claim that the teachers do some activities for language learning

in the classroom. However, most of them have said that they do not use any audio-visual aid (other than “Smart Class”) and activity in the classroom. For almost all the teachers the only audio-visual aid is the “Smart Class”. Under the ‘Unnayan Bihar’ project, the Government of Bihar has given every secondary school a smart television, a multimedia speaker, UPS and battery, data traveler, etc. they have also been given teaching-learning material for every subject. The Unnayan initiative has been launched to improve quality of teaching and administration with the help of technology. This initiative has been taken a few months back, therefore, it does not seem reasonable to comment on that. A separate study may be conducted to test the efficacy of the “Smart Class”.

Problems and challenges in the teaching of English

The teachers of English have also shared some problems and challenges they have to face in the teaching of English. When they were asked why the learners’ competence in English was unsatisfactory, they cited many problems and challenges. Almost all the teacher said that the learners’ do not come with the prerequisite knowledge of English when they come to secondary schools. The learners are unable to read and write in English when they join secondary school. Some teachers have claimed that some students do not know even the alphabet of English.

Another challenge is to motivate the learners to study English as the learners consider it, to quote a teacher, “a secondary subject”. English is not a compulsory subject in the matriculation examination. The marks obtained in English do not affect the overall grade. Therefore, the students do not take English seriously. High teacher-student ratio is another challenge in the teaching of English. The average of student-teacher ratio for all the 25 schools is 596:1. However, it may not be considered an exact student-teacher ratio since only 25 schools have been taken and convenience sampling has been used to select the schools. The highest student-teacher ratio is 1655:1 and the lowest is 34:1.

Unlike big cities, the students have very little exposure to English. They do not have time, space and motivation to practice it. The parents do not pay much attention to their wards. A teacher says, “The parents do not bother what their wards are learning. They feel that their only job is to send the wards to school”. Furthermore, the teachers said that they have to do some official paper works since they do not have supporting staff.

Some positive change and Initiatives

1. Almost all the schools have electric connection with power back up of UPS for smart class.
2. All the secondary schools have “Smart Class”.
3. All the schools situated in urban areas have separate toilets for boys and girls. However, in some of the schools in rural areas toilets are not operational for students.
4. Over all cleanliness has improved.

Findings and Recommendations

The study suggests that the teachers have limited knowledge of pedagogy of English. Most of the teachers need to be updated with recent developments in English language teaching. One of the serious issues is that the teachers do not give opportunity to the students to interact in the classroom and they need to be exposed to English in natural way. Most of the teachers know the importance of activities and audio-visual aids but they lack motivation to use them. In other way, it seems that they do not have conviction to make them learn.

In order to improve learning outcome, the first step would be to improve teacher education. In-service training should be more and the training should be given by keeping in mind the facilities available in the schools, the teachers and the students. One of the important findings of the study is that most of the teachers do not have accountability towards their job. For example, no teacher in the interview has accepted that he/she is also accountable for unsatisfactory learning outcome of the learners. Some initiatives can be taken to make the parents or guardian of the students more accountable and aware of the importance of English and education at large. ■

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Shifting Trends of Adventure Narrative; Journey from Colonial to Postcolonial: A Comparative Study of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Mantel's *Life of Pi*.

Anirban Kahali

This paper tries to trace the changes evident in two representative adventure narratives focusing on sea voyages—*Robinson Crusoe* and *Life of Pi*. While *Robinson Crusoe* is one of the early English novels which uses sea voyage as its backdrop, *Life of Pi*, on the other hand, is a contemporary postmodern text which also uses the same theme but with certain modifications and alterations. This paper also tries to trace the underlying themes by tracing and referring back to the canon.

While Crusoe's voyage has an underneath tone of colonization, Patel's voyage is a postcolonial one, mocking certain political events of that time by making us "believe in God". This shift can only be best understood by referring back to the European canon of travel narratives and by analyzing the politics behind them.

Adventure as a major literary genre incorporates the theme of colonization and serves the colonial purpose. Since its very inception in novels like *Don Quixote* it had been "man's struggle against adversities" and his survival. It also includes a practice of otherising as we can see in both *Robinson Crusoe* and *Life of Pi*. In both these novels, the protagonists are reduced to have a primitive existence and face the adversities barely, establishing finally a much needed identity. Thus, *Life of Pi*, in a sense is a re-reading of *Robinson Crusoe*, but at the same time it deviates from it, as Pi Patel's adventure in no sense serves a colonial purpose as that of Crusoe. Finally, in this novel, one can also see a strange relationship between power and consumption. As is evident allegorically that one who has more power easy more and demands even more.

Thus, in the following paper we should try to make a comparative study focusing on the treatment of the theme of adventure in *Robinson Crusoe* and *Life of Pi*, and trace the shift from colonial to postcolonial. So, we would try to first define adventure and then find the similarities between these two texts and see how *Life of Pi* is a re-reading of *Robinson*

Crusoe but at the same time we would also focus on the dissimilarities among them and find out how *Life of Pi* deviates from *Robinson Crusoe* and re-creates it.

Keywords: adventure narrative, European canon, colonial, postcolonial, modern, postmodern.

The term “adventure” had been described in the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* as 1. “an unusual, exciting or dangerous journey” and 2. “excitement and the willingness to take risks, try new ideas”. Since the beginning of the Enlightenment period we find that the curiosity to know the unknown increased among the mass. Expeditions were sponsored by the rulers in order to find new lands. These adventures were not merely undertaken with the motif of gaining knowledge but with the latent motif of expanding new markets. With the advent of Industrial Revolution this tendency of expanding new markets changed into a tendency of expanding new colonies as the demand for raw materials increased considerably. One should keep in mind that adventures are undertaken not merely for pleasure but for the purpose of making profit out risk. This theme of adventure had been one of the important tropes used in the narratives time and again with a purpose of colonization. But with the course of history the motif behind adventure narratives also underwent a change. This change can be traced as we compare the narratives with the central theme of adventure published in different times.

The project can be best understood if we consider two epoch making works published in two different eras. Since sea had been the means through which this project of colonization had been carried out, therefore let us trace the changes evident in two representative adventure narratives focusing on sea voyages—*Robinson Crusoe* and *Life of Pi*. While *Robinson Crusoe* is one of the early English novels which uses sea voyage as its backdrop, *Life of Pi*, on the other hand, is a contemporary postmodern text which also uses the same theme but with certain modifications and alterations. While Crusoe’s voyage has an underneath tone of colonization, Patel’s voyage is a postcolonial one, mocking certain political events of that time by making us “believe in God”. This shift can only be best understood by referring back to the European canon of travel narratives and by analyzing the politics behind them. Adventure as a major literary genre incorporates the theme of colonization and serves the colonial purpose. Since its very inception in novels like *Don Quixote* it had been “man’s struggle against adversities” and his survival. It also includes a practice to differentiate Others as we can see in both *Robinson Crusoe* and *Life of Pi*. In both these novels, the protagonists are reduced to have a primitive existence and face the adversities barely, establishing finally a much needed identity. Thus, *Life of Pi*, in a sense is a re-reading of *Robinson Crusoe*, but at the same time it deviates from it, as Pi Patel’s adventure in no sense serves a colonial purpose as that of Crusoe. Finally, in this novel, one can also see a strange relationship between power and consumption. As is evident allegorically that one who has more power easy more and demands even more.

Novel, being a self contradictory genre, tries to make a perfect blend of reality with

imagination and history with fiction. Thus the establishment of identity is a pivotal motive which can be traced in any narrative. The act of declaration of the origin of the protagonist in a narrative, provides a sense of authenticity and make us believe the tale that the narrator has to narrate. This can be seen in both the novels as both Crusoe and Patel give a detail description of their origins, the history of their families and also their relationships with the other members of their families. Crusoe while describing his life gives all the details regarding his birth and about the history of his family: “I was born in the Year 1632, in the City of *York*, of a good Family, tho’ not of that Country, my Father being a Foreigner of *Bermen*, who settled first at *Hull*: He got a good Estate by Merchandise, and leaving off his Trade, lived afterward at *York*, from whence he married my Mother” (05). After establishing his filial bonds, he then proceeds to establish his own identity as his name had undergone a change “... I was called *Robinson Kreutznaer*; but by the usual Corruption of Words in *England*, we are now called, nay we call ourselves, and write our Name *Crusoe*, and so my Companions always call’d me.”(05). But this is not all, as in an adventure narrative, one has to shed one’s affiliation and establish oneself as an independent individual by facing the adversities of nature bare handed, reduced to the state of the primitive man and claiming their victory over all odds. As Crusoe dose by establishing his own colony, and also making an indication towards the enclosure movement that was prevalent in England, by pointing out how his father had owned a farm for himself. This is important to note that establishing one’s identity is an important aspect of the postcolonial discourse and it is only by establishing one’s identity, one can achieve their desired independence as well as establish their own native affiliations.

In *Life of Pi*, the protagonist Piscine Molitor Patel, better known as Pi Patel, tells about his name too “I was named after a swimming pool.”(8). Though at first glance it may appear that his father might have been a mathematician as he names his son “Pi”, but then he reveals how he actually got such a name. Though his “parents never took to water”(8), his name was influenced by the tales of one of his father’s business contacts, Francis Adirubasamy, who was addressed as Mamaji by Pi, went to France for educational purpose when Pondicherry was a French Colony. During his stay at France, he unlike most common men didn’t collected memories of great monuments, but rather liked to swim in every swimming pool located in different cities of France. Since he had a great affinity of swimming he swam across all the swimming pools present in France. He on being acquainted to the protagonist’s father Mr. Patel narrated his experiences regarding different pools. He swam across the Olympic pool, Piscine Deligny, the venue for the swimming events of the 1900 France Olympics. In spite of the pool being “touched by immortal glory”, it did not touch Mamaji’s heart as he says that “Deligny was bad enough. Bain Royal, another latrine on the Seine, was worse. At least at Deligny they scooped out the dead fish.” (11). Mamaji also visited other famous pools like “Piscine Château- Landon, Rouvet or du boulevard de la Gare” (11). But those were also insufficient to please him as he said “... I thought I was swimming through a jelly fish” (11). Finally it was only Piscine Molitor which caught his attention as he thought it to be “a pool the gods would have delight to swim.” (11).The

description of the pool caught the attention of Mr. Patel and therefore he named his second son as Piscine Molitor Patel. But just like Crusoe, his name too came across certain changes as there was a confusion among the common people as they thought him to be “P. Singh” (20) and wondered why he was not wearing a turban. The misery of having such an uncommon name took place when Pi was twelve years old and was a student. One of his fellow mates got the idea to bully him as an “evil genius lit up his dull mind. He raised his arm, pointed at me and shouted, “It’s *Pissing* Patel!””(20). Even the teachers being unaware of their pronunciation called him as “Pissing”. In order to save his prestige Piscine changed his name to Pi. But it was quite a struggle for him to establish his new identity as no one seemed to accept it in the beginning. It took him quite some labour to become Pi Patel and make people accept his new name.

Both Crusoe and Pi Patel underwent a change of name but it is only through the struggle for survival that they established their individuality. Both the narratives which are based on a sea voyage have one thing in common. They both are the only human survivors, who survive violent storm followed by a shipwreck, and the both passionately desire to survive, fighting against all odds. As we can find in other narratives, that the question of survival of human beings, while facing adverse conditions is related to the theory of ‘the hand of God’. However, we can mention another important motif which runs parallel to the above mentioned axis, which is basically the fear from wild nature, the fear from the uncharted sea, unmapped land mass, and of course from strange people—this can be aptly be termed as ‘Crusoe Syndrome’. (Marzec: 130). The struggle for existence is supported by the protagonist’s belief in God. A common pattern can be found in many biblical texts like *The Book of Job* or the story of Jonah and in narratives like *The Old Man and the Sea*, *Moby Dick*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Life of Pi*. All these texts are categorised as sea narratives and shows how the religious belief aids the protagonist to counter the insecurity and uncertainties they experienced in unfamiliar locales under different circumstances.

While reading the action of Robinson Crusoe on the unknown island and pointing out to his fear, Robert P. Marzec in his essay *Enclosures, colonization, and the Robinson Crusoe Syndrome* points out how Crusoe spends the first night on the island “fearful of unknown space... inhabiting the land not its own terms but metaphysically above it in a tree”(130). Unmapped territory, therefore, “triggers a response of dread” in Crusoe when he is “uncontrollably thrown into the space of uncultivated land” he cannot “immediately form a frame of reference” (130). This creates a crisis of identity. The problem is explained by Max Weber, a German Sociologist, who opines that human beings derive meanings through their belief in God. However, he feels that with increasing rationalisation of human thought, and with the introduction of new scientific discoveries, disenchantment had occurred.

Eyal Chowers, while examining the sociology of Weber in the article ‘Max Weber: the fate of homo-hermeneut in a disenchanted world’ (1995) argues that human beings can arrive easily to a meaning when they, with their insatiable thirst for them encounters an

objective world which is enchanting. According to Chowder, the confusion created by the philosophies of philosophers like Nietzsche helped in the formation of “one of the paradoxes that defined the Western understanding of the self” (Chowder:123). While Nietzsche in his nihilistic philosophy had “shattered the last hopes of religious and metaphysical consolation, thereby suggesting the possible meaninglessness of human existence,” on the one hand, Weber on the other hand struggled to establish a meaningful self in the intermediate space of rationality and irrationality. Chowder suggests that “the tension between these two positions”(123) is manifested in the works of Weber. Though he accepts the disenchantment of an individual, he envisioned such a self to develop a sociology of religion as Chowder argues that “the threat of disenchantment, of a rationalized social environment, and of meaninglessness dominate Weber’s work because he views human beings as creature who desire meaning in their lives and are able to invent it”(123). The similar desire to find the essential meaning in the world disenchanting by scientific rationalism haunts Crusoe and Pi in their struggle for existence as they quest to establish their identity.

“Religion will save us,” (27) believed young Pi as he remembered that “religion had been very close to my heart.” (27). Being an Indian, religion has to be an important part of his living as Swami Vivekananda in his *The Future of India* points out that “Here first arose the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, the existence of a supervising God, an immanent God in nature and in man, and here the highest ideals of religion and philosophy again and again rushed out and deluged the world” (834). According to Swamiji, “religion is one and sole interest of the people of India. The Indian mind is first religious than anything else.” Thus, being an Indian boy belonging to a Hindu family, Pi was obvious to have such belief. But the twentieth century India was more disillusioned than the India known to Swamiji. When Communism was introduced to India, the rational and educated youth took to it. Such a man was Mr. Satis Kumar, the biology teacher of Pi at Petit Séminaire. He was a staunch communist and an atheist who lost his belief in God as he suffered from polio. He cried for God’s aid but it was only the modern medical science and logic which came to his rescue: “When I was your age, I lived in bed, racked with polio. I asked myself every day, ‘Where is God? Where is God? Where is God?’ God never came. It wasn’t God who saved me—it was medicine.”(28).

This was the India which have been disillusioned after suffering the after effects of world wars and the Independence which caused partition. The partition not merely separated the land mass, but it tore apart the soul of entire country. As Mr. Kumar aptly quoted “Some people say God died during the Partition in 1947.”(27) The partition was done on the basis of religion, hopefully if there would have been any God, it might have prevented such a gory occurrence where thousands of his children suffered great loss, thousands slaughtered and massacred. The Partition of India can be termed as one of the most hellish events that took place in the modern era. The partition not only divided India into two nations but also divided the unity among the people of the nation. The two new born nations which took birth on the stroke of the midnight hour of 15th August 1947 are constantly engaged in the act of war,

which is basically a product of the mistrust among the religious groups. These wars not only cause mayhem by killing millions but also cause instability in the socio-political sphere of the country. Thus one may say that God “may have died in 1971 during the war” (27).

The contemporary socio-political condition under Mrs. Gandhi and the declaration of the emergency all over the country somehow disillusioned Pi and the world to him seem to lose its magic. But this disenchantment did not last too long in case of Pi. In times of need, all that Pi remembered was the divine help of God as he knows that only God’s mercy can save his life. Especially when he was being accompanied in a life-boat by the zoo animals, among them two were carnivorous—a hyena and a tiger named Richard Parker. The life of Pi was now in literal sense in the hand of God as he was in the middle of an ocean accompanied by a Bengal tiger named Richard Parker.

One can find Pi’s faith in God as he thanks God for saving their lives: “Finally, it was my nose that was the judge of land... “My God! My God!” I whimpered... I babbled incoherent thanks to God and collapsed” (258) as he landed on a shore. Thus it was only his faith in God that consoled him and helped him to struggle against all odds and survive.

Crusoe in a similar manner was devastated by the shipwreck, though unlike Pi he managed to find a piece of land. But unknown land only increased his anxiety and fear of the unknown savage territory which was unmapped. Though we can find him in every moment invoking God for his mercy and help “... a View to the sea, that if God sent any Ship in Sight,” (51). It was *Bible*, on reading which he found solace to survive in the unknown locale. The Bible provided Crusoe with the much needed courage and motivation which allowed him to make his living out in the unknown. A relation between Crusoe and the land can be seen in the text. Crusoe marks his territory and encloses it with fence. This act somehow indicates towards the enclosure act passed in England which allowed the individual to enclose his land. This can be said as the first step which led to the establishment of colonies. Crusoe himself is just a representative of this process.

Bible not only gave him strength or edified him, but it also helped him to civilize the savage. As Crusoe met a young boy and saved him from the hands of the cannibals, he then tames the boy. He names him Friday, “which was the day I sav’d his life” (174). Then he started teaching Friday and started his education by enlightening him with the knowledge of *Bible*. But as the boy grew up, Crusoe “taught him to say master” (174). In this case it’s eminent that educating Friday was a ‘white-man’s burden’ for Crusoe. One can also clearly understand how Crusoe uses religion as a tool to establish his own colony and get his own slave. Crusoe is a person who establishes the theory of supremacy of Christianity and with the help of Christianity establishes his goal. It is noteworthy that in spite of the shipwreck, Crusoe finds the remains of the ship and discovers a library inside. Thus, indicating towards a linguistic chauvinism. Language is a powerful tool which was used by the colonizers to strengthen their hold over their subjects.

On a stark contrast to Crusoe’s religious inclination, Pi is a person who adopts all

the religions like a true Indian. He is not a man who sticks to his innate religion, that is, Hinduism but also practises Islam and Christianity. Thus, to Pi, humanity is the religion one should follow. The way Crusoe tames Friday finds its contrast in Pi's relation with Richard Parker. Animals are not human and therefore "Other". One can also trace the affiliation of animals with Africa, as Crusoe points out "But all this while I made no Allowance of Dangers... I might fell into the Hands of Savages... far worse than the Lions and Tigers of Africa." (106). And Friday being an African was akin to animal, which makes him savage, primitive and a subject to be feared. But animals can be tamed with proper training, the training that the colonial masters provided to their subjects in order to train them. Here, one can find the application of Said's observation mentioned in his *Orientalism*, when he points out that, "'Orientalism' is this European construction of the East as primitive, savage, pagan, underdeveloped and criminal. Such a construction that enabled the Europeans to justify his presence: The poor, weak native needed to be governed and 'developed', and it was the task of the Europeans to do so." (160) Crusoe being an agent of colonization successfully trains Friday, Pi, being a postcolonial man fails to do so with Richard Parker.

Apart from the belief in God, Crusoe and Pi do not seem to have a lot in common. While Crusoe is a man who is a colonial agent who had undertaken the journey to establish his own business, Pi, on the other hand is a postmodern man who suffers with postcolonial hangovers and sets on the journey with his family to visit Canada to find new opportunities. The postmodern era is the era of globalization, where we can find the creation of global villages. This trend includes people who roam around the world, the migrants who move from one country to another in search of job and those who take shelter or refuge to some other country because of some international disputes. The advent of Globalization marked a change from nationalism to internationalism. This effect of globalization can be seen by the name of Pi Patel. He was named on the swimming pool which was located in Paris. This name was suggested by Mamaji, who was a globe-trotter. His father who owned a zoo in India moves to Canada where he thinks he would find better opportunities.

Even the novel *Life of Pi* is an example of memory narrative, which is chiefly a postcolonial trait, where the protagonist Pi Patel narrates his memory to the central narrator. The memories of Pi tell us about the important events of independent India, pointing towards the events like partition and the declaration of the Emergency period during the reign of Mrs. Indira Gandhi "I don't know much about politics. Father and Mother complained about Mrs. Gandhi" (27). On the other hand, *Robinson Crusoe* is not merely a memory narrative. Crusoe maintained a diary during his stay on the unknown land. Thus, Crusoe, like the Puritan settlers of America, who established new colonies, maintained written records. These records can be held as authentic and thus forms a part of history. Creation of history was a colonial tendency, which was undertaken with the purpose to know the place in a better way.

To attempt a comparative study of these two novels—*Life of Pi* and *Robinson Crusoe*, we may observe that apart from a few similarities that of being a narrative based

on sea adventure and presenting the passionate desire of an individual to survive against all odds and try to understand their miraculous survival in terms of metaphysical reality, these two novels are far apart from one another. While Crusoe's journey begins on sea and develops on land, which threatens his identity, he finally establishes his identity in a capitalist manner by establishing his own territory. Pi, on the other hand, is a postmodern man, who possesses a complex culture with respect to time and space, creating ambiguity, which is a dominant feature of postmodern text. The novel also shows a typical relation between power and consumption. One with greater power thrives to achieve more power, no matter if that person has to opt a foul way. This actually mocks the Emergency that was declared by Mrs. Gandhi. ■

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Orphanhood as Identity: Rootlessness and the Child Protagonist

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The orphan protagonist is a recurrent figure in children's literature, so much so that orphanhood becomes an indicator of identity in itself. The lack of adult or parental protection creates a special category of character, which is oppressed not on basis of cultural identity, national identity or class, but because the state of being an orphan becomes a classification that invites oppression on its own. The orphan becomes the postcolonial "other," a representative of isolation of human beings from one another. The portrayal of this identity in children's fiction creates a duality where the child protagonists may face neglect or oppression due to powerlessness, or they may have the power to forge an identity for themselves by triumphing over their situation and social dictates, despite their initial rootlessness. Essentially, the orphan story in children's literature has its uses as a narrative of triumph, where the lack of parental care and protection serves as an opportunity to embark on dangerous adventures or face difficult situations, which present themselves to the independent child hero, even if the independence is generated by circumstances. The orphan story may also serve as a wish fulfilling fantasy for the child reader who relishes the prospect of reading about the lifestyle of a character that does not fall under parental supervision and scrutiny, especially with the safety of knowing that the child hero will not meet a bad end.

In literature for children, an orphan hero is a narrative unit with a specific set of utilities. Roland Barthes divides narrative units into "indices" and "functions" (246). While indices refer to personality traits of the characters, information about their identity and help create an "atmosphere," functions refer to "operations" or actions that develop the narrative (247). The orphan, as a narrative unit, has certain pre-programmed indices and functions. She is the ambassador of emerging victorious against all odds, with a healthy dosage of qualities/indices akin to "courage and kindness" (Cinderella's motto in the 2015 Walt Disney Pictures film). There is a certain "goodness" attached to this particular character, whose functions include navigating a corrupt world, facing danger and making friends- a character that can go beyond the constraints of a plot structure that involves a happy child

living in a caring family, which can actually monitor them and ensure their safety. Thus, the rootless orphan is often marked by increasing independence and a capacity to make decisions in the absence of a guiding hand, especially at a crucial moment, which leads to some sort of maturity or understanding. An orphan may be an old soul in a child's body.

Popular repetition of the orphan story also makes the orphan child an archetype- a recurrent motif. The child archetype is a symbol of both dread and hope. The loss of parents is a common cause of anxiety and stress in children. We fear loneliness and rejection, even as adults. The orphan also fits into the quest archetype, where she is looking for acceptance and belongingness in a narrative where she is marked as different due to lack of a familial structure to shelter her from a harsh world. This is where her rootlessness stems from. Necessity makes the orphan learn the way of the world quickly as she struggles to survive. There is grief and pain and strife, but there is an archetypal reward when the quest is completed and home is found. "Home" might be acceptance, love, camaraderie, friendship, family or a simple recognition of self-worth.

Developing the symbol further, Melanie Kimball calls the orphan a manifestation of people's isolation from fellow human beings and from society. To her, they represent solitude. They being the outcasts of society without the protection of social institutions like family, she dubs them as "the eternal Other". Yet, she says, ". . . they also represent the possibility for humans to reinvent themselves. (559). Rootlessness becomes an opportunity to build the self according to ones life experiences.

The beginning of the orphan narrative is a broken home, which opposes the ideal home stereotype with parents perfecting the role of caregivers and actually assuming responsibility. The ideal family is a stereotype too, after all.

Laura Peters, in the context of Victorian culture states that family is an "unsustainable ideal" and needs a scapegoat in the form of the orphan figure to reaffirm its representations of "legitimacy, race and national belonging" (1). In a modern family we may not see race or even national identity as something that is uniform for all the members. The orphan is often 'othered' by virtue of being an orphan. She need not be illegitimate in order to be a scapegoat. In Grimm's version of fairy tales, when the king's son asks the father of Cinderella (called "Aschenputtel" in German) if he had a third daughter, he replies in the negative: "No," said the man, "There is still a little stunted kitchen-wench which my late wife left behind her, but she cannot possibly be the bride" (116). In this case, the father does not connect to the daughter after the mother of the child is no more, reducing Cinderella to an orphan like status. As she has no social standing in the eyes of people, even the ones in her own household, she is considered not worth being married off to somebody or worthy of finding shelter in another family. The father still acknowledges the children of his second wife, and is apparently blind to Cinderella's abuse at their hands.

The narrative including an orphan comes with readymade complexities. Orphanhood itself is a starting point for a problem that can propel the plot forwards. The orphan is

programmed to have certain inbuilt character traits that beg to be explored. For example, in continuation with the theme of rootlessness, Nina Auerbach sees the orphan as the “primary metaphor for the dispossessed, detached self” (395). She identifies her with the creativity that contributes to the growth of the novel as an art form. She further attributes her with the following characteristics:

...a faintly disreputable and possibly bastardized offspring of uncertain parentage, always threatening to lose focus and definition, but with the resilience of the natural victim, always managing to survive... (395)

This uncertainty and loss of definition points towards the potential of the orphan mytheme, that continues to be recycled in various narratives. The orphan’s state of abandonment or orphanhood is a ready launch-pad from where a narrative can go in many directions be they positive or negative.

On a positive note, in *The Hero Within* Carol S. Pearson identifies hope as an important component of the orphanhood narrative. She insists that orphans have to be cared for. Further, she holds that:

The stories, then, that the culture has evolved for the Orphan are rags-to-riches plots and very conventional love stories. The subtheme of these plots is that suffering will be redemptive and will bring back the absent parent. In Charles Dickens’s novels, for instance, an orphan suffers poverty and mistreatment until finally it is discovered that he is the long lost heir to a huge fortune. Reunited with his father, he will be cared for forever. (33)

The narrative of redemption is especially important in Children’s Literature. The suffering child, who does not receive redemption or comfort, is in for a dark future. It is in the plots without care, where the orphan continues to suffer, that negativity comes into play. The victim may turn bitter and angry and decide to victimize the world in turn. To illustrate, consider Tom Riddle from J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series. Tom is not acknowledged by his father and is left at an orphanage during childbirth by his mother (Merope) with nothing but a name to identify the baby. It is understood that Merope could have saved herself as she had magical powers, but she is heartbroken at her husband’s abandonment and chooses death over living for her child. This double abandonment shapes Tom’s character as he craves absolute power and control so that he is not victimized again.

Tom grows up unloved in an orphanage with scarce resources and an uncaring staff. His own magical powers make him stand out and he is shunned by other children. Also, he develops a cruel attitude which does not help his case. But there is no one to teach him otherwise and he grows incapable of bonding with other human beings. His dark side comes into play and he remains a selfish being incapable of loving others, or feeling remorse for causing hurt or harm. He develops a fear of death, unable to accept his mother’s choice to die when she could have saved herself. Also, he discovers later that his father had been living in luxury while he himself had grown in poverty. His response is to kill his father

when he acquires the capability to do so. His revenge does not end here. He wants to enslave the whole world that had overlooked him and tried to subdue him when he was a helpless orphan.

In his analysis of the child motif in “The Psychology of the Child Archetype”, Jung speaks of “individuation” (159), which is a process through which one’s personality matures after one learns to understand one’s inner self. Apart from being a link to the past, a child is also a symbol of future potential. She is the site of personal development, which is accelerated due to conditions like orphanhood and self-reliance. Jung identifies “futuraity” (164), which harks changes in personality, as an essential feature of the child motif. These changes help along individuation with “synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the personality.” This synthesis, in turn makes the child a symbol that “unites the opposites.” The child is a “bringer of healing, that is, one who makes whole” (164). This is especially true in case of the orphan hero whose future must bring wholeness and healing after suffering and opposition is conquered and maturity is achieved. Even if the orphan cannot undo a hurtful past, she learns that pain may be a part of her, but that is not all that she is. This development is not present in case of Tom Riddle, who learns to cope by causing pain in others, instead of finding personal healing, that is denied him in his story-verse.

The evolution process of the child is supported by abandonment which Jung calls a necessary condition if a child is to achieve independence (168). He points out the inherent paradox of the helpless child motif- that even if the child is pitted against dangerous enemies, and is constantly threatened by extinction; the child hero has special powers and would emerge victorious against all odds (170).

Healing is a major part on the individuation process in Roald Dahl’s *James and the Giant Peach*. James Henry Trotter is saved from becoming another Tom Riddle using the faithful deus ex machina of the mysterious old man bearing a magical gift. Here family is not the “unsustainable ideal” of Laura Peters, but a lost ideal. It is the kind of ideal that may be promoted in a children’s book:

Up until this time, he had had a happy life, living peacefully with his mother and father in a beautiful house beside the sea. There were always plenty of other children for him to play with, and there was the sandy beach for him to run about on, and the ocean to paddle in. It was the perfect life for a small boy. (1)

James knows the warmth of a happy and loving environment and the sudden loss of parents puts his life with his cruel aunts under stark relief. Dahl’s narrative is replete with dark humour and he utilizes the narrative function of “death of parents” in such a manner that it makes fun of all the similar functions ever utilized in a story, like - “tragic death in an accident,” “died due to an illness” or “killed by a dark wizard/ villain.” In an unapologetically absurd manner, the narrator declares that James’ parents got eaten by an “enormous angry rhinoceros” (1) that had escaped the London zoo. The caregivers are thus successfully out of the way and the story can continue when the lovely house by the sea is sold: the orphan

is physically removed from the site of comfort as James' home fails as a shelter in the absence of parents.

Dahl's treatment of life and death is rather dark as well, as it is said that being eaten by a rhino must have been a horrible experience for the parents, but at least it was over in "thirty-five seconds flat" (1). However James was still alive and all alone in an unfriendly world, and if death had ended all his parents' troubles, his were just about to begin. The young reader is not sheltered from the horrors that life can offer a helpless child. In here the awfulness is absolutely blatant, horrifyingly glaring and heartbreaking. Yet again, this is a narrative of hope and help comes to the child from unusual quarters. The idea is not to despair. At least that is the impression one would want to leave on a young reader.

Before relief come obstacles to be overcome. The hurt of parental loss is aggravated by abuse. James is made to do menial labour and beaten up by his horrible Aunts Spiker and Sponge, in whose care he is left. The "family" motif is corrupted and the environment reflects the corruption when the "beautiful house beside the sea" is exchanged for "a queer ramshackle house on the top of a high hill." The contrast in the situation is keenly felt by James as he can often spot his old dwelling from the height of his new abode. He is never called by his name but his aunts refer to him as "you disgusting little beast" or "you filthy nuisance" or "you miserable creature" (1). The words are extremely cutting to a child's self-worth, and painful even to the reader.

The physical abuse is topped with isolation. James is never allowed to leave the Aunts' domain and play with other children. There is not even a dog or a cat to pet and James grows sadder by the day, until things start looking up. James accidentally drops some magical crocodile tongues, delivered by the mysterious old man mentioned earlier, near an old peach tree. As a result a peach, almost the size of a house, grows on the tree with a hole/tunnel in the side carved out by the bugs that had managed to get inside. James climbs in and is able to get away from his aunts, along with his human-sized insect friends by rolling the peach off the hill and into the sea. The "coming back for revenge" motif is left redundant, which a children's book can do without, when on its descent down the hill, the peach squishes the life out of the two horrible aunts. In a true fairytale fashion Dahl includes the punishment element for the villain:

There was a crunch.

And then there was silence.

The peach rolled on. And behind it, Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker lay ironed out upon the grass as flat and thin and lifeless as a couple of paper dolls cut out of a picture book.(15)

Escape is only the beginning of the healing process. There is friendship with the insects that helps James, and then there is adventure. James learns to take initiative because his friends trust him to lead them out of difficulties and it is his idea that saves the giant peach

from the sharks in the sea. This is the part of the character development process where James learns self-worth, which was denied him by his caretakers. He reconstructs his identity in a positive manner. The Ladybug and Miss Spider are sure that James can get them out of their predicament with the sharks. James proposes getting the peach airborne by tempting the seagulls overhead, using the Earthworm as bait, and then tying ropes made with the Silkworm's help around their necks. James has the confidence to tell his friend, the Earthworm, that he would not let the birds hurt him. Here, from an abused orphan, James is slowly turned into a hero.

CONCLUSION

The literary orphan is a recurring figure in children's books. Ann Alston holds that narratives about orphans, which include the orphan finding a family in the end, are a literary fashion (43). She further writes that the appeal of the orphan character is two-fold, as it works on both children and parents. To her, children relish the prospect of reading about the lifestyle of a character that does not fall under parental supervision and scrutiny, more so because the children know that the character will not meet a bad end (44). In the case of adults, Alston feels that the reminder of children's desire to be taken care of, to be told of their worth so that their self-doubts weaken, is essential to the security of the edifice that is the family (44), thus beneficial to be pointed out to the adults who are the pillars of this structure.

An orphan's family is not always conventional, mostly because it is formed after the fact of orphaning. James Henry Trotter finds family after his heart in a group involving a centipede, a grasshopper, a spider, an earthworm, a ladybird, a glowworm and a silkworm; all of whom befriend him, encourage him and teach him that he is worthy, much unlike the aunts he was saddled with. That is the real meaning of family; it is chosen by and established around the orphan character with bonds of friendship and care.

To Alison Kinney, the orphan serves a useful function in a story, that of a dramatic "shortcut to narrative tension" or a "narrative opportunity" ("Uses of the Orphan"). The orphaning creates adverse circumstances that push the orphan into leaving the sphere of all that is familiar and safe. Thus, facing peril, going on an adventure or a simple journey enables the development of the orphan child's character and identity, achieved through the medium of some form of understanding and self-belief that is generated during the character's efforts to overcome adversity.

Though faced with desertion, the literary orphans who are not crushed by their circumstances, writes Kinney, are liberated of their limitations and transform into something great, "They seize their birthrights by the hilt to become Arthur, the Once and Future King" ("Uses of the Orphan").

In children's books, literary orphanhood repeatedly creates narrative opportunities for orphan characters to transform into something greater than what they were. The literary orphans possess characteristics like courage in various forms, resourcefulness, ability to

learn and grow and make friends on individual merit. The rootless orphans may not always turn out to be royalty, but if they rise from the position of being underdogs, it may be because the readers of the children's books want to see them succeed. ■

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Simplifying English Language Teaching and Learning with Special Reference to the Verb

Naresh Kumar

Human beings have a very unique and distinct ability to express their feelings and messages in one or the other languages. So, great emphasis is given to teaching and learning of their local as well as foreign languages. And for attaining desired perfection in the target language, innovative methods are devised and practised. In this fast changing global scenario English has taken the centre stage, so teaching English as a second language has been witnessing great innovations for making language acquisition easier. As far as the method of teaching and learning of four language skills in English is concerned, it is based on three dimensions namely- Input, Output and Feedback. And for this, better understanding of English grammar is very much essential. To begin with the distinction between the basic structures of Hindi and English languages, the most central element of English grammar i.e. the verb has been classified with examples and very effective and practical *Penta Rules* have been devised and introduced for the learners who will take just five steps and confidently make verb/tense based editing with no guesswork.

Keywords: Acquisition, skills, structures, proficiency, grammar, action words, classification, Penta Rules

1. INTRODUCTION: One of the most prominent schools of the first half of the twentieth century, great American Philosopher, Psychologist and Educational Performer, John Dewey once remarked, "Language exists only when it is listened to as well as spoken. The learner is an indispensable Partner."

Human beings are different from other living beings, because of their unique characteristics of using one or the other language for expressing their feelings, emotions, messages and action plans as well. With the help of effective language skills, people have developed a system of communication which is based on various system/patterns of sound, vocabulary and sentence. In order to make social communication effective, everyone has to use effective language, guided by emotion, situations, ideas and goals. This desired level of effectiveness and much needed perfection in English as a second language (L-2)

can be attained through a well devised innovative plan of teaching and learning of its grammar, followed by its linguistic and phonetic aspects.

In this competitive, materialistic modern world, we have been living in, English has become a “lingua-franca”. Since, it has to play a pivotal role in acquiring global knowledge, its innovative and effective teaching has to be promoted or rather guaranteed. There is no doubt if it is done, it will surely help the foreign learners in their pursuit of acquisition of English as a second language.

Contrary to the Popular belief that the strong base of mother tongue or learners first language i.e. L-1, delays in acquisition of second language i.e. L-2. It is a proven fact that it would rather make the whole process of teaching and learning English as a second language simpler, easier and more interesting.

2. Three Elements of Second Language Acquisition:-

The learning centre of the University of North Carolina of Chapel Hill has defined learning language as a complex, time-intensive task supported by the great sense of dedication, persistence and hard-work. It has suggested these three key elements to learning a new language, called second language acquisition (SLA).

- a. The first is comprehensible input which is a fancy way of saying being exposed to (hearing or reading) something in the new language and learning to understand it.
- b. Comprehensible output is the second element and unsurprisingly, it means learning to produce (speak or write) something in the new language.
- c. The third element is review or feedback which basically means identifying errors and making changes in response.

Based on these three building blocks of language practice, the language skill can be summarized on the basis of three dimensions:

- (i) Input – Listening, reading, writing and understanding in the target language.
- (ii) Output - Speaking, writing and comprehending in the target language.
- (iii) Feedback—going back and learning from errors by identifying and correcting them.

It has also been stated that a fine balance among the four language learning activities viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing must be maintained for ensuring proper result oriented learning outcome. If any learner fails in following or observing any of these four essential activities, then other three activities shall fall apart behind. The same is applicable to teaching of English as second language which can be taught through harmonious blending of these four activities by the teacher who is the role model for the learners.

3. Four Essential Language Skills:

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in USA states that the following four language skills socially play very important role in attaining the proficiency level in English:

Reading: The ability to comprehend and interpret text at the age and grade appropriate level.

Writing: The ability to pen down the ideas at the age and grade appropriate level.

Listening: The ability to understand the language and instructions of the teacher, comprehend and extract information and follow the instructional discourse through which teachers provide information.

Speaking: The ability to use oral language appropriately any effectively in learning activities (schemas) peer tutoring, collaborative learning activities and question/answer sessions within the classroom and in social interaction within school.

It is a proven fact that every language has its own system of structures and English is not an exception to it. To understand it, the following basic structures of English and Hindi can be illustrated:-

4. Basic Structures of Hindi and English Languages:

(i) Basic Hindi structure

subject + Object + Verb (VP)

e.g. Ram 'Shatranj' 'Khelta hai'

S O V

(ii) Basic English Structure

subject + Verb (VP) + Object

e.g. Ram Plays Chess

S V O

These two basic structures of Hindi show that placement of verbs in Hindi and English languages vary due to the difference in their structural patterns. In order to get proficiency in English, knowledge of its verbs patterns, features and classification are desirable for every learner so its detailed study is can be supported with the details given hereunder.

5. English Verb And Its Features:

(i) The verb is the most central element in a typical English clause structure: S V O/C A. The verb is the central element in that:

(a) It is normally medial

- (b) It is normally obligatory
- (c) It cannot normally be moved to another position in the clause and
- (d) It helps to determine what other elements must occur

The position of the verb in a clause is in contrast with the position of the Adverbial, which is normally peripheral. It should, however, be mentioned that the distractions between central and peripheral is relative not absolute. In a sentence like:

I take milk in my breakfast 'take' is most central element whereas 'in my breakfast' is peripheral.

- (ii) The verb element in a clause is realized by the verb phrase (VP), which can be made up of one word or a group of words.

We have been living in this house for ten years.

The work would have been done by now.

- (iii) On the basis of their content (function) and forms, verbs are primarily divided as (a) full or lexical verbs, and (b) helping or auxiliary verbs. Full verbs are further subdivided as regular and irregular.

- (a) Lexical or full verbs

Lexical verbs form an open set. They are said to be regular when their second and third forms (past and past participle) can be predicated from the base form e.g. waste-wasted-wasted or play-played-played. Where such prediction are not possible, the verbs are said to be irregular e.g. run-ran-run or cut-cut-cut.

- (b) Helping or auxiliary verb form a closed system 'BE', 'have' and 'do' are said to be primary auxiliaries, and will, would, shall, should, can, could, may, might and must are said to be central modal auxiliaries 'used to' , 'ought to', 'need' and 'dare' are marginal modals.

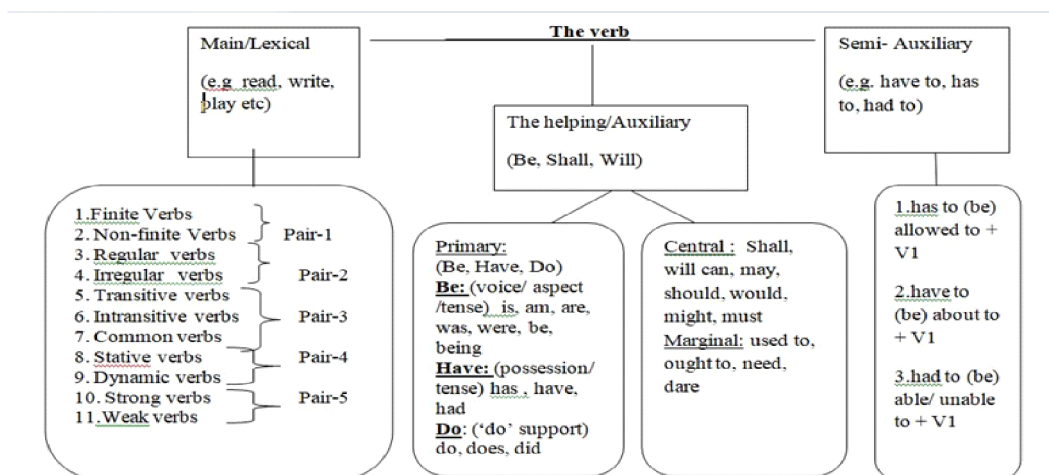
- (iv) The verb phrase carries different systems, prominent among them being the systems of tenses, aspect, mood, voice and transitivity. The system of tense account for the distinction between past and present aspect provides for the distinction between progressive and perfective. A verb phrase may be modal or non-modal, active or passive. A verb phrase may also be distinguished as transitive, intransitive or copular. These systems are realized by different forms of the verb, with and or without the help of the auxiliaries.

- (iv) The grammatical term Tense denotes verb forms used to express time. To express difference in time, we use different verb forms i.e. different tenses.

6. Classification of the verb:

Based on the features, roles and structures, verbs in English can broadly be classified

into two groups namely Main/ lexical verbs and Helping/ Auxiliary verbs. For more elaboration and clarity, the classification of verbs can be shown through the following diagram:



S. No. of Pair	Overall system of the pair	Types of Main verb	Identifical feature(S)	Examples
1.	Finiteness	(i) Finite Verbs	Active (Action Words)	Play, write, walk read, hit etc.
		(ii) Non-finite Verbs	Verbal nouns verbal Adjectives verbal Adverbs	Reading, Reading materils saw him reading (walking, walking stick, saw him walking.
2.	Conjugation	(i) Regular verbs	Predictable	Walk, Play, laugh etc.
		(ii) Irregular verbs	Unpredictable	Go, hit, rise etc.
3.	Transitively based on object	(i) Transitive verbs	With object	The <u>sings</u> songs (without songs question arises what is suny by him)
		(ii) Intransitive verbs	Without object	The dogs bark
		(iii) Common verbs	With and without object	We don't give up hope. Being bold. the doesn't give up

4.	Dynamism	(i) Stative verbs (Possession. Mental state, Emotion, Sense other states.)	No progressive use possible	I like stich things
		(ii) Dynamic verbs (Progressive verbs)	Progressive us possible	The <u>was running</u> in the park. The <u>has been</u> <u>running</u> this shop for years.
		(iii) Dynastative (Be, have, think taste etc.)	Commonalty used as statics & progressive	Be : This son is obedient this run is obeying him
				Have : She has a car, she is having good think Think : We think that he is not guilty She is thinking about her job prospects.

Polish born Great Polyglot Linguist of different languages, Michel Thomas once remarked, "If you know how to handle the verbs, you know how to handle the language. Everything else is just vocabulary."

Keeping in view the importance of the system of the verb in English Grammar, it is imperative here to discuss and explain the finer points of this grammatical entity. During classroom teaching and observation, it has been noticed that, students know the basic concept of present, past and future tenses with four patterns of verb phrases of each but even then, they commit mistakes during editing, error-finding and filling the blanks in the grammar exercises based on the verb. They get confused while deciding the verb phrase of a sentence or a clause or they do guesswork since they cannot decide that the verb phrase they are going to place in an expression is correct or incorrect.

6. Penta Rules: Just Five Steps for Excellence

In order to resolve this challenge and make better understanding of the usage of the verb as a whole, five simple but very practical and foolproof rules have been devised which can surely help each and every learner of English language to overcome all confusions, doubts and fear of mistakes while dealing with the verb. These five rules cover all variations of verbs/ verb phrases based on their super-segmental features of time aspect and mood. Though different grammar books have detailed chapters based on verb phrases and tenses, yet they do not have such handy *Penta Rules* which can practically help the learners/students

in deciding and determining the right choice of verb phrase for each expression, they are going to write, speak or edit. The purpose of introducing this mechanism of *Penta Rules* is to remove all confusion about the verb and its agreement with the subject in an expression. With the help of these *Penta Rules*, the young learners in schools will understand its different types and parts. Moreover, there will be better clarity about usage of the verb with the help of *Penta Rules* which are based on the principles of 3 Ps i.e. Pick, Polish & Place. These *Penta Rules* can be illustrated and explained with the help of the following 5 steps:-

Step-1. Deciding the tense in an expression based on the hinting words, situations or even factual numbers.

Time is a universal and non-linguistic concept with three divisions: Past, Present and Future. Time can be thought of as a line (theoretically of infinite length) on which is located, as a continuously moving point, the present moment. Anything ahead of the present moment is in the future, and anything behind it is in the past.

Time denoting words and figures		
Yesterday	Today	Tomorrow
1. Last/previous-day, week, months, year, once, once upon a time	Now, right now, at this hour/moment, nowadays, recently, current/this-year/month/week	Following/Next-day/week/ month/year/decade/century/ Millennium, 2025, 2197. Forthcoming, after this-day/ week/month/year / decade/century/millennium, Next Prime Minister/ Policy/Goal etc
2. Days/weeks/months/ years/decades –back/ago		
3. 1947/1997/2003/320BCE/ 709AD etc		
4. Mention of Historically renowned proper nouns like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel etc		
5. Historical monuments and incidents, WWI/II, Freedom struggle of India, Ban on Sati, Partition, Battle of Jhansi etc		

The above mentioned hinting words are indicative, not the exhaustive ones. This list can be enlarged by adding more hinting words which come across during practice. These words/ situations help in deciding the tense of the expression, if it is present, past or future. Once a tense is determined, another challenge sets in to decide its parts.

Suppose based on the concept of hinting word(s)/situation at this step i.e. Step 1, if the tense of the expression is decided as Present, then the challenge of deciding the type (Indefinite, Continuous, Perfect, Perfect continuous) of past tense occurs, in this situation Step 2 will surely help.



T-2	T-1 (Now)	T-3
(I)	All informative, factual, scientific, historical, geographical facts/details can be stated/described in Present Indefinite. e.g. - Sun rises in the East, Water boils at 100°C	
(II)	If something is happening which has no time reference and may continue after T-1, such action is described in Present Continuous. e.g. - They are studying in DU.	
(III)	If some ongoing action comes to its end just before touching the moment referred as T-1 which is the time of making of a statement, such actions are described in present perfect tense for being a perfective case. e.g. - He has recently completed his project.	
(IV)	If the ongoing action has some common or specific time reference for its duration with the help of 'for' and 'since', such action is described in Present Perfect Continuous Tense. e.g. - Hari has been trying for this post since 2018.	

In the same way based on hinting words/ situation, if past or future tense is decided for an expression made at T-2 or T-3, then the action word (Verb) in question will be framed based on the four parameters of divisions of time and aspect.

Step-3. Deciding the sequence of tenses based on the following three rules which determine the tenses of the sentences/clauses in connected expressions:-

Rule i- If principal clause of a compound or a complex sentence in present or future tense, then the other following coordinate or subordinate clause may be in any of the three Tenses. The reference/situation will help in determining the tense and/or its variety.

eg- Shivani says that Mohan is her friend/ was her friend /will be her friend.

But if the context is slightly changed with another clause or sentence, then this Multiple Choice will get restricted.

eg-Shivani says that Mohan was her friend since she does not like a cheater like him.

(The context of Mohan as a cheater has ruled out the possibility of agreement of the clauses like-....that Mohan is/was her friend.

Rule ii- If Principal clause is in the past tense, the other following claus(s) will be in the past tense

eg- Teacher told his students that he would take extra class on Sunday

Rule 3- If Principal clause is in the past tense but another clause has some scientific/ universal/ general facts, then such clause will be only in Present Indefinite Tense.

eg- The ancient scientists proved that the earth revolves around the sun.

STEP 4- Determining the Voice of the sentence/ clause based on the concept of doer or deed based subject.

Based on Steps 1, 2, 3 above, one can decide the tense (Past, Present, Future) and its type (Indefinite, Continuous, Perfect, Perfect continuous) but even then one cannot finally decide the correct verb phrase in an expression without determining its voice since active and passive verb phrases are based on the subject and object in a sentence respectively hence voice of the sentence should be determined before picking, polishing and placing it in a sentence.

eg- His book _____ (publish) last year. Ans. was published

His book _____ (publish) before he publically _____ (announce) about it.
Ans. had been published, announced

Next sequel of his book _____ (announce) by the Author at the releasing ceremony of his recent book. Ans. will be announced

The above mentioned sentences show that a particular action word i.e. the verb agrees actively with its real doer i.e. active subject and disagrees with deed based passive subject. Hence, active and passive voice in the same type of tense carry different verb phrase so the same should be analyzed and determined based on the action performed by the real doer or placement based object oriented subject.

STEP 5-Identifying the number and person of the subject before finalizing the verb phrase

Step 1-4 can surely help in deciding the tense and its type, according to sequence of tenses and the voice of a particular sentence but before finalizing the accurate verb phrase of a sentence, the number and person of the subject need to be determined. Since singular and plural subjects agree with different verb phrases, likewise first person singular pronoun 'I' does not follow the system of number like other singular pronouns in third person.

e.g. - I believe (not 'believes') in the spirit of brotherhood

I have (not 'has') no pending work.

I am (not 'is') working out for an alternative plan.

CONCLUSION: After following these five steps one by one, if a verb phrase is finalized for an expression/ sentence/ clause, it will be quite correct, leaving almost no room for any mistake, but if there is any confusion at any of these five steps then accuracy in picking, polishing and placing a verb phrase cannot be guaranteed. So, English language teaching and learning can be simplified by walking just Five steps in this direction. ■

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Exploration of Diasporic Literature in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

Karande Shahaji Rajaram

Kiran Desai, the daughter of Anita Desai, is an Indian-born American author who has adopted her mother's literary talents. She is one of the brightest imaginative writers of modern India. She is a well-known Indian English Novelist who occupied an exclusive place among the modern Indian Writers in English. Kiran Desai is an Indian diasporic writer. She presents Indians as heroes in her novels. Her novels usually describe Indian immigrants who fight to settle in an unfamiliar country generally America. She won the Booker prize award for her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. In this novel, Anita Desai discusses the hardships faced by the migrants between the homes and abroad, in that way developing a search for identity. The novel is written in Indian background which deals with the sarcastic madness of Indians for the West. As a novelist, Kiran Desai is more concerned in the internal countryside of the mind than in political or social realities. Kiran Desai as a diasporic writer exposes all the diasporic fundamentals like immigration, assimilation, marginalization, integration, nostalgia, alienation, hybridization, and imperialism, in her works. This research paper attempts to explore the diasporic literature in *The Inheritance of Loss*.

Keywords: *Diaspora, assimilation, immigration, marginalization, integration, nostalgia, alienation, hybridization, and imperialism.*

Introduction:

English literature which has now become broader in its scope refers to kinds of literature from the different cultures around the world. The people from India living in foreign countries speak out their inner voice, the psychological struggle they undergo living in a place where they felt the thought process, culture, language, society differs from that of theirs including the colour of skin. We find the feelings of insecurity, separation, loss of identity compromise, adjustment and struggle between two and more cultures in many of the Diasporic writing. The word "Diaspora" has been derived from the Greek word 'Diasperio', which means "to disperse" or "to scatter". The term refers to the scattered,

international location of the ethnic or cultural groups. Basically, it is related to the Jewish historical experience. It also implies a dispersion, scattering or decentralization of national or religious groups living outside their homeland but maintaining their cultural identity.

P. K. Nayar in *A Short History of English Literature* writes, “the problems of dual locations and dual roots which thematize the works of diasporic writers”(417). It brings out various concepts concerned with the diasporic literature, such as expatriate, integration, hybridization, immigration, and imperialism.

Definition of “Diaspora”: Diaspora is simply defined as the displacement of a community into another geographical and cultural region. It is related to the constructed and transnational nature of identity formation. In literature, diaspora means the voluntary or compulsory movement of people from their homelands into new areas before, during and even after colonization. Diaspora examines questions of how to characterize otherness in a text, how to respond to the other. It also examines the question of how to bring the concept of otherness to tolerate the experience of reading. Diaspora states to the spreading of people from their homeland due to force, slavery, labour, through dismissal or voluntary emigration in search of shelter, or of better living abroad.

Diasporic writing pampers in homesickness along with a bold acceptance of a new homeland. In modern times, writers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka have migrated to America, Britain and the West Indies. They declare their diasporic identity and confirm their hybridity to use Homi Bhabha’s term “Diaspora”. Edward Said highlights two facets connected with “Diaspora”. The first is ‘filiation’ that means an inborn relation with the motherland and the second one is ‘affiliation’, which means an adjustment in the ethos of the new country.

Diaspora has progressed during the times, recalling its connections with the homeland. It has also evolved its continuities and discontinuities during its encounter with the refinement of the host country and its ongoing change at the social, economical, cultural, and political stages. Thus, a diaspora exists when those people, living far from home, forge some sort of community with each other and maintain a relationship (real or otherwise) with their homeland. Narrative depictions of diaspora societies are in immediate requirement of ethically well-versed analysis.

Generally, Diasporic literature concerns with isolation, homesickness, existential rootlessness, and identity crisis and search for identity. It also concerns with the matters related to fragmentation of cultures. In the past few years, Diasporic literature has engraved a place for itself in Indian Literature. Diasporic literature commenced with the ejection of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

We find that the feelings of insecurity, separation, loss of identity compromise, adjustment and struggle between two and more cultures in many of the Diasporic writing. The Diasporic writers tried assigning their views through writings rather they took comfort in writings and won compliments for their work. Many Indian writers like Bharati Mukherjee,

Salman Rushdie, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry are dealing with diasporic consciousness and discovering its many problems through literature in English. Kiran Desai, the daughter of Anita Desai is an Indian-born American author who has adopted her mother's literary talents. She is one of the brightest imaginative writers of modern India. David Rubin rightly points out that Kiran Desai is exclusive among British and Indian Novelists in her tranquil. Rushdie focuses that the distance between foreign and the motherland may act as a stimulator which makes emigrants nostalgic. *Inheritance of Loss* deals with painful and suffering emotions of immigrants caught between two countries, two, cultures that infuse into the immigrants' "loss of inheritance".

The story of the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* begins with the residents of a town in the north-eastern Himalayas, namely, a disillusioned old magistrate, his granddaughter Sai, his cook and their rich variety of relatives, friends and associates. The novel turns about two diverse domains of the globe. On the one side, we have the hills of Kalimpong, and on the other side, we have the United States of America. There is a massive change in the cultural form and thought procedure in these two. One of the most active ideas which the novelist highlights is the interface between unlike cultures. Kiran Desai explores the disasters and the bewilderment in the formation of cultural, countrywide, and dialectal identity.

The plot of the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* revolves around two central characters. They are Biju and Sai. Biju lives in the United States of America as an illegal migrant who is trying to lead a new life there. The novel begins with an orphan, an Indian teenage girl called Sai, who is involved with her maths tutor, Gyan, but their affair does not get materialised as Gyan falls in with a group of cultural Nepalese revolutionaries. People of diasporic experiences have to encounter identity crisis at different levels. Migrants also have to familiarize themselves in a new culture in a new place.

Biju's life in New York is the most powerful. He is a teenage boy, who is not much educated, and belongs to a poor family. His father wants to see his son in the most flourishing part of the world, the United States of America. His philosophy has been influenced by the lowliness complex as colonised one.

To increase the cultural and material affluence, Biju decides to migrate to America. At Embassy, Biju joins a mob of Indians who are struggling to reach the visa counter at the United States. His experience at Embassy goes on:

"Biggest pusher, first place; how self-contented and smiling he was;I'm civilized, sir, ready for the U.S., I'm civilized, mam. Biju noticed that his eyes, so alive to the foreigners and went dead." (34)

Biju faces a sequence of challenges. He just arrives in the isolated world as a migrant, as an outcast. His dream of a protected future is flattened by the severe reality. Biju's daily life in America replicates his intuition of being an outcast. He felt a need for

village life. This was his first understanding when Biju became nostalgic. He felt that his own nation owes something superior to him than the developed and prosperous America. Biju understands the fight of the Indian community in the USA. He comes to know that the picture is not as glowing as it seems. A quote from the novel would highlight this:

“Lipping out and back on the street.

It was terrible what happened to Indians in a foreign country and nobody knew but other Indians out of the country.

It was a dirty little rodent secret.” (138)

Biju dreams of his nation, of the peace and ease of his native village. A deep sense of patriotism stimulates him to return to India. The novelist Kiran Desai exposes his feelings:

“Here he was, on his way home, without name or knowledge of the American president,....
..... without even hearing about any of the tourist sites – no statue of Liberty” (314).

Father Booty is another character like Biju who is a Swiss national. He goes through this kind of isolation after a certain period in exile. He opens a Swiss-style dairy and produces dairy products. The crisis moment came in Father Booty’s life when his philosophy has started to be changed. Father Booty becomes nostalgic and powerfully feels for his homeland, Switzerland. People start to carry double identity when they have been living in diaspora from generation to generation, after a certain period.

Even Kiran Desai in her novel brings out the positive and negative experiences in exile. Biju faces a sense of dishonour and alienation in America. This realization of humiliation helps him to build a new and strong feeling for India. Before leaving India, his mind was engaged with the American dream. It is carried throughout the novel, that experiences in exile always welcome multi flattened losses in life. Though the title of the novel predicts emptiness feeling with the word “loss” but the novel ends with the indication of optimism.

Jemubhai Popatlal Patel, one of the major characters stands for the highly complex identity with full of restlessness, loneliness, and sense of displacement under the influence of foreign culture. Jemubhai, a student of Law, at Cambridge University in England faces an identity crisis because of racial discrimination. Maltreatment given by British people, reluctant behaviour of the room owner Mrs Rice, who calls Jemubhai as “James”, the target of laughter of British people, Jemubhai develops an identity which is full of inferiority complexes and disgust against the British. Jemubhai carries some aspect of cultural identity as the meal is not enough for him that is why his half-empty stomach thinks and reminisces tearfully about his family which is in ‘Piphit’ in India, as:

“...his half-empty stomach thinks tearfully of his family and Piphit who taught him as worthy a hot dinner as the queen of England.”(39)

After assuring a powerful career in Law, Jemubhai returns to India with drastic transformations by carrying hybrid identity. His failure to recognize his wife Nimi, his rejection of his family, his hunting animals, eating toast for breakfast, pouring all his love with a dog called Mutt than any human beings show his deportment more or excessive than the foreigner one. When he asks for his lost dog Mutt to a person, he (person) murmurs against him as:

“saala... What does he think? We are going to look for his dog.” (289)

She faces ill-treatment of American to Indian like calling “Nigger”. Though she knows the black, hidden side of America told by Bikram uncle, she always asks the same question:

“Will I marry a prince from a far-off magical land?” (56)

Her depiction at the ending of the story as:

“The snow has covered my own hands so they are no longer brown but white, white, white... “(56)

Here, white symbolizes Jayanti’s strong passion for diasporic complex a white woman, an American. Thus, her diasporic complex identity is brought out very beautifully. The novel deals with culture, change and multiculturalism. One of the main themes of the novel is displacement in families. The novel also exposes the political disturbance in India and the instabilities of the unbalanced political situation widespread in India at that point of time. The novel also explores the inflexible caste and class system that occurs in India.

Conclusion:

Finally, I would like to conclude that, the diasporic identities are not fixed, stable and permanent, but rather a matter of great complexity, ambivalence, heterogeneity, and fluidity. In the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* Kiran Desai portrays distressed characters. Those characters are different types of exiled people who are experiencing the pain of exile in America. Their attainments and hindrances exist side by side. In these cases, they face an identity crisis after a certain period in their life an outcast. The novel *The Inheritance of Loss* appears not so much through the environmental scene as it does through the emotive locations of the characters. It deals with the anti-thesis of peacetime and fierceness. There are battles of interests. The spirits of love and disloyalty are portrayed in the novel. The novelist’s individual experiences of travelling, the brilliant portrayal of the characters, the incidents on the real-life and beautiful description of nature have all contributed to the creation of the novel. ■

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The Women Characters of Shashi Deshpande: A Study

Ashikur Rahman

The main purpose of this paper is to focus on the concept of ineffectuality on the part of woman. Regardless she is a mother, wife, daughter or a sister, our society always wants to see her passive, cowardly and weak. With the help of Shashi Deshpande's novels it has been tried to focus on the transformation towards which our community is moving but still there are miles to cover to this changed world where a woman gets respect and treated commonly with men. Shashi Deshpande maintains an extraordinary position among the modern and upcoming Indian English writers. Women starving for love, affection, understanding and respect is the main theme of her novels. The crucial battle is between the traditional rules and her personal satisfaction and happiness leads to defeat and quitting. According to Shashi Deshpande, any woman regardless married and have so many responsibilities have all the right to live her life as she wants with all the due respect, happiness, satisfaction and can develop her qualities and can fulfil her dreams.

Keywords: *Indian Women, Traditional Rules, Male dominated society, Feminism, Shashi Deshpande*

It was the year 1983 when the writer Shashi Deshpande was born in Dharwad, India. She is the second daughter of famous dramatist and Sanskrit professor, Shriranga. Shashi Deshpande graduated in Economics from Mumbai at the age of fifteen. After this she gained a degree in Law from Bangalore. She gave her primal years of her marriage in the care of her two young sons, and simultaneously took a course in journalism and worked for a magazine as well for some time. In the year 1970 she began her writing career seriously. Shashi started her career writing short stories which later got developed in writing novels. 'The Legacy' which was published in the year 1972 was her first collection of short stories and that was also prescribed for graduate students in the University of Columbia.

Shashi Deshpande has completed her M.A. in English Literature and lives with her husband who is a pathologist by profession and both lives in Bangalore. She is appreciated as the most talented contemporary Indian women writers in English. Since, 1980's Shashi Deshpande is the most versatile Indian English writer and a winner of Sahitya Academy

award. Individuality of educated Indian middle class women has been explored in the novels and short stories of Shashi Deshpande. Indian women who is trapped between the male dominated society and her own aspirations has been displayed in her novels in a very sensible manner. Domestic situations and the relationship of man and woman within marriage is the main focus in her novels.

Shashi Deshpande writes about people around her and not about politics or poverty of India. Characters of her novels are so real that we feel them like our own family or people we know. Therefore the novels and stories she writes match with the reality of life of people. Her stories are full of sympathy, humanity and understanding especially of the women. Her stories want women to remain herself as a normal human being rather than playing a role of daughter, wife or a mother.

Female writers faced a lot many struggles to put their voice placed in society in the nineteenth century. From the past couple of years many historians, experts and even women have worked hard to change this common feeling of bitterness in reference to women writers. Stand has been taken by the women writers expressing their uneasiness to several factors of life identical to that of their male fellows, the social unfairness, and search of identity. It is assumed, accepted and inevitably claimed that the appearance of women in the tentative field either from the domestic or professional point of view it is unquestionable and irreversible.

Stories also reveal the pain and problems of women imprisoned between male domination and custom at the same time her self-respect, identity and freedom. Out of all contemporary Indian writers in English, Shashi Deshpande appears as a renowned name. However, at the beginning she started writing short stories, she also writes four children's books and six novels. She is the expert of this type of writing is shown from this collection. Her English is simple and natural, and are without any craftiness. Her stories are mostly women-centered, women who are imprisoned in male-dominated society, women who is a daughter, a wife and a mother, a woman who is suffering loneliness and failure in life. Shashi Deshpande does not call herself a feminist and does not have any objective to become a promoter of hindrances of middle class Indian women. Her stories and novels presents reality of the society the way it is, beyond any clear censorious claim on the way it is obliged to be. Women characters in her stories are much stronger as compared to male character. Male character when compared to women males are weak and powerless. In spite of high education levels and economic independence women are treated as less powerful than men even in modern times were shown in her stories.

Woman is allowed to gain education and do a job but is not allowed to go out of traditional framework and how a woman give her life as a mother and wife is showed in her stories. Women's educations and goals do not allow them to fit in the socially established channel which outcomes as their isolation and detachment is proved by her stories. After reading her stories young women of current generation can identify themselves with the

characters and can feel comfortable. She also writes about well-known mythological characters like Amba and Bhima, disputes of Draupadi and Kunti from the Mahabharat are also refigured and reinterpreted in her stories apart from the stories of common woman. The feelings and emotions of women are illustrated from the point of view of men in Epics and Vedas as they were written by men, but the feeling of women can be understood by women only in this situation. Shashi has tried to controvert with representatives present in mythology and has tried to display the emotional disturbance of women of our Epics and Vedas through her stories. Stories of Deshpande can be classified as the as the mirror that shows the practicality after analyzing the defeated condition of a women of Indian society and the stories that heal the position after drawing the women's valuable insistence of herself. But any women moving from the conventional norms are not seen in her stories. The relationship of mother, daughter and wife are generally seen in her stories in short family centered stories. The importance is given to the problems faced by the women as a wife, daughter and a mother. She talks about how important is the human relationships are and also says that being a mother or a wife is not a burden but when there is a lot of pressure on a women with lot of rules and regulation then it becomes a burden for her. Although she writes about woman's suffering in a male dominated society, but does not like her to be called as feminist writer as it sound very narrow sense of words. Deshpande does not want to show men as only wrongdoers and women as only victims, rather she is just concerned about human relationships. She do not want herself to be called as a women writer and her work as woman work, but in her thoughts she think herself as a feminist. Shashi Deshpande wants her to be known as established writer. In one of her interview she said that I am a feminist but do not anyone to call her a feminist writer, her main focus is on women, but there is a difference in the way of looking them as human beings and not as just women who always suffers and she writes about the issues faced by woman at personal and communal levels.

Shashi Deshpande tries to display woman of modern India and in search of meaning of herself and the relationship that are primary to women. Her novels deal with the journey of self-identity of a woman. The complicacies of a relationship in which man and woman are involved especially in the frame of marriage. The character named **Jaya**, as shown by Shashi Deshpande in "*That Long Silence*" is not a silent sufferer. A woman plays different roles in her life as a mother, daughter and wife but has never been able to claim her own identity. In "*The Binding Vine*" **Mira** hated the way her mother use to surrender herself to her husband and do not have her own identity. Women associated to middle class family and their inner world is narrated in her novels (Bhatt, 2012). Feminist nature of Shashi Deshpande is not pessimistic or dishonest. Only after analyzing significant problem of a woman, Deshpande goes beyond view point of feminism. For her feminine appeal to woman's problems she was known to be sensible and natural person. In '*Roots and Shadows*', of Shashi Deshpande the state of character **Indu** represents the larger situation of woman in conventional Indian society where the new concept of western education, economic independence and globalization have completely shaken the roots of old Indian culture and

social values. Shashi Deshpande's positive and broad-minded side can be seen from her novels where she has represented woman as a person who use to get involved in her problems rather than getting detached Fathima (2012). All the novels of Shashi Deshpande are dealing with the problems of the women. Even for the love and sex the women of modern India is in the condition of total confusion. Today's women always suffers due to the imbalance between the expectations and demand of the tradition as she has developed different attitude towards the life where there is sometime rejection of tradition and betraying the same, and in this condition it is only women who suffers, and she questions and looks for the answers. In Shashi Deshpande's novel *'In The Dark holds no Terrors'* the character of **Sarita (Saru)** and her feeling of homelessness is a confirmation of her sense of isolation. She leaves her home twice in the novel in an attempt to get free, when victimized by Manu. Shashi Deshpande is competent in dealing to give full answers of the unrealistic attitude in the aspirational manner which is very important for any educated modern women to live a happy life (Rajwanshi, 2016).

Deshpande has not been much concern to the current aspect of the modern educated earning women, their arrangements and disturbances, rather her novels deal with the troubles and struggle of Indian middle class women and responses given by women by her silence which the mode of her communication. *"The Binding Vine"* was published in 1993 is a novel with a difference. Contrary to the other women character, the character of this novel **Urmila** has an encouraging and supportive family, she loves her husband and is happy being married to him. In this novel she decides to fight for another women's battle. In novel *"That Long Silence"* **Jaya** and husband moves from cozy and comfortable house to a small and old fashioned house. Jaya getting confined in an old house becomes an introvert. Problems and struggles of educated Indian middle class women is the backbone of stories of Shashi Deshpande and she has very finely dealt with the same in her novels *Kanchana* (2016). Social world of complicated relationships have been presented in the novels of Shashi Deshpande. In the course of their life women's are the sufferers of the gender difference. Personality of a women is blocked by male portion of the family but also by the female section. Their male-controlled mind set always overcome their bluntness, kindness and revolution countering unfair treatment towards them. In novel *"Matter of Time"* Husband leaves his home and wife Sumi with three teen aged daughters, Sumi then moved to her paternal home with her daughters but the same is not liked by her mother as she thinks that after marriage husband's house is the only house for a woman. In this male-dominated society even the well-educated modern women are getting victimized (Ashalata and Usha, 2014). Shashi Deshpande has made a common world in which a genuine circumstances of the inner view of the Indian women strongly displayed through the means of illusions and beliefs. How man has taken the world in himself deeply and actively is shown by the illusion. It articulates the fact in a meaningful image. Many traditional worlds have smashed to create a new world from their point of view for the women writers like Shashi Deshpande. The misconception used by Shashi looks appropriate to her vision of life. In novel *"The Dark Holds No Terrors"* in this novel character **Sarita** is a career women who in the daytime

is a doctor and at night is a trapped animal in the hands of her husband. Overall, it is woman's view point that is showcased but there is barely any reference of emotionalizing and overemphasizing of woman's problems (Jaishree, 2018).

Shashi Deshpande understands how tradition of our community is narrow-minded and partial against women. Hence, she is famous for constructing powerful women supporters who reject to get dominated by male of the society and face their life with bravery and power. In "*That Long Silence*" **Jaya** comes up as a conquering new woman who has learned the means to overcome cruelty and ultimately utilize her powers and abilities not only for personal fulfilment. Freedom brings in commitment as well as loneliness. Hence, human beings seriously want freedom when encircled by people but require people to get free from lonely life (Panda, 2017).

Woman is under domination at any stage of life, it may be under her father, her husband or her son. Marriages are known to be the transfer of dominance from father to husband. The enslavement of conventional marriage are strong and there is scope of avoidance due to which woman looks for support and shelter in enchantments, despotism and mental enslavement which usually leads to physical weakness or deaths. The social fundamental values that has been participating in the constancy of woman concealment ensures that the unrecognized sufferings of a woman becomes a part of their lives and they become the silent sufferers all over there life. In "*The Binding Vine*" Kalpana the second important character is a rape victim but belonging from a poor family her mother wants to close the whole matter (Sekhar, 2016).

Family is an institute in itself, everything starts here and anything that occurs outside the family embodies in the family. The homely environment totally melodious and blessed by the standard ethics of the community is constantly seen with conflicts, dictatorships and misbehavior. In "*Roots and shadows*" Indu got stuck between the old age traditions and her own individual views. The complicated nature of human relations is examined regardless it is inside the family or outside the family in social margin. Deshpande created her own stories that consist of various moves of wrongdoings and crimes that bring in the disputes of man, woman, material, feelings, sex, ethics, individual and social. Hence, the steps of reconstructing and destruction remains in the novel in a story form (Saravanan and Agalya). Male-dominated community the presence of a women is drained and restricted and this is very well known to her supporters. Her supporters searching for individuality inside the married life were captured between tradition and modernity. The readers are left in no doubt after reading her novels that presents a real picture of a women as mother, daughter and a wife who are in search of their identity as well as sexuality. In "*The Binding Vine*" **Urmi** has mentioned about her mother-in-law **Mira** who is a victim of marital rape, and is stuck in an unhappy marriage (Lakshmi and Arvinda, 2017).

Shashi Deshpande is not a complete feminist, she tries to feature established rebellious ideas regarding depiction of female voice and fight for their individuality. Shashi

Deshpande's "*That Long Silence*" **Jaya**, the character, is a well-read woman, blessed with literary sensibility though nurtured in silence. Jaya is a modern, convent educated, fluent English speaking woman and a creative writer who symbolizes the emerging new woman conscious of her status in the society. She also kindly give stress on the requirement to become constructive and take steps towards attaining identity and create better existence in this modern world Sundariand Kanitha (2017).

It is love and understanding with the help of which we can battle with the problems of life at the same time sorrows of her novels gives us anger and shocks. Novels of Shashi Deshpande makes us understand that diversity is absolutely basic to interventionism. Topics of her novels are many a times conflicts, not logical even though disburser other registered accords both are victims and agents, agents who bring a fetch a transformation in the conventional picture of womanhood. In "*The Dark Holds No Terrors*" the character **Sarita** occupies the centrist position because she is financially more secure and can fend for the family. But Manufinds it difficult to occupy a peripheral position (Bakayaraj, 2017). It is not a common women's voice but an intellectual voice of her that is Shashi Deshpande through her stories and novels. Western audience is not catered to magic realism, or concession to marketability, no themes etc. It has been three decades since when she is writing about human difficulties. Common and ordinary people who we might meet on the streets and our society is the main part of her novels. In "*Roots and Shadows*" she has displayed a series of girl-children, where each girl faces a different problem within the family circle. They are Mini, Akka and Indu. It is human being that is behind her characters but it is true that she writes mainly about women and her difficulties of life Bakayaraj (2017).

From the study it can be concluded that the woman that Shashi Deshpande wants to present in her novels is different from the one who is suppressed, silent and struggler in various phases of life. She want women to break their silence and fight for their identity and respect in this male dominated society. Women are intelligent who can fulfill their dreams and goals and can build homes by their strength and power and pursue their career at the same time. They can remove all their doubts, confusions and misconception and can see the truth from their journey of self-examination and self-discovery. Supporters who shape their life as per their potential is tried to be presented in the novels of Shashi Deshpande.

A female supporter who has tried for find out their identity and individuality and has ultimately reached to the resolution and has become the voice of modern women is also shown in the novels of Deshpande. Comprehensively Deshpande's novels present a picture of Indian middle class women who is bounded between the relationships it may be as a wife, a mother, a daughter or sister. Shashi Deshpande's novels shows that she is very sensitive and is totally understand the imbalance between male and female in the community. Her novels mainly bother about women's fight for herself. After being involved in so many relationships like a mother, a wife, a sister a women feel burden on herself as she is trapped between the traditional rules and not been able to live her with freedom and not able to

fulfill her dreams and goals. Every person on this earth is equal and should get all the rights to live their life on their own rules and regulations. The image of women's inner self is the main and powerful point of Shashi Deshpande's novels. Her supporters are those women who are under pressure to find their identity and are constantly in hunt to explain them. In the past it was difficult for women to put her voice in the society, but now she has learned how to create her own individuality, how to fulfill her dreams even after so many responsibilities of life being a mother, daughter or a wife. In her interviews Shashi Deshpande have mentioned that she do not want herself to be known as a feminist writer, even though she writes mainly about women's suffering in the male-dominated society. Her stories recommend that common life of Indian middle class women are full of compromises. Therefore they develop the tendency of self-withdrawal. Several relationships and dimensions of family relations have been seen in one of the survey of her novels, there are daughter and mother, daughter and father, sister and brother, and in-laws, but the main focus is on husband and wife because that is the base and platform of any family and it is that relationship from where new relations start and give a shape to the family. There are joint families where there are uncle and aunty, their children and other relatives all these relationships are pictured in a very sensible and practical manner. The supporters of Shashi Deshpande are not very courageous but they are women who are in trouble who are trying to put their voice in society and trying to get their identity and respect. The society which is male-dominated and male-controlled are pictured in her novels where women are afraid of their husbands and other male members of the society. Society where preference to sons are more than given to daughters. Shashi Deshpande do not want to show men as only criminals or villains and women as only sufferers or victims rather she is just bothered about the relationships and the love and respect that is required from both the sides male and female. ■

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Girish Karnad's *Tale-Danda*: A Stigma of Caste and Religious Consciousness of Contemporary Society

Deepak Kumar Sonkar

Tale-Danda (1990) is amongst the best known plays of Girish Karnad. It received much critical acclaim for being Karnad's first play that deals explicitly with the influence of the larger social and intellectual milieu on individual action. This historical play serves as a kind of political allegory of contemporary problem of casteism in India. There are close resemblances in the situations and social rivalries of the two periods; however, the events in *Tale-Danda* are reminiscent of a great stigma on the forehead of Indian society with regard to the caste system handed down from generation to generation.

Keywords: critical, historical, milieu, political, allegory, contemporary, casteism, stigma.

Segregation in India is systematized, sanctioned and accepted. Karnad has been a critic of segregation caused by caste and religion. He publicly criticizes L. K. Advani's Rath Yatra, the demolition of Babri Masjid and the subsequent riots. These issues, in *Tale-Danda*, are easily reflected in *Sharanas* threat to smash the naked idol in Jain Mandir in order to build a temple of Lord Shiva. Karnad wrote *Tale-Danda*, as he says in an interview, when he returned from U.S.A. and found that "India was in turmoil over the Mandal-Mandir issues. The society was being polarized and the country was moving in a dangerous direction. *Tale-Danda* is a solid issue-oriented 'literary' text that tries to address issues of religious beliefs that create social and political crises." (1)

Girish Karnad's play *Tale-Danda* may be described as a Thesis play. It deals with a social, political or religious crises with a didactic and, perhaps, radical purpose. It sets out to call people's attention to the shortcomings of a society, and very probably, offers a solution. It is a play dealing with the problem of hypergamous marriage which is considered to be sacrilegious according to Hindu religion. The play may also be called a history play, because it is based on recorded historical events which took place eight hundred years ago in the city of Kalyan. The play deals with the few weeks of the rise and fall of *Sharana* movement during which the vibrant prosperous society of Kalyan plunged into violence and bloodshed when Sheelavanta, a cobbler boy, marries Kalavati, a Brahmin girl.

Though the 'Mandir' and the 'Mandal' movements might have inspired Karnad to write *Tale-Danda*, the theme of the play is neither the 'Mandir' movement nor the 'Mandal' movement as is mentioned by Karnad in the "Preface" to the play. The 'Mandir' movement alludes to the Hindu-Muslim riots; and the 'Mandal' movement refers to the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report by the Government of India relating to the Other Backward Castes which spurted out turmoil and unrest among the upper caste Hindus. Instead, the theme of *Tale-Danda* is the marriage of a Brahmin girl with an untouchable boy which spurted out violence and bloodshed in the city of Kalyan.

Tale-Danda literally means death by beheading (*Tale*: Head. *Danda*: Punishment). Offering one's head, either on completion of a vow or in penitence, was a common practice in medieval Karnataka. Basavanna often uses the word to express his outrage at a particularly unpleasant situation or accusation, to mean something like 'May my head roll' or 'I offer my head.' Introducing *Tale-Danda*, Karnad writes in the "Note" to the play:

During the two decades ending in A. D. 1168, in the city of Kalyan, a man called Basavanna assembled a congregation of poets, mystics, social revolutionaries and philosophers. Together they created an age unmatched in the history of Karnataka for its creativity, courageous questioning and social commitment. Spurning Sanskrit, they talked of God and man in the mother-tongue of the common people. They condemned idolatry and temple worship. Indeed, they rejected anything 'static' in favour of the principle of movement and progress in human enterprise. They believed in the equality of sexes and celebrated hard, dedicated work. They opposed the caste system, not just in theory but in practice. This last act brought down upon them the wrath of the orthodox. The movement ended in terror and bloodshed. (2)

Dealing with the ugly aspect of caste and religious intolerance during the social and political crises created out of Mandir-Mandal issues, Karnad says, "When people all round us are slaughtered in the name of temple, I hear echoes from those times long past. It seems eight hundred years solved no problems. We are back exactly where we started." (3) Retrospecting the history in its sordid prospect, he projects the mystery of caste and religion in the Indian social dynamics. The play is written on the backdrop of growing fundamentalism and communal frenzy in India. But contextualizing the contemporaneity in history, he presents an individual's endeavour towards communal integration during an epoch of violence. The play responds to a later movement in the political evolution of India as nation, the decisive shift in the late 1980s from secular to religious (specially Hindu) nationalism.

Throughout the play, Karnad has presented the contemporary inter-religious (Hindu-Muslim) conflict in the intra-religious (Brahmin-untouchable) conflict of the 12th century history by interlocking movements of transgression and punishment. Dramatising the social elements, revolutionary concepts, humanistic faith and caste factors in totality as historical materials he has deconstructed history in the corrective doubts. Aparna Bhargava Dharwadkar right remarks:

The play's historical narrative centres on the twelfth-century *Virasaiva* movement of religious reform and protest, led by the poet-saint Basavanna, which flourished for a time in the city of Kalyan (in present-day Karnataka) under the patronage of King Bijjala, but ended in violence when the new community translated its opposition to caste into practice by arranging a marriage between a Brahmin girl and an untouchable boy. The focus on the hierarchical disunity of Hinduism, Karnad foregrounds the problem of caste and relegates the devotional, mystical, and poetic features of the movement to the background. (4)

Though Karnad has not prescribed any magic balm for the ills and evils of caste inferiorisation and religious marginalisation, he has conveyed his theoretical notion in favour of Aristotelian equality and Gandhian tolerance for the sustenance of the Indian nation. Highlighting caste, class and social awakening, Karnad analyses these elements to solve India's quintessential problems.

Karnad times the action of the play in 1168 A.D. and depicts a communal struggle in the city of Kalyan in north Karnataka when King Bijjala was the founder ruler of Kalachurya dynasty. There were great scholars, poets and philosophers in Bijjala's court. Basavanna, the great scholar, saint-poet and philosopher was King's Treasury Officer who fought with other brilliant people for a casteless and classless society. These people shed their castes and got initiated into a new faith, *Sharana*, and became the devotees of Lord Shiva. The play lays emphasis on the love of humanity and brotherhood of man to accept human beings as human beings. People should give respect and social status to one another. One should not divide society and country into fragmentation on the basis of caste and religion. They talked about God in the language of common people. They condemned all the in-human traditions and believed in social and gender equality. Finally their movement ended in a disaster due to the marriage of a Brahmin to an untouchable boy which led to the destruction of the *Sharanas*. But in the play,

Girish Karnad seems to treat the Bhakti Movement as a reform movement. He seems to be inspired by the Western humanism which has developed since Renaissance. But the Bhakti Movements actually inspired by a kind of mysticism, since spirituality has been involved in it. Saints and rishis, earlier, saw God everywhere. So, it was a sort of mysticism. It was never a movement, it was a spiritual perception opposed to the hierarchy of the high and low practiced by the society, which has been an age-old spectacle in India. The saints of the Bhakti movement were not actually reformers, in the modern sense of the term. Theirs was a mystical movement, which had the implications of reform. It was not a reform movement. (5)

But Bijjala, though a victim of casteism and an admirer of *Sharanas'* philosophy, supports caste system like an orthodox Hindu. He finds caste essential for people's existence. He says, "In a casteless society, they will merely sputter about like a pile of fish on the sands

and die.” (6) Karnad shows that such dual mindedness is the reason that we have not eradicated this monster of caste which includes repulsion, hierarchy and hereditary specialization. The people of lower castes are treated as inferior. They are not even allowed to pass nearby an upper caste person. Under the leadership of Basavanna, the Sharanas were bent upon doing away with the curse of untouchability which is still considered as something sinful and curse-ridden in several parts of Post-Independence India. The problem of untouchability recurs again and again in the play. Two *Sharanas*- Jagadeva (a Brahmin by birth) and Mallibomma (a Taner by birth)- are very intimate friends. Mallibomma is greatly hesitant while entering his house. He enters after Amba’s assurance that she will purify the house later on. Even when Jagadeva threatens his mother not to set his foot in the house until Malli comes with him, his mother invites Malli to her house reluctantly. It is evident from their dialogue in Act I Scene I :

Amba: Come in, Malli.

Mallibomma (explaining): You see, Ma’am...I’m the son of Taner, Kariya (Pause.)

Amba: My son won’t come into the house unless you do. So come in, please. I’ll have the house purified later. (7)

The entrance of an untouchable in the house of a Brahmin was an act of impurity and hence purification of the house was needed in order to restore the sanctity of the house. What a miserable plight of the society in which a person was differentiated, cursed and hated not on the basis of his act but of his origin for which he was in no way responsible. The entrance of Malli into the house of Jagadeva was looked at by women, children and old men with a sense of surprise and utter disgust. It seemed as if ‘some kind of witchcraft’ was taking place.

An old woman, Guddevva is also opposed to the visit of untouchables to the house of Basavanna and that is why when he requests her to come to his house, she frankly says in Act I Scene III : “No, thank you. You collect all those low-caste people in your house, don’t you-even the untouchables? I’d rather not rub shoulders with them.” (8) When Basavanna comes to know about the marriage between Kalavati, a Brahmin girl and Sheelavanta, a cobbler’s son, he becomes serious and, as Karnad says, “His eyes suddenly fill with tears. He cannot speak. Kakkayya looks stunned, uncomprehending. A long, strange silence.” (9)

In the house of Basavanna, there assemble many *Sharanas* in connection with the engagement of Kalavati, about ten years old Brahmin, with Sheelavanta, about fifteen years old cobbler boy. The parents of the girl and the boy are Sharanas. Madhuvarasa, Kalavati’s father and a Brahmin by birth happily says, “We have the engagement ceremony tomorrow evening. You must all come.” (10) He says to Basavanna, “It’s evident you did not anticipate that your efforts would bear fruit so soon.” (11) The Sharanas feel happy because a Sharana boy is going to marry a *Sharana* girl. But they are unaware of the horror of this sacrilegious hypergamous marriage.

The marriage of Kalavati, a Brahmin girl and Sheelavanta, a cobbler boy signifies the marriage of two ideologies and so becomes the talk of the day. It proves to be a blow at the age old Varna System. But the “Caste in the hands of the orthodox has been a powerful weapon for persecuting the reforms and for killing all reform.” (12) The same weapon was used by the orthodox Brahmins in *Tale-Danda*. The violation of traditional fixity gives birth to horror and bloodshed. The reforms envisaged by Basavanna were blocked by Sovideva and others.

We thus see that Basavanna’s philosophy of life is much relevant to our contemporary society. Had Basavanna’s slow but effective process of social transformation successfully taken place, we would have found a better society to live in. But unfortunately Basavanna’s sincere efforts which had led to the emergence of the casteless society of the *Sharanas* had ultimately been reduced to nothing and they crumbled into the pages of history. The situation in contemporary era has not much changed. We are reminded of the famous observation of the German philosopher, Hegel, that the only thing we learn from history is that we do not learn any lesson from history and hence history repeats itself. ■

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Colonial Modernity and its Challenges: A Reading of Select Texts of Mamang Dai and Easterine Kire

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The term ‘modernity’ is an often discussed term in literature, history and critical studies. It should be noted that the process of modernization always involves in it the process of transformation along with the idea of development. This process always involves a shift from the traditional way of life to modern. Modernity has various facets and it has also influenced various societies. The cultures of North East have always come across various encounters. Sometimes these encounters leave positive impact on the cultural aspect and sometimes negative. Cultural survival always demands dynamism and adaptability to changing world without losing its essence. This paper is an attempt to shed light on the effects of modernity on North East and its cultures. It would also be interesting to focus on the hazardous impact of technological innovation on the ecology of North East. It is important for the region to maintain their traditional cultures. “Traditional cultures need neither to reject modernization nor to be absorbed in the streams of modernization”. This paper would try to explore how the harmony of these two would be able to hold the traditional values of the indigenous people along with the winds of change.

Keywords: Modernity, colonial, ecology, development, technology, cultural survival, adaptability, culture, North East.

Introduction:

In a quotation in the 2006 edition of Indian Folklife, Ao Naga poet and writer Temsula Ao reflects on the state of tradition among the ethnic groups of North-East India. She has observed that:

The cultures of North East India are already facing tremendous challenges from education and modernization. In the evolution of such cultures and identities that they embody, the loss of distinctive identity markers does not bode well for the tribes of the region. If the trend is allowed to continue in an indiscriminate and mindless manner, globalization will create a market, in which Naga, Khasi and Mizo communities will become mere brand names and commodity markers stripped of all human significance and which will definitely mutate the ethnic and symbolic

identities of a proud people. Globalization in this sense will eventually reduce identity to anonymity” (as qtd in Bender 106).

Her observation has reflected the most important threat to the region. Drawing upon the cultural change that this region has gone through, she has tried to aware the ethnic groups regarding the emergency of preserving their own cultures. Temsula Ao’s comments on the culture and tradition of North East India shows her concern regarding the harm to the culture of the region at the advent of modernization. She comments on the exoticization of cultural artifacts that alienates them from their very source and reducing them to mere objects of display. This is a threat to their identity. The mainstream or the foreigners exoticize this land, its people and its customs. For the ‘mainland’ this land is still the ‘mysterious other’. “The Northeast has long fascinated those who know anything of it- far away, romantic, undiscovered, India’s lost frontier” (Verghese 428).

Buell in his book *Literature and Environment* has introduced an important concept, i.e. the concept of ‘indigeneity’. Indigeneity refers to the “aboriginality or native-ness in recognition of analogies/affinities between the historical situations and cultural practices among “native” or “first people” worldwide” (Buell 418). Buell has commented that the interest on indigeneity emerged as a result of “disenchantment with the negative environmental consequences of industrial modernity” (Buell 428). This awareness, too, gave rise to ecocriticism that tends to make people aware of their nature and environment. That is why the ecocritics are interested in looking at the cultures of the native people which are instrumental in providing an alternative imagination regarding place and identity.

In *Tracking Modernity*, Aguiar demonstrates how colonial ideology is inextricably tied to the power of modernity and technology. Aguiar argues that a long with the railway, the British brought a very specific idea of modernity to India. This rhetoric of modernity that “traveled” to India with the British came out of “the amalgamation of practices and institutional forms that had given it solidity in Victoria England” (Aguiar 3). Aguiar also explains that modernity in general, but especially colonial modernity privileges mobility. Colonial modernity found its expression in narratives of progress and expansion which necessitated different types of movement including: “flows of knowledge, materials, commodities, practices “and social and physical movement” (Aguiar 9).

Dr. B. B. Kumar in his book *Modernization in Naga Society* has discussed the terms such as modern, modernism and modernity. On being modern he has said, “To go by dictionary meanings, modernization, together with modernism and modernity, are concepts concerned with the business of being, making or keeping modern. *Modernism* also means ‘adherence to upto-date views, methods and tastes’, *modernity* stands for “the state or quality of being modern”; and *modernization* is the noun form of the verb to *modernize* the meaning of which has been given as to “make modern; adapt to modern tastes” (Kumar 1). According to Dr. Kumar, “the concepts of modernism, modernity and modernization extend beyond the dictionary meanings and also their ordinary connotations to include mental

attitudes and approaches of individuals or groups” (Kumar 1).

It should be noted that the process of modernization always involves in it the process of transformation along with the idea of development. This process always involves a shift from the traditional way of life to modern. “The transformation associated with modernization has been visualized in terms of a movement away from the traditional pattern” (Kumar 4). As the economically and technologically advanced models of modern society are of western origin, modernization, too, has often tended to be treated as synonymous with westernization.

When we talk about the influence of modernization on the Naga society, we find that “There have been other kinds of effects of the change towards modernization including widening of socio-economic disparities, and growing individualism and weakening of community spirit” (as qtd in Kumar p.6). Regarding the changes due to the process of modernization, Verrier Elwin said:

The real changes go much deeper. The fundamental difference has come in shifting the gear of life from war to peace, the cessation of head-hunting and the gradual disappearance of Feasts of Merit. This has led to all sorts of unexpected consequences. It is no longer possible to wear some of the finest specimens of Naga textile art, for these depended on success in war or generosity in feasting. Wood-carving has suffered for the same reason. The architecture of houses has changed, for certain features could only be added by families who had earned the right to do so. The maintenance of the morungs is no longer urgent, now that there is no need to keep a guard always on duty” (as qtd in Kumar p.6).

Temsula Ao has also interrupted such kind of changes as the changes have come at the cost of a great loss towards the community. Temsula Ao is also of the view that, “Such changes have brought discontent and problems of adjustment”. Modernization “has been interpreted as something opposed to the traditional” (Kumar 7). Tradition is not frozen, but it adapts itself to new situations. There is no straight, linear progress from the traditional to the modern; neither is the transition smooth. He said,

Tradition is defended because it is more relevant and meaningful to the group. The Nagas, as any other group, perceive reality from their ‘frame of reference’ moulded by previous cultural conditioning....when a group and tradition oriented society like that of the Nagas is thrown into a new situation, they will react favourably if they feel it reinforces their present phenomenal world and negatively if they see it as a threat to their present beliefs, understandings, customs, and goals” (as qtd in Kumar p.8).

“The whole fabric of traditional Naga society depended on “the preservation of customs developed exactly to fit the environment and tested by centuries of use” (Kumar 14). It should be noted that most of the time the new situations can make the natives more confused because they think it as a threat to their lifestyle and old beliefs that they have been governing

generation after generation. For example: though modernization has brought newer technology to their society, there is always a clash in adapting the new values and means of change as they always create an imbalance in nature. This aspect is also evident in Mamang Dai's novel *The Legends of Pensam*.

Colonialism is the vehicle that brings modern values and institutions to the colonized world. It was something that was formed as a result of the 'western impact'. "Colonialism, however, superimposed a Eurocentric concept of modernity derived from the Enlightenment on the literatures of the region, thereby creating a rupture between the past and the present" (Misra xiv). Culture and Society is a subject to change. No societies remain unaffected with the passage of time. Our minds are dominated by the thought that Modernity and colonialism are imports from the west. It is the creation and production of the west. But the real picture is not like that. Modernity is not originated in Europe. The shift from the dominant view of the 1960s, defined by modernization theory, to that at the end of the 20th century, centred on multiple modernities, is beginning to give way to postcolonial and decolonial understandings of modernity. Mohanty suggests, "the worlds that colonialism replaced or destroyed belongs to the irretrievable past and is irrelevant for our modern purposes". Reflecting on the mentality of the colonizers towards the forest and ecology of the region, B. G. Verghese was of the view that:

The early colonizers and administrators were prone to regard the vast uninhabited forested areas they encountered as terra nullis (no-man's land) to be taken over for development or declared reserve forests at will. Similarly they tended to regard the simple hill and plains tribals, especially those following their own forms of nature worship or indigenous faiths, as people in need of enlightenment (Verghese 21).

This paper also critiques the development brought about by modernity. This whole discourse of development actually reflects the unequal power relations between the west and the rest of the world. Wolfgang Sachs, a leading scholar of the post development schools suggests, "the idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape and it is time to dismantle this mental structure" (1). According to Escobar the post-developmental school of thought is interested in terms of searching for an alternative to development in "local culture and knowledge".

James Ferguson in his text, *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* has described the failure of the development projects to properly understand the cultural and economic values of the people of Lesotho. He was also concerned with the consequences of these development projects on environment. Development projects aim at developments in technology, and not in safeguarding cultural values.

Discussion:

Writers like Lummer Dai and Yeshe DorjeeThongshi "may be considered counterparts of the literateurs of the Indian Renaissance of the nineteenth century who

encouraged the challenges posed by the ideals of ‘modernity’ and ‘progress’ aggressively pushed forward by the European Enlightenment” (Misra xx). Tilottoms Misra has rightly pointed out that Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam* “represents the predicament of the sensitive young minds in contemporary Arunachal Pradesh, who too are at crossroads” (Misra xx). Mamang Dai depicts the ‘in between’ spaces of the young minds and the clash of ideas.

The Legends of Pensam is a novel written by famous Arunachali writer Mamang Dai. This novel is an amalgamation of myth and history of the Adis of Siang Valley. Mamang Dai also tries to bring out the myths and tradition of the tribe. In the words of Prasanta Das, “Fiction, history, myth, and memory merge in a deceptively seamless manner in Mamang Dai’s *The Legends of Pensam*. This novel advocates a return to the roots of these people. Through this novel Dai also “conveys the complexity of the painful process of change in Arunachal Pradesh”. (Baral 8). Their expressions regarding the so called development in their land only show their rage and frustration.

The term ‘Pensam’ has also great significance. The meaning of the word is ‘in between’ or ‘middle ground’. From this respect, *The Legends of Pensam* is also a middle ground between myth and reality. This novel also shows the clash between traditional and modern ways of life.

This novel is also significant for the fact that it documents the construction of Stillwell Road and the predicament of people. It took a lot of pain and hard work on the part of the people who were involved in this work. “It went up mountains, plunged into gorges and spanned ten rivers and hundreds of streams. No other road in the world had taken as high a toll of human lives as this one; it had been dubbed ‘a-man-a-mile road’ (Dai 40). This most important aspect in the novel is that this novel seeks to interrogate colonial modernity and the writer has been able to show that tradition and modernization do not go hand in hand. Prasanta Das, in his article “Indian English Writing from the Northeast” has rightly pointed out that:

The Legends of Pensam covers quite a bit of history: the first contact with the British in 1911 in which a British political officer and a number of sepoys and coolies were killed by Adis in the village of Komsing; the punitive British expedition of 1912; the building of famous Stilwell road during World War Two; and the winds of change that are sweeping traditional structures and values in today’s Arunachal Pradesh (Das 12).

The Legends of Pensam includes a web of stories and every character in the novel is related in one way or the other. This novel bears the history of the Adi tribe. They reside in a land of hills, spirits and forest. The villagers were dominated by animistic beliefs. They thought the trees, too, have life. They believed the spirits of their ancestors dwelt there. Through the traditional way of life of the Adis, the writer tries to portray how their way of life maintains an ecological balance which has been destroyed by modernization. The narrator

regarding their simple way of life commented:

And I saw again how their days were passing: the fire burning brightly in the hearth, the dogs curled up close to the flames, the cot in the corner. Life moved on quite normally, except that like so many others in so many unseen recesses all over the world, they hid their pain, while the seasons turned" (Dai 25).

The novel begins with Hoxo's birth story who was believed to have fallen from the sky. The villagers also believed that story and Hoxo was growing as a part of the village. This novel includes the stories of simple villagers accepting their fate and doing their best to survive. That is why the narrator said: "The Adis always nurtured a kind of fear towards the foreigners". There were various instances that proved their unusual and fearful response towards them. Noel Williamson's massacre was a significant example of that fear. The narrator has rightly said, "No one is quite sure what provoked the attack. Some recorded evidence suggests a communication gap: the tribe feared that Williamson would bring troops to destroy its village" (Dai 48). Besides Williamson a tea-garden doctor named Dr Gregorson, forty-seven sepoy and coolies were also killed. As a result of this massacre punitive expedition of 1912 "hacked its way through the chaos of virgin forest to capture the culprits and send them away to prison in the Andaman Islands" (Dai 48). The village old man also believed that it was because of the massacre that they remained without a road.

The white men's view towards the ecology of the region, especially towards the forest is significant. To understand their notion an officer's record can be taken into account. He wrote in his notebook:

The forest is like an animal. It breathes all around us and we never know when it will suddenly rise up like a green snake out of the decaying vegetation or descend on us like a mantle of bats reeking of blood and venom. The trees are enormous and sinister. They stand all around us and you can feel them looking down and waiting. One fears to move. The pile of rotting leaves and clumps of fern are hideous traps, and yesterday the stakes that fly out from there injured three of our native men. Their feet have been slashed open and they are screaming that they will die because these fire-hardened bamboo panjees are sharpened like blades and the points are dipped in poison. It is a terrible war and I wish I had never come to record such terror and suffering (Dai 52).

Through this passage it is clear that this is not only just one white officer's view. This is the attitude of each and every white man who visited this region even for once. They find it difficult to survive amidst forest and hills. They do not feel comfortable to be surrounded by deep forests. The overwhelming presence of trees disturbs them. They fear the forest. The forest is a terror for them. This hints at the contrasting attitudes of both the natives and the colonizers. While the natives feel homely at such kind of environment, the foreigners feel alienated.

This is the story of a tribe who lives in co-existence with nature. Though this was an alien land in the eyes of the foreigners, this land also could not escape the slaughters of modernity. This novel also bears the fear and uncertainty of the villagers regarding their future.

In another story “The Road”, there is the description of a village called Pigo. It is the oldest settlement in the region. “The first men and women who came here had started their journey from the mountains and walked through the forests carrying bamboo flares” (Dai 146). In this description we can see how the overwhelming presence of mountains and it surrounds them their whole life.

It should be noted that Pigo was the only town “with tarred roads and concrete buildings and electricity” (Dai 147). It hints that modernity has already set its foot on some villages. The process of building roads was continuing in the villages. The author has also mentioned about certain villages who were very mysterious and remote even “long after the British left” (Dai 147). It was just the beginning of progress in the remote villages. For some “The road was bad news” (Dai 151) as there was robbery in the village. They were scared regarding the happenings in the village. The villagers doubted the road builders as the robbers. Most people were against of this road construction. Regarding the construction of road the writer B.B. Pandey has rightly pointed out that, “Although the roads are absolutely necessary for all types of development, the effect of road construction on forests themselves is unfortunately adverse unless necessary precautions are taken in advance” (Pandey 148). He has also said that, “Experience has shown that forests tend to disappear, once they are made approachable by roads” (Pandey 148). A villager called Larik said, “This one terrible road is all they have managed for us in fifty years! And what does it bring us? Outsiders. Thieves. Disease. Will this road bring us good health?” (Dai 156). Undoubtedly, the natives are driven by the ‘xenophobic fear of the outsider’ (Misra xiv).

Different versions from different generations were available regarding the road. For some it was a step towards development. But for most of them it is only destroying their places. The young people were against of the road as it came as a threat to their identity. They are not seekers of new identity and they do not want to join hands with the government. The people do not welcome strangers and they have reasons for it. They try to preserve their culture and tradition at any cost and they do not want a road that would shatter their identity. They were against of this development brought about by modernization. They were against of the destruction or detritus of their forests created in the name of progress and development. They were aware of their ecological imbalance as well as losing their own roots. For them what is the need of modernization if it comes at the cost of losing one’s own roots? That’s why they say, “Leave us alone” (Dai 158). This was the response of the people at the advent of development, at the advent of modernization.

The thing that hurt the people the most was the feeling that “the bridge is breaking” (Dai 162). The word ‘bridge’ is used metaphorically. The bridge that is broken is the bridge between the older tradition and the newer wind. This is the clash between tradition and modernity. As a result of this clash the age old tradition has lost its roots and the bridge of the

roots, built by the ancestors has been lost. That is why the narrator has rightly pointed out:

Yes, the bridge was swaying and slowly tearing away. Land was being stolen. Forests were being cut and logs floated away down the river. New fences marked Old territory and it seemed a curtain had fallen over the old villages. What was Once sacred, the old sense of joy was being lost (Dai 163).

These lines carry the fear of people in losing their own identity. At the same time they are also optimistic about bridging the gap. They truly hope that one day a new bridge would be built.

The story of Gurdum gives us vivid details about the detritus as a result of modernization. "Plastic floated across the hills, clung to riverbanks, perched on trees. Broken glass and discarded packaging scarred the bald slopes closest to the town" (Dai 165). In these lines there is also a hint of ecological imbalance. Sirsiri lived in this place and her fear of breaking of the road and the collapsed pillars did not let her sleep. Her condition metaphorically refers to the condition of every modern man who remains in uncertain state about their life. She said, "What a place! Cursed, ill-chosen, disturbed!" (Dai 168). She expressed her disgust towards the place as it offers only uncertainty towards their survival. Through the novel, we realize that people attempts to reconcile not only with nature and their tough life, but also with the changes, the changes that do not harm their true self. The novel ends with a very hopeful note. This is hope of retelling their stories and makes themselves alive even beside the 'cement walls'.

In Esterine Kire's novel *When the River Sleeps*, the journey of Vilie is the most important aspect of the novel as it takes the reader to the primitive way of living of the Nagas. His quest leads us to a way of life that is not influenced or intruded by modernity. That is a life that is free from all the chaos of the modern world and that denounces the modern living. This book in a way advocates a return to nature. Kire takes the traditional stories, folklore and myths of her community and uses her imagination to create a work that is as fascinating in the written form. Again in Kire's *The Son of the Thundercloud*, through the eyes of Pele we can see the life of the son of the thundercloud. In the novel, we also see the juxtaposition of the modern life with that of the traditional. There are instances of women who have lived for more than three centuries, yet the roof of their house has been built with tin.

Regarding the Nagas and the damages brought about by modernity to their cultures R. R. Shimray has commented, "The young generation of the Nagas has almost forgotten the great values of the culture and the noble traditions of their forefathers" (Shimray viii). Shimray has tried to explore the aftermaths of the negligence of their culture. Their culture needs to be preserved. "The grafting processes of their ancient culture to the modern life is so sudden and catastrophic in its results that the end result may prove fatal to the very fabric of Naga culture as a whole" (Shimray viii). Through the novel *When the River Sleeps*, the author Esterine Kire has tried to examine the issues that are related to Naga identity. She has tried to revive the Naga identity by bringing back the mythical past of the Nagas, a past that is rooted in beliefs and traditional knowledge system.

Arunachal Pradesh is an island of peace in the entire north-eastern region of the country. B. B. Pandey is of the view that, "A balance between the tradition and modernity has also to be maintained while planning for development of Arunachal Pradesh". Pandey was also concerned about the relationship between man and nature in maintaining ecological balance in the land called Arunachal Pradesh. He said, "The man and environment relation in context of the people of Arunachal Pradesh is a question, next, which demands greater attention because it is a fast developing society and unwise drain of its natural and material resources can prove hazardous in the future (Pandey ix). That is why Mamang Dai's novel *The Legends of Pensam* portrays the idea of maintaining a healthy balance between tradition and modern way of life. People should not forget their traditions while embracing modernity. This novel also documents the native's concern for their nature and the damages made by the human beings. That is why the natives protect the forests in order to protect nature as "in the forest, through the eco system a balance in nature is maintained" (Pandey 85).

In the novel *The Black Hill* we also see the people's disapproval and disgust when British occupied Assam. So, the narrator said, "Since the British had occupied Assam their hills had been disturbed by these strange, foreign men who crept deeper and deeper into their land carrying gifts of salt, iron, tobacco and opium" (Dai 8). The British used these items as a means of getting control over people.

The novel *The Black Hill* documents the people's craze for medicinal facilities because sometimes their herbs were not enough to cure certain diseases. Father Krick also understood the weakness of people. That is why about Krick the narrator has said, "here he was, a white foreigner who only carried his cross, a medicine box and possessions more modest than their own" (Dai 175). On the one hand the natives wanted to take certain facilities, on the other they frightened the outsiders who brought those facilities to them. They wanted Krick just for treating the sick people of the village. Before Krick's arrival they did not have faith in drugs and medical diagnosis. Because of the native's faith on him "he learnt a new phrase then- ..a great healer, a medicine man" (Dai 179). Krick in his letter to the directors also asked for medicines for those people as they surprised to see the effectiveness of some medicines. For example: that world did not have the medical facilities that we have today to cure diseases. But they had belief over the native herbs and they knew their uses. Undoubtedly, those herbs proved to be very helpful in curing diseases. Thus, a world, untouched by modernity, chaos, had been able to survive in its own mythical pattern. This world in their own structure found ways to deal with nature and outsiders. The indigenous people always believe in the wisdom that they gain from nature. They may not be sophisticated with the usage of other technologies, but they possess wisdom and that wisdom makes them modern in their own way.

The cultures of North East have always come across various encounters. Sometimes these encounters leave positive impact on the cultural aspect and sometimes negative. Tilotoma Misra has also commented on the threat of new cultural norms upon those traditional. She said, "Each of these encounters resulted in different forms of resistance as

well as appropriations. The clash of cultures has often led to the loss of traditional forms and the adoption of new cultural icons that threatened the existing ones” (Misra xiii). Verghese was of the view that, “The region has undergone many transitions within the larger Indian transition. Modernization has telescoped decades, even centuries, distancing youth from elders, causing trauma and bewilderment” (Verghese 431).

Methodology:

Textual and theoretical analysis is the basis of discussion of this paper. Post-colonial theory offers powerful critiques of modernity by showing how the terms of the debate are necessarily Eurocentric. Although modernity is “better seen as irreducibly plural and fully global”, colonialism and modernity are linked. Modernity tries to wipe out the traditional values and knowledge system. Modernization reconstructs a cultural system and provide it a new shape. North East India can be said, as a land of both tradition and modernity. Post-developmental theory has been applied to critique the so called development projects of modernity which disturbs the ecological balance and harmony. To understand colonial modernity from a different point of view, the post development theory can be taken into account. It critiques the so called modern development projects. The process of development is guided by purely western interest. So the development fundamentally reflects the pattern of western hegemony.

Conclusion:

Modernity has also played an important role in the idea of centre and margin. In the words of Tillottoma Misra, “People whose history and civilization had been pushed to the margins as not conforming to the norms of the Eurocentric concept of modernity, took up the task of recreating their past and re-inventing tradition so as to represent the present as a stage in the continuous process of marching from the past to the future” (Misra xvii). So, the responsibility comes directly to the writers of the region to bridge the gap created by modernity.

Dr. Kumar is hopeful that, “some ways will be found by which it will be possible to achieve ‘modern’ standards of welfare without having to pay too high a price, without the sacrifice of tradition and identity, without the wiping out of variety and colour” (Kumar 10). In the words of S. P. Aiyar, “modernization involves a change of outlook, a belief in the possibility of progress and directed change and acceptance of the objective criteria and standards of constant improvement in all aspects of individual and social life. Its essence lies in the awareness of men as being self-potent individuals who has the power to change their lives and transform society” (Kumar 10).

“Traditions and cultures are the two main conduit pipes through which one can smell the odours of and peep into the social, political and religious systems of the people and their societies” (Shimray 1). North East has always put great efforts towards maintaining a harmony between man and nature. But modernity has seemed to be effected the ecological balance of the region. It is important for the region to maintain their traditional cultures.

“Traditional cultures need neither to reject modernization nor to be absorbed in the streams of modernization”. The harmony of these two would be able to hold the traditional values of the indigenous people along with the winds of change. Cultural survival is only possible through renewal of cultural values and beliefs otherwise any culture and its people would fall into an abyss. ■

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The Concept of Marriage and its Practices among Boro-Kacharis and Mishing Tribes in North East Assam : A Study

Shyamal Chandra Sarkar

Akhtarul Islam

Marriage is one of the important events of both male and female. They begin conjugal life through marriage. Marriage gives protection to a woman. It is found since ancient period. A family becomes identified as a consequence of marriage. Marriage normally precedes the establishment of a family. It is a spiritual bond of a man and a woman. It is not only a moral institution but also a religious contract among many communities. There are various stages of marriage according to Morgan, viz. consanguineous marriage, Group marriage, Syndesmian marriage, Patriarchal marriage, Monogamy marriage. Marriage is divided into the forms of polyandry, polygyny, group marriage and monogamy. But, later on, group marriage was eliminated from this list.

The Boro-Kacharis are one of the major indigenous tribe of North East India. They strictly followed clan exogamy in their marriage system. Boro-Kacharis contact marriage by negotiation (Hathachuni), widow remarriage is also found in their society. Bride-price also prevails among Boro-Kacharis marriage system.

There are other major tribes in the plains of Assam who are known as Mishing. Clan exogamy and tribal endogamy are followed in their marriage system. Marriage within the same clan is strictly prohibited in their society and same sub-clan marriage is also prohibited in their society. They are monogamous. The Mishing practise two types of marriage, namely, Midang (arranged marriage) and dugla-lanam (gandharba vivaha). Bride-price is allowed in their marriage system.

Keywords: *Marriage, evolution, forms, practices, of Boro-Kachari and Mishing tribe.*

Introduction:

Marriage is a very important event in the life of a woman. Matrimony in course of time is followed by maternity, and its recurrence makes the women periodically helpless and absolutely dependent on her husband. Marriage, therefore, determines the fate of a

woman to a much greater extent than it does the destiny of a man. A good marriage is a welcome protection for the woman, a bad one is worse than a painful chain.

Marriage is a legal social institution. It is the institution that allows social sanction to man and women to establish sex-relationship between them and to produce children. "Marriage", as defined by Westermarck, "is more or less a durable connection between male and female, lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of the offspring".

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study are:

- (i) To attempt to reveal the introduction of marriage.
- (ii) To attempt to explain the brief history of marriage.
- (iii) To attempt to reveal the evolution of the institution of marriage.
- (iv) To explain the different forms of marriage.
- (v) To attempt to explain the practices of the marriage of Boro-Kacharis in Assam.
- (vi) To explain the practices of the marriage of Mishing in Assam.

Methodology:

The method of the present study is analytical in nature which is based on the primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources contain books, journals, leaflet, data collection from website documents published from research institutes. Books, particularly on the marriage are supplied a greater source of information.

Primary data collected by the meeting of some social workers and also in an interview with renowned persons helped fruitful analysis and authenticity of the topic. Secondary data are mainly applied to this topic.

Review of literature:

A good number of literary works are available in marriage. But only little works have been done especially on marriage. No serious academic exercise has been done particularly on marriage and its practices among the Boro-Kachari and Mishing tribes of Assam.

Some important works on Marriage are by A.S. Altekar, Sekhar Brahma, B.N. Bordoloi, G.C. Sharma Thakur, M.C.Saikia, Jatin Mipun, Promode Bandhu Sengupta, Ram Nath Sharma, J. Sanyal, K.N. Mallick, Kishore Kumar Sarma.

Brief History of Marriage:

Being the hoary antiquity, Hindu literature has naturally preserved some traces of promiscuity existing in prehistoric times. The Mahabharata informs us that in the land of the Uttarakurus and in the city of Mahishmati the institution of marriage did not exist. It may be, however, added that Uttarakuru is very probably a mythical country, not existing on terrestrial globe, and that the evidence about Mahishmati consists of an observation made by its Pandava conqueror cane military campaign. It may not be worth more than the

proverbial traveller's tale. According to the Great Epic, it was the sage Svetaketu who decreed that promiscuity should be supplanted by regular marriage. Whether the state of promiscuity, here referred to as existing in prehistoric times, is a mere possibility intellectually conceived, or whether it actually did exist in some sections of society in certain parts of the country, we do not know. There are a few passages in the epic showing that a state of promiscuity may not have been an impossibility at an early period. They disclose an astounding laxity in sexual morality.

Marriage and family are sometimes confused. But the two should by no means be identified. The family is an association; marriage is one of its institutions. The family is based on the institution of marriage. Marriage normally precedes the establishment of a family. It should not also be confused with sex-relationship. It is a legal and moral institution. In civilized societies no social and moral sanction is attached to sex-relationships of men and women which are not covered by an arrangement of marriage. Pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships are tabooed in most of the civilized communities, and they have nothing to do with marriage, which is a social moral institution. Sex-relations are not covered by marriage relation; do not necessarily end in marriage. Moreover, sex-gratification is not the sole end of married life. 'Marriage is a socially approved way of establishing a family of procreation'. B. Malinowski aptly remarks, "Marriage on the whole is rather a contract for the protection and maintenance of children than an authorization of sexual intercourse".

Marriage is not an artificial contract between a man and a woman. It is a spiritual bond. It is not a tie that can be severed at the sweet will of the husband and the wife. The Hindus in India attach great sanctity to the institution of marriage. To them, it is a union of two souls for the realisation of their highest good of life. In many communities, marriage is not only a moral institution, but also a religious contract. According to Gandhiji, marriage is "spiritual union through the physical". Jacobs and Stern said, "Marriage is a term for social relationship of husband and wife or of plural mates; also used for the ceremony of uniting marital partners".

Evolution of the Institution of Marriage:

According to social anthropologist, sociologist and historians, the institution of marriage in human society gradually evolved to its present stage starting from promiscuous relationship between male and female. In this stage of promiscuity the male-female relationships were unrestrained and without control. According to the anthropologist Lewis Morgan, one finds exchange of wives, giving wives on loan and other such customs in very ancient primitive tribes which led no institution of marriage. Since there was no restriction upon sex-relationships, the father was not much important in the family and most of the progeny was known by the mother. These findings of Morgan are more logical than historical. Morgan has pointed that the institution of marriage evolved through several stages. These are—(i) consanguineous marriage, (ii) Group marriage, (iii) Syndesmian marriage, (iv) Patriarchal marriage, (v) Monogamy marriage.

Different forms of Marriage:

Marriage is a universal institution. But its forms may vary according to the difference in the domestic, legal, economic and ceremonial arrangements. The term “form of marriage” applies to numeric variation in marriage, i.e. the variation according to the number of consorts united to each other. The main forms of marriage usually are polyandry, polygyny, group marriage and monogamy. Among these forms of marriage group marriage is not marriage proper as it does not fulfil the parental, economic, legal or religious functions.

Practices of marriage of the Boro-Kacharis in Assam:

The Boros are one of the important indigenous tribes of the North East India. They belong to the Tibeto-Burman family of Mongolian race. The fact that the Boros once wielded great power and influence in the entire North East is beyond doubt. In upper Assam, they are identified as Sonowal and Thengal Kachari. In Southern districts of North Cachar and Cachar they are designated as Dimasa and Barmans respectively. The Boro-Kachari society had been strictly followed the rule of clan exogamy in their marital relationship till the recent past. “The Boro-Kacharis constitute a parilineal group comprising a number of certain exogamous clans. Though choice of marriage partner within the same clan is prohibited according the clan rule, the marriage among Boro-Kacharis is found to be held within the same clan also. It is revealed from investigation that in the village Dolpara, a man belonging to the Basumatary clan marries a woman who belongs to the same clan though it did not happen previously. It can be said that due to Sanskritisation or in other words due to impact of Hinduism (Vaishnavism) and contact with the plains population, they have a tendency to merge with the Hindu Social fold”¹.

Marriage among the traditional Boro-Kacharies is like a civil contract unlike the status of a sacrament in other Hindu marriage alliances. The usual practice of contacting a marriage is by negotiation (Hatha-chuni). The word ‘Hatha-Chuni’ literally means the distribution of rice by the bride with a wooden ladle. But marriage by servitude (‘Chawdang-Jagarnay’) and widow marriage (‘Dhokha’) do often take place. In marriage by servitude, the would-be groom is to render physical labour usually for a period of one year but the period may be extended depending on the degree of satisfaction of the would-be father-in-law. In recent years, this type of marriage is not encouraged in the Boro-Kachari society. According to the customary rule of the Luki-Bekeli area, now in force, the man entertaining a would-be son-in-law, must give by will 1/8th of his property in the name of his daughter. Widow re-marriage is found among their social custom. In this marriage system, the widower must cut off his all patrilineal relationship and induct himself to the ‘ari’ (clan) of the widow. Another type of marriage is found among the Boro-Kacharis which is known as ‘Kharchanai’. Here the girl goes voluntarily to a man with the intension of putting up with him as husband and wife and when this unceremonious union is sanctified subsequently in a marriage it is known as ‘Kharchanai marriage’ (Narri, 1966).

The Boro-Kachari society is primarily monogamous. There is no bar in contacting a junior levirate marriage i.e. the younger brother marrying the wife of his elder brother on the event of his (elder brother's) death. But in no case, senior levirate marriage can take place but not senior sororate system can take place. Again marriage under junior sororate system can take place but not senior sororate marriage, i.e. on the event of the death of one's wife, the elder sister of the deceased wife (if not married till then) cannot be taken as a wife. Similarly, no cross-cousin marriage (MBD/FSD) is allowed in the Boro-Kachari society. The practice of parallel cousin marriage is, however, not obsolete altogether. It may be mentioned here that as there is no class or clan distinction among the Boro-Kachari society, the question of judging the social status of the would-be partners never arises. In other words, hypergamy has no place in the Boro-Kachari society.

Negotiation marriage ('Hathachuni') has become the normal social custom of Boro-Kacharis. The system of demanding bride-price is still prevalent but in the higher echelon of the society, it is practically non-existent. There is, however, a system under which the co-villagers of the bride may prefer a claim to a certain amount called 'Malsa'. This amount when realised is deposited in the village fund to be spent for social purposes. But this amount is liable to be called back by the family of the groom, should the girl on the event on becoming widow, prefer to go back to her father's home forever, leaving all claims on her husband's property. This counter demand on the 'Malsa' is known as 'Khalar-Gothaianay' (Narzi, 1966).

It is however to be noted that there are fundamental ritualistic differences in solemnising marriage between the two sections of the tribe-the traditional Boro-Kacharis and the followers of Brahmanism. While the traditionalists resort to 'Hatha Chuni' system, the Brahmas take recourse to Vedic rites and perform 'Hom-Yojna' ceremony before the sacred fire as like as other Hindu communities. But in the traditional system of marriage, the groom instead of going to the bride's house sends only a little party to fetch the girl ceremoniously to perform the rituals at the groom's house. When the bride accompanied by her kith and kin and the party arrives in a most joyous mood, she is received at the gate amidst a benedictory ovation and taken inside. Soon after this, a grand feast is thrown out in honour of the bride and the bridal party by taking a pig and it is customary for the next meal of the bridal party to be taken at the bride's house on return. As soon as the feast is over, the members of the bridal party beg leave. Then the groom party starts cleaning of their house. Immediately after the cleaning of the entire household, the bride is asked to make symbolic cooking and then to offer a little amount of food so cooked to the household deities. Amidst citation of invocatory prayer by the village 'Douri', the bride makes the offering first to Mahadeva and then mother Kamakhaya. The bride is then asked to touch the rice pot kept normally in a corner of the kitchen which she does with her left hand. At this moment the bride is administered an oath of fidelity to her new home. Then both the groom and the bride are given some sermons of married life by one form amongst the elderly persons or by the village 'Douri'. This being over, the bride herself has distributed the residue of the feast at least once first to her husband and then to the invited guests. This

distribution marks the culmination of the 'Hatha-Chuni' marriage. On the eighth day of the marriage, the groom is to visit the father-in-law's house with his bride and also wherever possible with his friends. This visit of the groom to his father-in-law's house is a part of the marriage ceremony and until it is done, a 'Hatha-Chuni' marriage is not treated as complete.

Practices of the marriage of the Mishing in Assam:

The Missing are an Indo-Mongoloid tribe settle in the Plains of Assam. They are one of the major tribes of Assam. Originally, they were hill dwellers and lived along with the Adis in Arunachal Pradesh. On the basis of the legends of the tribe and available historical records, they moved to the plains of Assam, around the 13th century A.D.²

The Mishings practise clan exogamy and tribal endogamy in their matrimonial system. Marriage within the same clan e.g. Pegu with pegu or Doley with Doley will never be sanctioned. Similarly, marriages are restricted within the same sub-clan. The cross-cousin marriage is common among them. The Mishing society recognises the matrimonial alliance with great honour, and therefore, Mishing families often prefer cross-cousin marriage. This marriage system has been prevailing among the Mishings since time immemorial. According to the patrilineal system of the Mishings, once a girl is married, she belongs to her husband's family and the children born by her bear the surname (which means the clan) of their father.

The Mishings are monogamous. However, a man is allowed to marry more than one wife if he is economically capable of maintaining his wives and children. In such cases, the first wife enjoys the highest position amongst the other wives. Though polygamy is common; polyandry is unknown to the Mishings. Mishing marriages can be divided into two types, viz. Midang (arranged marriage) and dugla-lanam (gandharba vivaha).

The Mishings join in merry-making, and on occasions volunteer to help the parties concerned. Perhaps, it is an expression of their fellow-feeling and reflection of their free and frank minds- so universal amongst the tribal people. In earlier days, a mithun or its equivalents of Rs. 100 or so was charged as a bride-price (alig) payable to the bride's parents, but lately, the amount has come to many variations and some families have totally abandoned the custom. The bride-price is a part of their custom rather than a demand of the parents of the bride in terms of dowry. Bride-price is usually taken in term of damages done to the family. That is common in Gandharba Vivaha (Dugla-lanam) only. The other form of marriage which is still popular among them can be described as "Gandharba Vivaha" where the young couple concerned take the initiative. The young boys and girls working together in the fields and dancing their ways in the Porag and Ali-ai-ligang festivals find an easy way for their childhood love to flourish and if lucky enough their parents arrange for their final engagement.

But if one of the parties disapproves the idea of their alliance or express inability to bear the expenses of a formal wedding, the boy with the help of his friends takes away the girl on an appointed time and the bride is received in a little ceremony. The girl's parents

are immediately informed and the matter is settled in a gathering known as Orai-Binam. In such cases, a higher bride-price is usually demanded through the total expenditure incurred in this system is usually less than in a Midang, and seems to be favoured by a considerable bulk of the population. Infant betrothal is known to be prevalent among them but the marriageable age is between 18-25 years for boys and between 15-20 years for girls. The divorce is allowed among the Mishings if conditions compel the couple for this. Widow re-marriage is also common among them. The widow is allowed to marry the younger brother of the deceased if she so desires. However, she cannot marry the elder brother of the deceased, who is regarded as a father figure.

Finally, we come to conclude that marriage occupies an important place in human life. It is a legal social institution which gives freedom to involve in sex-relation within male man (husband) and woman (wife) for producing children. Marriage is useful for the establishment of the society and is followed from the ancient to till now. Marriage is treated as a moral institution and religious contract in many communities. According to Morgan, there are several stages of marriage, namely, (i) consanguineous marriage, (ii) Group marriage, (iii) Syndesmian marriage, (iv) Patriarchal marriage, (v) Monogamy marriage. Polyandry, polygyny, group marriage and monogamy are the various forms of marriage. But, group marriage is eliminated from the list later. ■

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Views and Visions of the Diasporic Cognizant in V.S. Naipaul's Novels

Anil Koshy

V.S. Naipaul is one of the prominent and versatile writers in Indian literature. He is widely acclaimed as one of the accomplished stylists and prolific writers of his generation. He is certainly among a few prominent expatriates of our time, particularly writers with an Indian background, who have emerged as the most eminent writers in English and made a significant contribution to English literature. His name comes readily to the readers' mind as one of the major contemporary writers, whose works show a deep concern for the culture of the colonized countries. Besides, his early works have placed the exotic society of the Trinidadian on the literary map of the English speaking world and thereafter have projected him as a journalist, a successful novelist, a keen writer of travelogues and a great master in the art of writing novels. It is, however, in his novels that, he appears to shake the world with his highly controversial views, stark and naked expositions of the countries he has visited and the realistic pictures of these countries with his high pitched tone of anger, harshness and severity of his statement, as well as a brilliant, dazzling and engaging style. The writer stands, on the one hand, as a great master who sweeps the western world off with his brilliant skill of language and fascinating narrative technique in general, and India in particular, and on the other have raised great doubts among his critics regarding the veracity and authenticity of these views.

Keywords: Diaspora, Nostalgia and Immigrant Sensibility

INTRODUCTION

An attempt has been made to investigate V.S. Naipaul's novels into the various factors leading to the emergence of this technique and the salient features of its narrative technique that make it popular as well as the most effective form in the modern times. While discussing the achievements of the major proponents of this new form, all his novels project new pioneers like, Isaac Dinesen and V.S. Naipaul has emerged as very significant and powerful artists making the fullest use of its new narrative skill.

In his novels, particularly on India, Naipaul appears most critical, controversial, as well as most thought provoking in his comments and views. Here an effort has been made to make a thorough and close examination of the three novels: *An Area of Darkness*, *India: A Wounded Civilization* and *India: A Million Mutinies Now*. In order to arrive at a realistic understanding of these views and visions, we need to pay an intense observation.

The prime objective of this article is to delineate the development of the fictional world of Indian literature and show Naipaul's growth, development and contribution and determine his place in Indian literature. It also emphasises how Naipaul has become the source of inspiration and influence for many contemporary novelists. There is a striking variety in Naipaul's approaches, each one having its techniques of illumination. They are exposed to chiselled perfection which offers a rewarding reading. Many reviewers have considered Naipaul as a sensitive and perceptive novelist of twentieth-century Indian literature. His insight is characterized by a spiritual depth and meaning, and his creative criticism of Indian literature has been positive, just, and through, thus helping the recognition of a pioneering style in a positive manner.

The delineation on Naipaul's first visit to his ancestral homeland in 1962 is taken as a personal record of the Trinidadian Naipaul, who comes to his parent's homeland to see the India of his dream. The novel *An Area of Darkness* subtitled as 'An Experience of India' moves from place to place, comes closer to persons and different characters of India, closely notes the workings of the caste system in India and also observes the various rites and rituals observed by the Indian people. He also chose to study the outlook, attitude and the application of their creed and makes several visits to temples to record the performances of rites and rituals therein. He makes a long stay at Srinagar, goes on a traditional annual pilgrimage to the cave of Amarnath, which is made holy by a five-foot-high ice lingam which usually is formed there automatically during the summer. And thereafter, he makes his observation that although the lingam is a symbol of Lord Shiva, for Naipaul it is a symbol of India.

Naipaul undertakes this pilgrimage along with other pilgrims, but he hardly appears devotional; his interest is more in his art of journalism as well as in his desire for the fulfillment of the Indian fantasies of his youth that urged him to spend a long period in the Himalayas. But, what is most important to note here are the various views and opinions that he records on some of the important Indian societies, their religion, their caste and creed and their way of living. These views have raised severe criticism in certain literary circles particularly because Naipaul here appears not as an Indian but as a person who passes comments and remarks, contrary to the expectations and opinions of a common Indian.

In *An Area of Darkness*, Naipaul also expresses his views on Gandhi and his political philosophy which appear very interesting and illuminating in this novel. He makes all attempts to justify his criticism of Gandhi's political philosophy and his practice of mixing

religious sentiments with politics. He appears almost right in his opinion that many of Gandhi's principles and ideals have lost their relevance in present-day India. He sharply reacts to the Gandhian attitude to poverty which tends to treat poverty as something sacred and holy. He is shocked by the dirt and squalor of India and returns to the subject so often that one wonders if India has only filth and dirt and no beauty at all. He is obsessed with India's poverty and lashes the society for the cruelties of its caste system, yet he fails to see that even these poor people have in them dignity and integrity which cannot be shaken by poverty. He has proved himself capable of being them as individual men and women, as human beings. He seems to be guided by no deep psychological insight and he has attempted a critical interpretation of India with a superficial knowledge of the country and without an awareness of the multidimensional nature of its civilization and the rich complexities inherent on its life and culture. Close and intention probes into some of these observations reveal that Naipaul has either been reactionary or very sensitive to some of the problems in India.

The next perception emphasizes the second stage in the development of Naipaul's diasporic concerns. If anyone goes through his second novel on India, *India: A Wounded Civilization* he may come across various statements which raise one's eye-brow and makes one feel for the sceptical and arrogant tone with which Naipaul has made his observation. An intentional and critical study of this novel, *India: A Wounded Civilization* which Naipaul wrote in 1977 is but a continuation of the novel *An Area of Darkness* published in 1964. The dark and the disillusioned vision, which he objected in his first travelogue thirteen years before continued to dominate this novel too. Naipaul's image on India that he had in his childhood is shattered when he actually observes the real India. And as such the vision becomes bleaker as he moves from the first visit to subsequent visits. This vision, however, becomes all the more frightening, appalling and negative when in his subsequent visit in 1975 he finds India reeling under Indira Gandhi's state of emergency. Despite his sense of belongingness to his ancestor's homeland, Naipaul is unable to tear himself from his strong sense of self and highly intellectual bent of mind based on Western education and Western environment. Thus, Naipaul is unable to arrive at the real truth about India. He is unable to fathom, 'the misty and the muddle that India is,' the real spiritual and metaphysical culture of India as a result of which his vision of India dark, dismal and grim is based on sheer generalizations and fragmented as well as distorted reading of India. Hence the vision of India as projected in this novel is far from being whole, truthful and comprehensive. Moreover, this novel unfolds another revealing factor which throws further light on Naipaul's distorted vision of India.

From his vision of India as revealed in this novel, when we turn to his views we find that far from being the truth, they are not only unacceptable but also highly objectionable. Of course, there are certain observations, and remarks which do reveal the real state of Indian people, their poverty, their economic condition and their narrow and broad attitude towards matters. Naipaul's surfacing after a long quest amongst the new diminishing ripples of socio-political and cultural paradoxes of India. He sees a million mutinies breaking out

in the margins; mutinies of castes, of class, and gender. He sees these rebellions as positive movements towards the restoration of India. Naipaul observes that the dark shrouds, holding beneath them centuries of violence are being torn apart structures of dominance are being dismantled. Naipaul finds India in its offices, kitchens, galleries and shawls; in Dalit rebellions and women's movements.

V.S.Naipaul emerges as an extraordinary writer with a luminous mode of expression and a powerful skill of exposition, he has been attempting at fiction, on various subjects drawn from history, colonialism, civilization and socio-political scenarios of the modern world. But in his fictional writing, among various other countries like the Caribbean, West Indies, Africa, and the only country that have seized his imagination is certainly India, the homeland of his ancestors. This, of course, reveals his fascination for his deep interest in India and this becomes all the more significant when we find that after his first visit in 1962, he returns again and again to India. It is also significant to note that after each long visit he writes a novel on India which certainly creates a stir among his readers. Each short novel that he wrote on India like *An Area of Darkness* (1964), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977), and *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1990) was based on his successive visits to India in 1962, 1975 and 1988 respectively. In each of these novels, he appears to give a dismal passion and fascination for India. This, what may be called the love-hate relationship that has been displayed in his novels on India, appears all the more interesting and complicated in his latest novel, *India: A Million Mutinies Now* which is also considered, perhaps, the last novel on India by the author.

The novel is based on the visit of Naipaul to India in 1988 repeatedly records his first visit to India in 1962 and as such it shows the progress that India has made during this intervening year as well as the regress and losses India has sustained during two scores of years since it attained Independence. This fills him with a feeling of alienation, and insecurity particularly when he thinks of this struggle, the sacrifice and suffering that the country had made for the achievement of freedom. Logically he connects an inevitable feeling of alienation with the same kind of feeling that he had experienced in his first visit to India in 1962. But he explains that this was a kind of special journey for him because he had gone to India than with a strong feeling of belonging to an Indian community.

He begins this novel by referring to his first visit 'when I had first gone to India, in 1962,' repeatedly records his experiences of 1962. He reports this time and comes back to it several times in the first section, and many times in each of the succeeding sections, as a result of which it appears that the author is recalling his memories and experiences about India of 1962 to compare and contrast them with the India of 1988 in order to reveal the changes, the progress as well as setbacks the country had undergone during the intervening period. This sense of contrast, the sense of manifold changes and the completely reverse situations in the socio-economic canvas of India figure as the central theme of the novel in which Naipaul, while observing all the changes, also expresses various overtones of wonders and surprises along with a deep sense of scepticism satire and irony.

In the process of this exploration it is hard not to feel that, at times, it is Naipaul himself who is the most confused. It takes him the best part of a year in the country of his ancestors before he goes to the village of Dubes, where his grandfather was born. Here he might have come to terms with his past; but it is, inevitably, a failure, inducing shame and withdrawal. No wonder, then that in the dream depicted in the last page of *An Area of Darkness*, he compares his search for an identity with a piece of patterned cloth unwoven to trace the figures, that ironically enough ends up in twisted threads.

It may be noted that during this process of self-analysis he calls confusion and mutinies, encountered with his failure to belong to it, Naipaul, the journalist, the artist of nonfiction novel finally becomes Naipaul, the satirist. It is the art of satire that provides the key to understanding Naipaul's purposes and efforts. The satirist requires an object of disgust, of hatred to exercise his art, to produce that distorted mirror in which, as Swift said, "We are liable to see everyone's face but our own." In this way, Naipaul tries to hide behind the mask of satire, irony, bitterness and disillusionment in his failure to find his identity with India. And, as such, the author retreats again and again into two different confused perceptions of India, neither of which owns him.

CONCLUSION

Thus, his three novels about India represent three different, yet related stages of his life-long struggle with himself and his search for identity, a struggle which cannot be understood in isolation, but can be explained only if one takes a comprehensive view of all his narratives expressing his self and his search for identity in a country which had remained close and yet had eluded him. Hence, even if we take *India: A Million Mutinies Now* as the latest and probably the last novels of Naipaul on India, we cannot take Naipaul's views and visions on India as final or truthfully based on any accuracy of veracity; for, despite all Western assumption of truthfulness and the keen observation of a journalist, there remains much that needs to be revised.

Naipaul's diasporic consciousness in the world of literature is becoming an increasingly dominant phenomenon. It is the mental flight of some people who constantly trying to reconstruct their present from a past that is lost to them. Their roots shoot down only to strike against a frozen, fractured consciousness and then begin a search for their distinctiveness to anchor on to, and the diasporic literature is born. Although many individual comparative studies have been conducted on the writers of the Indian diaspora, there is a scarcity of studies that analyse this phenomenon as the growth of an individual writer within the framework of his continuing encounters with his homeland. Naipaul's unique position as a 'Twice Removed' diasporic writer and his short novels spanning three decades of his engagement with India provide this extraordinary opportunity.

The genesis of diaspora, its penetration of the writer's consciousness, and the resultant sensibility that gives birth to cross-cultural writing is a context in which Naipaul's genuine relationship with India is analysed. This turbulent relationship finds expression in

Naipaul's deep-seated concern for the land of his ancestors. His vision being coloured by the very similar diasporic consciousness that birthed his quest, he is caught within the ripples of his own making in his first real encounter with India.

At the end of each novel, Naipaul has brilliantly made us to understand the diasporic conscious. It also reveals that Naipaul's views and visions as expressed in his three novels on India impend all the more alarming and contemptuous as one moves to examine his experiences and interactions. His three most important novels on India emphasise his visions and views of the Indian traditional background, culture and identity, historical and political circumstances and patriotism which are subject to analyze. ■

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Women's Struggle for Independence, Gender Inequalities in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*

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The two main functions of literature are to give 'instruction' and 'delight'. Resistance, perhaps, comes under the category of instruction raising the social consciousness of the readers. The word 'resistance' often means an overt reaction or opposition to events or situations. The idea of 'resistance' in literature could convey a particular message or it may refer to an open action taken up by social activists to bring out the required change in the social set up or to drive a point home. The intention of the 'resistance' is to promote different or counter-thinking about the fabric of society itself. Thus, the most important aspect of resistance/protest literature is that, it includes within itself an element of social activism. Therefore, the idea of resistance in literature mostly revolves around a cause or an issue. Resistance in literature can take the form of a symbolic sign of delivering a social message, displeasure, or a banner of discontent with something in particular or in general.

Keywords: Feminine Attitudes, Rejuvenation of Women Empowerment and Postcolonialism

INTRODUCTION

A study of theme of confrontation is necessary because it not only raises questions but sometimes suggests solution. Resistance is governed by the socio-cultural constructs. To understand resistance in literature is to focus on the economic and socio-political structure within which the action of the events takes place. Of all the literary models, the novel is considered to be the most suitable means for this purpose because it enables a writer to depict human relationships in its varied aspects. To put it in simple words, the fictional form may be considered a documentation of social criticism.

People resist for many reasons: resist, what they don't understand; resist, what they don't like; resist, because they tried and failed earlier; resist to change; resist to preserve; resist to protect; resist to be loyal. There are different types of resistance- political, social, cultural, psychological, emotional and silent among the ways of protest. Resistance may take many forms, including active or passive, overt or covert, individual or organized,

aggressive or timid. Resistance to change is the action taken by individuals and groups when they perceive that a change is occurring as a threat to them. 'Perceive' and 'threat' are the key words in understanding resistance to change.

From the last quarter of the twentieth century, the Indian women novelists started articulating women's aspirations, their professional endeavors, their newly formed relationship with man and the changed perceptions of motherhood. Many writers like Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Uma Vasudev, Githa Hariharan, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapoor, Gita Mehta, etc. have presented various forms of women-resistance to patriarchal norms. These writers seem to be protesting against the restrictions of women's lives, emphasizing on the theme of resistance.

Fiction in the hands of these writers has come to locate the nature of the individual acts of resistance in the society where the problems like economic dependence of women, dressing, adolescent love etc. are seen as practices that need change. Women are no longer presented as meek, passive, but energetic with a sense of self-consciousness and self-assertiveness. These novelists made the process of social change look meaningful. Writers like Shobha De construct their narration by going a step forward by allowing their protagonists to step out of the patriarchal control.

A brief review of the criticism on a few writers reveals varied perspectives on emancipation of women, quest for identity, feminism, gender discrimination, man-woman relationship, cultural conflict etc. but very few attempts have been made to analyze and understand the dialectic of resistance. While Mrinalini Sebastian discusses Shashi Deshpande's novels from the perspective of post-colonialism, Sunita Reddy makes a full-length study of Shashi Deshpande's novels from the feminist point of view. Suman Bala's edited book *Women in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande* focuses on husband-wife relationships in all her novels till *A Matter of Time*. Shalmalee Palekar reads Shashi Deshpande's novels in terms of Gender, Feminism and Postcoloniality. Guru Charan Behera examines the narrative pattern of *That Long Silence* as the multi-coloured patchwork quilt. Very few critics like Usha Bande discuss Deshpande's novels like *A Matter of Time* and *Small Remedies* from the perspective of resistance and reconciliation. It is clear from the brief survey of criticism that there are very few comparative studies of the recent Indian English fiction in general and the works of Shashi Deshpande in particular from the perspective of the dialectic of resistance. There is a need to examine the literature of resistance as projected by different women novelists from a comparative perspective.

Hence, this article seeks to examine select novels of Indian and Nigerian women novelists that emphasize woman's sensibility, experience and perspective. The article focuses on the dialectic of resistance in the Indian English and the literature. It attempts to throw light on various problems of women from the point of different in class, culture, and race. It refers to the struggle of women for freedom, development and individual identity. An attempt has been made to provide a glimpse of women writers and their contribution to the

society through their writing.

Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, Indian English fiction has attained greater heights and attracted the attention of the academics all over world. R.S. Pathak rightly observes, “In the growth and development of the Indian novel in English the 1980s occupy the most significant position. . . . It is during the Eighties that Indian English novelists and novels earned unheard of honours and distinctions in the Western academic world” (14). With the publication of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981), Indian English novel took the experimental form from psychological and realistic stages. The post-independence Indian English fiction may be studied broadly under four categories-the political novel, the ethno-centric minority discourse, the expatriate writing, and the women’s writing or the feminist fiction.

Women’s writing assumed a great deal of significance in the post-Eighties with the emergence of new women writers who present their feminine awareness. Women’s literature seems to be focusing on women’s emancipation, equal rights to women on par with their male counterparts on their identity in society. Writers like Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Uma Vasudev, Githa Hariharan, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapoor, Gita Mehta, and others made an attempt to portray women characters from the point of the feminine sensibility.

These writers present the picture of the woman in a different perspective, which is entirely different from that of the past. Women characters from three different categories of the society i.e., from aristocratic, middle-class and the rural poor background are portrayed in their novels. For instance, the protagonists of Nayantara Sahgal and Shobha De come from the upper-class.

Women writers seem to study the human relationships and present their understanding of daily problems and deal with various themes of conflict protagonists, the East-West clash and women’s struggle for independence in an atmosphere of gender inequalities etc. in the modern world. These women novelists make an attempt to set women characters free from the age-old male domination in their fictional world. The women in their novels are well-educated and with their intellectual capacity and financial freedom they attempt to resist the cultural and social oppression. Their plot construction ability, depiction of characters, and the use of narrative techniques, awakening social consciousness make their novels significant and draw the attention of the society. The characters in their novels are drawn from the domestic spheres but portrayal in all its variety of ambitions, good and bad, gender discrimination, caste and class inequalities etc. make the novels reflect the world at large.

A brief analysis of the women writers of the Indian English fiction is necessary before a detailed study of the select writers and their novels for the purpose of the present study. Kamala Markandaya’s characters are rural peasants, city-dwellers, queens and concubines, English officials in India and Indian emigrants in England. Her themes revolve

around hunger, poverty, despair, fear and death. Realistic picture of the Indian villagers, their customs and cultures, rites and traditions are presented in her novels. Her novels focus on the changing socio-economic scene during the Sixties.

Deshpande's reputation, however, rests on her mature novels like *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *That Long Silence*, for which she was honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1991. Her novels generally centre on family relationships, particularly the relationship between husband and wife and the latter's dilemmas and conflicts. For her portrayal of the predicament of middle-class educated Indian women, their inner conflict and quest for identity, issues pertaining to parent-child relationship, marriage and sex, and their exploitation and disillusionment, Deshpande has been called a 'feminist'. The publication of *That Long Silence* by the Virago press made its own contribution to this belief. But Shashi Deshpande made it absolutely clear that she had nothing to do with feminism in the narrow sense. Being a woman herself, she sympathizes with women. Deshpande has portrayed the new Indian woman and her dilemmas, her efforts to understand herself and to preserve her identity as wife, mother, and above all, as a human being in the tradition-bound, male-dominated Indian society.

For seventeen long years, Jaya manages to suppress her feelings, thinking that it is more important to be a good wife than a writer. In the early years of her marriage, Jaya was acquiring a name as a creative writer. One of her short stories was published in a magazine and Mohan thinks that the story portrays their own personal life of a man who cannot reach out to his wife except through her body. Then, she begins to write under an assumed name with the help of Kamat. She starts writing light, humorous pieces on the travails of a middle-class housewife in a column titled "Seeta". This receives a good response from the editors and readers. Therefore, she rejects her earlier image.

Jaya doesn't want to listen to the edited versions of Mohan's story when he returns:

Mohan has sorted out his problem, and no longer fears prosecution, joblessness and disgrace; we can go back to our original positions? Does it mean that he'll come back and give me a carefully edited version of what has happened - as he has done so often till now and then ask me, 'What do you say, Jaya?'... But it is no longer possible for me. If I have to plug that 'hole in the heart', I will have to speak, to listen; I will have to erase the silence between us (19).

After suffering a lot due to her failure to speak in defense, she decides not to remain a silent victim anymore. She gets the message from Mohan that, all had turned out well and he would come back. Jaya reviews the whole situation and thinks whether they would go back to their original position and he would give the answers he wanted. It was not acceptable to Jaya and she doesn't want Mohan to become her master. Therefore, she says to herself, "I will have to speak, to listen, to erase silence between us" (192).

CONCLUSION

At the end of the novel, Jaya breaks her long silence and builds herself to speak with Mohan, giving voice to her unidentified life throughout the novel in the preceding three parts. However, Shashi Deshpande's Jaya doesn't break away from her familial bonds but maintains the sacredness of the Indian marital vows and makes life possible in contrast to that of Shoba De's protagonists. This conviction of hope shows the positive attitude to life. Deshpande's protagonists finally try their best to conform to their roles, and the novels end with an optimistic note with the possibility of some positive action in future. The novelist emerges in them as a bridge-builder between the old and the new, between tradition and modernity and for portraying the basic reality of Indian society and the place of women in a sensitive and authentic manner her novels are immensely valued. ■

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Homelessness, Loss and Identity in V S Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*

Isha Seegar

The status of being part of a country or home sustains one's identity as an individual. Along with the factors that constitute the family ancestry, one's life-style, dwelling place and livelihoods under the influence of nationality determine his culture. Hence, the native country and the home itself give identity to a person. How is it possible to identify a person who has no roots and no home? Nation and home are not just physical entities which give shelter to a person but they are the factors which sustains his existence also. The present study portrays the various themes like homelessness, loss and identity in V S Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas*. In *A House for Mr. Biswas* the major themes are rootlessness, homelessness, the sense of loss, the search for identity, alienation and inauthenticity. Mr. Biswas, the protagonist wants to overcome his desperate and doleful conditions of exile and homelessness and helplessness. He tries to set a secure place to fix his position for himself and to trace his roots. He is in search of a house to identify his root and culture. The house symbolically portrays and the metaphor of the house lays emphasis on the homelessness and helplessness of Mr. Biswas.

Keywords: Homelessness, Loss, Identity, Rootlessness, Dilemma

A home away from home studies the condition of Diasporas in alien land. Displacement for a long time arises the migrants' sense of loss about their own country, people, food, tradition, heritage, and so on. However they have to adapt to the new surroundings in order to maintain their earnings. The worse effect of displacement is that the displaced person loses his home and identity and he can never be a part of the country he resides. The Indian diasporic writer V. S. Naipaul's novel *A House for Mr. Biswas* represents the dilemma and atrocities of a displaced Indian in Trinidad, Mr. Biswas.

This paper seeks to explore the life of Mohun Biswas, a poor migrant from India who dreams of a better living in Trinidad. Naipaul powerfully sketches the consequences of migration. Though migration provides job opportunities to some, the condition of a majority is under question. V. S. Naipaul derives his characters from different cultural

backgrounds like various nationalities, races, ethnicities and religion. He allows the characters to correlate each other to study how the cultural intersection helps to mould a new society.

The house that Mr. Biswas ultimately purchases is full of rotten pillars, weak roofs with the yard without a drainage system; the windows remain opened. He is heavily and highly under debt. The house symbolically becomes a centre and nerve knot of life. It is the rebellion of a weak and small helpless man but this quest is nonetheless worthwhile. He achieved very little but it is an achievement to make something out of nothing. His nowhere-ness is exceptionally universal. His sense of loneliness, meaninglessness, and nothingness and absurdity is universal for any man who tries to create an identity for himself. The house of Mr. Biswas gives him this identity.

The theme of quest for identity and sense of belongingness has been an existential crisis in modern man's life. It is a social vacuum. Through the life and character of Mr. Biswas, Naipaul captures the vagaries of life and explores the depth and complexities of the experiences of a common man. Biswas is trapped into the net of struggle against the trials and tribulations, failures and frustrations. Like Joseph Conrad's hero, Marlow, Naipaul shows in the life of Biswas, a man's mood and nature. Conrad's novel, *Heart of Darkness* describes Marlow's voyage both into the darkness of Africa and into the darkness of his thoughts and feelings. In the same way, Naipaul explores the sensibility and motives of his hero Biswas.

The text is an autobiographical novel, where Mr. Biswas is the reflection of Naipaul's father and Anand (Biswas' son) as Naipaul himself. Mohun Biswas is born six fingered which the astrologer declares to be unlucky to the family. Mr. Biswas lives with strong self-determination to achieve an identity of his own in the society. He tries hard to earn a house of his own despite his wife's family's immense wealth. Finally, Biswas fails to buy a new house and instead he gets for his family a ragged house and a handful of debts. In spite of all the hardships in life Biswas is happy because his son gets a fellowship to study at England. Biswas tries to create a world for himself with his career as a journalist. At last, none of his dreams gets fulfilled except a shabby house for his family. Biswas dies of heart disease leaving some debts behind.

Simultaneously, the novel is about the contracted labourers who migrate to the Caribbean Islands. They are predestined to suffer from the sense of destitution, dislocation, alienation and displacement. Mr. Biswas feels a pain as Homi. K. Bhabha says, "a separation from origins and essence with always a sense of un-homeliness" (120). The contemporary life-style undergoes doubt, confusion, alienation and a sense of rejection and dejection. It is moving fast, towards the creation of an alienated and insular society and sensibility. The changes during the past few decades in the world of elites and in their intellectual world of ideas and in the physical world of man's environment have adversely affected the emotional personality who has become "mechanical in hand, head and heart" (Carlyle "The Signs of

The Time”). Writers like T.S.Eliot, W B Yeats, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Henry James, Graham Greene and others create and communicate the spiritual miasma of modern man and his sense of bondage in an empty, godless, ugly, corrupt and alien society. At the same time, such godless people try to gather up all the doubts and uncertainties of life with a view to assert an affirming faith in the face of identity crisis. Like these writers, Naipaul presents this dilemma and dubiety of man.

In the novel, the symbol of ‘houar’ focuses on the homelessness, rooflessness and rootlessness of Biswas. The novel also has an autobiographical touch; it marks a climax of the first phase of Naipaul’s literary life and career. It is the story of an unidentified and unexceptional man who is set apart. The novelist gives a certain identity to his protagonist at the time of his birth by naming him Mr.Biswas. He is born “unnecessary and unaccommodated” in a dark room. The work contains several references to the darkness which symbolically and suggestively signifies the inevitable and inscape gloomy and doomy, suffocating and stinking conditions of life. The world of Biswas is the world which hatefully demise all his attempts to assert and of ascertain his dignity and maintain his prestige and honour. Mr.Biswas resists rebels and revolts against social slavery and personal bondage. It provides the motivating thrust of the novel. It also gives a broader perspective to the colonial experience of a historically displaced and uprooted person who lives in a desolate and destitute society in a wasteland. In an adverse environment, his life undergoes the strife and struggle against the universal denial of his very existence. In this context, Bernard Krikler rightly remarked:

The book (the novel) is about Mohun Biswas’ will to make dent in the world, to leave behind him something of value in his case of a house. It is also about his effect and struggle to give his own life some shape and purpose and meaning, in a situation which from the first renders him most powerless to do so. (270)

The words of Biswas, “And I am going to get my own house” clearly express his keen needful desire to possess a house and redress his homelessness and helplessness. Unlike Ganesh in Naipaul’s book, *The Mystic Masseur*, Biswas does not allow himself to be caught into the trap of the world of material success. His problem is not just to live but to make for himself a world to live in. He goes in search of a house and gets one the Hanuman house and seeks fulfilment of his dreams in his marriage to Tulsi family’s dear darling daughter, Shama. He gets married into the prosperous and large Tulsi family, he feels his identity threatened. The Hanuman house is no house for him but is like a prison for him as Naipaul very aptly describes, “The concrete walls looked as they were as when the narrow doors of the Tulsi store on the ground floor were closed, the House; bulky impregnable and blanks.” (45). The problem of Biswas is the assertion of individuality amidst the stifling and oppressive Tulsi. It is also a significant aspect of the main theme of the novel which could be seen in Biswas’ quest for a house of his own. Thus, he rebels against the system of the Hanuman House which suggestively symbolizes chaos and confusion, disorder and disharmony,

traditionalism, cultural crisis, rites and rituals and subservience. He disapproves and challenges the Tulsis. He calls scornfully the Tulsi children as gods which is in a way disrespectful to dictatorial egotist Mrs. Tulsi: ridiculed Hari and onward, speaks English to show his disapproval of them; and poses his rejection by openly and overtly associating with Pankaj Rai and Nath's, the rivals of the Tulsis. Really, Biswas is a prisoner of his own aspirations and ambitions, failures and frustrations as Keith Garbian observed:

Empty of religion, which he frequently derided and of true creativity, Biswas is not simply a prisoner of the Tulsis or any other particular factor in his society. Rather he is the prisoner of his own passage on earth. His story is largely an odyssey of restless questioning, where the stifling locales (Pagotes, Arwacase, the chase, Green Vale, Short Hills, Sikkim Streets), are metaphors or analogues for his soul status. (492)

It is observed that Biswas is not only a victim of society but he is also a victim of his own self. His pride, sense of dignity and self respect and his education makes him look different from others. He wants to impose his own sense of balance on the world and makes use of his imagination to come to terms with the stark reality around him. His intellectual and sensitive qualities make him restless and infuse and inculcate in him the need to change his destiny. All his life he spends in dark and confined crowded rooms and he lives in dire poverty all forty. The people in diasporic conditions cannot liberate themselves from the emotions of alienation, identity crisis and rootlessness. In order to find delight Mr. Biswas shifts from village to town and he transplants himself to a nuclear family. But amidst all these things he tries to get an identity but cannot find happiness. Apart from Mr. Biswas, Seth, Mrs. Tulsi, widows at Hanuman House and Govind face the problems of alienation and rootlessness. But they try to overcome it by setting up a Hindu community and culture in Trinidad. Hence they are maintaining their Indian diaspora in Trinidad.

The metaphor of house in the novel becomes a symbol of identity and independence, individuality and freedom. The shabby barracks at Green Vale revived and renewed the ambition of Biswas pining for his own house. The symbolic significance of the house could be further marked in the doll's house that he bought for Savi at Christmas, to defy the Tulsi rule. The sight of rugged and ruined house next day enraged him and he brought Savi from the Hanuman House. Here Naipaul referred to the darkness and the dead trees, "the dead leaves suggest him life-in-death existence and him suppressed ambition. So, they walked the rest of the way to Green Vale, though the darkness and then below the dead trees to the barracks" (Naipaul, 222). His shift from one house to the other symbolized growth, movement change in the relationship of Biswas with his family. At last, he discovered his identity in his children as they were his real replica. He puts forth, "It is for children's sake that I am building it". But the pulls and pressures further aggravate so much so he suffers from nervous breakdown. His mental disturbance matches with disturbance in nature. The rain and thunder storm reduce his already half completed house to the 'Wallless, floorless and roofless' house. He remains homeless, helpless and hopeless. Here, Naipaul uses the imagery

of the black ants to heighten and sharpen the feeling of decay and death and to paint and present the gloomy picture of the futility of Biswas's aspirations.

Mr. Biswas' greatest victory lies in his decision to escape from the Tulsis. The new house he bought is the reflection of his craving for freedom and presents his wife and children with a new hope to live in self dependency and personal fulfillment. Biswas offers his nuclear family what he struggles to achieve during his entire lifetime. However he cannot taste the fruit of liberty and identity for a longtime but he is happy that he is the reason for the family's cheerfulness. All the same Mr. Biswas feels an unsafe life. It is worth mentioning that Mr. Biswas succeeds in his attempts to establish an identity though he buys a small and dirty house, thereby questioning the outermost systems which hinder people like him to live in the world. ■

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Female Writers in Fantasy : A Study of Select Writers and their Defining Works

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Feminism is basically a revolt against the age old tradition of discrimination against women. The feminists are very vocal about the need to reassess the status of women in the society and against the inferior treatment meted out to them. As in the different spheres of life, patriarchy prevails in literature as well. On one hand, we hail the books in the fantasy genre written by writers such as Lewis Carroll, C.S. Lewis, J.M. Barrie, and J.R.R. Tolkien as great classic pieces; at the same time, we fail to appreciate equally captivating and enchanting worlds created by the female authors. This paper attempts to bring forward a study of three such female authors who have contributed to this genre of fantasy fiction. The paper will also address their struggles and the discrimination that they faced in this male dominated world along with a commentary on their signature works.

Keyword: Fantasy Fiction, Female writers, Parallel world, Feminism, gender discrimination

The art of story-telling is as old as humanity itself, very much an essence of it. It is ingrained in our nature; everyone has a story to tell. Literature documents those stories which later on transform into a source of inspiration, excitement, knowledge, moral growth, spiritual reform and entertainment. The genre of Fantasy is one such sub-division of the wider domain of Literature which never fails to engage the readers. Notwithstanding the fact that women have never been credited for their sustained effort and endeavour to be credible story-tellers like their male counterparts, they have proved time and again that they are equally qualified in the art and technique of the mentioned departments. The present paper will attempt a study of such prominent female writers and their signature works in the field of fantasy fiction.

The first prominent name which comes to mind is that of the famous writer J.K. Rowling. Counted among the immensely successful writers of the contemporary period, she has achieved a unique status for herself. Her story resonates with that of the initial rejection that women face in general when they set a foot outside the household chores to

prove themselves. Despite braving the odds out there and coming-up with an overwhelming idea of the boy wizard who went on to attend the popular school of Witchcraft and Wizardry-Hogwarts, she was subjected to many denials in getting them published. Her being a woman, that too, a single parent was a big hindrance in her claim to fame in this highly patriarchal society. The fact that she was ready with an absolutely marvellous storyline did not matter much, what mattered was the destitute condition she was in. She was advised by one of her publishers to add an initial to her name which otherwise was just Joanne Rowling to make it J.K. Rowling. The reason for this was a general observation cited by the publisher that such a name would attract the boys as they were not much inclined towards works by female authors. Hence, the middle name Kathleen which Rowling borrowed from her grandmother, was inserted in her name. It has been more than two decades that the first Harry Potter book was published and the life history of the author has become as common as Harry Potter himself, still we do not see a decline in the popularity of the novels. Clearly, the female author of the magical series is as brilliant as any other male author of the time.

Harry Potter series chronicles the struggle and growth of the eponymous character through the course of seven novels, where each novel is concerned with a year spent in the special school of magic called Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, from his eleventh year to the seventeenth. The series captures the wildest limits of imagination so vividly that it does not appear to be made-up. At the heart of the story, lies the very conflict between good and evil; after years of confrontation, the saga culminates in the defeat of the evil. We find a lot of symbolism throughout the novels. The set-up is that of a parallel world co-existing with the normal world in which we live. We find the conveyance from one world to the other happening through special portals. Such commonplace things as a public toilet, an old Telephone booth, a Shabby Bar, are few examples of portals used in the book. There is magic everywhere; but even in that magical world we witness the same power struggle as we do in the real world, there is a discrimination based on the races here as well. The delineation of the characters is skilfully done and the plot is superbly created which retains the interest of the readers to the last words of the last novel, so much so, that the readers are left craving for more. The following line from Harry Potter could be considered as an important example of Rowling's writing style as it condenses a noble idea in the short space of a line that could be implemented as a mantra for leading our normal lives too.

"It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."(1)

This was one of the wise advices given by Professor Dumbledore to Harry, to guide him so that he utilizes his qualities in a positive way in order to help others and power should not be misused to treat others in an inferior way. But, when we examine on a wider scale, we find even in our real world, the piece of advice remains as much applicable. It clearly delves on the moral aspect of power.

Another prominent name which comes in this regard is that of the creator of the

monster in Frankenstein- Mary Shelley. Born as Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, she went on to marry the famous poet and one of the followers of her father, Percy Bysshe Shelley. On a surface level, her life would be the dreams of a common person; she had such influential people in her family. Apart from her husband, her mother was a prominent feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft, whereas her father was the great philosopher William Godwin. But the scenario within was quite the contrary, Mary Shelley had a tumultuous life. There were constant struggles in her life; be it coping with a new step mother as her own mother died during childbirth, or the relationship she had with the poet P B Shelley against her father's wishes, then the loss she suffered when the couple lost their three kids- one by one, and the final blow was the accidental drowning of her husband. In her last days, she had to bear with the physical pain because of the brain tumour she was diagnosed with. In spite of the losses and tragedy she endured, her claim of being a successful writer cannot be refuted. She has written several novels but her fame rests chiefly on the gothic story of Frankenstein, published in 1818, and continues to remain a bestseller even today. The novel is now considered as the pre-cursor of the Science Fiction novels. At the time of its release, the novel was subjected to harsh criticism, but once it was known that the author is a female, the criticism became much harsher and venomous, which shows how dubious our society is and how the patriarchal mind-set dominates all the fields of life. A woman coming from the privileged section of a developed society is not judged on the basis of her qualities rather on her gender. It was considered ruthless and inappropriate for a woman to think about such a horrific creature as presented in Frankenstein. Undoubtedly, a woman in the patriarchal set-up is not even allowed to think freely, and she is pronounced to be terrible and ridiculous for the display of same creativity which would accord someone from the male fraternity, the status of a genius and an innovator who likes to experiment.

Mary Shelley, as she herself has claimed, was pretty much inspired by the following quotation from Paradise Lost, in fact, the whole story-line of Frankenstein revolves round the ideas mentioned as under:

“Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay

To mould Me man? Did I solicit thee

From darkness to promote me?”(2)

The above lines constitute the subject matter of Frankenstein as revealed by the author herself who has quoted the lines on the cover page of the novel. The story which was an outcome of the challenge given by Lord Byron as to who amongst the three- Lord Byron himself, Mary and Percy Shelley, could write the best horror story. Mary's response to this challenge was the story of Frankenstein and hers was judged as the best of the three. The experiment with the plot and narrative where we have three narrators- Firstly, there is Victor Frankenstein, the creator of the monster; Secondly, Captain Robert Walton and third one was the Monster himself. The entire novel is epistolary in form; the frame narrative is done by Captain Walton who works as an explorer. He narrates the story while giving

information to his sister. The main plot of the story is related to an experiment which culminates in devastating consequences. The experiment was conducted by Viktor Frankenstein, who studied chemistry and other sciences at university. He tries to give life to lifeless things, the latest experiment was done on a dead body. Victor tries to instill life in a dead body which goes horribly wrong and results in the creation of a heinous creature. This monster is repelled by his creator who is shocked at what kind of abominable creature he had made. It becomes really problematic when the creature starts killing people. Even though, the creature had been given life by Victor, yet he is intelligent and capable of deceiving people. This is proved when he demands another creature like him should be created, his female counterpart so that he does not remain isolated and he promises that he will go to uninhabited place with his companion in peace. But, at the same time, he threatens him if he failed to make a partner for him, he would kill him as well as his loved one. Victor, at first agrees but later on thinks about how dangerous this could be for the whole race of humanity. So, he tears the other body apart and tries to flee the place. Here, he is reprimanded that on the wedding night, the monster will meet him. On the said date, the monster kills Victor's wife Elizabeth, and grins an evil grin while staring at his creator. As an aftershock of this, Victor's father dies and we find Victor pursuing the creature to destroy him. He follows him towards North Pole area, and dies before grabbing the main culprit because of excessive cold and exhaustion. The novel ends in the death of Victor Frankenstein. Even to the present day, the monster is mistakenly referred by the name of Frankenstein.

Last, but not the least, in my list is the famous American writer Robin McKinley. Acknowledged for her variety of novels and rewriting of the classical fairy tales with her own twist of a strong feminist view point. Her heroines are not those who consider themselves as superior or inferior to the men out there, rather they are as strong and intelligent as them. She does not let them play the "damsel in distress" types of characters who need saving and help from the so-called superior men; her heroines are free to decide whichever course they want to take in their lives. In fact, according to biographer Marilyn H. Karrenbrock,

"McKinley's females do not simper; they do not betray their own nature to win a man's approval. But neither do they take love lightly or put their own desires before anything else. In McKinley's books, the romance, like the adventure, is based upon ideals of faithfulness, duty, and honour."(3)

McKinley's celebrated work *The Blue Sword* and its prequel *The Hero and the Crown* define originality and add a new flavour to the genre of fantasy. Rarely, we get to observe a strong female character leading a crusade in the fantastical stories. In her *The Blue Sword*, we witness the character of Angharad "Harry" Crewe, who is a recently orphaned young woman when the narrative opens. Here, she is the one who takes the lead in the story. She is the chosen one who has to save the lives of the people of Damar, a fictional city facing the threat of the demonic Northerner tribes. The Damarians are different people with different customs and language. Harry learns the new language and custom, she develops the magical power within her and demonstrates warrior's skills. She is given

the Blue Sword which once belonged to the legendary Damarian heroine Lady Aerin. She is able to lead her people to victory in the end by defeating the Northerner tribes. The legendary Lady Aerin, bearer of the blue sword is the heroine of the prequel to The Blue Sword, titled as The Hero and the Crown, which was published in 1984. This novel details the chronicles of Lady Aerin; how she slays a dragon and helps restore the Hero's Crown. The story also focusses on the growth of her character from being a shy introvert to the exquisite warrior who saves the people of Damar. McKinley has a keen insight which she applies while assigning women centric characters and positions in the narrative in a judicious manner. It does not appear forceful at any moment, rather it is exceptionally delightful to observe women in prominent roles. And, it would not be an exaggeration to state that McKinley has gone out of the league to build a strong and exceptional world where female get ample of opportunities to showcase their capabilities, to establish the fact that even they can be the "Chosen One".

To conclude my paper, Literature takes a leading stand in proving that women are as capable as their male counterpart in all the arenas. We have so many examples of women doing exceedingly good in their respective fields, the genre of fantasy fiction is not an exception to this. The domain of literature contains several known and unknown female authors, that does not mean women are incapable of producing quality work, especially in the realm of fantasy fiction; some are acknowledged and appreciated while others remain unnoticed like a flower which is "*born to blush unseen, and wastes its sweetness on the desert air*"(4). Such gifted writers as J.K. Rowling, Mary Shelley, Robin McKinley prove the point effectively. There is indeed no dearth of talent, the need is to let the females work freely, without any curtailment, so that they work without pressure or any gender bias or prejudice. If we facilitate our women as the men are already, definitely, we can expect some extra-ordinary work which will truly spread magic all around and enrich the human experience with regards to fantasy fiction, because they will add their own "womanly" construct to it. The magical words in this respect are: to provide equal opportunity to the fairer sex without any sort of biases so that we are able to enjoy more fantastical worlds created by the "creators" themselves. ■

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Pain as an Incomparable Experience: Exploring the Subjectivity of Trauma through Maya Angelou's *When I Think About Myself* and Sylvia Plath's *Mad Girl's Love Song*

Manisha Shrestha

Maya Angelou (1928-2014) and Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) lived around the same time, during the same historical events, in America. However, due to the difference in their cultural origins, and due to their personal psychology, they experienced the time, their lives, and their traumas differently. While on the surface one might find a clear divide, the pain that underlies their existence and their work bind them indistinguishably. This paper would seek to study and explain this thread that binds these artists, women and all people together. It seeks to explore trauma as an individual and subjective response to objective realities.

Keywords: *American, African American, Trauma, Poetry, Identity, Self*

Introduction

Maya Angelou and Sylvia Plath are two eminent American writers, born on the 4th April, 1928 October and the 27th, 1932 respectively. Both, Plath and Angelou lived through the same historical time but they experienced them differently due to their origins and cultural backgrounds. Literature and psychology are closely connected and like R. Wellek and A. Warren believed if one wants to analyse a literary work, one must analyse “the author’s personality, the way a certain literary work was made” (Emir 51). Therefore, any study concerning the works, especially of the poets under discussion requires adequate knowledge into their lives.

The word “trauma” is originally a Greek word that plainly means “wound”. From the physiological perspective, the word means a wound or a rupture that disables the normal functioning of the human organ. From a psychological perspective, however, it signifies a state of emotional shock which scars the psyche of an individual. When one discusses trauma, one primarily focuses on the preliminary consequence of the same – PTSD (Post

traumatic Stress Disorder). A traumatic event causes biological and psychological alterations in a person. Freud says trauma results from an extensive breach that is made in the protective shield by an external stimuli. While some create an intense image of the reality and drown in the depth of depression, others fight the natural, current and rise out of it in flames of glory. They are re-born to new life and vigour. Trauma is, however, a subjective reaction to objective events.

Studying Trauma in Angelou's "When I Think About Myself"

In one of her famous poems, "When I Think About Myself", Angelou essentially presents the problem of racism. While doing so, she brings to light the years of torment and trauma that her community underwent at large, and also presents her own trauma. Angelou lived through the troubled period of remorseless segregation.

In the poem, Angelou, assumes the voice of the Black community as a whole, not just through her narrative technique and the point of view she speaks from, but also through the unabashed usage of African-American English. As, in *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*, Kali Tal says, "Bearing witness is an aggressive act" (Tal 6). After the unfortunate divorce of her parents, Angelou lived with her grandmother in Stamps – one of the regions that was infested with prejudice and abuse against those of her community. She watched helplessly as little white girls giggled while they abused her dear grandmother – Annie Henderson, at her own store. She was surrounded by instances of lynching of the members of her community. In her famous autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, she says,

In Stamps the segregation was so complete that most Black children didn't really, absolutely know what whites looked like. Other than they were different, to be dreaded, and in that dread was included the hostility of the powerless against the powerful, the poor against the rich, the worker against the worked for and the ragged against the well dressed (sic).(*Collected Autobiographies of Maya Angelou*24)

The Black community has a long history of oppression and subjugation. Even the passing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, the Blacks continued to be treated differently, lowly and as undeserving of human dignity. The bitter blend of helplessness, agony, rage and sarcasm Angelou uses in the poem, speaks of the burdensome, age old humiliation that the community underwent as a whole for being who they are. The work is filled with symbols, images and scenes from moments of abuse that the Blacks underwent. Like in most of her works, even in this poem, she "speaks out the survival, development, and actualization of African-American people confronted by the Anglo-American cultural hegemony with the best of words she can summon" (Du 1).

She speaks of the "great big joke" (*Maya Angelou: The Complete Poetry* 29) that their life was turned into, because of the systematic oppression that her community had

undergone in the past, and continued to undergo. The intensity with which the indignity she had faced as a child made Angelou believe that maybe “God was white too” (*Collected Autobiographies of Maya Angelou* 42). The usage of antithetical ideas only further heightens the pang of pain. She speaks of their lives as “adance that’s walked / a song that’s spoke” (*Maya Angelou: The Complete Poetry* 29).

In the second stanza, Angelou presents a scene wherein a Black woman must work at a White residence as a domestic help. Due to the cultural, social and therefore, economic discrimination, the Blacks, would require to work in the houses of the White community irrespective of their wish. They were often asked to tend to the children of the house, who would often mirror their parents and slap abuses at them. “The child I work for calls me girl” (29), she writes.

The poem progresses from a choke to the speaker, laughing hard enough for her stomach to ache, to her starting to cry. Every verse ends with the refrain – “when I think about myself” (*Maya Angelou: The Complete Poetry* 29), suggesting an inability to think anything else. There is a repetition of thought. One of the primary effects of PTSD is being flooded with uncontrolled memories. In the book *Upside*, Jim Rendon says, “these memories, full of dense information and thick with emotion, are much stronger than normal memories” (Rendon 49). There are instances of flashbacks, and a sense of immense powerlessness, which she presents to the readers, wrapped as a contorted, and bitterly sarcastic poem.

However, regardless of living through traumas through her life, Maya Angelou is one of the most inspirational individuals that the world was fortunate to witness. Emerging from the dark, swimming across turbulent oceans, she rose like dust to create an unforgettable history. Separated from her divorced parents at a young age, living in a racist environment, getting sexually assaulted, surviving broken marriages, living through pain and poverty and some, fortunately, short-lived compromising professions, surviving the agony of seeing her son meet with a devastating accident with a recovery process that was as slow and discouraging as it was, she thrived as a singer, dancer, producer, screen-play writer, actor, feminist, apartheid activist and literary writer. Every time pain pulled her to the ground she bounced back, higher. Her confessional works stand testimony to this.

Studying Trauma in Plath’s “Mad Woman’s Love Song”

Sylvia Plath was a white woman living during the same historical period. It was due to her cultural background that kept her immune from the social and cultural torments that Angelou underwent. However, there were other reasons that scared Plath. She was an over-thinker with a sensitive heart but with a logical mind. Every incident that she witnessed directly or lived, left an indelible mark on her mind. In her journals, Plath recalls herself to be a fanciful girl, who believed in fairies and magic. However, when she got introduced with loss and death with the unfortunate and sudden death of her father, she, tragically, metamorphosed into the lady who found companionship in darkness and other disturbing muses. The control of her mother sought to have on her, and for her, made her desire for

freedom direly. Her inability to structure this void inside her mind and correctly comprehend its existence consequently led it to silently bloom into a chaotic passion. She became a victim of bipolar disorder. “The mind makes and makes, spinning its web” (Plath, *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* 286), she had written.

Perfection became her substitute for love, and creativity became her cathartic companion. When life denied it to her, she gladly sought it in death, which, for her, was the only means for perfection. Plath subsequently ended her own life at the age of thirty, as a heartbroken woman – pained and lonely, after the unfaithfulness of her husband, Ted Hughes, and his having left her with two children – one, who was then, one year old, and the other, who was just some months old.

Her life is coloured in shades of grey – the colour of paradox, that is neither white nor black and yet both. It is a colour of dullness, of timelessness and the colour of depression. A series of destined encounters, obsessions and losses break her inch by inch while building her up at her creative end. While many critics fiercely argue that Plath’s life is more than just her death, and the perspective that her works and all her massive literary effort is nothing more than a mere psychological error, is natural. However, her works are indisputably confessional and thus open to perspectives that the researchers and critics choose to view it from. In her research work, Anumarla Govindan writes,

While she benefited from all her literary elders in learning the nuances of the craft, she was also faced with the problem of finding her own voice to express the traumatic experiences of her personal life.
(Govindan 19)

Her poem, “Mad Girl’s Love Song”, grapples with the themes of heartbreak and depression. In her journals, Plath says that when a date – Mike (Myron Lote), had made her wait for long, that she found inspiration for this poem. However, the poem, while begins from one event, seems to grow deeper and touches various of her poems, “Mad Girl’s Love Song”, grapples with the themes of heartbreak and depression. In her journals, Plath says that when a date – Mike (Myron Lote), had made her wait for long, that she found inspiration for this poem. However, the poem, while begins from one event, seems to grow deeper and wider.

The work is a villanelle, that deals with the themes of isolation, denial, love, madness and disillusionment. The refrain, “I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead.... I think I made you up inside my head” (*All Poetry*) runs through the work. It were as if the speaker is in a state of trance that she fails to come back from. Through the work, the speaker continuously disengages from reality and drifts away.

Various critics have pointed out that while it was a man who inspired the poem, the “lover” in the poem might not be a “lover” at all. It is believed to be a symbol for her father. It could even be ‘Hope’. The source, or person or occurrence that truly causes her such a

trauma is discussed to be one or the other, however, the effect which it had on her stays constant and therefore, undeniably true. In trauma studies, the word trauma is not associated with the event in particular but the effect it has on one. It is not incidents but interpretations that the study is associated with.

She speaks of the stars that waltz away. The choice of the word “waltz” is significant here. It is a dance form that is usually done in pairs. Plath speaks of the loss of light, of hope from her. She perceives them as stars, but those that dance away from her in pairs as an “arbitrary darkness” gallops at her while she watches it all, with helplessness and a deep sense of loneliness.

The religious, apocalyptic scene she brings forth in one of the stanzas, presents a grim image wherein, for her, the order of the world has toppled over. “God topples from the sky, hell’s fires fade” (*All Poetry*), she says. One of the primary effects of PTSD, is losing any sense of oneself, or of the world, or one’s place in it. According to Sigmund Freud, trauma is a reaction to the painful, repeated reminisced event which splits the psyche. He considered trauma to be an external stimulus that was instrumental in causing a negatively overwhelming affective experience, which could shape or rather, disfigure one’s identity. When an incident shatters one’s bubble of certainty and security, the traumatised person loses grip over meaning, and therefore, depending on their individual resilience, slips into an abyss. In their chapter, “Trauma as a Crisis of Meaning”, Debra Kaminer and Gillian Eagle write, “Trauma can have an impact on our belief and meaning systems that goes beyond trying to develop an explanation for why the trauma happened”.

The speaker constantly juggles between the past and the present and is unable to let go, causing her to drown perpetually, in an ocean of memories that come lashing on. She seems to be struggling with incessant and passionate flashbacks, and a tearing sense of pain that can neither be ignored nor be handled. There is a constant intrusion of the past in the present, just like that of in Angelou’s “When I Think About Myself”. This, however, causes her to desperately seek to escape it all and sink a state of nothingness. She wishes to have fallen in love with a thunderbird instead, which is a symbol of lightening, thunder, of life and rebirth.

Placing the Events of Traumatic Side by Side

Angelou and Plath faced various events in their life. Due to their cultural differences, in spite of living through the same period in history, they experienced it differently. While Plath underwent the loss of a dear parent at a young age, Angelou and her brother had to face the wrath of their parents’ divorce by being sent away to the ruthlessly segregated region of Stamps. While Angelou underwent personal and collective trauma of humiliation due to racism, Plath was eventually separated from the sole place where she felt she belonged – the sea. While Angelou was raped at a very young age by her mother’s boyfriend – Mr. Freeman, Plath faced the chaos of her mind for years and years. While Angelou lived for years, in search of a home in a person, Plath was betrayed by her husband – Ted Hughes,

who chose Assia Wevill instead of her and left her with two minor children. Plath utters, “my whole being has grown and interwound so completely with Ted’s that if anything were to happen to him, I do not see how I could live. I would either go mad, or kill myself” (Sharif 11). However, Angelou could triumph over pain and rise as one of the most inspiring women that the world witnessed, Plath succumbed to it, and ended her life at the age of 30.

Conclusion

When an event or an occurrence shakes the foundation of one’s illusion of security it causes them a varying amount of shock, depending on their individual levels of resilience. Despite the differences of circumstances, different kinds of trauma, different contexts of their poems, different themes in their works, personal or universal intent, the fact that one rose from it and one drowned in it. It is undeniably a fact that both of these women experienced pain / trauma of unimaginable degree.

While it is true that the ‘ritual uses the logics of trauma within a “controlled setting” in order to provoke a profound change in the person’ (Strum 29), trauma itself is an experience that is subjective in nature. Trauma is an incomparable concept and as Lacan believed, all beings are, in fact, shaped by their personal traumas. One could look at events and place them in hierarchies, however, the pain that any event causes a person and the trauma one is forced to live with is a subjective experience that can only be empathised with. For no matter what the cause is the pain remains valid, true and unmistakably agonising to the traumatised persons. ■

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Book Review

Devi: The Boundless – A Daughter’s Inward Journey

Novel in Translation |

M A Susila (Tamil original) | Translated by V Kadambari

Emerald Publishers, Chennai | 2020 | ISBN 9789389080582 | ₹ 220 | pp 191

-Dr. Prakash Bhadury, Assistant Professor of English.

Brilliantly narrated, *Devi: The Boundless* displays M A Susila’s gift of storytelling that shuttles between the past and present, pre and post-independence period of time, adversities and aspirations, setbacks and new hopes, and prejudices and assertion of identity and that makes for seamless narrative of a brave woman’s distinct journey in modern India whose life is at once shocking, yet reverential as she refused to be lost into the crowd of ordinary, into the timid and docile.

Yadumagi, the original novel in Tamil, is, as the translator notes: ‘the fictional autobiography/Biography to recover the past and to pass on the lessons to the future’. The author, M A Susila, a former professor of Tamil is well known translator and author of Tamil literature; her short stories have been translated into various languages and bagged her international honour. When the book is read, it takes a reader through the fragrance of night queen at karaikudi to the unstoppable Ganga at Rishikesh via the tortuous journey of life of Devi in between that marks her indomitable will to brave all the adversities against women in our society and her recovery from the sordid past to glorious future that reverberates within as a source of strength for whoever reads her story.

The translator, V. Kadambari, was a Professor of English, Ethiraj College, Chennai and later, headed the Gender Studies in Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development. As a noted translator already, through the present book, she has helped disseminating the unparalleled richness of Tamil literature to the world by breaking the linguistic boundary. The very first reading leaves the impression that she has unlocked the thought processes of Tamil version and locked them into English making the translation perfectly cultural and distinctively creative. The boundary between the two versions might be too thin to be seen.

The story is narrated through Charu who observes her mother, Devi’s mysterious life who would have been buried into oblivion, yet like the night queen, who blossomed without

anybody's knowledge; who shaped her personality and now it is the time to unfold the petals of her frozen life, hence, Devi, the boundless. The story glides through skillfully varied sequence of time, beginning from the description of Devi's role as the headmistress of a school, her home and flower garden at Karaikudi in 1967 in which the narrator makes sense of her mother's concealed emotions, mysterious moments of shocks and surprises that lay frozen and that begins to unfold, to the bank of the Ganga at Rishikesh, in 2013 where Charu recalls Devi's death due to heart attack and seventy-five years of her life's journey of recovered past.

Devi, the Tamil Brahmingirl was the victim of child marriage; she lost her husband at the age of nine, even before knowing the meaning of marriage and was sent to the ice-house, a shelter for widowed women where she continued in whitesari, tonsured head, dry drab life of stoic suffering for absolutely no fault of hers. Her orthodox grandmother arranged her marriage for the crude belief that a girl is someone's else's property hence, no need of education! She missed two years of studies but with the support of her father and brother she could continue her aim as she knew that education was her sword in her battle ahead. She bore the brunt of such comment: "Are you going to make this widow a collector (p.90)?" But in her inner core, she is a Vedanti and a pragmatist both at a time that shine through her detachment to all that she does with the exception that she is attached to the noble cause for others what engaged her helping the poor students in education, arranging meals for poor girls, helping in getting jobs and supporting all whoever was around her, no matter she was cheated or scorned on occasions during her intercourse of life.

Finally, at Rishikesh in a somber ambience, Charu recalls so many hidden facts of Devi's life known from her twin-like colleague, Sylvia who gave hints of seven decades of Devi's war against society, for her firmness of purpose, her iron will and indomitable spirit to face all challenges. Devi's war and victory is every woman's war and victory; she would ever shine in the firmament of all brave women who found life against all odds. She flows without turning to look back. ■

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