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papers. ■

Editor speaks.....

It is high time the focus of the critics
and research scholars shifted from urban/
metropolitan to rural/tribal or Adivasi
literature. The forces of the urbanisation, print
culture and commercialisation have resulted not
only in keeping the Adivasi communities
marginalised but also have adversely affected
their languages and literary cultures. Tribes in
India are still thousand miles away from the
mainstream of the society: the urban and
metropolitan. However, it should not be pushed
to oblivion that the roots of Indian literary
tradition lies in the rich oral literature of the
tribes/Adivasi/Banavasi. Their verses, in the
form of songs or chantings are expressions of
their existence and close connection with their
soil and the world of nature. The folktales, songs
and literature have been orally transmitted from
one generation to another and survived for ages
in the face of several threats like modernisation
and advancement in various fields. Yes, we have
achieved materialistic prosperity but on the other
hand become aesthetically bankrupt to
appreciate the undying beauty of the unwritten
literature by making proper study. It is a pity that
a large number of folktales of the tribes, in other
words their rich literature are already lost due
to the very fact that those are in oral forms.

Hence, attempts must be made with
concerted efforts at an accelerated pace for
collection and conservation of tribal languages
and their rich literature that are under serious
threats. We may lose an invaluable part of our
history and rich literary heritage in case we fail
to document the tribal history, literature that are
in oral forms.

So, there is an urgent need to create a
space for the study of tribal literature within the
canonised written texts. Identifying and reading
literature in which orality is not dismissed as
casual utterances in different dialects need to
be ensured.

'Rock Pebbles' has been constantly
trying to publish research works on marginal
literature, Adivasi/Banabasi and other socially
vulnerable people of the country.

Our heart-felt gratitude to the scholars,
literature enthusiasts and well wishers for their
unconditional support to make the journal a
'Rock of Gibraltar'.

- Chief Editor

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The Politics of Gender and Girish Karnad's Treatment of Female Characters in his Major Plays

Arati Sinha

Ever since the spread of feminism as a universal and revolutionary literary and critical ideology, existing and contemporary literature have been reevaluated from this point of view. Among Indian writers, the prominent dramatist, theatre activist and actor, Girish Karnad has clearly established himself as a spokesperson of the politics of gender equality, secularism and social justice through his numerous plays and talk shows. Indian women inspired him to make them the pivot of his dramatic plot. By manipulating and transforming the ancient Indian myths and folklores he has succeeded in creating archetypal feminine characters who dazzle the audience/ readers by their strong power and intent of realizing their natural desire. They come before us, as individuals who are not scared of breaking away the shackles of patriarchy. The article intends to evaluate some of the important plays of Karnad from this point of view.

Keywords: - Feminism, Patriarchy, Sexuality, Individuality, Tradition, Gender, etc.

With the advent of feminism as a global and revolutionary ideology, the practice of reading became an exercise in examining the gender relations that prevail in society. The influential feminist critic, Elaine Showalter has already established how gender and politics have become two important factors in determining the value of women's experiences, interests, rights and position in society.

The factors not only seek but force to shift the position of women from object to one of subject and agents of change in an otherwise patriarchal and sexist social set-up. Traditional notion of female politics is thus redefined and even male writers take lead in treating and portraying it from a revolutionary angle. Among the Indian writers, Girish Karnad has indeed taken the cudgel to voice on the politics of gender, secularism, social justice and equality. Throughout his plays that he wrote over 60 years of his career, we can look for inspiration and enjoyment on these issues.

As a writer, theatre activist and film actor, Girish Karnad holds an important and esteemed place in the annals of post-1950 new Indian English drama. With deep insight

into the rich tradition of ancient Greek and Indian mythological drama, and innovative approaches towards the modern European drama he has breathed new life to the genre of post-independence Indian drama in English. Following in the tradition of Ibsen, Beckett, Ionesco, Eugene O’Neil, Tennessee Williams, and, Vijay Tendulkar and Mahesh Dattani, Karnad’s plays have shown widespread awareness towards contemporary issues and their address in novel ways. He has made good use of popular rhymes, quotes and proverbs and folk-lore in giving local as well as universal appeal and performative capacity to his dramas. In the odd stories taken from the Mahabharata in Yayati, the historical legend of Tughlaq, the snake myth of Naga-Mandala, the myth of transposed head in Hayavadana, other historical plays like Tale-Danda and Crossing to Talikota etc, Karnad has given new twist and interpretation to deal with and negotiate contemporary Indian realities. The struggle for existence faced by the pre-independence Indian dramatists (V.Bhave, A.Kirloskar, M.M Dutt) sensitized appeal out of folk-lore indigenous mythological and historical issues.

Unlike so many male writers of his generation Karnad chose to articulate his politics of gender through the female characters with whom he peopled his stage. He has a mind to give his female characters not simply a voice but also a narrative nudge so much so that they are not only crucial to the development of the plot but also capable of announcing the ideology of the dramatist about the world in which we live. Consequently they present the view of a better world in which women can live as equals. However brief their appearance may be in the plays, his women characters are typically independent in mind and action, even when they are confined within the stifling environment of patriarchal structures. They attract the readers/audience as strong individuals with instinctive impulse ready to rebel against the oppressive patriarchy. Though taken from the traditional sources they appear different from the present day modern educated and so called empowered women. They are very decisive, firm and do not seem to suffer from any kind of inhibitions when it comes to go against the societal norms. From the Queens of medieval period in his historical plays to contemporary women like Manjula in ‘A Heap of Broken Images’ and Vidula in ‘The Wedding Album’ these women characters act with a consciousness of their own power and the clear intent of fulfilling their ambitions and desires. Through them, Karnad succeeds in transforming archetypes into individuals. Their ultimate metaphorosis becomes an experience to the audience.

When observed carefully the women character drawn from minor stories in epics, as well as folk-tales as presented in the plays Hayavadana and Nagamandala, and the Fire and The Rain go through the three stages of ‘Feminine, Feminist and Female’ phase; social and cultural passivity (as described by Elaine Showalter) finally to emerge as individuals sure of themselves. Visakha in ‘The Fire and the Rain’ and Sharmishtha in ‘Yayati’ even go further in using their bodies in order to avenge their past humiliation. The next two plays ‘Hayavadana’ and ‘Nagamandala’ are radical in approach as Karnad depicts female sexual desire as central to the dynamic development of the plot in them. In both these plays, the love-sex triangle between two men and one woman move around the pivot of the female

desires. Cunning Padmini and innocent Rani are motivated by same thing to secure the sexual pleasure they have discovered accidentally with men who are not their husbands. To enjoy this new found pleasure they are ready to do whatever it takes and exploit and explore everything that the divine power has given them. This is something new and path -breaking for women confined within gender roles and patriarchal boundaries. What is more radical is the way Girish Karnad has depicted the sexuality of Padmini and Rani, without being judgmental on their characters. In fact, the dramatist has ensured that we are sympathetic and understanding as to what they want and the means they use to get it.

In ‘Nagamandala’ Rani is trapped in a meaningless marriage and her husband Appana, the typical dominating husband has no love for her. However, the demure, unquestioning and shaky Rani, once she enters into conjugal relationship with Naga thinking that it is her husband Appana; towards the end, emerges as an extremely bold person who knows her mind without any regrets. She tells her husband:

“I was a stupid, ignorant girl when you
Brought me here. But now I am a woman,
A wife and I am to be a mother. I am
Not a parrot, a cat or a sparrow.”(NP.)

Similarly in ‘Hayavadana’ Padmini is courageous enough to defy the conventional norms in order to get what she wants. Despite being married to the scholarly Devadutta she is attracted towards his friend Kapila who is the embodiment of virility and physical strength. Her desire of getting a “complete man; a combination of physical strength and intelligence” makes her create what she wants. Given the super- natural ability she interposes the head of Devadutta and Kapila and gets what she desired. Her pursuit for perfection does not stop here. When she realizes that the body of Kapila is behaving according to the govern of Devadutta’s mind she is disillusioned. She never wanted that, but she is not ready to compromise. In her death her firm will is asserted which is not ready to live with both kapila and Devadutta.

In the play ‘The Fire and The Rain’ Vishakha is another strong character who is not ready to sacrifice her youth and sexual desire at the altar of traditional and cultural rites. when her husband Parvasu all of a sudden leaves her to appease therein gods, she is left alone to confront her sexually frustrated father -in -law. In these circumstance, when her first love Tavakri comes back into her life, she does not hesitate to violate the social code in order to renew her longed relationship with him. Her strength and individually comes to the fore when she confronts her husband Parvashu:

“I was sure you wouldn’t ever come if
I were on my death-bed. But my fornication
was reason enough, wasn’t it?”

Visakha’s candid acceptance shows her strong mind which is powerful enough to go against the norms.

Even in the play *Bali*, the furtive love scenes in a temple between the sophisticated Queen and a lowly elephant driver is expressive of her yearnings for a stranger outside the confines of the palace and her role as the Queen who must produce the male heir. Though she loved her compassionate and gentle husband, her instinctive sexual desire forces her to establish extra-marital relationship. In the end, this young woman who was committed to non-violence shows her mettle by killing herself instead of performing the ceremonies that will cleanse her of the inexcusable sin of adultery. She successfully presents arguments against the denial and erasure that expiation implies. By her refusal to undergo the rites of expiation she stresses the point that the experience and pleasure she received from her sexual transgression are not regrettable to her at all. The point is that in all these plays, it is the innate sexual desire of the women characters that propels the plot and creates the dramatic tension on the stage. All these women break-away from conventional social boundaries and seek both love and pleasure outside the family. Besides, another noticeable point is that in each of these plays the pleasure partner that the woman choose for herself is profoundly the “other”—the non Brahmin friend, the supernatural snake, the lowly elephant driver (the mahout). Together with it Karnad also puts his fingers on the burning issues of caste and gender in the same go. Surely, he is talking about the politics of upliftment and empowerment of the most vulnerable and suppressed members of society.

All these plays are based upon classical myth or popular folklores but Karnad has inverted the Image of traditional women from a passive receptor to that of archetypal women full of strong individuality and assertive nature. These women are ahead of the modern women who do not seek redressal from the system but create possibilities outside it for themselves. Though Chitrlekha in ‘*Yayati*’ commits suicide, she becomes a vehicle to demand the rights of woman who are crushed in the patriarchal order. Before taking her life she did not hesitate to blame her sensual father-in-law, king Yayati that;

“you have got an idiot as your
son on whose shoulders you have
transferred the burden of your
sins and then you come to give
me lectures on duties of a female
as a woman and wife. (p .81)

“*Yayati* happens to be the earliest play of Karnad but his politics of gender vis-a-vis woman’s place and treatment in society has been set rolling from his very first play.

In his historical play “*Tughlaq*,” though the only important female character is the step mother of the Sultan and she has a brief role to play yet it has been presented in a positive and forward light. First of all she is not like a typical scheming step mother but a strong and understanding woman who is concerned both for the welfare of the kingdom as well as the king. She can feel that Nazib is misguiding the Sultan so takes the strong step of getting him murdered. She even counselled the sultan against the idea of introducing copper

currency. She was apprehensive that instead of reviving the economy of the kingdom it will encourage corruption. It is another matter that her lone voice dies in the cacophony of corrupt ulemas and noblemen and she is put to death. But in the end Tuglaq realizes his blunder and becomes stunned. He can cry only for God's mercy now. In 'Tale Danda' Karnad focuses on one of the most critical issues correlated with the class and caste system. Basavanna's fight against caste, class, religion, gender and inequality; though defeated because of lack of unity and faith among his followers – sharnas/ lingayats is successful in leaving everlasting impression on people's mind. Karnad made it apparent how in the medieval India, during the early days of Dalit Mobilization, marriage was an essential strategy to recognize the rank, Immaculacy and woman's sexuality. Another pertinent question that the playwright raises through a female Sharana' is that whether a low caste boy who is very happy when offered a girl of upper caste will be as happy if he is to accept a girl lower in rank than his? The point that Karnad highlighted through this drama is that not only upper caste but even lower caste people are also conscious of rank when they are negotiating marriage. Actually he wants to say that the process of social change cannot be made possible through an overnight revolution. That way it may end in bloodshed and die prematurely. First we have to educate people and then prepare the ground for change.

In his 2004 play 'A Heap of Broken Images' Manjula Nayak is presented as a strong confident and bold woman writer who is not afraid to upset others with her frank opinions. Outwardly she comes as a confident woman but inwardly she suffered from a sense of abandonment from her parents on account of her specially-abled sister. She is continuously trying to hide her lifelong envy for her sister resulting into dual personality - one for public and one for reality. Her act of repression of her real feelings turns her into a heap of broken Images. Together with this Issue of identity crisis of a woman, the theme of importance of English language over vernacular languages is also raised through her profession as a writer.

Through the character of Vidula Nadkarni in *The Wedding Album*, Karnad raises the Issue, how urban elite families consider it a prestige issue to have a NRI Son-in-law. Vidula is happy enough to marry an unknown boy from USA through arranged marriage. But the boy is a typical male who flaunts before her that he had a number of girl-friends but when it came to marriage he opted for a "cultured" Indian girl who will agree to his terms and conditions of marriage. The double standards of society for a male and female are quite revolting and unacceptable to a truly educated mind. The vanity and anxiety of urban elite girls like Vidula, torn between internet cafes and tradition are satirically presented by the dramatist.

Thus Karnad's plays looked from a feminist point of view depict a psychological phenomenon instead of sociological. He takes the issues of existential and adjustment problem of Indian women. The mute miseries and helplessness, the rebellion and breaking away from patriarchal boundaries, the essential dream, desires and sexual needs and last but not the least, the Quest for Identity and self-hood for millions of women are given a poignant

and sympathetic projection by Girish Karnad. His gender politics and feminine sensitization as such had started from his very first play. ■

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Jayanta Mahapatra, Nissim Ezekiel and A.K.Ramanujan : the Trio in Indian English Poetry

Basudeb Chakraborti

The theme I intend to pursue in this article is to explore the possibilities of considering Jayanta Mahapatra, Nissim Ezekiel and A. K. Ramanujan as a Trio of Indian poets in English like the Trio of Indian Novelists in English, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan. I will first refer to the meaning of the word 'Trio' and then to some common characteristic features of these three novelists and finally shift my attention to the Trio of Indian poets in English.

A trio is a bunch of three people as one, especially musicians or singers, or a group of performers or writers or poets or playwright that have something in general. The saying, something in general is important. When we think of Indian literature written in English, we naturally remember three novelists and they are Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan. One of the major reasons to address these three novelists, as the Trio, is that there must be certain similarities in their works. Before exploring these similarities among these three novelists and my specific attempt to research and to finally establish three Indian poets, Jayanta Mahapatra, Nissim Ezekiel and A.K. Ramanujan as the Trio of Poets in Indian poetry in English, I am looking into the scenarios of the Indian Nationalism and the role of Mahatma Gandhi in India's Freedom struggle.

The growth of Indian novels written in English in the twentieth century was a phenomenon. This was due to the freedom movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Indeed the struggle for Independence both violent and non-violent inspired all Indians to stand united against the Colonial rule in India. Indeed the Indian nationalism at the conceptual level was in existence even at the time of the Sipoy Mutiny against the British in 1857. To our Colonial Masters it was the Sipoy Mutiny but to Indians it was our first National movement for Independence. Nationalism is based on 'modernising force' of a nation. It is a fact that the colonial masters helped Indians to be familiar with the Western philosophy, the Western art and literature and Western concept of democracy. I refer to Jeremy Bentham who says Democracy is for "the greatest good of the greatest number of people". I refer to Edmund Burke's *Speech on Conciliation to America*. Lord Macaulay led the Anglicists and he established English education in India. Mohan Ramanujan says:

English was seen then as a modernising force and naturally the colleges and other educational institutions set up in the nineteenth century, notably Hindu College, were centres of radical and progressive thought. To give an idea of the intellectual climate, one could, perhaps, consider Henry Derozio's career.

Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan are called the trio of the Indian novelists who write in English. One major trend that unites among the trio of twentieth century novelists is that these three novelists Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan are inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of life. A study of Anand's novels shows that Anand champions the underdog and the oppressed people of Indian society. He delineates the indescribable sufferings of the have-nots of the Indian society in his novels. That the caste-divided Indian society is a hindrance to the formation of Indian nationhood is perhaps the sub-text of Mulk Raj Anand's novels.

Untouchable is a potent condemnation of the evils of the degenerated Untouchable and distorted orthodoxy. Bakha is an 18 year old boy, one of the sons of Lakha, the Head sweeper. Bakha's day begins with the work of latrine cleaning. He is an efficient sweeper. How the caste divided Indian society inflicts pains upon this poor Bakha has been photographically delineated by Mulk Raj Anand in this novel.

Raja Rao in his novels shows how Gandhiji's principle of non-violence helps Indians fight against the colonial rule in India. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* is an Indian Novel in English that delineates the model of Non-violence as the solid foundation of achieving the aim of decolonising India from the colonial rule. The theme of *Kanthapura* may be summed up as 'Gandhi and our village', but the style of narration makes the book 'more a Gandhi *Purana* than a piece of mere fiction'. Gandhi is the unnoticed God, Moorthy is the perceptible avatar. The reign of the Red men is *Asuric* rule, and it is resisted by the *Devas*, the *Satyagrahis*. The characters sharply divide into two camps: the Rulers and their supporters on the one hand and the *Satyagrahis* and their sympathizers on the other. (This idea is taken from Srinivasa Iyengar, p. 391)

The imaginary locale of the story is a tiny village in South India. It is 'Kanthapura'. This small village represents the whole of India. One can have the glimpses of the Indian struggle for Independence and the Indian philosophy of life through what happens at this tiny and obscure village. The novel is also a comment on the widespread caste system in Indian society. Gandhiji's believed that Caste system in Indian society is inhuman and barbarous and he believed that this caste system is detrimental to the growth of the country. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* has the quality of an epic in prose. *The Serpent and the Rope* has the quality of an encyclopaedia. The novel, *The Serpent and the Rope*, autobiographical in nature, shows novelist's conscious shift of attention from the Gandhism to *Vedanta* *bad*, from freedom narrative to metaphysical fiction.

R.K.Narayan has a deep rooted commitment to the ancient Indian heritage. Conservatism which is the kernel of the Hindu religion in general and the Brahminical cult

in particular and the zeal for reforms, both are contrasted in Narayan's novels. A modern man who visit foreign countries several times in his life time and at the same time an Indian, championing the values of ancient Indian heritage, Narayan ultimately bends towards the India past. R.K.Narayan's novels represent 'Indianness'. We find in him two opposite views on life— one is his intellectually realized modern views on life and the second is his emotional faithfulness to the Hindu attitude to life which Narayan inherits from his orthodox Brahmin family. Finally the second one triumphs over him. And his novels are the reflection of this triumph.

The Vendor of Sweets shows how the protagonist finally eschews the modern life suggested by his son and takes refuge in the mystic world. Jagan in *The Vendor of Sweets* becomes a worst suffer of the predicament arising out of their confrontation between Indianness and the modern western values. This Indian value of life is the first point of similarity among the trio of Indian novelists in English. Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K.Narayan, these three Indian writers gave the novels written in Indian English not only Indian style and structure but also content which is typically Indian. This is the second area of commonness among these three writers.

Like the Trio of Indian novelists in English, Jayanta Mahapatra, Nissim Ezekiel and A.K.Ramanujam are the trio of Indian poets in English. This is the hypothesis of my speech today. There are certain points of common characteristic features among these three Indian poets. Nissim Ezekiel is a "leading edge or ground-breaking figure" in modern Indian English Poetry. *A Time to Change*, published in 1952 was the first land mark in the history of Indian poetry in English. The noteworthy poets of the post-Derozio and pre-Ezekiel times were Toru Dutta, Michael Maddhusadan Dutta. Bruce Alvin King made a comment in this context:

If Indian poets in English are less well known abroad than the novelists it is probably because their concerns are personal, local and yet universal; they do not write, at least not directly about the nationalist and postcolonial political and cultural themes that the West patronizingly expects, even demands, from the formerly colonized.

(Modern Indian Poetry in English, New Delhi: Oxford University Press 2004)

Indeed Bruce's comment on Indian poets is appropriate. Indian poets particularly Nissim Ezekiel, Janata Mahapatra and A.K.Ramanujan revealed their private response to Indian ethos, Indian land scape, and Indian social scape in their poetry. But Like Shakespearean sonnets, the trio of Indian poets has sublimated the poetic aesthetics of their poems from the local or regional to the universal and for that reason every lover of Indian poetry in English to date share the feelings of their poetry. In one sentence, it can be said that they have universalized the feelings of their poetry.

In Nissim Ezekiel's *Night of the Scorpion* we find how the narrator's mother or how the poet's mother was stung by a scorpion and the consequent sufferings in the poet's mind. This incident may be "real or imaginary". But readers definitely can share this poignant feeling of the poem.

A.K. Ramanujan's poetry is a sincere delineation of feeling and sentiments of the people he finds around him with no surface shine or artificiality. We find hardly any western influence in his poems. Ramanujan's inspiration of writing poems is his Hindu heritage. His awareness of India's past and Hindu religion seems to be the cardinal theme of his poems. But he was not at all blind to prejudices of the ritualistic aspects of Hindu realism. He vindicates the universal spirit of Hinduism which is a 'Way of Life'.

Ramanujan's poems are primarily very poignantly personal. But at the same time those personal poems have the entirety and the elevation of their own. At the end of reading his poems readers can universally share of his personal feelings of hopelessness of life, death, love. His poems are family-centric. We find this commonness in both Nissim Ezekiel and Ramanujan.

The poetic sensibilities of Jayanta Mahapatra definitely equal the poetic sensibility of Nissim Ezekiel, and A.K. Ramanujan. It is pointless to say that Jayanta Mahapatra requires any foreword or any introduction as one of leading trios of Indian poetry in English.

The well-known serious maxim, particularly in the context of art and literature is that "All good art is contemporary". A careful thought on this cliché comment reveals the fact that any great piece of creative art requires to be relevant not only to the present but also to the past and to the future. To know the present one requires the knowledge and the close familiarity of the past. And the knowledge of the past and the present helps a great artist to foresee the future. Though the present is related to the survey of the past and desire to foresee the future, the present occupies a major role in the Politics of the present modern India. Jayanta Mahapatra has wisely made a wise comment in this connection:

Poets, probably, watch the game of politics from the sideline. We are spectators, when we are poets: not players,

(The Hindu, 18th March, 2001: Jayanta Mahapatra's Views on Poetry.)

The poet was deeply shocked by the gruesome events that took place around him. Let me quote three lines from one of the poems from Mahapatra's *Random Descent* (2005), the first person narrator says:

I want my government to hover
Like a butterfly over a garden,
Not be, as it is, like a warp or snake

But it does not mean that the poet was unaware of the sufferings and the dispossession of the people, of the overall life around him. He was an enthusiastic observer even of the trivial events in life. The context again demands a quote of some lines taken from Mahapatra's poem, "*A Growing Ground*":

Like the nameless black tide
That leaves no trace on the sands,
Or the diamonds sparkling in Elizabeth's necklace

And the slow spirals of Kitchen smoke
In Orissa's starvation—twilight

The poet employs two important phrases –"Elizabeth's necklace" and "Orissa's starvation twilight". These two phrases are juxtaposed here with view to showing intolerable sufferings of the poverty stricken people and their excruciating conditions arising out of the all out exploitation. The irony revealed through these two phrases is conspicuous.

Jayanta Mahapatra who starts her poetry career, primarily wrote his poems, the essence and themes of which are basically Odisha-centric. His major collections of poetry are *Close the Sky*, *Ten by Ten* (1971), *A Rain of Rites* (1996), *Waiting* ((1979), *Relationship* (1980). Frequent references to the Temple of Lord Jaggannath at Puri come to readers' notice. Meena Alexander's observation on the importance of Stone in Mahapatra's poems seems to be very important. According to Meena Alexander, Stone is very essential to Mahapatra's idea of the origin of the universe. This idea is also concerned with the solar system in general and 'cosmological system' in particular in the universe. In one of his poems, the poet says:

. . . The autumns of a thousand years
spread out like leaves, filthy and veined with blood,
over the smooth dark stone of our lives:
What can save us now
But the miracle we have been waiting for?

Life to Jayanta Mahapatra is a happy blend of the past, the present and the future. The "dark stone" which is indispensably connected with our lives is a symbol of the Timeless eternity. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar makes a brilliant comment in this context:

Relationship is a sustained long poem, an expansion of the private lyric voice into a chain of meditations embracing a region, a tradition, a whole way of life. The theme and its half hypnotic articulation alike compel respectful admiration. Jayanta enters into the spirit of the wonderful testament in stones in Orissa's temples and exchange heart-beats as it were with the forgotten artists and their unfolding works of sculpture and architecture. Distantly paralleled by Keats's "Grecian Urn", Jayanta too seems to be teased by the untamable phenomenon of men and gods, Time and Eternity. (Iyengar, p.713)

Indeed Orissa is one of the Indian States that is full of temples. And those temples are made of stones. A careful study of Mahapatra's poems reveals that the theme of tradition, culture, myth, sensibilities and immense agony of Orissa is discernible in his poems. Mahapatra underscores that the identity of a man is associated with the pedigree of his family and the history of his ancestors and at the same time the place where he is born and brought up.

So the role of stone is indispensable in his poetry:

“My existence lies in the stones which carry my footsteps from one day into another Down to the infinite distances.” (Relationship, p-10)

Stone represents the ancient past to Mahapatra. Mahapatra observes stone as a representation and mark of permissivity. He owes loyalty and stoops to his father and grandfather with symbol of stone. He derives spiritual existence in it. Myth, Culture and tradition are Mahapatra's passions which have been revealed in his poetry. The influences of these three have directed his poetic mind towards the environment to which he belongs. He is attracted very much by the Indian myths, culture and traditions in general and myth, culture and tradition of Odisha in particular. As a man and an Indian poet in English he mingles himself with the social and cultural atmosphere of Odisha. In an interview with Makarand Paranjpe, Jayanta Mahapatra says:

Odisha is a religious place. We have a number of festivals getting on throughout the year. And one cannot shut oneself away in one's room and write something else. . . . Myth is there, history is there, and myth, history and rituals do become the stuff of poetry. Because that's the way of life in Orissa and poetry is a way of life for me.

(Quoted from R. Shankar, *Jayanta Mahapatra, The Poet Quest for Identity*, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2003, p.37)

In one of his poems, *A summer Night*, the poet with all his sincerity says:

This is the town where I was born; here with others,
Year after year I celebrate the joyous festivals.

The merriment of festivals around his surroundings ignites the flames of his poetic sensibilities in his mind and he bursts into his candid indebtedness to all these festivals in Odisha.

But the sublimation of his poetry from the regional to the National, from the particular to the universal like the two other poets of the Trio of Indian Poetry in English is a very important celebration in his poems.

Monolithic and unitary Indian ethos is conspicuously present in all these three poets. These three poets' poetic vision is inseparably connected with one another. They are not only the common in their attitude to the Indianness but also in their use of images and various types of rhetoric, based on the principle of associations in their Indian English variant. These three poets are hardly influenced by any western trend and aesthetics like apocalyptic characteristics of Dylan Thomas and his school or Surrealism of English poetry of the early decades of the twentieth century. These three poets uphold the Indian aesthetics in their poems.

One question comes to our mind to this context. Are not other poets like Kamala Das, K.N. Daruwalla, R. Parthasarathy, and Arun Kolatkar Indian poets? They are definitely Indian poets but their poems often look a mix of both the western and Indian views of life.

Let me mention one of the most popular poems, *Introduction*, written by Kamala Das. Gender discrimination is the cardinal essence of this poem, *Introduction*, the concept of which is Euro-centric. Indianness never believes in gender hierarchical patterns. Gender hierarchy is a social construct. A close study of Indian myth, culture and tradition reveals the fact that woman empowerment is a millennium old pillar of Indianness. The poem *Introduction* is a clear feminist slogan which champions for free alternatives for every woman. The concept of Feminist movement in modern India has come from the west.

R. Parthasarathy's poems make "the quest of the self for an identity". But the ancient Indian Holy Scriptures like the Veda and the Upanishad aim at man's annihilation of self identity through the knowledge of the self or Soul. I here refer to the attitudinal difference between the Indian and the Western. R. Parthasarathy's belief in "the quest of the self for an identity" is west-centric. The nuance of "the quest of the self for an identity" has nothing to do with the Indian concept of "Annihilation of ego".

Most of the poems written by Arun Kolatkar are surrealistic in nature. An examination of certain images Kolatkar has employed in some of his poems shows how he is influenced by the French surrealist Andre Breton in 1920s in France.

We hardly find any western focus in the poems of Jayanta Mahapatra, Nissim Ezekiel and A.K. Ramanujan. They are the home-grown poets of India. Nissim Ezekiel may be a Jewish or Jayanta Mahapatra may be a Christian but the fact is that anybody who believes in Indian culture, Indian tradition, and the glorious pedigree of Bharatiya ethos or anyone who believes in Indianness can be a true Indian. These three poets may be addressed as Trio of Indian Poetry in English. < ■

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‘With a Green and Yellow Melancholy.... Smiling at Grief’: Representation of Humours in *Twelfth Night*

Bimlesh Kumar Singh

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the Elizabethan plays is the representation of ‘Humours’. And the ‘Bard of Avon’ so adroitly employed it in his plays as to effect variations of the characterization and thematic strains. It seems that taking cue from the Grecian stalwart

Hippocrates, Ben Jonson theorized the “Humour Theory” in the Jacobean Age. But then, Shakespeare had already practised this ‘rasa’ in his Comedies and History plays. It would seem that as in ‘Henry Fourth, Parts 1& 2’, so in ‘*Twelfth Night*’, Shakespeare made judicious use of this theory. A patient perusal of ‘*Twelfth Night*’ gives us the wonderful role of various fund of humour in bringing about the variety and complexity of plot through gallery of characters. It’s in the light of this that varying responses of different characters to similar situations may be justified. While going through this beautiful comedy, it appears that dominance of four different humours (Phlegm, Melancholy, Choler, Blood) in the characters compels them to act and react differently. This explains why the Shakespearean characters appeal to the all the audience equally and instantly. Critics from generations have lavished praise on Shakespeare’s rich comprehension of human life. In my paper, an attempt is made to critically analyse ‘*Twelfth Night*’ from perspective of the ‘Humours’ theory to lay bare the various shades of characters and situations for which critics, especially Dryden, Johnson, Dumas, Bloom, Bradley, to name the few, have exuberantly eulogized Shakespeare.

Keywords: Humour/s, Bard of Avon, Characterization, Comedy, History, Variety, Complexity, Rasa, Rich comprehension, Critics, Rulogized.

In English literature, we come across a wonderful representation of all the four types of humour, too. It’s different types of humour which leads to the rise of different types of characters. Hence it’s as much physiological as psychological. The vast gallery of characters in Chaucer’s ‘The Canterbury Tales’ is also owing to the fact of various fund of humour which necessitates them to varying inclination like religious, secular, professional, sensual etc. The advent of the golden age of the Renaissance in England has witnessed the

remarkable representation of humour. Burton named his masterpiece, ‘ *The Anatomy of Melancholy*’ and the great Jacobean playwright Ben Jonson named his masterpieces, ‘ *Every Man in His Humour*’ and ‘ *Every Man Out of His Humour*’. It’s in the ‘ Induction to his play, ‘ *Every Man Out of His Humour*’ that Ben Jonson developed his concept of humour in literature (Dramaturgy).The ‘ Humour’ literary tradition introduced by Ben Jonson was carried forward by the Neoclassical/ Restoration playwrights- Congreve, Etherage, Sheridan, Goldsmith etc. It seems that Shakespeare, the pivot of the Renaissance, had already made profound use of ‘ Humour’ in his plays thereby lending physical variety and psychological complexity. For the present pursuit, I would focus on ‘ *Twelfth Night*’ , one of the best romantic comedies by Shakespeare.

Twelfth Night has been variously interpreted by critics. We notice both romantic as well as realistic responses to this romantic comedy.

William Hazlitt wrote in his critical essay ‘ *Twelfth Night* Characters’:

“This is justly considered as one of the most delightful of Shakespeare’s comedies.

It’s full of sweetness and Pleasantry..” (Hazlitt ,01)

In fact, the 19th century English critic on art and literature focussed on the romantic elements in this comedy in terms of plot and characterization. Another noted critic, John Ruskin famously remarked:” Shakespeare has no heroes but heroines”. Ruskin opined that the heroines of Shakespeare’s romantic comedies outshine their counterparts in terms of wit, humour, geniality and responses. When we come to the contemporary criticism, we find the study of ‘ *Twelfth Night*’ from the realistic/ Marxist perspective. Elliott Krieger” “ *A Marxist Perspective of Shakespeare’s Comedies*” is a Marxist rendering of the Shakespearean comedies, in general and ‘ *Twelfth Night*’, in particular. He introduced the notion of class & situations into the interpretation of the play, besides highlighting the Puritanic independence and aristocratic trappings. It would seem that the critics have studied this comedy from different perspectives, not from the perspective of the ‘ Humours’ theory which substantially explains the heart, the core of the complex behavioural pattern of the characters in the play. Due to these research gaps, the present paper is concerned with the explication of ‘ *Twelfth Night*’ from the perspective of the ‘ Humours’ theory.

This play was issued from Shakespeare’s immediate reaction to the *Twelfth Night*(after Christmas) custom in England. But then, the playwright’s divine imaginative power and matchless insight into varying ‘ Humours’ of various characters lends colossal proportions to his characters. That’s why, ‘ *Twelfth Night*’, although a romantic comedy, assumes huge range and dimensions as we may find in Shakespeare’s historical plays. It would seem that Shakespeare delineates the complex role of humours in governing the disposition of the characters. Viola, the heroine represents her response to the varied fund of humour when she expresses her concept of love through the imagined character of her dead sister:

She never told her love,

But let concealment, like a worm in bud feed on her damask cheek,

With a green and yellow melancholy, she sat like patience on a monument smiling at grief.(2, 4, 359).

For the art critics, this description may suggest apt use of ‘ pathetic fallacy’, but then, the Bard seems to have intended it to communicate the complex working of liver or hormonal functioning, as if blended yellow and green biles in affecting the temperamental patterns in a character’s life.

In fact, the present topic under discussion is in tune with the theme of the Conference entitled” Representation of Disease: Literary Responses Across Time and Space”. The philosophers and artists have discovered, since times immemorial, the ‘ Health – Disease’ dialectic as the two aspects of the same coin ie Anatomy/ Human life. In this connection, the observation of NIH US Library of Medicine is worth mentioning:

“ The dominant theory of Hippocrates and his successors was that of the four ‘ Humors’: black bile, yellow bile, phlegm, blood. When these Humors’ were in balance, health prevailed; when they were out of balance or vitiated in some way, disease took over.”

We see that the role of humours or fluids has been crucial in determining the disposition/ temperament of the characters in the texts and human beings, in general. The Indian system of Ayurveda, too, primarily talk about the internal hormonal balance of the anatomy by the harmony of “ VataDosha”, “ Pitta Dosha”& “ KaphaDosha”. Gelen, the great genius of Medicine, thought that the humors of the body are directly related to temperament. The English author, Robert Burton also talked about the vital role of mind in balancing the different types of passions at work inside the body. He remarked:

“ the mind most effectually works upon the body, producing by his passions and perturbations miraculous alterations... cruel diseases and sometimes death itself”. (Burton, 258)

Hence it would seem that the humors are natural workings of human anatomy. It , therefore, inevitably decides the disposition and responses of the characters towards situations. It’s pertinent to recall here as many as eight types of “Rasas” as enunciated by the Indian Sage Bharatmuni in ‘ Natyshastra’ an immortal treatise on the Dramatics, ‘Natyashastra’. These ‘Rasas’ have something to do with the essential working of different types of Humours. If we observe a text, we discover that the characters and situations in the texts are mostly I accord with the ‘ Humoral’ theory.

Twelfth Night, one of the finest comedies by the ‘ Bard of Avon’, has variety of characters representing various fund of humour and, therefore, different dispositions. It’s engrossing to see the contrasting characters in the play. Whereas Duke Orsino& Olivia represent sentimentalism, Viola , Sebastian and Maria stand for practical wisdom, although in different degree. The characters like Fool, Malvolio , Sir Toby and Sir Andrew represent witty perception, narcissism, hedonism, and puritanic strictures respectively. Quite naturally, the characters may be explained on the basis of humour theory. The characters of Viola &

Sebastian may be called ‘Sanguine’ because of the dominant humour, ‘Blood’. No wonder, they demonstrate energy, confidence, action, gaiety, clarity and vivacity. The characters of Duke Orsino and Olivia seem to be ‘Phlegmatic’ and, therefore, introvert. But then, they also behave reserved, anxious and confused mainly because of their melancholic temperament. The character of Feste, the Clown in the play, shows both choleric and phlegmatic disposition. The character of Malvolio embodies melancholic temperament and, therefore, bears anxious, confused, egotistical & irritating disposition. It would seem that the interplay of varying humours among various characters leads to a variety of character traits in the course of action thereby enriching the texture of the play.

Twelfth Night seems to be a wonderful study in ‘Humours’ theory.

From the beginning to the end, the interactions of the characters bear testimony to the fact. Even the opening scene of the play amply makes it clear that the Duke Orsino, Valentine and Maria show ‘Sanguine’ and ‘Phlegmatic’ disposition respectively because of their different humours. A look at their dialogues testifies to the fact: Orsino: If music be the food of love, Play on .

Give me excess of it, that surfeiting,

The appetite may sicken and so die.

Valentin (about Olivia): A brother’s dead love,

Which she would keep fresh

And lasting in her sad remembrance.

Maria (to Sir Toby): “ Ay, but you must confine yourself within the modest limits of order”(1,1,349)

It is followed by the repartee between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, both of them quite phlegmatic.

Whereas Sir Toby’s a hedonist given to carnal pleasure, Sir Andrew is too Puritanical to liberally appreciate the beauty of warmth and joy of life. The witty conversation between them justifies it:

Sir Toby: I’ll drink to her as long as there’s a passage in my throat and drink in Illyria.

Sir Andrew: Methinks sometimes I have no more wit than a Christian or an ordinary man has. But I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that does harm to my wit.

Sir Toby: Dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?(2, 3, 357)

Apart from these characters, when we come across the character of Malvolio, we easily notice his melancholic temperament. Quite naturally, he’s cold & dry, agile & sluggish. Sometimes he’s anxious, sometimes confused. He’s seen suffering from the self-praise and narcissism. Olivia (whose Steward he’s) rightly observes his behaviour when she says:

O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite. To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition is to take those things for bad – bolts that you deem cannon bullets.(1,5,353)

But then, the character of Viola represents humours in balanced proportion leading to her effective responses to the situations around her. Predominated by ‘Blood’ humour, she shows sanguine disposition. No wonder, she’s vivacious, energetic, practical, wise, encouraging, optimistic and instantly impressive. From the outset to the closing scene of the play, she rocks acts and interacts like a governing force. That’s why, her choice of words brings out her profound sense of practical wisdom and clarity. No wonder, even in highly romantic situations, her expressions are measured in terms of vividness, sensuousness, and dictions. Her interactions with Olivia speak of these qualities:

Viola (to Olivia): Most radiant, exquisite, and unmatchable beauty..

Olivia(to Viola): Methinks I feel this youth’s perfections

With an invisible and subtle stealth

To creep in at mine eyes.

Viola: Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness,

Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.....O Time, thou must

Untangle this, not I; It is too hard a knot for me t’ untie.(2,2,356)

It seems that Viola responds to the situations wisely and effectively as if in the spirit of balanced humour. It’s her integrity of character which makes miracles even in transforming the excessively sentimental characters like Duke Orsino and Olivia. The way she tells Olivia about the secret of true love thereby magically convincing the latter. Their dialogues testify their mutual interpenetration showing that the sustained company of the like- minded souls mature each other:

Olivia: If one should be a prey, how much the better to fall before the lion
Than the wolf!... when wit and youth is come to harvest, your wife is like to reap a proper man.

Viola: ...Grace and good disposition attend your ladyship!

Olivia: ... love’s night is noon...by maidhood, honour, truth, and everything, I love thee.....Love sought is good, but given unsought is better.

Viola: By innocence I swear, and by my youth, I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth (3, 1, 363)

It would seem that the successful movement through the altar of the practical experiences of life that enables the characters in the play towards attaining newer heights of wisdom. The dramatic arrival of Sebastian along with Antonio, who had already rescued Viola(the former’s twin sister) reveals to the inordinately emotional characters (Duke Orsino and Olivia) the truth of real identity of Viola, too. The disclosure of the feigned identity of Cesario to the Duke Orsino (whom the latter had already wished to be the female for his supreme partner) relaxes and sweetens the whole atmosphere of confusion & tension.

When Olivia comes across Sebastian for the first time, she starts loving him (mistaking him for Cesario) and the latter exclaims:

What relish is in this?
How runs the stream?
Or I am mad, or else this is a dream.
Let fancy still my sense in Lethe steep; if it be thus to dream, still let me sleep!(4,2,370).

Olivia also attains worldly wisdom and wastes no time before the Priest in declaring her love of Sebastian and ensures marriages:” Then lead the way , good father; and heavens so shine that they may fairly note this act of mine”(4,3,372). The Priest also approves of their happy marriage through genuine mutual love and announces:” A contract of eternal bond of love, confirmed by mutual joinder of your hands, attested by the holy close of lips, strengthen’d by the interchangement of your rings”. Duke Orsino also behaves like a transformed soul. Having discovered Cesario to be a female, he declares his royal wish to marry her:

When that’s known, and golden time convents, a solemn combination shall be made of our dear souls. Meantime, sweet sister, we will not part from hence...Cesario, when in other habits you are seen, Orsino’s mistress , and his fancy’s queen.(5,1,376).

Hence , ‘*Twelfth Night*’ is Shakespeare’s profound depiction of the various ‘humours’ of the characters. It lends a sort of psychological complexity as well as variety to the play . And it enriches the humanitarian, besides the romantic , appeal of the play. ■

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Clarion Call for Human Rights: A Critique of the Select Memoirs of Maria Campbell and Malala Yousafzai

C. Lakshmi Prasad

Throughout the cosmos there is a hue and cry for espousal of human rights. But the scenario that emerges in recent times is quite contrary to the written rule. To bring to the limelight the disheartening tale of suppression and marginalization, several litterateurs have emerged from the margins. The powerful and gritty words of writers who have become victims of suppression, it is hoped will create ripples in the community. True to Maya Angelou's puissant swearing, "But still, like dust I'll rise," female creative artists subverting the myth of 'the angel in the house' have come to the forefront leaving behind centuries of terror and fear. They occupy the broad canvass of the cosmopolitan society. This paper is an attempt to highlight the contentious issue of debate – 'Where lies the rights of humans?' as portrayed by the much-celebrated Native voice from Canadian pastures Maria Campbell and the powerful beckoning of a Pakistani Nobel Peace prize winner Malala Yousafzai.

Keywords: espousal, human rights, marginalization, ripples, subverting the myth

One of the greatest issues of our time is preservation and promotion of human rights. All men are born equal and therefore entitled to lead a life of freedom. To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity. When we deprive people of their right to live in dignity, to hope for a better future and to have control over their lives, then we deprive them of that choice. Naturally the affected sect will emerge to fight for their rights. According to Roosevelt, "Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights or keep them. Our strength is our unity of purpose. To that high concept there can be no end save victory" (45).

Throughout the cosmos there is a hue and cry for espousal of human rights. But the scenario that emerges in recent times is quite contrary to the written rule. To bring to the limelight the disheartening tale of suppression and marginalization, several litterateurs have emerged from the margins. The powerful and gritty words of writers who have become victims of suppression, it is hoped will create ripples in the community. True to Maya Angelou's puissant swearing, "But still, like dust I'll rise," female creative artists subverting

the myth of ‘the angel in the house’ have come to the forefront leaving behind centuries of terror and fear. They occupy the broad canvass of the cosmopolitan society. This paper is an attempt to highlight the contentious issue of debate – ‘Where lies the rights of humans?’ as portrayed by the much-celebrated Native voice from Canadian pastures Maria Campbell and the powerful beckoning of a Pakistani Nobel Peace prize winner Malala Yousafzai.

The two creative artists analyzed here have penned down the bitter experiences of their lives. The similarity lies in the use of the same genre – memoir and replication of similar themes. These contemporary writers have won accolades across the globe and their works prove the saddening truth that deprivation of human rights is rampant in every nook and corner of the world. They establish the dictum that by resorting to the magic of words they can bring to the forefront the plight of their community and tussle for their rights. Memoir, a passel of touchstone incidents hand-picked from the retrospections of the memoirists’ life efficiently portrays the journey of the survivors from the margin to the centre. Being testimony to injustice, memoirs stand for authentic presentations.

Plato, the pioneer of Western philosophy opined “If a man neglects education, he walks lame to the end of his life’ as education promotes grit, certitude and serenity. Ziauddin Yousafzai, the proud father of the children’s rights activist Malala strongly affirmed “It is the elder generation’s duty to teach children the universal human values of truth, fairness, justice and equality. For this purpose, we have two institutions: families and schools. Education, whether at home or in the classroom, has the power to promote acceptance of others’ views and to challenge biases and bigotry.” Education is the most efficacious vehicle for personal empowerment because it aggrandizes human dignity through its fruits of erudition, sagacity and understanding. Education and human rights are interlaced. If access to education is denied, it represents waiver of human rights. Richard Pierre Claude states:

Education is multifaceted with its social, economic and cultural rights. It is a social right because it promotes the full development of human personality. It is economic because it facilitates economic self-sufficiency through employment or self-employment. It is cultural because the international community has directed education toward the building of a universal culture of human rights.

In short, education which serves as “an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity” is the prerequisite for every individual to become a human being. Right to education is upheld in all constitutions in all parts of the world. But in the name of caste, gender and religion, education is mercilessly denied to many. Literature is bedecked with several examples to prove this saddening aspect of man’s inhumanity to man. *I am Malala* is a classic piece voicing forth this aspect.

Pakistan has evolved into a land where God only comes to weep and in this war ridden state even the breeze emits the repugnant smell of ammunition. Leading a peaceful life in Pakistan is a mirage amidst the dreadful political mayhem. *I am Malala* is an inspiring saga of a little girl belonging to the land of adversities. Entangled in the brutal web of terrorism and patriarchy, education, the basic right of every human being becomes a forbidden

fruit especially to girls in Pakistan. Community, ethnology, spirituality and political leanings are the major deterrents that thwart the hankerings of girls to taste, swallow, chew and digest the world of letters.

Malala with her indomitable spirit and dauntless courage emerges as a strong champion fighting for the cause of girls' education. Breaking the silence, Malala is determined not to remain a dumb beast but to give voice to the voiceless. To be heard is her mantra and she is really a beacon of inspiration for all those whose "wings are clipped and feet are tied." Her insatiable thirst for knowledge, education and reform won her the much-coveted Nobel Prize at a very young age of 17. Her actions speak louder than her words and once her dreams are realized this universe will be a better place to inhabit leaving to the winds the hierarchy of men and global terrorism, "Peace in every home, every street, every village, every country – this is my dream. Education for every boy and every girl in the world. To sit down on a chair and read my book with all my friends at school is my right. To see each and every human being with a smile of happiness is my wish" (265).

Malala hails from Mingora, a city in the Swat valley noted for its panoramic grandeur with matchless and majestic mountains, sparkling waterfalls and pellucid lakes. In a land where one can witness gender bigotry, Malala is fortunate to have been born to liberal minded parents Ziauddin Yousafzai and Toor Pekai who celebrated her birth and named her after the great revolutionary and inspirational figure Malala of Maiwand who is the Pasthun John of Arc. Her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai was a staunch supporter of universal education and women's rights. He instilled in his daughter the flair for learning and to speak against injustice. He didn't wish to clip her wings and allowed her to fly. He was determined to give her the best possible education thereby empowering her. Khushal Girls' High School, the brain child of Ziauddin opened up vistas of hope for all the girls of the vicinity to quench their intellectual thirst and to come out with flying colours.

The dreamy, adventurous and zealous lass Malala never in her wildest of dreams thought that her hopes will remain a sparkling armada of promises. With the advent of the Talibans in the Swat Valley, impasse in all the arenas of life became the order of the day. They prohibited all kinds of entertainment and focused on the strict adherence to religious duties. Fanaticism was their mantra and they administered merciless punishments on those who dared to disobey them. The hands of thieves were amputated and women guilty of adultery were stoned to death. Survival thus became an onerous task especially for women who were forced to confine within the four walls of their home. Schools were shut and education was forbidden to girls. Ziauddin tried his level best not to close his school despite severe threat from the Talibans.

Ziauddin saddened by the turn of events took a pledge to wrangle for human rights. With his daring child Malala by his side, he headed towards the local press club in Peshawar, where she delivered her maiden speech, 'How Dare the Taliban Take Away My Basic Right to Education?' She strongly asserted that "One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world." Her fiery peroration was aired throughout Pakistan. Assigned by the

BBC, Malala started to pen down the atrocities of the Taliban regime under the pen name Gul Makai. She began to campaign for girl's education much to the displeasure of the Talibans. Despite receiving many death threats, she was determined 'to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.'

October 9, 2012 was the darkest and murkiest day for the fifteenyear old Malala who was going back home from school accompanied by her classmates. All of a sudden two bearded gunmen boarded the bus and one of them in a hoarse voice asked, "Who is Malala?" Without waiting for an answer, the gunmen fired the bullets which pierced Malala's head and neck. Two of her friends were shot in their arms. Then the gunmen fled victorious, thinking Malala would die. But they couldn't defeat the crusader of education rights who miraculously survived the fatal attack. Dr.Fiona and Dr.Javid became her guardian angels bringing her back to life making her a metaphor for defiance against Taliban subjugation. Her memoir is an eyeopener to millions of girls to empower themselves and seize their rights:

My goal in writing this book was to raise my voice on behalf of the million of girls around the world who are being denied their right to go to school and realize their potential. I hope my story will inspire girls to raise their voice and embrace the power within themselves, but my mission does not end here. My mission, our mission, demands that we act decisiveto educate girls and empower them to change their lives and communities. (276)

The Malala Fund is really an oasis in this "...darkling plain/swept with confused alarms of struggle and fight/ where ignorant armies clash by night" (35-37).

Maria Campbell, yet another ardent advocate of indigenous rights has carved a niche for herself in the realm of Native Canadian Literature. Her unflinchingly honest memoir *Halfbreed* brings to limelight the bias and prejudicial treatment to which the Métis have archivally been subjected. Alien in the land of her own birth, Campbell is in pursuit of her genealogy. Denied the right to land, life and livelihood and infused with spleen and bitterness, she gives vent to her heart's agony through her debut masterpiece. The tender portrait of her loving relationship with her Grandmother CheechumCampbell serves as a perennial source of inspiration for her lacerated soul to fight for her rights.

Duncan's poem *Halfbreed Girl* accentuates the stifled existence of half breeds in the Canadian society, "She covers her face with her blanket/ Her fierce soul hates her breath/ As it cries with a sudden passion/ For life or death" (45-48). The half breed girl is dampened, unable to breathe freely. Campbell caught in such a traumatic and harrowing state has chronicled the experiences of her life. She presents herself as a lonely, depressed woman living in a community full of bigots. Poverty, discrimination and injustice were the social evils which acted like demons in the lives of the Natives. Under the pretext of the Land Act, the Whites seized the Native lands and distributed them to the White immigrants who built cabins and bars on those roads. Land Act left the forefathers of Campbell homeless 'Road Allowance People.' She details how herpeople became squatters on road allowances:

The land was ten dollars for a quarter section. Ten acres had to be broken in three years, along with improvements, before title would be granted. Otherwise the land was confiscated by Land Improvement District Authorities. Due to the depression and shortage of fur there was no money to buy the implements to break the land. A few families could have scraped up the money to hire outside help . . . They just did not have the kind of thing inside them that makes farmers. (12)

She explains the history of the half breeds in the prairies which was largely determined by the settlement of the West by White farmers and the corresponding destruction of the half breeds' way of life culminating in the so-called Riel Rebellion of 1884.

Cheechum, Campbell's maternal grandmother was her greatest influence and confidante. She was a small woman who tenaciously clung to her own way of life despite numerous and powerful threats from the various agents of colonization. Cheechum who was a live witness of the rebellion considered the history taught in schools as twisted and dishonourable truths. She narrated many stories which enabled Campbell to have a true picture and an entirely different perspective of the Rebellion. According to her, the rebellion could have been prevented if the federal government had seriously taken the complaints of the half breeds and the Indians. Most of the history books depicted Louis Riel as a rebel who was charged with treason. They conveniently forget to mention that Riel's execution symbolizes the genocidal process which killed many half breeds and Indians and relegated the rest to a marginal existence in the "empty pockets of North Saskatchewan" (15).

Racism and non-belongingness stifled the Native souls who were in a thirdhand position. As they were half whites and half natives, they were neglected by both the communities. They were looked down upon by the mainstream inhabitants, "The townspeople would stand on the sidewalks and hurl insults at us. Some would say, 'Halfbreeds are in town, hide your valuables.' If we walked into stores the white women and their children would leave and the storekeepers' wives, sons and daughters would watch we didn't steal anything" (36). Being a halfbreed woman and living in a racist and sexist society, Campbell had to face obstacles.

Discrimination was rampant in all arenas of life. School, the pedestal of knowledge served as a metaphor for bias and prejudice. Campbell in her memoir pointed out how badly trained teachers regarded the White students as the apples of their eyes, and mercilessly flouted the Native ones:

Our first teacher was a sad-looking little English woman in her late forties. She had never taught Half breeds before and we soon realized that she didn't like us . . . We had many different teachers during those years; some got the girls pregnant and had to leave; others were alcoholic; and because our school attracted everybody else's rejects, we had a constant stream of teachers. (52)

Half breeds were not allowed to speak their vernacular language 'Cree' at school, as linguistic genocide was one of the strategies followed by the imperial forces to silence the

aboriginals. For uttering Cree words, Mariam was mewed in a small closet with no windows or light for hours. Seated in two separate groups in the same class, Halfbreeds had a lot of brawls with the White kids. They always played by themselves unless there was a rugby or a ball game, when they played against the Whites. The hubristic and presumptuous White children would hurl insulting invectives at the Native students calling them, "Gophers, gophers, Road Allowance People eat gophers" (47).

Not only in schools, but also in synagogues the Natives suffered the still sad music of ridicule and ethnocentrism. Defying Cheechum's advice and pleading, once Campbell and her mother went to attend the church. Being late, they hurriedly stepped inside much to the displeasure of the Priest. With contempt and scorn looming large in his eyes, he paused his lecture. Campbell and her mother became the centre of everyone's attention. When her mother knelt down in the front pew and began saying prayers with her rosary, a lady leaned over and said something to her whereupon she took Maria's hand and they left. Thereafter they never went to church. Even after suffering so many insults, Halfbreed people never spoke ill against the church or the priest.

At the age of fifteen, Campbell tried to escape from poverty and discrimination by marrying a white man, Darren. Unfortunately her white husband abandoned her in the slums of Vancouver. With a female child in hand, she was left alone in the lurch. Prostitution earned her bread and butter. Totally dejected and crestfallen, the Natives were thrown into the quagmire of alcoholism, substance abuse and prostitution. Maternity didn't offer her any solace as she couldn't shower a mother's warmth and care for her children. Addicted to alcohol and drugs, she tried twice to end her life. But destiny too was not in favour of her. She bewailed her orlay:

It's a wonder that my babies ever survived through it all. I kept them clean and fed, but I completely neglected them as far as playing with them or letting them know they were loved . . . Finally I made up my mind to commit suicide and to take my children with me. I was afraid no one would want them and they would only be pushed around. One day I gave them each a sleeping pill... and turned on the gas. (140)

Protest or perish was her tagline and she audaciously tussled against racism, sexism, suppression, oppression and marginalization. Born to win, she has left an important legacy for all indigenous women and her tale is worthy to be emulated. More significantly, her courage in speaking out, in naming her oppressors, in reclaiming herself, helps to lift the cloak of silence from other women similarly situated. Campbell's arduous sojourn from a marginalized woman to an empowered individual alludes to the phoenix which rises from the ashes of its own funeral pyre symbolizing resurrection. Her saga, nonetheless woven with tremendous throes and woes, is a tale of survival and ensuing liberation. She is a true acolyte of Louis Riel, who presaged that one hundred years later his people would revive, rejuvenate and revitalize.

Weathering the storm, she overcame her addictions and volunteered herself to work for her community. She with dauntless courage threw away the blankets of shame which her people used to wear. Recalling the words of her grandmother Cheechum and hoping for a dawn of liberation, Campbell proclaims,

Cheechum used to say that all our people wore blankets, each in his own way . . . Somebody though, people would throw them away and the whole world would change. I understood about the blanket now – I wore one too. I didn't know where I started to wear it, but it was there. Change will come up this time because we won't give up . . . The searching, loneliness and pain are over for me. I no longer need my blanket to survive. (157)

With no blanket to hide herself, she valiantly titles her work *Halfbreed* – a term used with contempt, scorn and abuse by the Whites. She proudly wears it as a badge of merit and prestige.

The analysis highlights the fact that of all genres of literature memoir is a powerful tool of empowerment. Using this medium, both the writers have focused on how racial discrimination curbs the psyche of the characters when the male bastion raises its ugly head. In the midst of this, repression has strengthened the suppressed and the magic of words has helped the lacerated souls to subvert the myth of the oppressors. ■

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‘Gagged in Their Own Land’: Voices of Silence in Frenzy Manecksha’s *Behold, I Shine: Narratives of Kashmir’s Women and Children* and Urvashi Butalia’s *Speaking Peace: Women’s Voices from Kashmir*

Khem Raj Sharma

In the contemporary unsettled Kashmir, women have been gagged in their own land by the tyranny of religious orthodoxy, patriarchy, and the State. The exemplary role played by the women of this mesmerizing beautiful land has barely been accredited despite their conspicuous contribution in the history of Kashmir, and in retaining *Kashmiriyat*. The narratives of Kashmir conflict and its insurgency in 1990 explicate the role of freedom fighters, insurgents, militants, religious leaders, security forces and politicians vis-à-vis only men. Kashmiri women’s identity and place culminates only at being merely a victim as they have been silenced from all sides. Cornered by circumstances beyond their control, these victims of violence have sometimes been becoming victimisers themselves, and consequently, partners in violence as well. In the face of insurgency, this marginalised gender seems “chasing a mirage” (75) wherein their problems seem an insoluble impasse. For women’s voices to be heard, Frenzy Manecksha in *Behold, I Shine: Narratives of Kashmir’s Women and Children* (2017) and Urvashi Butalia in *Speaking Peace: Women’s Voices from Kashmir* (2002) have rendered representation to the struggle of Kashmiri women in the extremities of conflict. They have narrated numerous stories set against a surreally beautiful landscape frayed and scarred by conflict. These narratives provide a peep into the lives of women from divergent backgrounds across Kashmir.

This paper critiques these two texts to evidence how the beautiful women of the bounteous land of saints and intellectuals have been silenced in their own land by the extreme oppression, cruelty and violence perpetrated by the state, religious dogmas, and patriarchy. Besides, it would delineate how these stories of women, who have been pushed by circumstances or sentiment of nationalism, become the voices of the silenced ones thereby breaking the ‘uncomfortable silence’ enduring in the Valley.

Keywords: Silence, Gagging, Kashmir, Women, Patriarchy.

The stories of war have always been told from a male’s perspective and often times we do not hear of the impact that the war has on women and children. The plight of Kashmiri

women is one subject which has remained under-scrutinised for many decades. The women of Kashmir, whether Hindu or Muslim, have led a life of relentless suffering; a life dictated by the patriarchal structure of Kashmiri society. Fighting a decadent system and society has been extremely hard for such women and a number of issues warrant examination in assessing the politics of identity surrounding them. It may come as no surprise that Kashmiri women have struggled and continue to struggle against societal discrimination and inequality. Not only have these women been subject to violence by the police, but many have also experienced intense suffering at the hands of militants as well as Indian security forces. While some findings in this research from select texts are revealing from a factual and analytic standpoint, most highlight the scarce attention devoted to women's issues in Kashmir. While the identity of Kashmiri women has been shaped, to a large extent, by the rise of armed conflict, and there is a thriving debate on the issue, their movement has not found much voice beyond the Kashmir valley.

Frenzy Manecksha's *Behold, I Shine: Narratives of Kashmir's Women and Children* and Urvashi Butalia's *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir* explore the issues pertaining to the women and children of the breath-taking beautiful land of Kashmir through interviews, personal and reflective writings and extracts from various reports and books. Whereas Manecksha has narrated the lives of Kashmiri Muslim and Pandit women only, Butalia has talked at length about the women of the entire region of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and Kargil. Together they draw attention to a vital aspect of the conflict that has been all but forgotten. They reiterate the dynamics of gender within the context of armed conflict in Kashmir. These texts are translations of the experiences of the women of the valley into the making of better policies for them.

I

Frenzy Manecksha's *Behold, I Shine: Narratives of Kashmir's Women and Children* has been set in the once-fabled land of Kashmir, and moves beyond male voices and focuses, instead, on what the struggle means for the Valley's women and children—those whose husbands remain untraceable; whose mothers are half-widows; those who have confronted the wrath of 'Ikhwanis', or the scrutiny of men in uniform and what it means to stand up to it all. Dedicated "To free spirits and the champions of azadi everywhere" it also brings to focus the resilience of the Valley's women and children—of activists like Parveena Ahangar and Anjum Zamrud Habib, who, after debilitating losses, start human rights organizations; of ordinary homemakers like Munawara who have taken on the judiciary and of a young generation of thinkers like Uzma Falak and Essar Batool who foreground the interaction of gender, politics and religion and won't let Kashmir forget. Stitching together their narratives, *Behold, I Shine* not only memorializes women's voices—thus far forgotten, unwritten, suppressed or side-lined—but also celebrates the mighty spirit of the women's of the Valley.

Manecksha has travelled across the state "to understand the 'terrible beauty' of the land ... and the cruel plight of many single women, widows and half-widows." (46-88) Kashmir has been ravaged by militancy; and the high-handedness of the Indian state has

only made matters worse. Frenzy documents the stories of women who have witnessed sufferings at the hands of not only a rigid, patriarchal society but also the bullets from twin ends, viz. militants and the Indian military. Sexual violence as an integral weapon of war has been perpetrated on these women. Given her journalist background, she documents the stories quite diligently and with an eye to each and every detail to “ferret out women’s voices” (130). She questions the state and patriarchy: “Does a rape cease to be a rape if the woman in question is the wife of a militant and, therefore, deemed as a suspect by the state?” (130). She decides early that it’s a better idea to let the women tell their story without interruptions which works very well for *Behold, I Shine*. Their “sounds of silence or gestures can be as truthful and powerful as spoken words” (138). The voices are so poignant that tell about the horrors women of Kashmir have been living through since so many years thereby also telling about what they have done to overcome it: “... each narrative could be interwoven skeins of suffering, trauma, healing, resilience, resistance, struggle, humour and, most of all, individuality.” (138) The catchphrase “Be the change you want to see in the world” aptly suits to the doings of these victims of patriarchy and circumstance. “Their voices are multiple and diverse, their personas different. There were women who chose to wear full hijab ... [some] refused to cover their hair... negotiating dangerous spaces [like] going to court demanding justice, and fought epic battles... [and] refused to remain victims...” (146). They are trying hard to create a world which is peaceful and devoid of any hatred for the generations to come by.

The book starts with a historical perspective of the Kashmir problem and the real action begins after two chapters. She also alludes to Habba Khatun, the mystic poet whose words resonate with the plight facing Kashmiri women today.

How does one understand Kashmir and its sense of pervading loss? How has militarization transformed its landscape and eroded its cultural matrix? One way of imagining Kashmir, as it once was, is through Habba Khatun and she symbolizes for people, especially women. (2)

It is not easy to collect stories in Kashmir where the Indian forces are protected by AFSPA (Armed forces special Powers Act), a draconian law that grants immunity to armed forces in insurgency hit areas. For women, the only passage to “conversation across dwellings” is through ‘window talk’ which is the only “elegant opening to the wider world.” (10) However, there is no such alternative protective cover for the common citizens. The writer faces hostility first hand and in her words:

A policeman mocked my choice of profession and tried to intimidate me. ‘What are you going to write about us?’ he asked. ‘will you be writing against us?’ I refused to argue with him...(7)

Given the hardships that Kashmiris face each day, it is surprising to note that the common citizen hasn’t given on Kashmir, not just yet.”I gave my son to azadi,” (21) remarks a poor woman. This is a serious read and Frenzy has diligently provided references and footnotes, hallmark of a good researcher. Perhaps this is also a drawback since this scholarly work

deserves attention and is not a fleeting read. It is not something that will appeal to casual readers. She talks about half-widows; a term frequently used for Kashmiri women whose husbands have gone missing in Kashmir. For the husbands of these women, one can discover “unmarked graves in Kashmir” (Arundhati 15) The stories of all women have a common theme, of loss, economic disintegration and a daily struggle to endure a life of penury without any right to recourse and little positive hope for the future. Compelled by circumstance to live in emotional limbo, these women lead a hapless life where they are termed as unlucky, characterless and many more. Imprisoned within the four walls of their home, they “suffer from depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorders.” (32) At present, many half-widows have rejected the idea of remarriage for the sake of their children and for seeking justice. However, one seven year old girl wishes her mother to remarry as “she felt burdened by her mother’s huge worries and fears of future.” (53)

The dangling of the money has been used as a cynical exercise to manipulate and commodify the sense of honour of a poor family. Pakeeza, a Gujjar woman, was sexually assaulted in front of her husband’s family for serving tea to two of the relatives –believed to be militants. Later on, a senior officer offered the family a sum of Rs. 5,00,000 in exchange for silence, which shows how “rape, honour and compensation played out in patriarchal structures.” (58) Another Gujjar woman recounts her story of rape to Manecksha at her husband’s behest: “His encouragement that she ‘speak out’ reminded me that men sometimes take the lead in breaking silences.” (59) Many women would not be able to speak out and revisit the dark memories of violence against them, but one has to accept that “the sounds of silence are a way of acknowledging a woman’s dignity and pain.” (59) For female survivors of sexual violence, it is difficult to recall the nitty-gritty details of the violence and it is natural for the mind to blur such moments or shut them out. Also, it is even more complicated to “remain true to herself and her story, when sections of society have already stigmatised her viewing her as ‘ruined’, or having brought the crime upon herself.” (60)

But it would be premature to ignore the positive aspects that underlay some stories. In spite of the backseat gender identities and equality have taken in Kashmir because of the larger focus of calls for Azadi, some women have focused on these equally important issues. The founders of Muslim Khawateen Markaz (MKM) like Bakhtawar Behenji, Nuzwat Rawanda, Mehjabeen Akhtar and Zamrud in 1990 focused on mobilising thousands of victimised women to actively resist without guns. Besides vociferously rebelling, these women have evolved a language of resistance reinforced by humour despite all the surveillance. They not only fought actively for their azadi, but some of them supported even the militants. “We cooked for them, washed their clothes, ferried supplies, and provided logistical help.” (19) In her reveals, Zamrud reiterated that they even reveled against the soldiers in clearing the mess on the floor many times. However, their overwhelming participation still could not get them the space they deserve.

Women who had been ensconced in the four walls of their houses only were now “forced to go to police stations, army camps, jails and courts in the state and outside in

search of their missing sons and husbands” (25) because the men began to get picked up increasingly by security troops. According to Manecksha, this forced entry into the public space was a double-edged sword as they were open to cruel exploitation both by the militants as well as the military. However, their struggle has led the authorities to devise a strategy for their relief and rehabilitation. But there are “some grief-stricken women who have refused to touch a rupee of the compensation offered, denouncing it as ‘blood money’” (37) to pose a resistance and silently voice for their concerns. Sakina, a teenager and whose only brother goes missing, opposes by dressing like a young lad and striding around the streets whistling to summon the passing auto rickshaw and referring to herself in the male gender: “Sakina demonstrates how, in a troubled land, she has been able to tackle forces of oppression by the state and shake off the shackles of society. She lives in a small room but it has expanded into a huge space of personal liberty.” (52)

Frenzy touches upon a variety of issues plaguing people in Kashmir and *Behold, I Shine* is in the league of Beauvoir’s, ‘The Second Sex’. It seems as a great attempt at capturing stories of Kashmir’s women, stories that need to be told and have remained untold until now. Take the case of Hameeda who was beaten by the police who demanded that she disclose her cousin’s whereabouts. Her rape by a police officer made her “spoiled goods and therefore as ‘fair game’.” (67) These victims become more vulnerable to violence both by perpetrators and by society when they complain. “Amira was called anti-national; the man who assaulted Hameeda received a state honour; and Pakeeza, to her horror, found that the lure of compensation, which was never given, was used to hush up the case and drive a wedge within her family.” (73) It is difficult to come to terms with the fact that the armed forces often blur lines between militants and common citizens in order to extract information.

The mothers in the valley have been silenced by picking up their sons and putting them in the list of the disappeared. Parveen Ahangar, Iron lady and mother of Kashmir, have found APDP (Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons) for the ‘sorrowful mothers’. These mothers of the disappeared sons take grieving as a ploy which despite being instinctive and biological, also becomes a “‘performative politics’—using their bodies as a theatrical site at monthly sit-ins.” (86) Sadaf, a half-widow, projects herself “an *asalzanan*” and mourns wearing a voluminous scarf publicly: “Half-widow—return my disappeared husband” (86) “while remaining acutely conscious of social and political constraints in a patriarchal and violent space.” (87) She finds herself surrounded by men exerting control over her, some asking for marriage, some blaming her as an informer. “They all became my husband, even those ‘militarywallahs,’ was her pithy observation.” (87) Essar summarily projects the position of these women as: “Just because I cover my head doesn’t mean that I am covering my brains as well, or that I am submissive. Maybe, I just want to break the stereotypes perpetuated by Islamophobes and people from the western world.” (136) Munawara, another half-widow, vehemently poses a question: “Why are there special laws for crimes committed in Kashmir when it is repeatedly said that Kashmir is an integral part of Hindustan?” (105) These women have literally been relegated to the position of half-widows and even half-mothers by the militants, military and the patriarchy.

Women in Kashmir are increasingly making choices became evident in these lines posted by a young woman on Face book which sums up the situation aptly: "Some want to put the hijab on me and save me. Some want to take the hijab off me and save me. Just give me a break man! I can save myself." (136) Also, as Manecksha records, "...women had the innate capacity to rebuild fractured societies" (21). These "narratives of unyielding hope" do foresee a change when some fifty young women came breaks the silence by filing a PIL demanding reinvestigation in Kunan-Poshpora case. They viewed the sufferings of this group of women as it was a land under occupation and they underwent doing their bit in it. Another important outcome was the legitimization of the discussion of sexual violence in a society that otherwise viewed such a talk as strictly taboo. Filmmaker Iffat Fatima has documented the lives of women who lost their husbands or sons in enforced disappearances in *Where Have You Hidden My New Crescent Moon* and *Blood Leaves Its Trail*.

Manecksha has travelled across the state to talk to scores of women whose very fabric of life has unraveled under the clawing politics of their land. By navigating the morphed landscape, her book not only gives them voice, but offers a clear-eyed view of the Kashmir problem without an iota of sentimentality. It literally talks about sheer determination of women of Kashmir, their strength, love, belief, and zeal to lead a better life. Their stories are inspiring and moving at the same time. Through a narrative which is heartwarming the author makes oneto look at life, as they see it. This book is an ode to woman's power and magical ability to change the world and 'shine' through nothing but her belief and untiring efforts.

II

Urvashi Butalia's edited volume *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir* accords the human face to a complex political problem prevalent in Kashmir for a long time. Through the testimonies of ordinary and extraordinary women, the author draws on women's experiences in the conflict by pondering on certain important questions viz. How has the conflict affected women and how have they learnt to live with continuing violence? What strategies have they used to cope, to find a space, or to share or express what they are going through? What impact has the conflict had on their health and on their access to education? What has it meant for families, for power equations within them, for relationships, for children? The contributions in this book explore these issues through interviews with Kashmiri women, personal, reflective pieces, extracts from different reports and books. In this, "each word wounds, every story hurts, each incident of molestation and rape angers." (*The Outlook India*) Together they draw attention to a vital aspect of the conflict that has been all but forgotten.

Originating in an Oxfam India project to record accounts of violence in Indian-controlled Kashmir, this compendium contains first-person narratives, interviews, photographs, and extracts from published works reflecting nearly 50 years of suffering and resistance in that disputed region. The book's main point is that the Kashmir conflict is bad for women, no matter where they fall on the political spectrum. Butalia says: "It became my

mission to locate women's voices.” (Harneit-Sievers N. Pag.)The obvious effects, such as rape and murder, contend with the less dramatic but more pervasive insults of insecurity, poverty, and lack of education and healthcare. These essays “make for an eloquent testimony, not only to the grim realities of women's lives in Kashmir, but also to their deep desire for peace, a testimony that touches the heart of darkness, and light, wherein lie women's experiences of the long years of conflict.” (xxiii)

Naya Kashmir manifesto, adopted in 1944 by the national conference under Sheikh Abdullah “stressed the future of Kashmir as a secular, socialist state committed to eradication of communalism and the rights of women.” (ix-x) However, many surveys suggest how women of Kashmir are carrying the burden of conflict in forms of stress, trauma, depression, spontaneous abortions, miscarriages which are common problems the women of Kashmir are undergoing these days. There are “half-widows, widows, mothers who have lost their sons, or those whose daughters have been raped, young women who dare not step out of the house, women who have been pushed out of employment by the fear and uncertainty created by conflict” (xii). The levels of domestic violence, as accentuated by Butalia, have increased manifold for all women of Kashmir, whether Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, or Ladakhi. “For women, ... the external violence of war or political conflict is not something that is happening ‘out there’, but it has made its way into their homes and hearths.” (xv)The case of half widows is considerable the way they are facing day to day life. As Butalia narrates:

Being without an earning member in the family meant they were forced to go out and seek work, but the moment they stepped out of the home, or stayed away from it, family members would accuse them of being women of bad character—astigma that is difficult to live down, the more so when it is added to the stigma of widowhood. (xv)

Indeed, the contents of the book demonstrate the fact that it is women who have overcome the political divide in Kashmir that men seem incapable of doing. Thus within its pages one hear the voices of Kashmiri Muslim and Hindu women. And what they narrate has a familiar ring, an overlap, a commonality that is linked to their being women, whatever their politics. And it is precisely this that has facilitated the as yet nascent process of dialogue between Kashmiri Muslim and Pandit women.

For instance, Neerja Mattoo, retired principal of the leading women's college in Srinagar, recounts the “liberal, humanist atmosphere” that had survived various upheavals but came to a dramatic end in 1898. Kshama Kaul writes of the deeply conservative nature of Kashmiri Pandit society and the horrors of the sexual assaults and rapes that Pandit women have recently experienced. And Dr. Shakti BhanRaina describes her midnight drive from Srinagar to Jammu in 1989, a journey that resulted in permanent exile from her homeland.

On the other side, through a remarkable set of interviews conducted by Pamela Bhagat of women who live virtually in the war zone, in places like Kargil, Drass, Pandrass

and Matayen, we learn about the crisis in health that women have had to face as a consequence of internal displacement. Also, one finds it difficult not to weep when you read the searing account of the Chittisinghpura massacre by Sonia Jabbar, the first journalist to arrive on the scene.

The book also features Hameeda Bano, who describes what it is like to grow up as a Kashmiri woman in a land that has been convulsed by violence. And an interview with Parveena Ahangar, Chairperson of the Association of the Parents of Disappeared Persons in Kashmir, who speaks of the trauma of thousands of mothers and wives who have to contend with loved ones who have vanished without a trace.

Speaking Peace includes excerpts from the remarkable tale of Krishna Mehta, whose husband was a Wazir-e-Wazirat (district officer) in Kashmir in 1947 and was sent to Muzaffarabad shortly before Pakistani-backed raiders attacked the valley. When she along with her children had been flanked by the raiders to the Dome bridge, she recounts the unimaginable sacrifices that the women made:

Before that I had only heard about the women who had jumped into the river; for the first time I saw the tragic spectacle of humanity surrendering life so willingly and for no great cause at that. Some women still stood at the edge of the bank with forlorn looks on their faces and a few other knee-deep in water. They threw their children into the rushing river and seemed impervious to the shrieks and yells of their own infants. Life refuses annihilation. (23)

Krishna Mehta questions the idea of raiders regarding saving the Muslim women as they don't need protection. In these raids, many younger women had even "disfigured their faces with dung, clay and mud to escape the lustful eyes of the raiders." (27) These raiders would "carefully scrutinise the women and make their choice... If the children were in the way, they would snatch them from their mothers and hurl them to the ground." (27) This gripping tale describes her journey with her children from Muzaffarabad to Jammu and the kindness extended to her even by her "enemies".

At a time when all our security- *wallas* are fantasising about all manner of war scenarios — limited, surgical, etc. — these voices that speak of peace might appear disconnected from the harsh realities. But in fact, they are more connected because these women have experienced the full harshness of the reality that is Kashmir today. They have known through their own lives and those of their sisters, what it means to live in a place where peace, and the ordinaryness of life, appear a distant dream.

Urvashi Butalia spells out why this book was compiled and her words best communicate its relevance. She says that the book "aims to mark a moment in the history of the conflict in Kashmir and the involvement of the State and militants in it, a moment when the presence of women, whether as victims, agents, or perpetrators, can no longer be ignored, a moment which makes it clear that any initiative for peace and resolution of the conflict

must take women into account and involve them centrally, a moment at which the women's movement must rethink its involvement with such questions." (Sharma Kalpana, *The Hindu*.Pag.)

To sum up, it is averred that if in Kashmir conflict it is a fight for freedom for the Kashmiri men; for women, this ravaged state certainly is a paradise lost. These women have literally been curfewed inside Kashmir, by the security forces as well as by the militants for a long time. "They provide a non-violent resistance that has sustained domestic life with courage, honour and active support to the dream of independent Kashmir." (Dewan 2657) The unbridled rage of Kashmir's beautiful women has found its echoes in Frenzy Manecksha's *Behold, I Shine: Narratives of Kashmir's Women and Children* and UrvashiButalia's *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir*. They have recorded the endless decades of strife of these women who have suffered—bereft of family, means of survival and even personal space. Their victimization and consequent gagging has worked as a driving force for them resulting in their voicing and resistance against the militants, patriarchs and the military. ■

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Constructing a Queer Space: Lesbian Representation in Sanchez's *Allure*

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The debate between essentialists and constructionists on whether homosexuality is genetically transmitted or a social construct has continued for more than a century. Cinema is a medium that can change social norms but has been dominated by male actors and directors. Females are conveniently sidelined in films. But films like *Allure* that have lesbians in lead role sidelines male characters and carve out a space for the expression of female desires. The cinema is examined as a queer film and reaches the conclusion that the constructionist notion of same-sex relationship is more acceptable.

Keywords: constructionists, essentialists, queer, new queer movies, sexuality, homosexuality, lesbian, heteronormativity.

Sexuality developed out as Jackson and Scott Point out as “social rather than a natural phenomenon” (3), and from the beginning itself, the studies of sexuality have been centred on the difference between the views of social constructionists and essentialists. The debate between the essentialists and the constructionists helped to shape a definition of homosexuality. Essentialists regard identity as natural, fixed, and innate; constructionists assume identity is fluid, the effect of social conditioning and available cultural models for understanding oneself. Essentialists believe that homosexuality is natural and constructionists are of the opinion that it is socially constructed and a choice rather than a fixed identity. Cinema helps in establishing whether the essentialists’ notion of sexuality is right or whether the constructionists’ argument is more dependable as it is the only medium that can show homosexual life to a society that considers heteronormativity as the norm.

Conventionally, cinema is a male space and the feminine role is limited to just being the femme fatales, mother, daughter or sister. Virginia Woolf had noted how women were side-lined in fiction and women were “shown in their relation to men” and women were “until Jane Austen’s day, not only seen by the other sex, but seen only in relation to the other sex. And how small a part of a woman’s life is that” (69). The female role in cinema was limited “to titillate, to be in distress and be rescued, and occasionally to guarantee the heterosexuality of the hero” (Butler 82). Lesbian movies, however, is a female space with women playing

key roles and men having no significant roles. The female figure is presented differently in such films and it adheres to what Mary Ann Doane has observed, “of de-familiarization whose aim is not necessarily that of seeing the female body differently, but of exposing the habitual meanings/values attached to femininity as cultural constructions” (24).

Lesbians deviate from rejection of conventional womanhood; they deviate from the practices of developing into a female, rejecting heteronormativity, and taking a path that is unconventional and against social norms. They challenge male domination; cast aside female roles designed by society, and subvert all sexual norms. Colleen Lamos observes that “lesbianism has been celebrated as a sanctified sexuality free from the power plays of heterosexuality, as ‘pure lust’, as resistance to the patriarchy.” Lesbian movies come under what is termed queer cinema.

Queer cinema emerged as a diverse body of films, beginning around 1990. It is still ongoing and constituted a break with earlier representations of lesbians and gays in cinema. New Queer Cinema is a term first coined by the academic B. Ruby Rich in *Sight and Sound Magazine* in 1992. These films signal a turning away from the notions of negative stereotypes of homosexuals. The hallmark of these films is such that Queer movies attributed a positive image to gayness and lesbianism by making it normal as that of heterosexuality. Films that treat lesbianism and gayness as its central themes are often characterized by the celluloid examinations of the perverse and the abnormal within sexuality. The new queer movement typically shares certain themes such as the rejection of hetero-normativity and the issues faced by the LGBT protagonists living on the border of society.

Cinema plays an important role in giving currency to same-sex relationship. Directors attempt to normalise same-sex relationship by making central characters either gay or lesbian. Their homosexual life is pictured like the heteronormative couples in conventional cinema asserting that homosexuality is acceptable. *Allure* (2017) written and directed by Carlos Sanchez and Jason Sanchez is their debut feature film in which the lead characters are lesbians. *Allure* differs from other lesbian movies like *Carol* and *Blue is the Warmest Colour* because sometimes, the viewers doubt the sexual orientation of the characters. Still, the passion exhibited by Eva and Laura for each other and the passionate lovemaking scenes are enough to show the lesbian attraction these two have.

Allure 2017, as the name suggests, is overbearing, mysteriously attractive and captivating. Evan Rachel Wood plays the role of Laura Drake leading a desperate life and is a dissatisfied with her boyfriend. She meets a timid teenage girl Eva, played by Julia Sarah Stone. Eva is a girl who is traumatized by the possibility of her mother forcing her to move out of the family house and stay with her and her boyfriend. Laura steps in and takes hold of her and directs her to areas she had not experienced before. Laura is thirty-year-old, having trouble coming to terms with life. She had many bitter experiences in her life, and this shapes her mentality. Her occasional outbursts show this. Her shouting at her BDSM partner, “you are no good to me if you are not hard” during the bondage sexual encounter gives a glimpse of her general nature.

Laura is working with her father, who runs a housekeeping business. She carries toiletries and cleans houses. Eva's mother is her father's client, and she visits her house occasionally to clean it. Eva is introduced as toiling away at her piano. Laura is immediately attracted to Eva, and she tries to build up a conversation with her and makes her feel the goosebumps on her arm. This is the first contact they experience. Eva feels inseparably attracted to Laura. This, later on, develops into a toxic relationship and when Eva engages in a nasty fight with her uptight mother over the latter's boyfriend issue and moving out of the house to join him, Laura comes in and offers her asylum. This asylum, later on, moves on to be a permanent prison. Laura is the predator and Eva, the victim. Eva attempts to escape, but somehow, she is incapable of it as she is bound to her partner. Police are out enquiring about the missing girl and Laura becomes cautious. She refuses to part with Eva and locks her up.

Her heterosexual side is one of sexual fantasy in which she looks for sexual satisfaction in bondage and masquerades lovemaking. She finds satisfaction only when she curls up with Eva. The relationship between Eva and Laura is complex. The viewers do not get a clear picture of Eva's sexual orientation. She is seen enjoying the company of Laura, but then the only person with whom she has any contact is Laura. Her fight with her mother over the latter's boyfriend is the only place we find any encounter with a man. She reveals her hatred and calls his house "a shit hole." She gives up her mother, brother, school and her piano to live with a woman whom she knows only as a housekeeper. Under the company of Laura, she transforms from the ignorant teenage girl to a girl who smokes, drinks and engages in same-sex activities.

Laura is a woman who experiments with sex. Her description of her father's sexual urge for her could be made up and reveal her fantasizing. Her occasional BDSM with male partners, her violent explosive reactions after the sexual encounter with men aptly contrasts her reaction to Eva when she whispers to her on the bed "We are soulmates." The film does not bring in the lesbian element strongly and is more of Laura forcing a confused Eva about her sexual orientation. Laura keeps Eva as a prisoner and suggests her love for keeping people bound and under her custody, like in the two heterosexual scenes in the film.

Male presence in this film is limited. The opening shot of the film reveals Laura attempting to fulfil her sexual desire by engaging in sex with a man who is bound. However, she does not get sexual satisfaction and shouts at him. Another scene of male presence is when two men dupe her and brutally beaten up. Laura's dominating father, who is also her boss, is a strong masculine presence in the film. The patriarch warns his daughter and guides her. When she needs help, he is always around. He appears as a worried and highly concerned father.

In the absence of strong male characters the two troubled women find themselves entangled with each other in an inseparable manner. Both are guilty: Eva is guilty that she left her mother; Laura is guilty of her sexual misadventures, the latest of which is holding Eva. Both have many unresolved issues; both earn for companionship and care. Both can't be without the other. The power dynamics work well between these two characters. Laura is

in control, but she is a person with a low tolerance rate and exhibits her temper whenever she is challenged. Eva tries to escape from her because she fears Laura. She hesitates before the open bus door and finally returns to Laura's house. The control that Laura has over Eva is clear from this scene. Her loneliness makes Eva return to Laura. It is an abusive relationship. Laura is keeping Eva captured. After the initial enjoyment, Eva too feels that she is a captive. Laura emotionally blackmails her. She would have to be kept in prison for their joint action. Eva was only sixteen and their running away together would be like abduction, if Eva was discovered. Ultimately, Eva surrenders before Laura's compulsion.

Most of the time, the two are together in the house of Laura, which reduces Eva's contact with the outside world, preventing any interference from the society. However, social interference comes in Laura's father and the surveillance of police always at the back of Laura's mind as this fear prevents her from allowing Eva to move around. The need for a back story to strengthen the plot and give roundness to the characters could have motivated the makers of the movie to create the violent scene in which Laura gets hurt by two of her sexual partners. This leaves her and her father emotionally disturbed. Laura makes up a tale of how her father approached her for sex and how he attacked her. This is done to prevent Eva from knowing the truth, but the apology that the father offers Laura in the last part of the movie makes people wonder whether there is some truth in Laura's claim. The directors have not given a complete picture of this, which makes the plot indistinct in these areas.

The film is subtle and engrossing, visualized with a sophisticated gloom that lingers for long. The directors of the movie Carlos Sanchez, Jason Sanchez, have used their photographic skills to come out with a sophisticated display of visual imagery. Laura's home with its rundown furnishings and dull lightings gives the impression of the person who occupies it. The dilapidated building shown at the opening of the movie, the bedroom lit with a broken bed lamp and the shabby quarters where she gets beaten up, all add to the gloomy atmosphere. Eva finds her stay in the house a trauma and its intricate complexity reflects the condition she is in. The atmosphere suggests that same-sex couples always occupy a rundown space in society and they can only make temporary appearances in the mainstream but has to return to their backyard at the earliest.

It becomes evident to the viewers that Eva's sexual orientation is due to the dominant influence of her guardian. Laura is a predator who has trapped her innocent victim and uses her for her purpose with various techniques. From the first meeting itself, Laura approaches Eva and shows interest in classical music, which she never displays later. The goosebumps on hands are exhibited to invite Eva to touch her. Later, when she gets the chance, she takes off with Eva to her house, offers her some cheap food and drink and keeps her a captive. She knows the crime, as Eva is only 16 years old. The thought of losing Eva continuously haunted her, and she keeps her in her household. The predator image suits her better than an old motherly figure.

Alfred Kinsey, the pioneer of human sexuality, noted that only the human mind "invents categories and tries to force facts into separated pigeonholes. The living world is a continuum

in each and every one of its aspects. The sooner we learn this concerning human sexual behaviour, the sooner we shall reach a sounder understanding of the realities of sex.” In *Allure* this is applicable. It is not strictly a lesbian movie, though the central characters have lesbian inclination. Laura is constantly experimenting with her orientation and Eva’s orientation is not strictly lesbian. She is under the influence of the elderly woman. *Allure* establishes the theory of the constructionist that sexuality is constructed and not inherited. Both Laura’s and Eva’s sexual orientation changed when they met each other. The film establishes the influence of circumstances in sexual choices and stresses the constructivist theory that sexual orientation as a choice. ■

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A Journey from Colonialism to Post colonialism: A Reading of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*

Ameer Ahmad Khan

Colonialism is a calculated enterprise executed by the Western countries over the Oriental nations. Those who came for business gradually became the rulers and exploiters of the colonized countries. Under the guise of care and protection, the middleclass white men let loose cruelty and brutality in the new domains. India is one of the pathetic victims of this colonial enterprise. However, intellectuals and new writers of the colonized nations understood the causes of this plight and began to raise postcolonial questions through their fictional creations. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is such a postcolonial narrative of the predicament of the Indian subcontinent. It is a narration of the unending problems erupted and the countless killings followed in Delhi in the wake of partition. This article tries to establish that this tragedy is the impact of colonialism and Khushwant Singh's novel is a postcolonial counter writing of the traumatic experience.

Keywords: Colonialism, post colonialism, counter-discourse, railway & partition.

Introduction

Khushwant Singh is no doubt a legend among the popular Indian English writers. His reputation as novelist, short story writer and columnist is unquestionable. Singh has actually waged a battle against the unending problems of India before and after independence, through his literary contributions. In many of his writings he has chosen the weapon of satire to eradicate the evil tendencies of Indian life. Politics, religion, sex etc. are insignificant and irrelevant to him while dealing with the actual and serious problems of life. As a writer he is against all the taboos which have tried to strangle the peaceful life of ordinary Indians. His mission is to establish and maintain a peaceful and harmonious life among the ordinary villagers who are unfortunately ridden with communal and social differences.

As an iconoclast Khushwant Singh who stood strongly against the false notions of religions which are very sacred and sensational to the innocent Indians, has made an imprint. Similarly, in the matter of sexual affairs also, Singh is very rude and practical. As Nandini Mehta puts it in the introduction to *Not a Nice Man to Know: The Best of Khushwant Singh*, his sexy passages are "part of his long running crusade to rid the Indians of their hypocrisy,

prudery and inhibitions” (xiii). So, to many orthodox readers Khushwant Singh is a rebel who has challenged the conventional way of writing. His *Train to Pakistan* (1956) is an outstanding fictional narrative of Indian problems after Independence. It is also a critique of colonialism which tried to create a subservient mental paradigm among the Indians who were always seeking for something strange and different. In other words, *Train to Pakistan* is a post colonial answer to the false and fictitious questions raised by the westerners who tried to mastermind and exploit the colonized people. At the same time it is a rewriting of myriad problems created by the selfish and power crazy white men who always wanted to enjoy and exploit the Eastern treasures.

The Postcolonial Indian literature is an area in which clash of civilizations and a convergence of Indian and English, native and colonial, local and global, nationalist and subaltern, and the compatriot and the diaspora occur. It is not merely the wishful assimilative paradigm of mutual compatibility between East and West or the violent separatist paradigm of East versus West, but has been far more complicated since the days of British in India. Here in this troublesome and troubling scenario Khushwant Singh has done a great job through his literary masterpiece.

Khushwant Singh’s writing is in a way a counter-discursive literary revolution as explicitly stated by Richard Terdiman, the cultural historian in his work *Discourse/Counter-Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth Century France*. The counter-discourse presupposes, Terdiman says, a world of “competing contrary utterances against which it asserts its own energies” (36). Since a dominant discourse is an imposition from outside, individuals who are subjected to it will try to gain control over its power and turn it to their own use. Terdiman identifies this process as counter-discursive. A counter-discourse is not merely engaged in contradicting the dominant. It tries to represent reality differently and to counter the strategies of the dominant, which regulate the understanding of social reality. It has been similarly observed by Ellek Boehmer in his authoritative study *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. According to him nationalist discourses “impose their own definitions, certain dominant recuperative selves stand in place of others. There are those among the once-colonized for whom silences of history have not ended” (23).

Thus the innumerable problems of partition, the unbearable challenges of rebuilding India, the unholy religious measures for divine sanctity and the simplistic approaches for peaceful rural living are the major issues crop up in Khushwant Singh’s great fictional rewriting of India. Undoubtedly, Singh carries out a rewriting of British imperialism through this novel. It is natural with every indigenous writer as elaborated by Kavita Mathai in her article “National Identity in Recent Indian Novels in English”. To confront an authoritarian state-sponsored version of national identity the postcolonial writer opts a rewriting. “In a situation where the official version is the only one, purporting to be the authentic version as well, the role of literature becomes crucial in releasing alternative versions” (Zach 436).

Though British colonialism to a certain extent helped India to be a united nation, the ultimate aim of the colonizer was to plunder and parcel up India and her great heritage. Europeans regarded India and other eastern countries as a cultural other of Europe. It has been exactly observed by Edward Said in his seminal work *Orientalism*: “The Orient was almost a European invention and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and land landscapes, remarkable experiences” (1). Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* is in fact, a counter writing to the simple romantic notions about India by the white man and the chaos created by the colonizer in a community which stood for peace and harmony.

The action of the story takes place in a fictitious village namely Mano Majra. It is in fact, a microcosm of India where ordinary people of different religions and various strata of the society have been living harmoniously. Their life has been in rhythm with the arrival and the departure of the train from Lahore to Delhi and to the opposite. In Mano Majra, prayers, work, food and sleep are all initially regulated by the passage of trains through this small station. The early morning mail train blows its whistle and wakes the mullah providing the cue for the Muslim call to prayer, which in turn wakes Meet Singh, the Sikh priest. The passenger trains one from Delhi and the other from Lahore are significant symbols which depict peace while it rhythmically moves along this tiny village. Though “Mano Majra is a tiny place” (*Train to Pakistan* 10) it is the heart of India, the cradle of communal harmony and the fertile land of hospitality. And to this peaceful village colonialism has brought the seeds of distrust and hatred. Before partition the Lahore train was a forerunner of everything good.

The rhythm of the novel and the life in this village are regulated by the passing of trains across the Sutlej Bridge nearby:

By the time the 10.30 morning passenger train from Delhi comes in, life in Mano Majra has settled down to its dull daily routine. Men are in the fields. Women are busy with their daily chores. Children are out grazing cattle by the river. Persian wheels squeak and groan as bullocks go round and round... Sparrows fly about the roofs, trailing straw in their beaks. Pye-dogs seek the shade of the long mud walls. Bats settle their arguments, fold their wings, and suspend themselves in sleep. (13)

In this way the train comes to stand for interdependence and communal harmony rather than rivalry. The Indian struggle for freedom and the protection of its civilization most frequently cohere around the image of the railway journey and the vast spaces it traverses and hence brings into closeness. In his article ‘Idea of India’ Sunil Khilani observes that in India, “the great imperial cities Bombay, Calcutta and New Delhi became a stage where the symbols of office of British sovereignty were displayed, where the Indian was ruled, where space was most explicitly governed” (118).

The railway system introduced by the colonial rule influenced the Indian day to day life immensely and it affected the Indian nationalist attitudes to the colonial rule. Railways

were 'British – made', yet built by Indian labour of course. On the one hand, railways were a visible symbol of intrusive imperial power: an encroachment into Indian culture by the invader and anathema to Gandhi's anti-technological vision. But the same system was soon co-opted by the nationalists and used to spread the anti-British message far and wide. Initially unwelcome the foreign mode of transport was quickly internalized and adapted to suit indigenous needs. In imperial romance the railway signifies Britain's technological and unifying legacy but in the Indian context it has been woven into the drapery of everyday activities.

In fact, all the activities of the villagers in Mano Majra are closely associated with the arrival and the departure of railway trains. The early morning prayer services of all the three dominant religions, the Hindu, the Sikh and the Islam are punctuated by the passing of the first train. The next train, the 10.30 passenger from Delhi, finds all Mano Majrans at work—men in the fields and women in the kitchen. The Midday Express passes by when Mano Majrans are having siesta. The evening passenger train again finds Mano Majra active and at work. Then, men return home from their farms and women get busy with their routine work. The goods train gives them the signal for sleep and rest. Then "life in Mano Majra is stilled, save for the dogs barking at the trains that pass in the night" (*Train to Pakistan* 5).

When the British started ruling India, common man thought that everything was going to be good, just like the regular and punctual train journey. However, things began to change unexpectedly. Gradually the white men brought out the colonial teeth and started to gnaw the illiterate Indians. Then there was an upheaval of events and incidents, freedom struggle, persecution, partition etc. The Lahore-Delhi train also began to be unrhythmic:

Early in September, the time schedule in Mano Majra went wrong. Trains became less punctual than before..... Some days it appeared they had set the alarm clock for the wrong hour. On others, it was as if no one had remembered to wind it. Imam Baksh waited for Meet Singh to make the first start. Meet Singh waited for the mullah's call to prayer before getting up. People stayed in bed late without realising that times had changed and the mail train might not run through at all. Children did not know when to be hungry and clamoured for food all the time... (92-93)

British rule in India was initially treated as an East-West marriage or in other words, a *Maa – Bap* affair. When protests and demonstrations began to emerge, the cunning white men skillfully used the communal card. India, for centuries, a land of several religions, started to show distrust and disbelief, just like the change in the schedule of the train.

Train to Pakistan is no doubt a very realistic depiction of the predicament of the innocent Indians who started fighting and killing in the wake of partition. People who were living together, who earnestly prayed to different gods with one wish, who shared their ups and downs with their neighbors irrespective of religion and ways of worship, started to kill one another. Just like colonialism spread false and whimsical stories about the white man's

superiority, Mano Majra began to ring with rumours and deliberately created misleading stories. Within no time communal clashes began to hold command over thousands of Indians and Mano Majra also contributed greatly to this damned destruction. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims started killing one another. The constant clash and collision is narrated as an evil impact of colonialism. Once again the train becomes the battleground of carnage. It becomes a natural spectacle that on trains carrying huge numbers of passengers to either national site of perceived safety, India or Pakistan, large scale murder is taking place. “In Pakistan, Muslims raced along the trains murdering every man who was not a Muslim” (178).

The train here has been heightened to the level of a signifier where multitudes of people heading for their various destinations. On the eve of partition millions of people from either side of the dividing boundary were on the way, seeking refuge and security. Millions of non-Muslims from Pakistan longed for a passage to India, a land of hope and peace, whereas millions of Muslims from India sought the road to Pakistan, the land of Islamic faith and promise. Thus, the train in this context implies the movement of vast communities uprooted from the areas of traditional growth to a new land of hope. In a natural and objective way Khushwant Singh has delineated the brutality occurred on both sides of the border. However, he doesn't take sides with while narrating the holocaust: “. . . both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and dubbed. Both tortured. Both raped” (9). It is really a depiction of the awful experience of human beings involved in the dehumanized process of carnage.

The otherwise peaceful Mano Majra trembles with animosity between people whose loyalties start changing as the air is full of wild stories like ‘trains from Pakistan is full of dead bodies other than Muslims’; the cities of Amritsar, Ambala and Patiala ‘have turned into battlefields where Muslims are slaughtered and Koran is burnt’. However, Majrans still vow to protect Muslims by shifting them to refugee camps. A flood in the Sutlej carries more non-Muslim dead bodies enraging young Sikhs. Their anger is fanned by Mali the criminal and his gang, and making use of this opportunity to carry out their petty rivalry and to make money.

The criminal gang goes to the extent of firing indiscriminately on the Lahore train which is packed with Muslims and pushing down those who travel on the top of the train. Rumour mongers make it an opportunity to fan the fire. Stories of how mosques were desecrated by slaughtering pigs and tearing of the Koran are deliberately circulated. The Sikhs start mistrusting Muslims while a few women jump into wells or immolate themselves to save their pride since they are “paraded naked in the streets, raped in public, and then murdered” (142).

What shocked the people of Mano Majra, particularly the Muslims, was that they were forced to leave their homeland where they have lived for several years. Khushwant Singh as a master craftsman has given a heart rending narration of the incidents followed by the partition. Imam Baksh when asked to leave breaks down: “What have we to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst you brothers”

(147). His words are more touching and thought provoking when his fellow brothers decide to leave: “It will take us no more than one night to clear out of homes it has taken our fathers and grandfathers hundreds of years to make” (148-149).

British colonialism did its gruesome work in India. A great and united country was divided into two. People who had been leading a peaceful and harmonious life all on a sudden started to kill one another. The British justified their occupation of the country because they have a Messianic role to save the Indians from anarchy since they will clearly never be capable of governing themselves. In this context it is very relevant to quote the words of David Rubin: “The British consistently judge Indians on the basis of their own Western standards, convinced that these standards are uniquely good and universally applicable” (3).

Conclusion

Khushwant Singh’s masterpiece *Train to Pakistan* depicts the incompatibility of British colonialism. Moreover, it is a postcolonial counter discourse of the predicament. With all his skills as a writer, Khushwant Singh has spearheaded a postcolonial counter discourse of colonialism. The novel written in the childhood years of independent India is a scathing attack on imperialism. The ultimate outcome of colonial enterprise is painfully narrated in the arrival of the extraordinary train from Pakistan which had no headlight, depicting as a symbol of darkness and death in India: “There are no lights on the train” and the “engine did not whistle” (*Train to Pakistan* 18). The bleak picture is very much explicit when he says: “It is like a ghost” (142). Thus the novel’s trenchant exposition of the saddest and the most moving event, the partition and its aftermath in the history of India makes it a highly appreciated critique of British colonialism. ■

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Representation of Sexuality and Women in a Same-sex Relationship in Queer Films: *A Study of Fire & Girlfriend*

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Gender and sexuality are fundamental in understanding the structure of any society and culture as it is the cultural construction that decides the ‘acceptable’ bodies and ‘non-conforming’ bodies. Gendered and sexual identities are always under the inspection of heterosexist and heteronormative ideals and norms, the branched compositions and culturally accepted behaviours, attitudes and sexuality. These regulations control bodies and sexualities to behave in society and politically accepted manners as gender identities are often presented using socio-political structure within the nation space. Sexualities and identities are seen in binary frameworks of heterosexuality/homosexuality, masculine/feminine, dark/fair, fat/skinny, able-bodied/specially-abled and so on. The ideological set-up, and heterosexist family system reconstructs and establishes gender identities through constant negation and allowance of gender roles through performative and corporeal constructs. Queer identities have always been in conflict with the idea of nationalism as ‘compulsory heterosexuality is considered as the ‘norm’ in gender identities and in family systems, by the invisible authoritarians and enforcers of the society, who constantly regulate and are put under vigilance that leads to marginalization. The paper discusses key issues and the shifting and evolving gendered and sexual identities in relation to queer films.

Keywords: Sexuality, heterosexuality, homosexuality, cultural artefacts, normativity, heteronormativity, and identities.

Sexuality is increasingly seen as socially constructed. Contemporary studies question the heterosexist biases of sexuality studies and challenge norms of what is seen as acceptable, legitimate, and ‘normal’ sexuality. Theorists like Judith Butler, Gayle Rubin, Jeffrey Weeks, and others, drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, argue that homosexuality has always been referred to the margins using religious, medical, psychological, and legal methods. The assumption of heterosexuality-that everybody is heterosexual- as ‘standard’ is now termed ‘heteronormativity’ (a socio-cultural assumption that heterosexuality is the ‘norm’ and normal). Social institutions like marriage, kinship, family, political economy, and religion

are built around this assumption. Theorists now speak of sexualities rather than sexuality. 'Queering' is the process of turning on its head the assumption of heterosexuality-as-norm.

Queer Studies is an exceptionally self-motivated field that is expanding almost every day to include new histories, new cultures of empathy, relationship and affinity, and new ways of being queer. In academia, Queer Studies has come forward only very recently, with the term 'queer' gaining a positive political advantage, even in the midst of much opposition to it. Any discussion on Queer Studies cannot but begin with recollecting the etymological evolution of the term 'queer', and its allocation by the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender movement worldwide, in order to make sense of the long struggle involved in retrieving the term and pervading it with a political burden.

The issue of alternate sexuality and its representation via cultural artefacts is discussed prominently. While orthodox patriarchy often views alternate sexuality with theological denunciation and moral repulsion, constant attempts on the part of LGBTIQ activists, authors, and filmmakers have given issues related to alternate sexuality greater visibility. This consecutively has promoted ongoing changes in sensibilities and modes of representation. Abin Chakraborty quoted Rich's argument:

An important aspect of such changes is the recognition that if sexuality is part of one's gendered identity, then sexuality, like gender, is more a construct than something that is biologically determined. This is the premise of any challenge to that principle of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Rich 227-54) or 'obligatory heterosexuality' (Rubin 548) which undergirds patriarchal hegemony with its attendant concerns related to property and class. (71)

The implication of queer studies and identification of alternative sexualities has build up a confront to heteronormativity as disseminated by laws, social institutions, medical practice, cultural representations and so on. One of the problems faced by queer people concerning Indian popular culture has been the time not far away removal of alternate sexualities during the twentieth century.

Cinema as a cultural artefact plays an important role in social force by representing socio-cultural realities of the contemporary moment, to imagine the new possibility of living. Through rebellion of heteronormativity, it provides a 'queer' way of experiencing the popular culture.

As Nelmes discussed this sexual ideology in his book *Introduction to Film Studies 5th edition* by quoting Dyer's essay, 'Rejecting Straight Ideas: Gays in Film' (Steven 1985), he says, "the sexual ideology of our culture" (303) explicitly, the notion that society and culture, through structures such as the family and artefacts such as film, enforce specific outlook of what is considered to be correct sexual behavior. This outlook includes a dominance of the heterosexual point of view or belief and antipathy towards the homosexual one. Nelmes explains Dyer's observation that Homosexuality, is predominantly seen from a heterosexual viewpoint in most mainstream films. He refers to Dyer, "the image of

homosexuality as a sickness and a problem in Victim ... and an endless succession of lesbian and gay characters as vampires, psychos and criminals which, he argues, still continues today” (303).

However, Dyer remarks that sexual ideology is contradictory and ambiguous, full of “gaps and fissures” (Nelmes 303), through which filmmaker and audience can build new, unconventional meanings.

Critical understanding and debate of gay sensibility and established sexual ideology, a concept that was later marked ‘heterosexism’, conjoint by increasing numbers of people: audiences, critics, and filmmakers. Film production in this area sustained to materialize mainly within the structure of unconventional or art cinema, although Hollywood made infrequent endeavours to make use of what was seen as a progressively open gay audience and a greater interest in gay themes by non-gays for example *The Boys in the Band* (William Friedkin, 1970), *Making love* (Arthur Hiller, 1982), *Cruising* (William Friedkin, 1980), and *Philadelphia* (US, 1993).

Nelmes further discussed gay sensibility as a notion functional in the study of the film:

... gay sensibility can be defined as a developed awareness of sexual variation. This does not automatically mean that a filmmaker or viewer has to be gay or lesbian to be able to present or appreciate themes and issues connected with LGBT people, but such awareness can open up rich creative possibilities. (303)

As Kaustav Bakshi observed in the journey of Queer cinema, the west has evolved along two routes. The first route follows a rehabilitative logic. Contrasting the limiting portrayal of homosexuals in mainstream films, it tries to revive this image and incorporate it within mainstream cinema. Most of the films along with this route attempt to create an alternate space for the queer within the mainstream genre. Many of them are strongly invested in history, attempting thus to intervene and ‘queerise’ certain moments in history or to claim certain figures as queer heroes/martyrs. The other route, however, rejects altogether the representative possibilities of the mainstream genre. Regarding the burden of films, Kaustav Bakshi by citing Jackie Stacey’s essay, ‘Introduction: Queering Screen’, this tension of films, ‘reject[s] cinema as either a re-assuring space of positivity or a potential route through which to win the acceptance of wider audiences’ (124).

Taking advantage of avant-garde techniques, these films celebrate difference and sexual freedom and resist reduction to a normativity itself. Bakshi comments, “These films even problematise the notion of the positive image of the queer (an attempt that marks the more mainstream recuperative agenda), and some of them explore notions of pederasty, vampirism, homicide and sexual abuse, reading into all of this a defiant logic” (124).

The essay ‘The New Queer Cinema’ by B. Ruby Rich was marked initially in this latter route, through his essay Rich coined the term to identify a group of films that use techniques of avant-garde social constructionism, of creating socially constructed reality to rework histories. Her studies of the ever-changing outline of queer cinema substantiate to

the many ways in which queerness is represented, performed, and critiqued on the screen. Kaustav Bakshi cites by pointing out Rich's observation that these films are strongly influenced by art, activism and "'recoded aesthetics' (xv) linking the independent movement to the avant-garde" (124).

In post-globalization India, literature, and cinema, however, continued to contribute positively to addressing queer issues. If *Fire* (1998) had brought the Indian lesbian out of the closet, several overly queer films had begun to be made around that time, though none of these instigated as *Fire* did. The issue of same-sex love in Indian films was the first foreground in Deepa Mehta's *Fire* (1996), which revolved around a lesbian relationship between two women named Sita and Radha. While feminists have voiced objections over the nature of the representation, what made the film particularly significant was the commotion caused by right-wing specific religious groups who smashed up several cinema halls, demanded a ban on the film, and lambasted it as an affront to Indian culture. These responses illustrate how cinematic recognition of lesbian desire and relationships, however problematic, threaten patriarchal heteronormativity and provide opportunities for new solidarities.

As Bakshi observed that small films with limited viewership such as:

BOMGay (dir: Riyad Vinci Wadia and Jangu Sethna, 1996), *Bombay Boys* (dir: Kaizad Gustad, 1998), *Split Wide Open* (dir: Dev Benegal, 1999), *Mango Souffle* (dir: Mahesh Dattani, 2002), and *Gulabi Aaina/The Pink Mirror* (dir: Sridhar Rangayan, 2003) found wide circulation in film festivals and through informal networks. (166)

The film *Fire* reveals how contemporary postcolonial and transnational cultural discourses comprehend racialized, classed, sexualized, religious, and gendered forms of social synchronizing and normalization. According to Jigna Desai, Mehta's *Fire* with specific attention to how normativities and identities are catalyzed with the circulation of the film states:

Fire reflects the significance of Bollywood and Indian cinemas not only through referencing particular films through its dialogue, plot, and music but also through its form and aesthetics, employing melodrama and the family social drama as significant. (152)

Fire is most commonly read as suggesting that (arranged) marriage privileges men and suppresses women's desires and that the maltreatment of women, more than the compulsory heterosexuality, results from the autocratic nature of Indian traditions such as religion. Women trapped within the repressive authoritarian structure of the family, try to search for only solace and love in each other for lack of a better alternative. Women can seek choice now only because the bourgeois family is changing and accredits "choice" or "transformation" (Desai 153) because of the "modernizing" (Desai 153) deviations arising in India. The affinity in reading *Fire*, like films of Hindi cinema, is to contribute to specifying the line

between tradition and modern, positing over its position and the upcoming gender roles and sexualities within the family. Desai quotes Mehta's statement in an interview 1996 by Ingrid Randoja:

The women's relationship represents modern India itself... Radha is tradition-bound and just waiting to blossom, but can't because of the absurdity of tradition and duty. Sita is modern India, desiring independence over tradition. Yet it's not as if she can speak her mind. She's simply a catalyst, so when she walks into the house, she makes things happen just by her presence. (Desai 153)

Sita is modelled as modern for expressing such as "duty is overrated," (Desai 153) for cross-dressing and coquetting, for kissing Radha, and for questioning religiosity and female domestic chores. Ashok and Jatin are seen as on the same track as well; the former is traditional for his religiosity and the latter is an undesirable modern for his extramarital affair and pornography business. Some critics allege the film disparage tradition. As her performance and cross-dressing are queer and transgressive whether one pursues as performing femininity or masculinity. Her performance suggests being the new heroine of the cinema in the postcolonial moment of economic liberalization, as the modern woman of India.

The entire relationship of Sita and Radha in the film (which progresses very quickly to lovemaking and the discovery of which serves as the main climax of the film) is based on the premise that unfulfilled heterosexual experience can only propel women to engage in lesbian relationships thus negating the very existence of homosexual identity and its subsequent history and struggles. This is also disturbing as it endeavours to desexualize and thus negate the very same-sex relationship.

Fire in many ways had a greater impact as a marginalized film. In other words, it is interesting to note that these films, including *Bombay Boys*, despite their potentially controversial topics, have not garnered the kind of response that *Fire* did. As Desai comments on the condition of the film distribution system:

Vertical integration of the film industry results not only in difficulty in acquiring wide distribution in theatres and sufficient visible screen time but also in garnering publicity and exposure for the films as well as "positive" reviews. Furthermore, contesting the aesthetics and content of Indian national cinemas also may result in confrontations with the state that is invested in protecting bourgeois cultural sensibilities and ideologies and other groups seeking to represent the nation. (191)

Some other films have been significant in this nascent queer cinema movement in India. The early 2000s also saw the making of extremely competent films from the South: Santosh Sivan's Telugu film *Navarasa* (2004), a sensitive take on the Araavani community of South India, and Ligy J. Pullappally's Malayalam film *Sancharram/ The Journey* (2004), which told a deep emotional tale of a lesbian couple's predicament in a small village of Kerala. Shohni Ghosh's documentary *Tale of the Night Fairies* (2005) also made a significant

contribution to queer narratives in India: focusing on five sex workers based in Kolkata, Ghosh's documentary, though not dealing with specifically gay or lesbian sex workers, unravelled the complex moral knots in which the debates over the decriminalization of sex work were bogged down. Since then, films in other Indian languages, such as the bilingual *Margarita with a Straw* (2014) by Shonali Bose have also explored non-heterosexual relationships without courting too much controversy.

Extensively, another film like Onir's *My Brother... Nikhil* (2005) was released to critical acclaim, while Nikkhil Advani's blockbuster *Kal Ho Na Ho/Tomorrow May Never Come* (2003) and Karan Johar's *Dostana* (2008) raise errors much controversy for its homophobic comedy of errors involving its two male protagonists. Yet, *Kal Ho Na Ho* did not hurt as much as Karan Razdan's *Girlfriend* (2004), which established lesbianism as a psychological disorder, an abnormality from the monstrous clutches of which the male protagonist rescues his lover.

The film *Girlfriend* depicts the story of two women who are best friends and stay together in an almost idyllic atmosphere. They do not want to let men into their private space, apart from gay men whom they consider to be one of them.

The story is as simple as it gets: Tania is in love with Sapna. Sapna does not realize that this love has undertones of overt sexuality and only considers this to be the sacred sororal bonds that exist between 'best friends, even though it is revealed during the course of the film that they have had sexual relations in the past, albeit drunken ones. Rahul sees Sapna at a party, falls in love and pursues her relentlessly. They begin a relationship that incurs the wrath of Tania and she endeavours repeatedly to create rifts between the happy couple, even beating Rahul to a pulp, quite literally. And finally in the climax she reveals she is a lesbian, goes to kill Rahul but Sapna intervenes and Tania dies a dreadful death.

Tania had a gruesome past. Her mother's death coupled with her rape can be seen as a punishing mother who leaves her child in the face of danger. When she grows up, the kind of bond that she has with Sapna is almost reminiscent of a mother-child bond: the tenderness of love, the suckling each seems to repeat and reiterate the mother- child relationship.

The portrayal of same-sex relationships is as generalized as it can possibly get. It portrays lesbians as psychotic hysteric murderers. So when Tania dies, and the poor woman dies a painful death: she is electrocuted and then falls from a massive height leaving her corpse mangled, it is as if the director is deliberately trying to preach that lesbians should be killed because they are unnatural and an abomination to the society.

Rahul the problematic heterosexual, normative, homophobic hero must save the damsel in distress Sapna and cure her of any deviance whatsoever. He must save her from Tania who is sick because she is aware of her sexuality. She must be taught a lesson: that lesson is death. A bisexual woman is cured and brought back to the side of heterosexuality where she would fulfill her role of being progenitor and someone's wife.

Both the films *Fire* and *Girl friend* discuss the complexity in the representation of same-sex relationship especially women and raise serious questions on heteronormative society. How far is homosexuality excluded? *Fire*, however, is more than just a film showcasing homosexual relations; it endeavours to showcase the marginalized woman bereft of a voice, an identity- both sexual and humane. The characters seem to let go of their biological destiny of being the passive ‘masochistic’ women who must always willingly overlook the impositions of patriarchal structures and dictums because they have been trained as a potential chalice to carry forward the family in which they would be married.

The same complexity is apparent in the evolving representations of women in various Hindi films. As Chakraborty discusses Laura Mulvey and Annette Khun’s point of view that mainstream cinema not only functions on the basis of a broad system locating women as, he cites, “signifier for the male order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions” (62) but also lessen them to “a set of bodily attributes” (62) which install them as purchasable commodities within an economy controlled by patriarchy and capitalism. Mulvey’s *Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema* suggests a theory of gaze that is based on the traditional psychoanalytic notion of male/female definitions and oppositions. Her theory of gaze is argued that the woman is placed on the basis of being an object of keen sexual desire through a male gaze. So, this small instance aligns with the man asking the woman to objectify herself to the voyeuristic sensual experience. These arguments are equally applicable to the world of Indian cinema. As Chakraborty cites Sangeeta Dutta, “Women in Bollywood ...serve to maintain male domination’ through a ‘patriarchal version of female sexuality’ based on ‘conservative ideology” (62).

Although, within this generally hostile environment showcasing world queer cinema, KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival was launched in 2010 gaining assistance from the Mumbai film industry. One of the primary queer film festivals of India:

KASHISH introduced awards in different categories, judged by a panel of eminent jury ambiguous relationship with queer subjects, sometimes handling it sensitively and sometimes with offensive mockery, KASHISH made such for a new kind of cinema to emerge, making way for counter-discourse to enter the mainstream. However, Bombay Cinema’s regressive stance was countered by three Bengali films, *Arekti Premer Golpo/Just Another Love Story* (dir: Kaushik Ganguly, 2010), *Memories in March* (dir: Sanjoy Nag, 2011) and *Chitrangada: A Crowning Wish* (dir: Ritupurno Ghosh, 2012), all of which released in mainstream theatres, generating a public discourse- supportive or otherwise-which could be compared to that engendered by *Fire*. (Bakshi 170)

These films became points of reference for queer subjects who, for a long time, had been waiting for a powerful media such as cinema to talk about queerness sensitively.

As Pramod Nayar observed that a key issue in queer globalization is the narrative of teleology and development. The ‘First World’ noticed ‘Third World’ nations as only

recently ‘coming out’. It discerns the controversy over Deepa Mehta’s *Fire* as an index of the nation’s cultural, and therefore, racial, backwardness. In such a narrative, Western nations are considered more ‘progressive’ and ‘modern’ while postcolonial nations, which are only now beginning to ‘reveal’ their gay and lesbian community are ‘traditional’. Effectively such a discourse restores the binary of colonialism, where the West was modern and the (colonized) East abides for primitivism and traditionalism. Pramod Nayar quoting Van Gelder’s review about *Fire*:

Perhaps bold and novel in India, its feminist messages seem dated by American standards, and *Fire* would be easier to take more seriously if throbbing drums didn’t underline its images of passion, if a devastated husband didn’t slump beneath a soda machine reading “Crush,” and if a sampler inscribed “Home Sweet Home” didn’t lay such emphasis on the contrast between the stitched sentiment and the miseries and tensions that motivate the characters under this particular roof. (176)

The term ‘queer’ pursues to disrupt categories of identity, sexual, gender, community, and even national. Queer identities call into question institutions that are based upon assumptions of heterosexuality. Queer politics hunts for inclusion rather than exclusion. Postcolonial queer writing works dealing with the theme of “identity” (Nayar 178) often include debates about “the ‘stability’ of relationships” (Nayar 178), and “the assumption of heterosexual relationships as the norm and queer ones as ‘deviant’” (Nayar 178). Queer films deal the same themes in a greater sensibility.

These queer films collectively illustrate the shifting and evolving paradigms of gendered and sexual identities which are gradually being recognized across the country through different cultural representations. They exhibit the gradual erosion of essentialist notions of sexuality and gender, especially among metropolitan youth, which will continue to give rise to varying forms of representation and circulation. While these representations are not free from hierarchies of their own, especially along the lines of class, they are still invested with the potentiality of plural and emancipator horizons that are integral for conceptualizing a better future. ■

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Carving out a Niche in the New World: Characters as Signposts in Meera Syal's Novels

Aindrilla Guin

Meera Syal (1961—), the South Asian British author and a second generation diasporic projects the multifaceted reality of her existence in the life of her protagonists in a comical light. Beginning from her debut novel *Anita and Me* (1996), through *Life Isn't All Ha Ha Hee Hee* (1999), till her *The House of Hidden Mothers* (2015), everywhere is a strong cynicism at work, spoken mostly from the keen and sensitive vision of women belonging to different ages and situations. While Meena the protagonist in *Anita* is an adolescent, Chila, Tania and Sunita, the protagonist-trio in *Life* are young women vivid in their expressiveness. The protagonist Shyama in *The House* is forty-eight and has to connect with a younger woman from her homeland in the bond of surrogacy, though she is the mother of a nineteen year-old daughter. In Syal's novels the protagonists are women who are fighting hard to assimilate but certainly not without the difficulties. However the struggle posed by the protagonists in the three novels change as the women mature in experience, as they grow older and this speeds up the assimilation process as evinced in Syal's novels.

Keywords: acculturation, homeland, hostland, diasporic, in-betweenness, identity.

South Asian diaspora is one of the most interesting diasporas of the world. As Susan Koshy, the veteran diasporic critic claims in her book co-authored with R. Radhakrishnan, *Transnational South Asians: The Making of a Neo-Diaspora*, the South Asian diaspora was “one of the oldest, largest and most geographically diverse” (Koshy 2), and could be termed as endo-diaspora, that is diaspora which had formed before the formation of nations rather than exo-diaspora, the diaspora that had formed after the formation of nations (Koshy). The South Asian diaspora is unique by dint of the presence of diverse languages, cultures, religious ethos and most importantly different motivations for entering into diaspora— positive and negative (Cohen). The different meanings of diasporas and understanding of the same change as the reaction towards diaspora changes from first to second generation or third generation diasporas.

While the first generation diasporic subjects suffer from a sense of being in a state of exile, the second or third generation diasporic individuals have a greater urge to assimilate

with the hostland. However in several cases it has also been seen that while the first generation suffer from a sense of alienation in the new land, they nonetheless attempt to acculturate. But when it comes to the second generation subjects, in several cases the second generation subjects are more voluminous in expressing their protest against the hostland which they often feel has deprived them of their due as citizens and has been biased towards them.

In the case of first generation diasporics, there is a conflict within, whereas in the case of second generation diasporics the contestations are overtly expressed. However these are reactions which do not pertain to one and all. In many cases people who enter into diaspora find themselves in a better world than they had been in the homeland. The Sri Lankan diasporic author Romesh Gunsekera's *The Reef* has the narrator Triton, a butler at the marine biologist Ranjan Salgado's place, is forced to move up to London, along with his master. Triton faces a new world but not out of alienation. London gives him a new space to project himself, to grow up and express without knowing the language (English) of the land. Far from the strife between Tamil and Sinhala he gradually learns English and makes a name and identity for himself in England. In Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, the protagonist Nazneen throughout the novel considers her position in contrast with her sister where the latter had faced a terrible lot being in the homeland while she (Nazneen) had escaped the same being in England. For Nazneen the hostland through gradual acculturation becomes the land where she can realize her dreams. As the novel ends, comes Nazneen's elder daughter's comment, "This is England... You can do whatever you like" (Ali 413).

Meera Syal, the South Asian diasporic author is also a comedian, actor and screenplay writer located in Britain. She is one of the predominant diasporic writers of South Asian origin and is an important personality in Britain. The novels scripted by Syal are predominantly set in Britain, but her characters are strikingly steeped in their diasporic existence. The protagonists in Syal's novels are mostly Asian and the characters attempt hard to situate themselves in their present land of existence, that is, the hostland while carrying the homeland within the self.

Her works have brought to the fore the conflict and the confrontations, the insecurities and the disturbances of diasporic life and existence. On the contrary she has also shown how the same ground which acts as the teetering ground of identity crisis acts as the cultural space for creativity and the vantage ground for expression and powerful individual utterance. While the supernarrative of diasporic theory records the angst and disturbances, the rift and turbulence, the individual utterance, is at times success story and stories of spreading out—expanse rather than getting back to their cocoons. The in-between spaces, the "shifting grounds", "threshold spaces" (Bromley 5), lead not only to the shift but to a throbbing zone of cultural interaction.

The diverse cultural notions, the different ethnicities, class, caste, communities, multiple locations within the nation, different educational backgrounds prevent any purity or singularity of culture or linearity of identity. However this has been utterly disregarded in mainstream diasporic theory of the male-centric ethos. As Bhabha speaks of the "Third

Space of enunciation (Bhabha 37), where he speaks of an “international culture” (Bhabha 38) and culture’s “hybridity” (Bhabha 38), this hybrid existence is quite true of the characters in Meera Syal’s novels.

As Structuralists believe everything is outside the text, nothing is inside, and the meaning of the text is embedded in culture, the crux of Syal’s novels is entirely contestation of cultural conflicts. Subjectivity and identity, dwelling upon the traits of culture and the identity markers having their source in culture are clearly projected in Syal’s texts. Considering the nation as a dubious term existing on the horizon where reality and imagination seem to coalesce, Nation remains as a mooring, a sense of identification, of dwelling on the surface of things when the characters fail to exist on the reality of a locale. Under such a state of existence the characters in Syal’s narrative pose a comical face to the bitter reality of existence.

Existences pile, one upon the other as the characters strive to come to a compromise between the homeland and hostland. In her novels Syal projects young girls or women who confront their surroundings to become British, while all the time remaining intact in one’s culture, which is Asian. This criss-crossing of identification formed through interaction with the new country arouses a conflict that gives rise to the human drama of the novels.

Meera Syal’s association with socialist groups as Southall Black Sisters, Women Against Fundamentalism, sharing common membership with Refugee Council and Newham Asian Women’s Project provided her thoughts and concerns with an element of activism. However her novels do not envision the characters as taking up the onus of fighting for one’s stance or with any sense of activism for the propagation of the rights of the diasporic community. Instead they are mostly timid characters trying hard to hold on to their existences and giving a name to their identifications. In the novels of Syal the women come together to form a camaraderie, a sisterhood that would give to them a sense of strength in the foreign land (*Life Isn’t All ha Ha Hee Hee*), a powerful voice to express (*Anita and Me*), and the power to makedaring dreams come true (*The House of Hidden Mothers*).

The land in the West seems alien land however much the second generation characters might attempt at grounding themselves in the diaspora. The first generation characters suffer from a sense of exile, and hence carry their homes within, while the second generation take a dubious stance and treads between acculturation and recreating a homeland culture within the community. Though the protagonists are mostly Asian and a part of South Asian culture, they attempt to express their Britishness. However the expression is not of acquisition of the nation but a crisis at not being able to assimilate. The problem of black skin which makes one visible as one, who treads the in-between path, complicates things. For one’s identity which is British, but the skin colour hinders assimilation, the recognition as Asian becomes too conspicuous.

Syal’s *Anita and Me* is set in the mining town of Tollington in Wolverhamptonshire which is an insulated world of their own. The characters in Meera Syal guard their homeland

culture and their ethnic purity creating a miniature homeland in the hostland, a world steeped in Indian spirituality. The first generation diasporic face diasporic angst and suffer from a sense of alienation. The characters of Meera Syal find themselves misfits in their ambience and seek a world all their own in the heart of the homeland. They would wish to recreate a world, ethnically pure, free from cultural mixing, a new world built in the imagination. The characters while they make their home in the new land try to retrieve their homeland as well. Though they never attempt to get back to their land of origin, they certainly want to re-create the same in their homeland. The bi-polar division of the home and the world, of this world and that, mine and yours come to the fore.

In Syal's fiction there is the predominance of the women characters. In the diasporic context it has been repeatedly noticed that though the diasporic angst remains for both men and women, the women in the diaspora have been observed to be better acculturates than the men. While the men long to get back to their lands, the women find themselves opening up in their new found freedom. The freedom and the desire to make an identity, make the women active in their attempts to assimilate. The women often find a better home in the hostland than in the homeland. Still in Syal's *Anita and Me*, the protagonist Meena growing up to become an individual shows enough signs of regression. As Meena is progressing to assimilate into British culture as she comes close to Anita, her British friend who defies every rule or an urge to be good, Meena is drawn into the closet of her community by the host of people who hinder assimilation. Meena's Nanima (grandma) drags her further, entrusting her to the culture of her land of origin, that is, India.

However in Meera Syal there is a constant progression and her three novels though wildly different in their theme, seem to have a unidirectional approach as the women grow in age. While Meena, the protagonist in *Anita and Me* is an adolescent girl, Chila, Tania and Sunita, the protagonists in *Life Isn't All Ha Ha Hee Hee*, are middle aged. Shyama, the protagonist of her third novel *The House of Hidden Mothers* is 48, ageing and hence has to resort to surrogacy for the birth of her child, her way of celebrating life and her relationship with her white boyfriend. As rightly understood by Shyama, "In an age where you could cougar your way around town with a wrinkle-free smile, inside you were not as old as you felt, but as old as you actually were" (Syal, *The House*12).

Though in Meena's case Meena is squeamish, uncertain of her moves, quite true of a young girl; in Chila, Tania and Sunita's case, though the three women take different stance, they are quite confident of their moves and acculturation. Chila is timid and Sunita believes in the South Asian ethics of the sanctity of home and hearth, but they hardly dread acculturation. They often remember the warnings of the first generation community members, as Sunita would remember, "Divorce was one of the English diseases my mum was afraid we would catch if we hung around Willis' Fish Bar too much, along with short skirts, bad skin and bland food" (Syal, *Life* 79). The middle aged protagonists however do not dread their hostland and though each is tethered to her sensibility, she does not need to conceive a homeland in the mind, or create a replica of India in the imagination.

The comparatively aged protagonist in *The House of Hidden Mothers* forms a tie with the South Asian young woman Mala to make her dream come true. She builds a tie-up with India, but does not lament her presence in the West. Instead while her husband from India had failed to keep her happy and make her survive with dignity, her love, Toby gives her the sense of fulfilment that she had desired. As in *Anita and Me* as Meena sees a row of caravans, she claims, “I was fascinated by these travelling people, envied them their ability to contain their whole home in a moving vehicle...” (Syal, *Anita* 102). Though Meera is fascinated at the notion of a mobile home close at hand, the longing for homeland for a second generation diasporic is to quite an extent dubious. The urge to retrieve a cultural past remains but the urge to connect with the new land too is intricate.

Meena is attracted towards Anita and is happy in her company. She is not attracted to the goody-goody status of an Asian woman. Instead Anita’s liberty at expressing herself and giving way to her evils, makes Meena feel that Anita would be her idol. However the advent of Nanima as a powerful female, acts as an interception in the strong bonding between the diasporic individual and the native of the hostland. The consciousness that ever generates a sense of alienation which keeps a diasporic subject connected to one’s homeland is often imposed upon the subjects by the aldermen of the community. Attempts at guarding the frontiers of the community house too, is not always what is generated in the personality, but cryptically designed by the homeland activists.

Meena had been attracted to Christmas and her sense of well being always defined by her presence in the hostland. She had ever been fond of fish fingers rather than freshly cooked vegetables prepared by her mother and aunties. She would celebrate twice, Christmas as well as Diwali which proved an excess, As Anita would wonder, “You have two Christmases, do ya? Lucky cow” (Syal *Anita*99).

Though Meena would at times feel, “hurt, angry, confused, and horribly powerless because this kind of hatred could not be explained,” (Syal *Anita*98), at being humiliated and jeered at by the native British, she would still find herself at home in the hostland. The in-betweenness would linger but certainly not without the sense of doubt as to whether the feeling is stretched too far. The characters try to connect and find their rootedness in the hostland. But this process gets retarded not only by the hostland but by the dire urge of the homeland community as well.

In *Life Isn’t All Ha Ha Hee Hee*, Chila, Tania and Sunita give first priority to their family and family acts as the fulcrum of their existence. For Chila marriage is a prime concern and she prefers to go by the South Asian notion of marriage and virginity. Chila would lose her virginity only in the hands of her husband and not any lover. Caught in a dark corner of the room with a boyfriend was certainly what she hated. Sunita had a family of her own and her family remained her first concern in spite of the fact that she coveted for her *space*. Tania is officially seen as strikingly different from Chila and Sunita, as one who openly refuted the Eastern sensibility of sticking to moral purity and preserving the sanctity

of home and hearth. Tania even went up to sharing bed with her bosom friend's boyfriend without any qualm of conscience.

However by the end of the novel with the death of Tania's father, she takes up the responsibility of her home and even though she has a brother, she takes up the upper hand in resolving her duties on the funeral ground. She is devastated though she poses her strength of personality even while confronting the loss. The three friends come together in the end and in their white dresses, they resemble one another and their personalities cohere and coalesce in spite of their differences. In spite of their difference of outlook in the new world, they preserve their ethos which forms the base of their identity. However the cremation ground is the Western soil. The British couple Mr Keegan and his wife, who have come for a burial, have different reactions to this cremation ground. While the lady finds it hard to take the crying and the noise, for her husband, the sorrows seem much real in the exasperation, rather than in the silence. Mr Keegan, 'had never dared say, but he looked forward to these foreign cremations' (Syal, *Life* 329). The three women seemed similar in their, 'warm brown of their skins' (Syal, *Life* 330).

In *The House of Hidden Mothers*, Shyama the woman of 48, has a daughter of nineteen, but her present body fails to carry out her indomitable wish of becoming the mother of Toby's child in spite of her, "inhospitable womb" (13). Under such a ground of tremendous desire she connects with Mala, a lower middle-class woman from South Asia to fulfil her dreams on the platform of surrogacy. This platform, where mothers become one in their aspiration and women share a womb, as both mental and a physical space; motherhood emerges as a power quotient. Motherhood, which in a way acts as the biggest hindrance in the path of a woman achieving her goals and aspirations in life, here becomes the ground for acquisition. Such a nexus between women connecting beyond boundaries makes a different world possible where homeland versus hostland gets overpowered by the connection possible in the journey of the zygote from the biological mother to the surrogate mother over different worlds.

In this regard it must be said that though the second generation diasporic subjects struggle to uphold the sanctity of the homeland or fight for the interests of the land they had never been to their homeland. Their attachment with their homeland is curious, but being in the diaspora gives them the vantage ground wherefrom to comment. In the Bangladeshi British author Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*, the protagonist Nazneen's affair with Karim poses a similar notion regarding the second generation diasporic's attachment to the homeland as to an extent forged. Though Nazneen is initially attracted towards Karim for his upholding the spirit of Bangladesh and Bangla, the glamour of his words and moves, perish as Nazneen realizes that Karim had never been to Bangladesh, and is not conversant with the language, the spirit of which he upholds. Nazneen fights her own battle and finds herself quite confident of herself in London, can earn her own bread and pursue her dreams.

This getting over any crisis lurking nearby is quite visible in the diasporic experience of second or third generation diasporic individuals, especially women, and harping on the

notion of in-betweenness often sounds fabricated. As Vijay Mishra analyses in the *Introduction to The Diasporic Imaginary and the Indian Diaspora*:

Behind the use of *desh* stand ethnic doctrines based on exclusivism and purity, and linked very often to a religiously based communal solidarity of the *ethnie* (Smith 1986). Behind it stands the denial that the homeland of diasporas are themselves contaminated, that they carry racial enclaves, with unassimilable minorities and other discrepant communities, and are not pure, unified spaces in the first place (Mishra 16).

The in-betweenness is a reality of all places and had existed everywhere from the diaspora to the nation and self, but considering the condition of being in an in-between state as a purely diasporic phenomenon violates the truth. The reality always gets filtered through the narrators' conception and in the process gets re-presented and represented which harbours subtle politics and uncertainties. The fragile world of Syal is tainted by loss, the fear of wounds-would-be and memory of wounds escaped. However there is a strong emancipation, an ascension and accretion of power in the hostland. ■

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Destabilizing Patriarchal Constructs: A Critical Reading of Gail Sidonie Sobat's *The Book of Mary*

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Myths have been an undeniable source in both shaping and expressing the values, norms and behavioural patterns in societies. However, the archetypes in these myths have helped to oppress women in their personal and social lives, and have forced them to accept identities which actually are not theirs. This study examines myths as ideological tools of patriarchal systems and it argues that gender stereotypes were created in the religious texts of the New Testament of the Bible. Thus, the continuance of such gender stereotypes has enhanced the perpetuation of patriarchal ideology. However, a number of women writers have attempted to revise and rewrite these myths. Gail Sidonie Sobat's *The Book of Mary* (2006) chronicles the life of Mary of Nazareth, mother of Jesus. Sobat's Mary, unlike the idolized immaculate symbol of virginity and motherhood of Christianity, is a bold, sexual, politically active and assertive woman. In this unorthodox rewriting, Mary holding the power of the "Word", writes her own gospel, juxtaposing historical and contemporary discourses, and she also tells her own version of the events recounted in the gospels of the New Testament. The present research article analyzes Gail Sidonie Sobat's *The Book of Mary* as a rewriting of the Biblical myth in the New Testament in order to identify the author's attempts to deconstruct the phallogocentric patterns of thought created by the patriarchal ideology. It also explores the textual strategies that are employed by the novelist in order to challenge and revise the patriarchal ideology in myths, to find alternative definitions of female identity and to knit gynocentric myths.

Keywords: Myth, Women, Patriarchy, Gender Roles, Rewriting

Myths which are widely distributed and find their reflections in various media in the modern era, are ideological entities in so much as they reflect the social, cultural and political ideology of the culture in which they originated. Furthermore, the totality of the myths in which women are unmistakably secondary in importance can be considered as an evidence of the patriarchal standards of their cultural background. Just like myths which echo patriarchy, the patriarchal ideology is also a historical creation and thus, it

can be asserted that myths are ideological narratives in which specific gender roles are created.

There is not a separate discipline called feminist myth criticism but most of the theoreticians and writers comment on the nature of myths and their impact on culture and literature. They call attention to the androcentric nature of myths in which the world is interpreted through the lens and discourse of men. In recent decades with the influence of various feminist movements, a resurgence of women oriented studies is observed in different fields of social sciences, including anthropology, archaeology, and even in theology. Consequently, myths start to be scrutinized from a feminist point of view, and the male-oriented characteristics of these narratives are explored and the silenced or the unvoiced women of mythologies are traced. Feminist critics underline the fact that women in myths are defined first and foremost by their domestic duties and they are also defined by their relation to men- as daughters, wives, lovers or mothers. In myths thus, civilization is shown as a product of men, whereas women's roles are confined to the private sphere. These gender stereotypes created in myths has had a huge influence on the Western world's psyche since they are recreated and consumed in literature, art, and popular culture. On the impact of myths, Carolyn Larrington in the Introduction to *The Feminist Companion to Mythology* observes that:

For Westerners, our interpretation of our mythological heritage conditions the way in which we think about ourselves. Myth has been appropriated by politicians, psychiatrists and artists, among others, to tell us what we are and where we have come from ... Women need to know the myths which have determined both how we see ourselves and how society regards us. (Larrington ix)

In this environment, feminist mythmaking is interpreted as a powerful tool for counteracting. In *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*, Jane Caputi in her article titled "On Psychic Activism: Feminist Mythmaking" notes that feminists have employed and "revitalized" mythological symbols and figures from different traditions to establish a female oriented myth criticism as a field of resistance to the phallogocentric system. By the same token, feminist writers and scholars including Mary Daly, Adrienne Rich, Estella Lauter, Annis Pratt and Marta Wiegler, and critics in the collection *The Lost Tradition* (1980) edited by Cathy Davidson and E.M. Broner, argue that myths as a notion are critical and essential in defining women's experience.

Despite the fact that women in mythology are well-documented and discussed, they are reflected through a male discourse. As myths are recorded by men, and there is no surviving record of literary tradition by women in ancient times, in the absence of evidence, unfortunately very little can be said with certainty about the realm of women as opposed to the women represented in myths. In Larrington's words "myths about women are not necessarily women's myths" (Larrington xii), and she adds: "Historically women have been disbarred from the means to fix their myths in literary form, to give them a distinctively female perspective" (xii). The heart of feminist criticism of myths, thus, is a refusal of

existing mythical representations of gender. This criticism calls for the re-examination of the canonical texts and the recovery of the lost texts that could not make their way into the canon, and also the raising of awareness about their context in a multicultural and multidisciplinary approach. Therefore, the critique of myth from a feminist perspective is an indispensable part of feminist scholarship since it aims at a critical reading of culture and an unveiling of the ideological nature of texts.

Gail Sidonie Sobat's *The Book of Mary* (2006) chronicles the life of Mary of Nazareth, Jesus' mother, and makes her the protagonist of her novel. Sobat's Mary, unlike the idolized immaculate symbol of virginity and motherhood of Christianity, is a bold, sexual, politically active and assertive woman. In this unorthodox rewriting, Mary holding the power of the "Word", writes her own gospel, juxtaposing historical and contemporary discourses, and she also tells her own version of the events recounted in the gospels of the New Testament. Similar to gospel writers of the New Testament, Mary in this rewriting holds the authority of the "Word" and the possession of the knowledge, and she tells "herstory" through a series of journal entries and letters.

The present research article analyzes Gail Sidonie Sobat's *The Book of Mary* as a rewriting of the Biblical myth in the New Testament in order to identify the author's attempts to deconstruct the phallogocentric patterns of thought created by the patriarchal ideology. It also explores the textual strategies that are employed by the novelist in order to challenge and revise the patriarchal ideology in myths, to find alternative definitions of female identity and to knit gynocentric myths. The study examines the selected novel to lay bare the attempts of the writer to break away from the male-oriented myths so as to rewrite female experience via rewriting myths. By such rewritings, the writer not only voices the genuine female experience but also paves the way for the creation of new myths which would celebrate female identity and freedom.

In the history of Christianity, Mary as Jesus' mother attains a cult and mythic stature of herself. She has many titles including *Madonna*, *Maria Regina*, *Theotokos* (mother of God), *Mater Dolorosa*, The Queen of Heavens and Church, *Aeiparthenos* (ever-virgin). In other words, she has been turned into a symbol and a role model, and in the process she is constructed as a cultural, religious and historical phenomenon. The main actor of this mythmaking is the Christian Church, especially from the 2nd century onwards. In the hands of the Church, Mary is turned into a "sublime model of chastity" and the ideal of the feminine personified (Warner 1983, xxi). Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* also observes that Mary has become "the most fully realized and generally venerated image of woman regenerated and consecrated to the Good" (212). Likewise, Marina Warner, in her seminal study, "Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of *Virgin Mary*", writes that in the convent school that she attended, Virgin Mary was the role model presented to the young girls, and her cult and feasts were central to their education. With "her chastity, her humility, her gentleness", Warner remembers, "she was the culmination of womanhood". (1983, xx-xxi) The transformation of the historical woman who gave birth to Jesus into an idol is a process that has been established and perpetuated by

the Church through centuries. Consequently, Mary of Nazareth has turned into a mythic persona and an unattainable ideal that is remote from the experiences of actual womanhood.

As illustrated above, throughout centuries, Mary is presented by the Church as the apotheosis of passivity, obedience, motherhood and virginity, and these features are in all accordance with the patriarchal idea of woman. In addition, by giving her the title *Mater Ecclesiae* (Mother of the Church) the Church associates Mary with itself and it can be argued that this title further accentuates her role as an idol created by men for men. Above all, Mary of Nazareth is employed by the Church to define and emphasize the godliness of her son. In order to justify and establish his divine nature, in the process Mary is proclaimed divine as a way of securing the divinity of Christ. In other words, she is defined in relation to her son. As Carol Christ underlines, “she is not God the Mother but Mother of God” (151). Similarly Simone De Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* also contends that the Virgin Mary is defined and venerated in relation to her son and God. She observes that:

For the first time in human history the mother kneels before the son, she freely kneels before her son; she freely accepts the inferiority. This is the supreme masculine victory, consummated in the cult of Virgin- it is the rehabilitation of woman through the accomplishment of her defeat. (203)

Hence Mary is turned into a tool of propaganda at the hands of the Church for the gender roles. In addition, as demonstrated above, the Virgin Mary is exempted from the pleasure of sexual union and giving birth. Thus she gradually becomes more abstract and distant from the experience of the women who look up to her for some identification in the male-dominated Christianity. She becomes “holy” but she is not a woman, and the sanitized and desexualized ideal of Mary is far from representing the women’s experience. Sarah Coakley in her essay “Mariology and ‘Romantic Feminism’: A Critique” argues that a new discourse and symbolism should be created to demystify the patriarchal and distorted perceptions of the maternal “other” (101). In this sense, Gail Sidonie Sobat’s *The Book of Mary* is an attempt to destabilize the patriarchal construction of Mary of Nazareth.

Gail Sidonie Sobat in *The Book of Mary* gives voice to the silent Virgin of the Gospels and the Christian Church. Contrary to the earlier texts in which her life is written by men, in Sobat’s retelling, Mary of Nazareth writes her own life story starting from her 14th birthday. Sobat’s Mary is portrayed as a rebellious and independent teenager unlike the obedient and passive Mary of the Christian Church. At the beginning of the novel, the young Mary writes that she is given scrolls as a birthday present then she starts to pour her wishes and innermost feelings on to her scrolls. Just like any 14 year old, Mary is interested in her looks and in a confessional and colloquial tone she writes that:

My looks are alright, I guess. I like my hair the best. It’s black. Blue-black. It falls to the middle of my back when my mother lets me wear it down, which is never. She says I’m vain. My eyes are almond shaped and hazel. I like them ... After all, I am only fourteen-going-on-fifteen. My birthday’s in May. I am a Gemini. (Sobat 11)

In addition Mary writes that she finds her life “so booooooring” and she runs away from her house most nights and goes to a club to dance and meet friends (10). Mary also notes that she finds her name so commonplace and she thinks to herself: “Why in God’s name did our mothers name us both Mary? Don’t they know any other stupid names? What about Delilah? Or something exotic like Shakira? Nope. I got stuck, like a million other girls, with Mary?” (20) In the journal, Mary also confesses that she likes a young boy called Jeremiah and she puts on her “sexiest scent” to attract his attention (10). As seen, even this brief introduction illustrates the stark difference between the cultic figure of Mary set by the Christian Church and Sobat’s rewriting of it. Reimagining the life of a young Jewish girl, Sobat employs a conversational tone, and she portrays a Mary that sounds familiar to the readers. Her worries, her concerns and the way she interprets her life are not much different from any teenager’s, despite the two thousand years gap. In other words, Sobat’s reinterpretation of Mary, in contrast to the unattainable abstract ideal presented by the Church, is one that every woman can relate to.

Smart and observant, Sobat’s Mary in her journal entries also comments on the patriarchal society she lives in. She writes that her father Joachim does all the important works in his trading business, establishing the connections and doing much travelling, yet her mother is at the stall in the marketplace all day long and in the evening she takes care of the house. Still, unlike the silent submissive, almost absent mother figures of the Bible, Mary’s mother Anne is insightful. She insists that her husband teach their daughters how to read and write. Both her parents, Mary recounts, know that knowledge is power and they did not want their children to end up “powerless and ignorant” (73).

In Sobat’s retelling of the Marian myth, the image of Mary as the paragon of piety and chastity is destabilized. In *The Book of Mary*, she is drawn as a sexual being rather than an ever-virgin. In the book, Mary writes that “Whenever he [Jeremiah] looked at into my eyes, I got wet between my legs” (14). In their relationship, Mary also takes the initiative with Jeremiah; she makes the first move. Eventually they make love, and in a sensual and erotic piece of writing Mary narrates their lovemaking (17). In contrast to the portrayal of Mary who spends her days in the temple and takes the vow of virginity when she is just a baby, in Sobat’s retelling, Mary is not ashamed of her body and she writes that she does not feel filthy or embarrassed and she adds “I love to learn about my body through his body. I don’t believe that such knowledge is wicked” (30). Despite her conscious decision to make love to Joseph, Mary is realistic about the society she lives in. She thinks how mad her mother would be if she learned that she is not a virgin and she reflects upon the double standard of the male-centered culture as follows: “If my stupid brother Samuel slept with a girl, she wouldn’t think twice about it. She’d think the girl was a slut. That’s how it goes. Sam and the boys get all the breaks. I wonder if it’s different anywhere” (29). She, then, believes that the androcentric world order is universal. Still, she attempts to cross the borders drawn for her by the society and she tries to exercise her own autonomy and to have the ownership of her body. She knows all too well that in the patriarchal society she lives in, it is unacceptable for a woman to want a man. Mary recognizes the marginal or secondary status of women in her culture. In one journal entry, she writes that they

have stoned a woman in the market place who is accused of adultery. She continues to recount as follows:

So how come I've never heard of a man stoned for adultery, no matter what the Torah says? Doesn't happen in my village. Only women and girls. Unmarried girls like me who lose their virginity ... I wonder how many of us there are. Bad girls and women, that is. Probably quite a few. Hiding. Hiding from men and their stupid laws" (20).

It is almost always women that are condemned with adultery according to the Biblical law. Mary realizes in her early age that patriarchy condemns those women who do not conform to the norms and she knows that if she wants to be with Jeremiah she has to do it secretly. To have any bodily desires for women is considered immoral and lust is associated with sin and death in the Bible. The pressure of cultural and social norms is evident in Mary's lines in her journal. After she writes that they kiss, she immediately adds: "I'm going to have to burn this scroll. I am dead meat if my mother finds this. Or worse, yet, my father. They would call me the whore of Nazareth" (14). As illustrated, Mary knows the strict moral codes of the androcentric society that she lives in, yet she aims to challenge them as much as she can. She says: "So I am crafty. And careful. Always. You have to be to survive in this world" (9). Hence, from early age on, Mary learns that the world is not a place for women and one has to use her wits in order to find her way through patriarchy as a member of the suppressed group.

That's exactly what Mary does when she gets pregnant. Mary uses her wits and the power of knowledge when she realizes she is pregnant with a child. She writes down her surprise as: "Shit. I am pregnant. Can't lie to myself anymore. I am three weeks late. Shit. I just checked my calendar and scrolls" (30). In the meantime Jeremiah is arrested, it comes out that he is an "opium and hashish dealer" and already married (35). Trapped and alone, Mary weaves a story to save her. Otherwise, when her pregnancy out of wedlock is realized, she will be one of the women who is stoned in the market place. When Mary is seeing Jeremiah, she is also already betrothed to Joseph, a neighbour of Mary's family who offers three cows, three sheep, five hens and a cock for her. Mary says that when she has her period it is not considered as a passage of rite to celebrate, but "it was immediately hush hush" and she suddenly becomes "Marriageable Mary" (28). In her diary Mary describes Joseph as an "old, nerdy looking" (15) and a "sorry schlump" guy (15). He has been interested in her but she does not pay much attention and she only flirts with Joseph to make Jeremiah jealous.

To save herself from stoning, Mary decides to write a letter in which she explains to Joseph that that she is visited by an angel during the night and she is told that she would be visited by the Holy Spirit and she will be pregnant. The angel tells her that she will have a son and she should call him Jesus. Then looking at her letter and her story, Mary asks to herself: "Pretty good, huh? Angels are all the rage these days. I used my best grammar and most artistic calligraphy. I will send it over to Joseph's this afternoon. Maybe he'll come over to have me read it to him tonight. For the first time, I can't wait to see him!" (41). As

observed, since Mary is literate, she could use the power of language to set up her own truth. Thus, Sobat, in her telling of the Marian myth, upsets the gender roles. More often than not, it is always the male-inscribed texts that define women and tell their stories. But here, Mary becomes the author and Joseph is the passive recipient of this “truth”. Sobat’s portrayal of Mary challenges the conventional gender roles and questions the patriarchal ownership and the authorship of the text, in this case, the Bible. In other words, Sobat writes back to the “ur-text” and she presents a female-oriented version of the Annunciation.

Unlike the Bible where she is secondary and owes her significance to her son, *The Book of Mary* is Mary’s story and here, Jesus has a secondary role. Mary in the Bible and in the Christian tradition gains recognition and importance not due to her own individual characteristics, but because she is *Theotokos* (The Mother of God). In Sobat’s retelling, on the contrary, Jesus’ story is at the background. Mary believes that Jesus has been spoiled by Joseph and the rest of the family since he was a boy. When he bullies his sister, Mary asks him to go and apologize from her, but he refuses saying he is the “Son of God”. Seeing him insisting that he is the son of God, Mary explains to him:

In a sense, just as Sol is a daughter of God. Just as I am. But to lord it over your sister... or your mother... is not right. It is not what I want from you. It is not what your father expects of you. All children are gifts and you are precious to us. But I want you to forget the notion that you are God’s Chosen Son. I want you to treat Sol and me and your Papa and the children and the mothers in Wellhouse with kindness. (89)

For Mary, then, her son is not special in any way. He is a miracle of life like any other soul and she does not hesitate to call him “little bastard” when he makes her angry (106). Unlike the Mary of the Bible who is fully devoted to her son and one of his most devout followers, Mary of this book does not believe that he is the Son of God. Consequently, they are estranged and as Mary writes: “He has slammed the door of his heart” (168). Even when they work out their difference, Mary does not accept that Jesus is a Messiah (Savior). When people start to call him Messiah and ask for his blessing, she refuses to see her son as “holy”. She states that: “He is my son. A good man. A carpenter, healer, gardener. A sometime fisherman, a sometime shepherd. A husband and brother. A teacher. But not the Messiah” (147). For Mary, all these attributes are good enough to be a human being, a miracle of life, he does not need to have any supernatural characteristics. Hence, Sobat portrays a “human” Jesus.

As a stark contrast to the unchanging Virgin Mary, Sobat’s Mary changes; through her journal entries and letters we read how she is transformed into a healer and strong woman from a love-sick girl. At the end of her Gospel, Mary writes that she is leaving Jerusalem for Ephesus, the land of Mother Goddess. She draws attention to the significance of women’s history and tradition and she underlines the importance of passing stories to the next generation of women. She concludes that:

Maybe someday daughters of granddaughters will read, laugh at my follies and learn from my terrible mistakes. Maybe they will recognize themselves in my youth, in my spirit, and think well of Mary of Nazareth. May be, by then, they will be free

to write, and think, and act, and they too, will have marvellous stories of their own to tell. To remember. To keep alive the spirit of woman and of being a woman in a man's world. (250)

Thus, it can be concluded that Sobat in *The Gospel of Mary*, employing the contemporary discourse and juxtaposing the historical tale of Mary of Nazareth with the timeless issues of womanhood, weaves a subversive, provocative and witty tale. Contrary to the Virgin Mary who is robbed of femininity and motherhood, Sobat's Mary becomes a soul sister for women all around the world. Through her novel, Sobat subverts the patriarchal ideology of the New Testament of the Bible, and by offering an alternative version to it, she attempts to deconstruct the hegemony of the text that marginalizes and disempowers women. Moreover, she has employed different textual strategies in order to subvert and revise the patriarchal ideology in the Biblical myths of the New Testament, to come up with alternative definitions of female identity and to weave gynocentric myths. ■

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A Critical Study of Technophilic Characters in William Gibson's *Sprawl Trilogy*

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The present study is a modest attempt to explore technophilic characters in *The Sprawl Trilogy* of William Gibson. It discusses the emerging trends of advanced technology and its impact on human beings. It analyzes Gibson's perception on advanced technology through his representative technophilic characters in *The Sprawl Trilogy*. The characters in the novels undergo physical modifications. The *Sprawl* fiction contains three novel viz. *Neuromancer*, *Count Zero* and *Mona Lisa Overdrive*. It explores how physical confinement with technology creates conscious and corporeal experiences. It probes into mind-machine links. It discusses how advanced technologies modify or replace the missing body part through the representation of technophilic characters. It delves into a new paradigm of physical embodiment which paves the way to blurring boundaries between technology and the physicality. Gibson's characters are always get physically confined by advanced technology. It also critically analyzes philosophical dilemma about the existence of humanity, physicality and identity. It explores limitations of transcending nature of bodies. It discusses temptation of the characters to link with world of cyberspace and cybernetics in the multi-national corporeal world.

Keywords: Technophilic, Characters, Cyberspace, Prosthetics and Cybernetics etc.

William Ford Gibson is known as post-modern American-Canadian science fiction writer. Gibson is chief exponent who invented a new genre of science fiction known as Cyberpunk. He was born in the Coastal city of Conway, South Carolina. His work encompasses literature, journalism, acting, recitation and performing art. Gibson is the first post-modern science fiction writer who used the term cyberspace in his celebrated book *Burning Chrome* in 1982. His journey of cyber fiction began with the publication of *The Sprawl Trilogy* which contains three novel viz. *Neuromancer*, *Count Zero* and *Mona Lisa Over Drive*.

When we discuss the term *Sprawl*, it becomes very technical and gets confined with only cyberpunk fiction. The term *sprawl* implies a game of mission which based on action. The *sprawl* incorporates expanded assets of vast multi-national corporations. The *sprawl* performs the tasks which are not possible to multi-national corporations. It contains

two types of equipments viz. Cyberware and everything else. Cyberware refers to machine implants It interfaces within the CNS (Central Nervous System) of the human body.

Every technophilic character uses a playbook which is supposed to be a set of variations and alternatives on specific ordeals in the matrix. These playbooks get interrelated to basic cyberpunk tropes. In the Sprawl the characters have their own agenda which signifies that things must be done. They follow agenda and principles as their guide. They establish proper thumb rules to run the Sprawl by making the world dirty, high-tech and excessive. It also aims to fill the characters lives with action and intrigue. It aims to play and finds what happens. A creation of Sprawl town signifies changing nature of technology and discusses the shifts, mutation, adaption and death of technology. Gibson focuses on Sprawl as twisty town which suspends difference between real and illusory. A Sprawl epitomizes exploration of parallel urban reality called cyberspace.

A technophilic body is an outcome of functional and aesthetic transformations. It establishes link to the human body's surface and functional organic structure. As we explore the different categories of transformations in concern with technophilic body; we find two distinct categories. The first category deals with techniques' and technologies which are applied for the aesthetic manipulations of the body's outward appearance. It incorporates cosmetic surgery, muscle grafts and transplantation of biosoft chips and prosthetic body parts. The second category consists of alterations of human organic body structure. It applies technology such as biochip implants, prosthetic body parts implanted by myo-electric coupling with advanced upgraded senses.

When we apply E. M. Fosters's theoretical frame work in concern with technophilic characters , it becomes very different from conventional type of characters. E.M Foster in his book *Aspects of the Novel* deals with two types of characters viz. Round and Flat characters. According to him, Flat characters are always two dimensional, uncomplicated and always remain constant. On the contrary, round characters always complex and undergo development. In the second type of characters we can analyze the technophilic characters. All the characters referred here are belong two category of round characters. The characters such as Molly, Case and Dixie Flatline are complicated and they always undergo change and development.

The Sprawl Trilogy consists of three novels viz. Neuromancer, Count Zero and Mona Lisa Overdrive. These three texts incorporate technophilic characters which have different features and establishes mind machine links. The substance of the Sprawl Trilogy deals with world dominated by corporations and ubiquitous technology. It depicts the world which is possessed and possessive due to advanced technology.

Neuromancer is foundational text of cyberpunk post-modern science fiction from the Sprawl Trilogy of William Gibson. It is known as post-human text. A novel sets in Chiba city. Case is the central technophilic characters which encounters with us right at the beginning of the novel as console cowboy (hackers are always referred as cow boy). His

nerves system was destroyed by his former employers for his act of data stealing. He does black jobs for multi-national corporations. Case is neurologically debilitated. He meets Molly a Street Samurai razor girl. She takes to him to her boss Armitage who is in need of console cowboy to run the mission of data stealing from multi-national corporations. Armitage helps to cure the nerves system of Case. After healing the CNS of Case they head to the Sprawl. It depicts the techno-savvy world which is possessed and possessive. Case has prosthetic arm by which he fills a tray of glasses. Prostheses are nothing but replacements for amputated body parts. It means that Case has replaced with missing body parts. A modification of body parts and rapid application of technologies have enabled disembodiment.

Gibson creates Chiba city which is similar to the post-modern cybercity. It is well equipped with digital hi-tech and perturbed with rampant decay. Neuromancer's Molly under goes routine elective surgery. She implants permanent mirror shades in her eye sockets. She transforms herself into a skillful clever cyborg warrior. Case's guide Dixie Flatline is nothing but data downloaded to computer from brain after his death. Gibson portrays "character of Case in a surrounding where nurture is deteriorated and society is mutated in black markets involved in nerve-splicing and micro-bionics ("NR,p.19).

Gibson depicts the world of advanced technology which is yet to be invented. A technophilic character of Molly resists meat-space and tries to become cyborg. Molly represents cyber warrior which exhibits resistance to global system of oppression. Molly is primordial example of the post-human Cyborg. She has implanted mechanical body parts all the way down to scalping knives hiding under her fingernails. The critics like Penny, Murray and Sixsmith comment that "the docked body is the interface between the real and the virtual worlds and it's the corporeal body -the sensorial body-that enables the true sensations of cyberspace to be experienced (Murray and SixSmith ,p.318).

A Coda is the last part of the novel which stands symbolic. Case becomes aware of his body as data system. Case doesn't get sense of physical self as he gets jacked into cyberspace. Armitage restores his ability by entering into matrix.

Count Zero is second novel from Sprawl Trilogy. It is sequel to Neuromancer. The novel sets seven years after the events of Neuromancer. The setting itself reveals the strange things begin to happen in the matrix. The plot of the novel deals with battle between two powerful multi-national corporations over use of new technology by hackers. Turner is the main character who is corporate mercenary. He is in form of reconstructed body of Hosaka corporation. Turner designs bio-chip to influence Bobby Newmark who is the hacker of the story. Angie is a daughter of Turner. She plans to construct bio-soft. The character of Josef Virek pines for such a bio-soft through which he thinks to take off evolutionary phase of immortality.

Count Zero discusses the overcoming of technophilic body to the physical existence of human beings. A character like Angie exhibits the same transformations by implanting

biochip in her brain to enter the matrix. At the beginning of the novel Bobby appears as hacker. He applies ICE (Intrusion Countermeasures Electronics) which is hacking software. The blending of mythologies and a technology signifies that as human culture and civilization has undergone drastic changes due to advanced technology. The robotic Boxmaker invented by Marly in the orbital venue is connected with Tessier-Ashpool dynasty which is hyper mechanical. The Marly episode is interwoven with Turner and Angie those are involved with Sense Net. Gibson's prosthetic paradox signifies transcendental physical state which links to the corporeal world.

Gibson's portrayal of console cowboys are exemplary of technophilic embodiment which show brand of technicity neurologically cyber psychic and resist material technique. According to critic David Brande, Gibson's cyborg characters express the underlying market forces that condition their environment. They are nothing but commodities controlled by their environment"(Brande.p.84-85). Count Zero depicts the fusion of the two AIs and their evolution. Angela Mitchell is the first technophilic character who carries a biochip in her head .It enables her to enter in cyberspace without interfacing and communicating with load. The concluding pages of Count Zero portray Angie and Bobby in an idyllic state and behavioral approach of Bobby Newmark is spiteful.

Mona Lisa Overdrive (1988) is the last novel from the Sprawl Trilogy of William Gibson. The novel sets eight years after the events of count Zero and fifteen years after Neuromancer. The plot of the novel is woven round the character of Mona who is dancer and prostitute. Mona gets job from unknown sources and gets transformed by plastic surgery. She undergoes plastic surgery because she wants to look like Angie Mitchell. Angie and Mona are drug addicts. William Gibson continues the character of Molly Million a razor fingered mercenary from Neuromancer. Bobby Newmark from the second novel Count Zero hooks himself into super capacity cyber-hard drive known as Aleph. Continuity is central character which is AI (Artificial Intelligence). Finn is secondary character which transformed Neuromancer and Count Zero in to construct. Finn's construct is different from Dixie Flatline. Technophilic character of 3 Jane contained in Aleph is more complicated than the constructs we met earlier in the trilogy Technophilic characters of Angie and 3 Jane are profit driven and have mind set of patriarchal corporation machine.

Mona Lisa Overdrive emphasizes that physicality is only obviously suppressed by technology. As Bobby's physical body is dead and keeps living within the Aleph which is made of biosoft. The Sprawl Trilogy criticizes the blurring boundaries between man and machine which raises deep philosophical questions about humanity and identity.

Gibson compares Sprawl with BAMA (Boston -Atlanta Metropolitan Axis) in which he depicts futuristic world of cyborgs. The characters presented here are resemblances of upcoming human beings which are possessive and possessed with advanced technology. Gibson visualizes a future where all the human culture will get transformed by the hi-tech and corporate life. Gibson discusses the issue of application of advanced technology by representing the technophilic characters in the sprawl. Gibson has discussed the tendency

of techno savvy world in the process of globalization. Gibson firmly declares that when the technology goes beyond day today need of human beings it get converted in to prodigious outcomes and turns as bane or boon. Gibson presents nurture of sprawl on large scale which is replica of real Northeast Megalopolis. The question of survival is also discussed by presenting the technophilic characters. They struggle to survive by using advanced technology. He focuses on the issue of global information through the mass media. Even the issue of capitalist ideology and profit driven society has been discussed very effectively. In the Sprawl democracy becomes only an ideological illusion but society is getting transformed in to a corporate oligarchy. Gibson envisions future globe connected with worldly space known as the matrix. He talks about interconnectedness of entire universe through advanced technology.

According to David Tomas, “Sprawl Trilogy is suggestive and describes near future of human race which contains radical mutational suffering of the human body in to ecological structure”(Tomas, p. 113-124). Gibson focuses on post-industrial hybrid culture which predicts the advanced human bodies interfaced with biotechnology. Projection of cyberspace raises very serious question regarding the identity composition of technophilic bodies. The substance of Sprawl deals with explosive economic growth of advanced countries. It discusses the augmentation in technological gadgets.

Gibson deals with post- industrial hybrid culture which discusses enhanced body constructs which are interfaced with bio-technology. Sprawl fiction raises very serious question regarding the identity and composition of technophilic bodies. The substance of sprawl trilogy contains the economic growth and augmentation in advanced technology. Most of the technophilic characters in the sprawl trilogy are victimized due to their body confinement with use of advanced technology. The Sprawl portrays the trans-human tophilic characters which always overpowered with post-human instability. The Sprawl incorporates its major dimensions like AI (Artificial Intelligence), VR (Virtual Reality) genetic engineering and dominating world of multinational corporations. The Sprawl portrays world of corporate greediness and radical changes occurred during 1980s. It discusses the issue of capitalism and emerging trends of profit driven society. Gibson envisions near future world which will suffer with the wrath of determinism of technology.

Through the technophilic characters Gibson often emphasizes on basic contribution of edge of technology which sustains cybog culture in competitive edge. The Sprawl fiction characterizes with possession and dehumanization by technology. The substantial part of the sprawl fiction is that the cyborgian fusion and fission provides empowerment as well as disempowerment. Gibson through his technophilic characters has applied *Deus Ex Machina* literary device to discuss the bizzaenss of emerging trends of technology.

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The sprawl fiction characterized by post-industrial cyborg world. It discusses the three major dimensions such as economic ecology, multinational corporations and cyborg organisms. Gibson not only presents the cyborg as mere blending of human and machine but it concealed with third system by amalgamating imagination, material reality, nature and culture. Gibson discusses contradictory ideas towards the technologies while constructing bodies, spaces. He discusses in the context of mon-oculture and multi-cultures. The world presented by Gibson is near future but it can be real in upcoming days because there is competition between multinational corporations for economic expansion and growth of technological advancements. Gibson never insists that all the human beings should not apply the technology for the purpose of materialistic prosperity and should not make loss of physical identity. The characters presented are paradoxical to the emerging human being who is confined with advanced technology.

The technophilic characters establish the existential aspect of human life in future. It poses the question of human identity and existence. When individuals will get possessed by technology the next dilemma they have to face about their existence in real world. These two worlds will create absurdity amongst the masses in future. Gibson predicts future of human race and struggle of human beings for the survive through the application of advanced technology. In the era of globalization all the masses are haunted with materialistic world and he is ready to pay the price of his life by accepting the new emerging technology and he wish to escape from materialistic sufferings. The technophilic characters performance the same acts to get rid off this real world which have full of suffering.

Through this study we come to know that Gibsonian cyberspace is state of uncertain possibility. It not only focuses on transformations occurred in individual's physicality but also characterizes with individuals efforts to survive by using new equipments existed through advancement of technology. The Sprawl fiction deals with individual's interactions with machines. Gibson's cyberspace is reaction to individual who established his/her state of consciousness. It brings an individualistic experience. Throughout Sprawl trilogy cyberspace becomes means of communication and integral part of data storage and exchange process. Technophilic characters are marked with consistency. The relationships established by major characters with minors are very weak or slight. Gibson never prefers to explain AI characters by keeping them merely plot devices. AIs presented are malevolent and powerful beings by inheriting enigmatic power and alien reciprocity. The protagonists are humanistic and are always isolated from day today social intuitions and net works.

By representing the technophilic character Gibson discusses the dystopian account of future of human being. A character of Case represents the dynamic aspects of individual in profit driven society. He puts his life at stake to grab the opportunity of materialistic prosperity by working for multinational corporations through the act of data stealing. Most of the advanced countries have undertaken project for the creation of cyberspace for the

purpose of establishment of dominancy across the globe. The creation of Sprawl will put out of all the human existence and identity. Gibson emphasizes the nurturing of human culture not by using technological advancements but nourishing human values in the era of technological advancements.

The technophilic characters seem to be bizzare by its nature and action. The actions of them forwards to achieve extraordinary goals which are not known to common people. They have their own agenda to run the activities in the cyberspace . They are programmed by their own ways. They have transformed physicality which gets connected to the cyberspace. The physical transformation occurred is only confined with material driven technological universe. The techno- savvy world presented by Gibson signifies the alleviating state of technophilic characters which are away from realistic world.

The Sprawl Trilogy never resolves traditional binary contradiction between the computer and the human being. It does not debate on cyberspace and it's reality. It never focuses on mechanical and organic aspects of human life. Near future world portrayed in the Sprawl creates beginning of techno-savvy universe. The Sprawl depicts the prosthetic paradox by disembodiment of human body. Gibson's human characters are confined by their physicality which we can describe in the word of a critic McCarron as a disdain for the too, too human flesh"(McCarron,p.267).The struggle of technophilic characters seem to be intrinsically physical. They struggle for identity and reaffirm the aptness of the physical identity. Gibson's prosthetic paradox signifies physical detachment.

In Gibson's Sprawl series the characters are always carefully inscribed. The villains in the Gibson's fiction vary from multinational corporations to the emerging mass media. The constructs presented in the Sprawl trilogy acts according to the rules of matrix. Gibson criticizes the emerging trends of modern technology through which human being considers his physicality as commoditization. Technophilic characters are always get tempted with cyberspace culture. Cyber culture deals with the application of emerging technology such as prosthetic body, AIs, biochip etc. through which human being inherits trans human quality.

Gibson's Sprawl trilogy contains the technophilic characters and their involvement in black markets of nerve splicing and micro bionics. The cyberspace often revolves on the masses who survive in the eroded nurture. Cyberspace signifies the virtual space of information through which the technophilic characters access to a global information network. The sprawl presented by Gibson undergoes retraction, suspension and alteration. A technophilic body is the product of various levels of transformations occurred due to modern advanced technology.

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technophilic body is the product of various levels of transformations occurred due to modern advanced technology.

Gibson's artistic presentation of technophilic characters envisions the near future generation of human being which will be technocratic and get alienated from the realistic world. They will get infatuated with cyber culture where they will consider technology as Net- God. They will get involved in cyber- war to grab material prosperity .They will hired by multinational corporations for the purpose of black deeds in the matrix or Run. They will damage their physicality by implanting various equipments invented by modern science. Cyber culture will bring alternative world for the world of sufferings and sentiments. The cyber world has nothing to do with world of reality rather than profit driven society. All the characters in the Sprawl signify the prolonged struggle to achieve their identity, escape from technological confinement. ■

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Dalit Literature, a Voice of Voiceless: A Reading of Mina Kendasamy's Poems

Vishakha Vikas Bhonsale

The word 'Dalit' traditionally meant or connotes as wretchedness, poverty and humiliation. Hence the term has become derogatory. With reference to the Dalit literary movement, we have not used the traditional meaning of the term but have added a new dimension and content to it. 'Dalit' means masses exploited and abused economically, socially, culturally, in the name of religion and other factors. Dalit writers hope that this marginalised group of people will bring about a revolution in this country.

This paper intends to highlight the Casteism present in the modern times in Indian Dalit Literature. It is an attempt to give a glimpse of Dalit Literature, its past, present and future. It further depicts the origin of Dalit Literature and its emergence. An attempt has also been made to draw the attention of the readers to the social- economic discrimination, casteism, exploitation and moral degradation rife in the society.

Keywords: Segregated, Outcastes, Annihilation, Metamorphose and Casteism

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who is known as the father of Dalit Literature and Baburao Bagul gave momentum to Dalit Literature are regarded as pioneers of Dalit Literature. India happens to be one of the world's biggest democracies, but ironically it still continues to remain as a caste-structured society. The caste system as we call it has segregated thousands of Dalits, and their struggle for emancipation under liberation movement headed by Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar. Dalits in India occupy the bottom level of India's rigid caste system. Dalits have no access to land, they live in harsh conditions inflicted by the other upper caste Hindus, and are forced to carry out jobs that are supposed to be polluting for the other upper caste Hindus. Dalits continue to be caught up in this vicious circle of being called 'dirty' or 'polluted' people by birth, and are completely excluded from social, religious, and economic life. The term 'Dalit' had a stigma associated with the patronizing names imposed by the upper caste. These include names such as 'Pariah', 'Untouchable' etc- names which basically have negative connotations to it. When it comes to Dalits, the womenfolk face much more issues. Women were being marginalized, exposed to threat of sexual violence and the distressing sale of women. Dalit literature aims to highlight the difficulties, and

inhuman treatment meted out to Dalits in society. Dalit literature is a literature of the oppressed and the downtrodden of India, who are constantly looked down upon. Dalit literature means achieving a sense of cultural identity. Now Dalit literature is presented mainly in the form of poetry, short stories, and autobiographies. Some of the major themes are pain, negativity, frustration, and humiliation which are present throughout the Dalit literature.

DALIT LITERATURE: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

According to our ancient *dharmashastras* (religious texts) of the Hindus, there are only four *varnas* (classes). The Brahmins were priests; the Kshatriyas were warriors; the Vaishyas were the traders and the Shudras were skilled or unskilled people who did menial work. This is basically the caste-system and the development of society based on class which is now world-wide. The religious texts written by the Brahmins emphasized that the class system was God-made and not man-made. The Brahmins started spreading their own theories that they were born from the mouth of Brahma making them superior, the Kshatriyas from his shoulders, and the Vaishyas from his thighs and the Shudras from his feet making them inferior. Because of these religious texts the Brahmins implemented duties to the various castes. Thus, it not only became a religious obligation but also obedience to this order. The whole caste-system in India was based on exploitation. The untouchables led a life which was of poverty, ignorance and misery. Even with the arrival of British in India nothing seems to change.

Dr. Ambedkar as we know was the person who enabled factor in Dalit literature because of his ideas, outlook towards life and his struggle to achieve what he felt. Through his struggle against untouchability and inequality, he liberated the Dalits in India from slavery and wretchedness, thus giving them a new self-respect. Before Dr. Ambedkar, the untouchables lived a life of poverty, ignorance and misery. His call awakened the man in the Dalit and this common elite man joined the movement with all his strength. The Dalit literary movement has today reached various parts of India and the literature is now going in almost all Indian languages. It was Dr. Ambedkar who moulded the tradition of revolutionary thinking of almost a generation of Dalits, who can today hold their heads high, thanks to him. The literary manifestation of the social awareness is what defines Dalit literature. Dalit literature takes up arms against oppression and exploitation and demands social and economic justice. The values of democracy, secularism and socialism are being eroded. The formation of Dalit literature itself is inescapable until the structure of society changes. The future of Dalit Literature may not be alluring, but it is certainly gleaming.

ANNIHILATION OF CASTE: AN UNDELIVERED SPEECH BY DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR

Annihilation of Caste is an undelivered speech by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, against the untouchability that is prevalent in India even today. It was drafted to be delivered during the Annual Conference as the Presidential Address for Hindu reformist group Jat-Pat Mandal, to address the issue of Casteism in Hindu society.

Basically, if we consider, a lot of nonsense has been spoken about the issue of hereditary and eugenics in defence of the caste-system. Inter-caste marriage has become a huge issue in India. Caste-system itself is a negative perspective. It prohibits people belonging to different Castes from intermarrying. It is not a positive method that individuals have to select which two among a given Caste they should marry.

Caste has completely been muddled and subdued by the Hindus. The first thing that must be identified is that Hindu society is a myth in itself. The name Hindu is itself is a foreign name which should be understood by individuals. It was given by the Muslims to the natives for the purpose of distinguishing themselves in the society. Hindu society itself does not exist. It is only a collection of castes. A caste has no feeling in itself. Indeed the ideal Hindu society must be like a rat living in his own hole refusing to have any contacts with other low caste people. There is an utter lack of 'consciousness of their kind' among the Hindus. In every Hindu society the consciousness that exists is the consciousness of the lower caste people. This is the very reason why the Hindus cannot be said to form a society or a nation in India at this stage.

Meena Kandasamy is a poet, fiction writer, translator and activist born in 1984 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India is a Dalit voice. Her maternal grandparents were lower-caste Shudras who fell in love against the norms of the society and left the country for Ethiopia where her mother, Vasantha, was born. They subsequently returned to India. Her father, Kandasamy, born in the nomadic tribe of AndiPandaram in a tiny village in the Pudukottai District, was the first in his family, and village, to finish school, college, and university. He went on to receive a Ph.D in Tamil literature. He came from a landless family, and was himself of mixed-caste heritage. His father, Karuppiyah was a witch-doctor, and the hereditary professions were fortune-telling and begging. Even today, the words Andiand Pandaram continue to be words of defamation in Tamil and Malayalam that denote to be 'beggars'. Meena's father grew up in an orphanage after her grandfather abandoned the family. Her parents' marriage in 1981 was considered anti-caste marriage in this marginalised society. Her mother worked at IIT Madras for three decades as a faculty of mathematics, a period during which she led a legal battle for the implementation of the reservation policy and for her work to be recognised by a hostile Brahmin academia. Her father taught Tamil at the Madras University. Their involvement in the anti-caste struggle led Meena to work along with Dalit movements and it influenced all her work.

In 'Advaita: The Ultimate Question', Meena says:

Non Dualism
Atman Self
Brahman God
Are Equal
And Same.
So I
Untouchable Outcast

Am God.
Will You
Ever Agree?
No Matter
What You
Preach Answer
Me. Through
Your Saints.
One More
Final Question
Can My
Untouchable Atman
and Your
Brahmin Atman
Ever Be
One?

The poem cross examines the concept of Advaita in Hindu philosophy and culture. The Holy Scriptures and preaching of the Brahmins cannot answer her sarcastic question. She tells according to this concept of Advaita, she, is not only an untouchable outcast but also a God, but in the Indian consciousness could never ever agree to that. Then she asked a final question whether the non-dualism is a true concept, she questions whether her untouchable Atman and Brahmin Atman could ever be one. She makes us wonder on the concept of non-dualism in the mind of Hindus and she provokes us to question our scriptures, religion and even the nationality. Therefore, she was courageous enough to leave the question unresolved to foreground the fact that despite the talks about Atman, Brahman and Advaita, the practice of untouchability exists and persists even today. When Atman and Brahman are equal and same, the distinction between Upper castes and outcasts sounds preposterous.

In the poem 'Becoming a Brahmin' she clearly deals with the pitiable position of marginalised people in our society. This poem can be analysed in many inferential ways, especially with the Brahminical dominance in our society since ancient times. The poem begins with the line "Take a beautiful Shudra girl/ Make her marry a Brahmin". Here one can see the portrayal of a Shudra woman in our society. She declares that the Shudra woman is beautiful. But she as a poet takes the women out of the customs and makes her marry a Brahmin. In the following step she asks the Shudra girl to marry a Brahmin. In the poem the poet clearly shows; how a male Shudra is always a Shudra till his death. The poem continues: "Let her give birth to his female child/ Let this child marry a Brahmin". The poet takes the poem to the next step when the Shudra girl gives birth to a female child. Moreover, by marrying a Brahmin her daughter will become a Brahmin and the whole generation will be metamorphosed into Brahmanism. Dalit women are further more marginalised in the marginalised society. In some cases, the Brahminical society won't accept or allow marrying a Shudra girl. This poem is actually based on documentation,

prepared by one of the Dalit intellectuals Periyar on the speech of Gandhi at Tirupur on 20th September, 1947. There he propagated that if a gorgeous Shudra girl marries a Brahmin and provides birth to a girl child and again that girl in future marries a Brahmin and if this practice is repeated for generations then the final product will be a Brahmin. And finally she ridicules by telling that she is awaiting another Father of the Nation to produce this algorithm.

In One-Eyed the poet speaks:
the pot sees just another noisy child
the glass sees an eager and clumsy hand
the water sees a parched throat slaking thirst
but the teacher sees a girl breaking the rule
the doctor sees a case of medical emergency
the school sees a potential embarrassment
the press sees a headline and a photo feature
Dhanam sees a world torn in half.
her left eye, lid open but light slapped away,
the price for a taste of that touchable water.

The pot, the glass and the water sees the thirst of a person and not the noisy child, or her clumsy hands. But, he the teacher, the doctor, the school and the press see the violation of rules, medical emergency, potential embarrassment and a headline a feature. They are indifferent to the needs of human beings. They fail to understand what inanimate objects understand in this poem about human nature. They cannot comprehend it. Dhanam's world is 'Torn in half' when she drinks from the touchable water. She is beaten, slapped. That is the price she pays for her thirst. This poem is a good example of the atrocities committed against the Dalit women.

In Princess-in-Exile the poet affirms:
Scorned, she sought refuge in spirituality,
and was carried away by a new-age guru
with saffron clothes and caramel words.
Years later, her husband won her back
but by then, she was adept at walkouts,
she had perfected the vanishing act

If you read the poem closely you will understand that this poem is about none other than 'SITA'. Here Meena Kandasamy's Sita is no longer a chaste woman. She doesn't want to follow the rules laid by the patriarchal society specially the 'new-age guru with saffron clothes and caramel words'. Her Sita has perfected the role of vanishing since she was kidnapped by Ravan. Her constant walkout was a perfect revenge on her husband Ram who was not careful enough to protect her or even to rescue her.

'Ms. Militancy' is a wakeup call for women to be strong and courageous like the heroine of the poem herself. She is deeply affected by her husband's betrayal. She feels like

she is about to die, and ants are already climbing up her body. She gets headache every time she thinks about her husband during meal time. She feels her heart is beating rapidly, and her heart has forgotten its normal rhythm. Yet, she readily accepts her husband back when he returns from his dancer mistress's lap. She supports him by giving him one of her anklets to start a new fresh life. She is portrayed to be devoted and loyal when judged by the standards of Tamil culture. But, the rage she displays when her husband passes away shows he is not a passive, submissive woman but a bold, assertive and courageous women who revolutionises to gain justice which her husband failed to get. Justice alone can calm her anger; otherwise she will burn down the society by "a bomb of her breast". Such is the faith of the woman and for the women who are coming forth to voice out their protest at a very young age. She herself is a model for the down trodden, subjugated women.

The poem 'Moon-Gazer' displays the unquestionable superiority of non-Dalits over the Dalits. The scenario present her is; there are fifteen children in the class of Hindi poetry and they are all preparing for their upcoming exams. The teacher is talking about a bird he is smitten with that watches the moon intently every night. A girl stands up, and asks the teacher what does that bird do on new moon days? The teacher is shocked to see her audacity to ask such question and simply replies to her 'that the bird watches his face'. She is mocked by the teacher as well as the whole class. Now she is all grown up, she is twenty-two and she is thinking, how she sank into the teachers eyes without even reaching the surface. After this incident she did not ask any more questions. This is the common fate shared by the Dalit women.

In 'Dead Woman Walking' Meena Kandasamy is talking about a mythological figure that was deeply in love with her Lord Shiva but, in a different perspective. To, Meena Kandasamy she is not someone who is abandoned by her husband to be with Lord Shiva but, she was wretched woman deserted by her husband. She was once a beautiful wife of a merchant but, he started doubting his wife's talents in providing delicious meals. Instead of understanding "the magic of my (her/wife) multiplying love" he took over her mystic and left her to marry "a fresh and formless wife". She became a dead woman but this story of kept throbbing in her heart. Her pain is precisely captured in the line, "I wept in vain, I walked on my head, I went to god". This poem sarcastically shows how such women die while being physically alive. This is the story of 'KaraikalAmmayar'.

If you analyse the above poems it is evident that in her poems, Meena Kandasamy herself says that 'I work to not only get back at you. I actually fight to get back to myself. I do not write into patriarchy. My Maariamma bays for blood. My Kali kills. My Draupadi strips. My Sita climbs onto a strangers lap. All women militate. They brave bombs, they belittle kings'. She draws the agonizing picture of Indian marginalised woman. Meena Kandasamy fearlessly trashes attack on the superstitions and the age old orthodox beliefs forced upon the lower caste women by the patriarchal society.

CONCLUSION

Casteism is an old social evil which is used to subjugate the lower structure of the Indian society and to uphold discrimination as well as gain unfair advantage over the 'untouchable', marginalized people in India. Varna began to be identified by birth. Thus an individual's identity is determined by his/her caste. The marginalized groups of India like Dalits or untouchables, adivasis, and nomadic tribes were made to steer dehumanized and degraded lives. They have been denied the basic fundamental rights by our rigid caste system in India. They are expected to lead a miserable life, doing inferior works like sweeping, working in fields, cleaning drains, toilets, they are also often excluded from religious life and remain servile to the privileged class. It is observed that their habitats are away from the people who are in the uppermost hierarchy in our society. In this paper I have made a humble attempt to highlight Meena Kandasamy as an eye-opener to people who still feel superior of themselves. She focuses on these sufferings, frustration, humiliation, suppression, anguish and revolt of the ill-fated marginalized sections of our society. Most of her poems are a perfect example of marginalised women in our society. ■

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Reverberation of Colonial Laws on Tribes and Forests in *Paraja*

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Large part of Indian English literature depicts the lives of Indians during the British rule. But few authors picturize the agonies of tribes during the British rule. Tribes in India form 8.2% of its population according to 2011 Census of India. There are many tribal groups across the country and each tribal group has its own cultural practices and beliefs. But there are common problems faced by the tribes of different ethnic groups. The origins of few such problems can be traced in the imposition of British laws over the tribes. This paper focuses on the problems faced by tribes during the colonial rule due the laws introduced by the Colonial Government in Gopinath Mohanty's novel *Paraja*.

Keywords: Colonial rule, tribes, British and law.

COLONIAL LAWS

The colonial laws altered the relationship between forest and the tribes dwelling in the forest. After the various laws introduced by the colonial rule, the movement of tribes was restricted. In the 1860s, the colonial administration created property rights over forests, which were formerly unrestrained. The same is followed till date in the post-independent India. Before 1947, our forests, according to Ramachandra Guha (1983), served the strategic goals of British imperialism. Following independence, they catered to the demands of manufacturers and the industrialists. Colonial forest policies aimed towards maximising the revenue. They also introduced taxes and cesses, which became the revenue for colonizers. It became very difficult for the tribes who were wholly and solely dependants upon forests as now they had to pay taxes.

A report submitted to the colonial administration in the year 1850 said that the local communities' mismanagement was causing destruction of the forests. Hence, keeping this as a reason, the Forest Service was founded in 1864. The assertion of governmental monopoly and the exclusion of forest communities have characterised forest administration since then. The first Forest Act, passed in 1865, was enacted to this goal. This was judged inadequate and replaced by a much more punitive Act in 1878, as business reasons and income generation became paramount.

The 1878 Act was a large-scale piece of legislation. The new law was completely different in terms of structure and content than the prior statute. The main objective of the

1878 Act was the formation of absolute state property rights and, as a result, a clear agreement between the state and its people over their respective rights in the forests. Thus, the main objective of the Act 1878 was to establish state property and the separation of customary rights. Then there was the classification of forests into reserved, protected, and village forests, as well as the procedure for forest settlement in each of these. The line of demarcation the forest was more under government control in the first two.

Only the residents' 'use-rights' in the Village forest survived. The government only had management rights in village forests (Chapter III). Village forests were largely made up of leftover wastelands with little forest service oversight. The purpose of the Reserved/Protected categorization was to make money from timber. In Village forests, profit was absent. To begin with only areas needed for national requirements and for export to England were designated as reserved. The colonial government gradually increased the area under reserved forests. Protected forests were designated with the goal of converting them into reserved forests. Such conversion took place, as the demand for forest resources increased. There were 14,000 square miles of state forests in 1878.

"This increased to 56,000 square miles of reserved forests and 20,000 square miles of protected forests in 1890 and to 81,400 and 8,300 square miles respectively in 1900". (Gadgil and Guha, 1992, p. 134).

The several amendments to the 1878 Act as and when the colonial government required and the ambiguous language used necessitated a single piece of legislation that would do away with ambivalence. This led to the promulgation of the 1927 Act that forms the basis for the laws related to Indian forests. But the main purpose behind this was timber. Its title says:

"An Act to consolidate the law relating to forests, the transit of forest produce and the duty leviable on timber and other forest produce".

There is no purpose of conservation. According to the act, no person can claim a right to private property in forested land merely because he is domiciled there, or his forefathers lived there for centuries. Nor do such people have any rights over forest produce. This gave a major blow to the tribal communities. The intention of the Forest Act is clearly to lay down the procedure by which the government can acquire property and generate revenue from it. By this, they snatched the lands and got monopoly over the forest produce.

All these acts gradually alienated forests from the tribes. Tribes were the major barrier for the Colonial government to acquire the forest produce. Along with these acts, there was one more act which restricted the movement of tribes. It was known as Criminal Tribes Act. In this act the castes and tribes "notified" under the Act were labelled as Criminal Tribes. They believed that they carried criminal tendencies. Hence, anyone born in these communities was labelled as a "born criminal", irrespective of their criminal precedents.

There are majorly four reasons behind this. Firstly, to gain control over the forest. Second, British had come across the bravery of tribes in 1857. Hence, to restrict them this

act was introduced. Third, the British idea of ‘civilizing’ the savages. Fourth, to control the loot which were taking place in the forest areas. The act gave the police sweeping powers to arrest them, control them, and monitor their movements. Once a tribe was officially notified, its members had no recourse to repeal such notices under the judicial system. From then on, their movements were monitored through a system of compulsory registration and passes, which specified where the holders could travel and reside, and district magistrates were required to maintain records of all such people. A stroke of the pen turned 14 million people into criminals in their own land.

The tribes across the country had to go through manifold difficulties by the laws introduced by the colonial government. These acts snatched the homes and livelihood of the tribes. They were also forced to pay taxes to the Zamindars and forest officials also collected bribes. All these developments led to the emergence of Naxal movement in some areas. Modern India still follows the laws which were formed by colonizers. There is an immediate need to consider the tribal rights over the forest and taking them into confidence in the process of forest conservation.

REVERBERATION OF COLONIAL LAWS IN *PARAJA*

In Gopinath Mohanty’s *Paraja* one can witness the negative consequences of the laws introduced by the British and the first deleterious effect is of the forest guards. Sukru Jani’s ordeal in *Paraja* begins with a run-in with the forest guard, a lecher who has a thing for Sukru’s older daughter Jili. Selling a daughter for money is a betrayal of the tribe’s core beliefs of integrity and honour. Sukru Jani’s enraged reaction to the forest guard’s request has unintended consequences. The forest guard’s savage vindictiveness is sparked by the message of denial relayed through Kau Paraja, who brazenly reneges on the permission previously granted to Sukru to cut the trees. Some revenue inspectors also issue him fine notices, which if he does not pay, will place him in jail. For Sukru, there is no other option. Finally, he decides to pay the fee by borrowing money. And that decision binds him to enslavement inexorably. He becomes a goti, or bonded labourer, for the Sahukar. The old father’s grief at being degraded to serfdom is shown in his lament as he wraps his arm around his son: “Gotis, Tikra! Slaves, we’re gotis from today!” (*Paraja* 11)

For the self-respecting, slavery is a necessary evil. Paraja is on the verge of death, but he refuses to go to prison, which is his only other option. Gotihood is bad enough, but being imprisoned is an unimaginable embarrassment.

Prison is another important thing which got prominence during British rule. Unfortunately, many tribes became victims of it. Courts and prisons were ruthlessly used by the British to suppress the innocent tribes. A prison term, in their estimation, equals eternal shame and damnation. Prison is the biggest horror in the life of tribals, according to Mohanty: There is no terror bigger than the terror of the prison for the illiterate tribesmen. It is completely beyond his grasp because it is part of a system in which he has no say, despite the fact that he lives on the outside of it. He understands labour, even unpaid labour under a tyrant moneylender, because he was born into it; yet, anyone who goes to jail is

eternally labelled a criminal and shunned. The law never relents once it has you in its clutches, and it cripples him socially and economically. The terror stems from the tribal's complete lack of understanding of the court and criminal system, which remains as unknown and malicious to him as a terrible fate. The rise of the moneylending class in India can be traced back to British rule. Land became private property under the new British Revenue system of the eighteenth century, and a new sort of society emerged in our country as a result. With the arrival of the British in India, industry arrived, partially replacing the agricultural system. Land was a matter of life and death for peasants in the agricultural system. However, the rise of commerce transformed the tie between man and man into a bond between a tenant and a landlord. The introduction of money as the sole medium of transaction once again plunged the peasants into poverty. The British government refused to accept five sacks of rice, as was customary with kings and local zamindars, and instead demanded cash. Natural disasters, particularly the 1866 famine, which broke the backbones of most Odia farmers, gave rise to moneylenders who eventually began taking the land of poor peasants. As a result, the farmer was reduced to a landless labourer or a migratory worker in the city.

The persecution of moneylenders is the same in tribal villages as it is in any other village in India, including the Uttar Pradesh village of Belari, which Premchand had shown us in *Godan* (Hindi: 1936). Ramachandra Bishoi founded a liquor business in *Paraja*, and the tribals surrendered their property to buy liquor. He afterwards became a moneylender, lending money for land mortgages.

He charged such a high interest rate on the loan that a poor tribal would never be able to repay both the capital and the interest, which was calculated in an oddly convoluted method. As a result, he became his goti, and spent the rest of his life as a bonded labourer. In the following diagram, Mohanty depicts the process: A tribal guy approaches the Sahukar for a mandia loan, and the Sahukar agrees to give it to him. The deal is done, and the Sahukar asks the man as he prepares to leave: 'Have you taken your grain'?

'Yes, Sahukar', the man says.

'How much are you taking'?

'One putti'.

'All right. Now go and tell my clerk that you are taking a putti of mandia.

He will write it down in his books'. (*Paraja* 50)

The poverty stricken Kondh or paraja must inform three other people, in addition to Sahukar, that he is borrowing a mandia putti at 50% interest. And one entry is created each time. The borrower returns the following year with a putti and half of a mandia, which should be enough to pay off the obligation. 'Is that all?' the Sahukar inquires, his gaze falling on the grain pile.

'Why, yes, Sahukar. I took one putti, and the interest is half a putti.' 'One putti! Are you mad? You took one putti from me, one putti from My clerk, one putti from my wife,

and one putti from my servant. How many puttis is that? There, count: one and one and one and one makes four. And the interest of four puttis? Two puttis. So you should have brought six puttis in all; instead of which you have brought one and a half. Why, even the interest is more than that! Do you understand?' 'No, Sahukar,' the bewildered tribesman says. 'But, you must be right.' And the poor man is hooked. A goti is born'.... (*Paraja*13)

The tribals' chronic indebtedness is undoubtedly related to widespread poverty and a subsistence economy. When tribal people's homes were secluded and free of middlemen and contractors, reliable anthropological evidence shows that they were not hindered in their struggle to live a carefree existence. They were self-sufficient in terms of their finances. They were able to survive because of the abundance of forest resources available to them. Unfortunately, when their homes were opened as a result of global economic development, they were entirely unprepared to experience the benefits of development. In the absence of any organised attempts on the part of government, outsiders, the so-called "civilised" people, exploited their vulnerabilities.

With the passage of time, their predicament worsened, and they were reduced to the position in which we now find them. The traditional moneylender's business model is straightforward and practical for tribal debtors. When a tribal member wants money for whatever reason, he only has to go a few furlongs or less to the moneylender's residence, where he is always welcomed – day in and day out. Because an average tribal has very little in the way of moveable or immovable property, the moneylender lends him money without any conditions, sureties, guarantees, or guarantors. All he has is a sincere desire to repay his loan with his salary and possibly some land.

The moneylender sees them as adequate security and requests that the tribal land be mortgaged to secure the loan. A debtor's only obligation is to adhere his thumb impression on a blank sheet of paper or under a draught that he cannot read as a formality. Because the majority of the tribal people are illiterate, they have no notion what is being put in the moneylender's account books.

They obediently place their thumb impression wherever the moneylender requests, sealing their fate for all time. In many situations, these transactions are conducted orally, and they cannot afford to seek remedy in a court of law. However, even those transactions that are recorded in the account books are nothing more than legal fictions due to incorrect entries of inflated sums, and the poor's only recourse is to contact the village panchayat, which frequently favours the moneylender's interests. Indebtedness leads to bonded labours and land alienation, like in Mohanty's *Paraja*. Thus, the extent of the indebtedness problem is huge. Indebtedness among tribals has social and psychological components in addition to economic ones.

The moneylender's persecution in Mohanty's *Paraja* is not a new occurrence in Indian literature. This can be traced back to colonial administration all over India during the nineteenth century, when traditional Indian society was undergoing structural changes as a

result of the introduction of many new professions. The arrival of Ramachandra Bishoi in the Paraja village was not unexpected. He acts as a go-between here, establishing a relationship between the indigenous people and the government's revenue inspectors. As a result, the predatory mediator between the capitalist world's market economy and the pre-monetary values of the self-sufficient tribal community appears frequently in Indian fiction.

As we've seen, British colonisation ushered in the expansion of the commercial frontier into a rather simple, self-sufficient tribal economy. As a result, tribals have had to rely on non-tribals, who are by nature exploitative. "The continuous erosion of tribal producers' self-sufficiency exacerbated tribals' dependence on non-tribals," writes Bikram Nanda in this regard. Market value is infiltrating a world where there are no markets in Paraja. We discover the adhikari, an outsider as well as a government agent, slapping an outrageous fine of 80 rupees on Sukru Jani right at the start of the tale. Sukru then flees to Ramachandra Bishoi, a moneylender who manages to keep Sukru as his goti in the end. Mandia and Tikra, Sukru's two sons, later became gotis under the same moneylender. Sukru also mortgages his land, which the Sahukar never returns. As a result, the introduction of money into a non-monetary society gradually ruined a happy and peaceful family. In the narrative, there are a few characters who first oppose the market value system. The forest guard, a bureaucrat, and the first ever representative of the outside world to infiltrate the tribal realm in the storey, Jili and Bili, Sukru Jani's daughters, fought tooth and nail against the forest guard's suggestions. But, defenceless in the face of a value system that was overtaking their community, they were forced to play concubines to the road contractor, and Jili was forced to abscond with moneylender Ramachandra Bishoi. We can also see how the market value system is gradually eroding individual liberty. Bishoi is merely a moneylender, unlike Mangaraj in *Chhamana Athaguntha*, who is a Zamindar. He lends money to the poor and converts them into bonded labourers, a process that has affected Sukru and his two sons Mandia and Tikra. Freedom has become a commodity, and they can only buy it with money. Land is sometimes the only means of living in a largely agrarian Indian community, which is why it is loaded with so much passion in our culture. The tribals in the novel struggle to reclaim their land, and in the end, they kill the moneylender out of frustration and despair. The moneylender's assassination in *Paraja* is a vivid example of tribal resistance. It demonstrates that Mohanty's portrayal of the tribal world is neither solely romantic, nor is it primarily a nostalgic picture of pure innocence.

The indigenous people of Paraja, are aware that, while ethically correct, the killing of Ramachandra Bishoi is a criminal crime. They are aware of the rules of the law and go to the police station to surrender and await punishment. The administrative network of bureaucracy, justice, and the penal system has now dragged the tribal world into it. However, corruption and exploitation are commonplace in Paraja's court and police station. That is why the mere mention of words like law courts makes tribal people shiver. In the words of Mohanty, tribals' attitude toward courts is as follows:

“They had seen from a distance the world of law courts, packed with buzzing crowds of clerks, peons, policemen, and lawyers carrying thick books under their arms, and it was a nightmare world for them. In the court there was always someone growling at you: what are you doing there; who asked you to come in? Who is that smoking? Stop that noise! and people ask you not only your name but also your father’s name and the name of his father and his father, back to the fourteen generations, and everything that was spoken was written down in the books. The tribesmen lived in terror of the court, and the stories they heard only added to their fear.” (*Paraja* 16)

The overlaid character of the legal system causes people to feel alienated from the system that distributes justice to them. It is a graft from above that is supposed to scare and mystify rather than aid and remedy genuine problems since it has not evolved naturally. The court is a source of horror not only for tribals, but also for non-tribals, particularly for village commoners who, like tribals, are scared by the magical power of the written word, on which the legal system is based. The indigenous people’s fear of the court, the prison, and any government authority stems from a lack of understanding.

For a tribesman, anything unknown is mysterious and terrifying. Sukru implies that these administrative agencies have magical abilities. In the same way that he addresses the sky and Dharmu, his God, the Just One, he addresses the court. The literary people, symbolised by the revenue, as well as the Sahukar as a class in the storey, exploit the unlettered tribesmen. This literary world intimidates and threatens Sukru: “Sukru Jani stood in the dock like a criminal, and when he saw the authorities writing, he felt as if a dagger was being dragged across his heart; because he possessed the tribesmen’s inherent aversion to writings on paper”. (*Paraja* 60)

The culture of the tribals is centred on orality. They don’t keep any records or keep any written documents. Whatever agreement they reach is solely on the basis of a verbal agreement. Because there is no written evidence available to them, the crafty Sahukar might easily deceive them.

CONCLUSION

Mohanty portrays a tribal world as a pure paradise before outside forces like the British laws infiltrated it and distorted its beliefs. In some ways, this is an oversimplification, a type of stereotyping that is common in literature, in which a binary opposition between good and evil, or natural and artificial, is used to divide two societies and cultures. Gopinath Mohanty doesn’t completely romanticize tribes; pimps like Kau Paraja and Madhu Ghasi take advantage of their victims’ emotions and sentiments. Even the text’s clumsy characters, such as Barik, Dhepu Chalan, Faul Domb, Chambru Domb, Shama Paraja, and Rami, are accurately depicted, and their petty corrupt ways are exposed. Thus, *Paraja* stands as a good example for the depiction of tribal society during colonial rule. ■

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A Replica of Tribalism: Bessie Head's *The Collector of Treasures and Other Botswana Village Tales*

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Tribalism is strongly connected with the social structure of tribe which differs from tribe to tribe. One group differs from another group politically, economically and socially. These different groups make distinction between the groups and individuals. Tribalism is a social system where human society is divided into small, roughly independent subgroups called 'tribe'. Bessie Head (1937-1986) is one of the most prominent South African writers. Being born as a 'coloured', her life was full of tragic experiences and suffering. The short story collection *The Collector of Treasures and other Botswana Village Tales* (1977) is related to her own tragic experiences. These stories are fictional but some of the stories are taken from oral traditions of the community and some from historical sources. Religion plays important role in African tribal societies. Though there is change because of the invasion of colonial powers in the social, political and family life of the Africans; still, they adhere to their tribal customs. They obey the chief, still follow evil remedies of witchcraft, they believe on superstitions to solve their problems.

Keywords: Tribalism, Inferiority Complex, Christianity, Black and White conflict, Tribal Customs.

Tribalism is strongly connected with the social structure of tribe which differs from tribe to tribe. In South Africa, colonialists strengthen the differences between Zulus and Xhosas, Ndebele and Vendas, Tswana, Qwaqwa and so on. Mixed races were segregated by whites by means of culture, residence, occupation and status. These differences help to create conflict between the tribes. One group differs from another group politically, economically and socially. These different groups make distinction between the groups and individuals. Tribalism is a social system where human society is divided into small, roughly independent subgroups called 'tribe'. "Tribalism is the state of being organized by, or advocating for, tribe or tribal lifestyles. Human evolution has primarily occurred in small groups, as opposed to people's cooperation in society as a whole. With a negative connotation and in a political context, tribalism can also mean discriminatory behaviour or attitudes,

based on loyalty” (Wikipedia). In *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* Hornby defines Tribalism as, “behaviour, attitudes, etc. that are based on being loyal to a tribe or other social group” (1638). According to Nothwehr, “tribalism is the attitude and practice of harbouring such a strong feeling of loyalty or bonds to one’s tribe that excludes or even demonises other tribes that do not belong to that group” (5).

Tribalism is the manifestation of a collective group’s identity based on common natural impulses such as fear, desire, necessity, or ethnic distinctiveness. It becomes positive when it works collectively for the development of nation. According to Colin Turnbull, “Religious consciousness dominate tribal thought and permit tribal life, giving rise to a living morality... far from being opposed to change, or opposed to nationalism, they contain the very essence of the widest possible nationalism” (22).

At the time of colonial incursion, the colonizers want the land, labour of the people. Negroes in Africa have different tribal and ethnic identities like Kombe, Bujeda, Benga, Zulu, Negros. These different Negro slaves from different tribal identities who have no similar language, no similar customs, no similar religion but they join together and form an identity that is Black. Blacks at all times persist as slaves and whites as masters. White master always tries to subjugate the native black, and develop among blacks inferiority complex. White master always uses ‘superiority complex’ as a tool to enforce colonial rule. As Sucheta Patil and Pradnya Ghorpade point out, “On one hand, slaves had to submit themselves to their masters’ will under the ceaseless peril; on other hand they could become all-important to them, serve as their trusted friends, and be sharer in their confidential information” (203).

The pre-colonial tribal groupings were converted by white colonizers and assigned to specific categories of jobs to different groups of people. Colonial government manipulate as well as create ethnic and racial identities. In many African countries after independence, many people lived together under one government. But these groups do not co-operate with each other, they fight for better positions in the government. Historians call the struggle as tribalism. When the colonialists came to Africa, each group of Africans come closer together. The people of each tribal community united to oppose the invaders. So, people came to feel very strongly that they belong to one group or tribe rather than another. Also, the colonizers often make friends with one chief and use him to conquer others. So, groups of people become enemies. At the time of colonization Europeans began to rule all over Africa. Their famous policy is ‘divide and rule’. They make use of tribal chiefs and Kings to rule so, these tribes remain divided after independence. The different members from the tribes continue their struggle to gain power. African political leaders also inherited this tradition of struggle and they use their position to win favour of the tribal group instead of national development. People live together in the areas they are peasants or workers. They speak same language, usually they have some traditional customs but they still fight for the tribal group. They develop the belief that their tribal group is more important than nation.

Political tribalism is deeply rooted with identity and emotion. Loyalty to political tribe is important than anything else for the people. So tribe members are ready to do anything for their leader or chief. Chief's word is everything for them. Thus, any change in politics is threatening to the member's identity. Ethnic tribal and racial identity challenges not only to society in general but Christianity in particular. Barreto states,

Ethnic and racial differences are not the problem. Prejudice and racism inject our differences with the sinful notion that our difference leads to superiority and inferiority or the distorted belief that our differences are merely cultural cues for determining who is in and who is out, rather than emblems of God's gift of diversity (129).

Ethnicity emphasizes on the external opinion of an individual or a group by another individual or group of individuals. Ethnicity is therefore an expression of group consciousness.

Bessie Head (1937-1986) is one of the most prominent South African writers. Being born as a 'coloured', her life was full of tragic experiences and suffering. She leaves South Africa in 1964 for Botswana and remains exiled until her death. She is well known for her novels as well as short story collections. The short story collection *The Collector of Treasures and other Botswana Village Tales* (1977) is related to her own tragic experiences. There are 13 short stories in this collection and all the stories are rebellious in nature. These stories are fictional but some of the stories are taken from oral traditions of the community and some from historical sources. Christianity is at the background of most of the stories. In this connection Lauren Smith remarks, "Bessie Head's short stories, too, are soaked in Christian themes and images...Many of the important, sympathetic characters in the collection are Christian, whether or not their religious beliefs play an important part in the narrative" (65).

Her first story "The Deep River: the Story of Ancient Tribal Migration" is about individual identity. People in the village have no identity; they live under the rule of Chief. They follow one of the tribal customs that is 'to follow the Chief'. Bessie Head describes "...the people lived without faces, except for their chief, whose face was the face of all the people; that is, if their chief's name was Monemapee, then they were all the people of Monemapee" (1). The chief makes all the decision, such as when to plough, when to harvest, and when to prepare the crops, the people simply follow his orders. People follow the rules and they live in peace. They live without conflict. They live together like a deep river. Although people are given their own land, they are not allowed to plough without the chief's order. Chief orders people for ploughing, for harvesting and at the end of the season they gather together for thanksgiving program. The special messenger goes around the town and gives the chief's message to the villagers:

"Listen, the corn is to be pounded!"

'The corn is to be fermented now!'

A few days after again the messenger comes,

'The corn is to be cooked now'

‘The bear is to be brought now!’ (2).

All the people come together for the celebration of harvest time, in this way they live together under the chief’s rule. The conflict arises after the chief’s death and people start to ask questions and start to show their own faces. Chief Monemapee has three wives and five sons. His fifth son Mokobi is a small boy at the time of the death of the chief. He is the son of Chief Monemapee’s third wife Rankwana. Rankwana is young and beautiful. Sebembele, senior son of Monemapee, falls in love with Rankwana secretly. After the death of his father, he declares his love for Rankwana and Mokobi as his own son. People start to take doubt on the Chief’s death. They say, “Sebembele made a second blunder. In a world where women were of no account, he said truthfully: the love between Rankwana and I is great” (3).

Sebembele admits love for Rankwana which causes conflict among the people. They are of the opinion that the ruler must not be emotional. There are two groups among the people. Some support Sebembele’s love, and some oppose. He is caught in the situation of ambivalence. Whether to take position of his chief or accept his love affair? Councillors are of the opinion that he should not think about the woman so much. They say, “Why are you worrying yourself like this over a woman, Sebembele? There are no limits to the amount of wives a chief may have, but you cannot have that woman and that child” (4).

One morning people see Sebembele, Rankwana and Mokopi walking together. Their expressions are described as “they saw that they had a ruler who talked with deeds rather than words. “They saw that the time had come for them to offer up their individual faces to the face of this ruler. But the people were still in two camps” (5). Sebembele chooses his love for Rankwana and he rejects chieftainship. After that people leave the village and move towards Southward. They finally settle in the land of Bamangwato. People still refer themselves as the people of Talaote tribe. But always say that they have lost their place of birth because of a woman. They are of the opinion that woman is always cause of trouble in the village. In the footnotes Bessie Head remarks, “The Story is an entirely romanticized and fictionalized version of the history of the Batalaote tribe. Some historical data was given to me by the old men of the tribe, but it was unreliable as their memories had tended to fail them” (6).

The story “Heaven is not Closed” talks about the struggle of a woman and her experience in the colonial society. The story is revealed through a character Modise. Modise says, “we as a tribe would fall into great difficulties if we forget our own customs and laws” (8). The story is a conflict between two customs in a small village of Africa- the old Setswana culture and Christian custom. Galethebege is a devoted Christian lady, who loves Ralokae, a widower and non-believer of Christianity and wants to marry according to Setswana culture. Galethebege visits Missionary to take advice but surprisingly she is excommunicated. The Missionary is a follower of Christ but does not like blacks. He sees them just as beggars and thieves and he thinks that all the rituals that blacks follow are against the heaven as a result he does not like black community. He reflects the condition of human society that how people use religion to misguide people. He tries to break the peace and unity with the

help of old customs. Bessie Head describes that in order to understand civilized culture, people convert their religion into Christianity, and it has become a fashion. But Christianity starts to suppress the old traditions and customs in order to assert their superiority and the conflict arises between the two customs. Missionaries who are against the tribal customs believe that, African traditions and customs have no use. They reject these customs as ‘heathen customs’ (10). As Julio Finn observes, “[Christians] never expected black man to get to heaven: he was only good for creating the white man’s paradise here on earth” (27). All the people are eager to know how the heaven is closed to Ralokae. They think if the heaven is closed to Ralokae then it might be closed to all of them who attend the marriage ceremony. So, they all decide not to visit the church. They think cow as a symbol of wealth and holy animal. They follow the customs at the time of marriage. There are some traditional customs in the Setswana community. Some sexual malpractices are associated with the marriage ceremony. They cover the stinking intestinal bag of the ox around their necks. Ralokae is a traditional man who does not believe in man but strongly obeys the old Setswana culture. Though, he loves Galethebege he refuses to marry according to Christian culture.

In the story “The Collector of Treasures” Dikeledi Mokopi, the protagonist, takes aggressive step against suffering. Her anger against the discrimination leads her to take violent step to kill her husband. As the title ‘The Collector of Treasures’ suggests the protagonist is collecting the compliments and encouraging words that people give her. It is her treasure in her lonely life. The woman in this story challenges the traditional patriarchy. In patriarchal society masculinity is associated with superiority, whereas femininity is linked with inferiority. Ghorpade Pradnya observes “Femininity is based on a patriarchal value system leading to certain typification of roles. It lays emphasis on virginity, fidelity, religious rituals, notions of purity and attitudes of preferences and prejudices for and against one gender over another” (130). Woman receives ill treatment in male dominated society. According to Simone de Beauvoir, “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the female presents in a society, it is a civilization as a whole that produces this creature... which is described as feminine” (16). Bessie Head describes two kinds of men: traditional and non-traditional. She criticizes man’s customary dominance, Head says, “The ancestors made so many errors and one of the most bitter-making things was that they relegated to men a superior position in the tribe, while women were regarded, in a congenital sense, as being an inferior form of human life” (92). According to Lloyd Brown Bessie Head’s male character Paul is “dominating male enforcer of female equality”.

Bessie Head has shown deep anger against witchcraft in the story “Witchcraft”. Witchcraft is the very dangerous practice in tribal society. Bessie Head comments “Everything in the society was a mixture of centuries of acquired wisdom and experience, so witchcraft belonged there too; something people had carried along with them from ancestral times” (47). The villager calls Tswana doctor for everything in their life they call him for “...herbs to protect him in his employment, when he married, when his children were born, or when he was taking a long journey from home” (47-48).

As she states, “it was one of the most potent evils in the society and people afflicted by it often suffered from a kind of death-in-life. Everything in the society was a mixture of centuries of acquired wisdom and experience, so witchcraft belonged there too; something people had carried along with them from ancestral times” (47). Mma Millipede does not believe on witchcraft. When she is ill, the villagers arrange for her Tswana doctor but she refuses to have treatment. Because she knows that Tswana doctor knows nothing. She tells people to arrange doctor for her. Bessie Head highlights on another tribal evil practice that is ‘ritual murder’ in the story “Looking for a Rain God”. There is no rain in the village and people cannot plough as there is no water. The family of Mokobja is enduring drought from six years. All the villagers are not farmers some of them are herdsmen. They sold their animals during the drought to purchase food. The women are haunted by the starvation of next year. Botswana society is strongly patriarchal. Mokobja is old in the tribe and in the family also. His wish or opinion is more important for family members. People are deeply religious and feel very close to God. Their traditional customs are more important for them than new God, that is Christianity. Old Mokobja remembers the rain making ceremony. But it becomes hard for him to recall tribal ceremony as it has been forgotten because for so many years they are praying Christianity. Though, Mokobja went to church for many years, he decides to follow the old custom for rain. He explains the ritual to his youngest son Ramadi. Rain god accepts only the sacrifice of the bodies of the children. Then the rain will come. And they kill the two little girls for rain. Villagers notice the absence of two little girls and they ask the question about the girls, they are answered that they just died. Soon the police come and arrest the old man and his son when the mother of the girls speaks truth. Ritual murder is against the law but Ramadi and Mokobja follow the old tribal custom and sacrifice their own children for rain. But there is still no rain. The villagers and family members are in deep sorrow.

“Jacob: the Faith Healing Priest” is the story of two priests Jacob and Lebojang. Jacob works for people and prays for him for this he takes nothing from the people. But Lebojang deceives people and takes a lot of money for prophesizing. “The one prophet lives on the sunrise side of the village and other Lebojang, lives on the sunset side. Prophet Jacob is a very poor man and lives in a mud hut. He walks around with no shoes. Prophet Lebojang is very rich and lives in a great mansion and drives a polished car” (20). Jacob’s parents died when he was small. Then he is raised by his uncle. But all his property is taken by relatives with the help of chief. Lebojang is arrested for ritually killing a child as a part of his magic to bring wealth and prosperity to his rich clients. Bessie Head strongly shows her anger against these tribal practices. The story “The Village Saint” reflects the selfish nature of the village priest Mma Mompoti. She develops her façade identity in the village. She visits to funerals, hospitals and church. She acts with great piety but her intensions are not pure. She says, “And what may ail you, my daughter? And what may ail you my son?” (14). Villagers know nothing about the relation between Rra Mompoti and Mma Mompoti, it seems very normal at the surface level but reality may be different. Soon, Rra Mompoti goes with another woman. Everyone in the village including her son Mompoti supports

Mma Mompoti. A saint is generally considered to work for the people in the society, who has given his life to others. But Mma Mompoti takes money from Mompoti for the new things. Still, all the villagers have strong faith on her, they believe her.

‘Kgotla’ plays vital role in the social tribal life of South Africa. Kgotla is similar to court functioning in tribal societies. Cases of disputes are taken to the Kgotla for decision. In the story “Kgotla” Thatayarona and Kelapile both are the members in Kgotla who discuss on various problems in the village and solve them. Bessie Head suggests here that things are changing here in Kgotla. Some changes are there in the village but tradition has its own place among the people. It is the story of Rose who is working as a helper in the school for the blind. There she meets Gobosamang and impressed by his behaviour and they get married. But soon villagers begin to poison her husband against her. She feels so bad and thinks, “people’s jealousy for me is burning my back like alive coal resting there. I shall go back to my own people” (63). Rose decides to return back to her own people. But they do not accept her as at the time of her marriage as per the tradition they have received the cattle from her husband and if Rose returned back they fear they would have to return their cattle back. They say, “Oh no...return to the husband. Jealousy like that is a natural thing. After all, you are a beautiful woman” (63). When Rose leaves Gobosamang, he brings new woman home which is against custom. His mother protests and says, “Gobosamang, you cannot bring a moswagadi into the yard. You know that it is barely three months since her husband passed away and by custom you should not be having relations with a woman like that you can die!” (64). Tsetso is also not following the custom. As according to the custom after the death of husband one should not find another man or marry to any other person until one year. But, Tsetso within three months comes to live with Gobosamang. Gobosamang’s mother follows the tradition. She knows that it is inappropriate for her son to have a relation with Tsetso as Tsetso has not spent a year’s mourning. After the returning of Rose she finds Tsetso.

Villagers accept the ruling of the chief. He gives his decision. All the people who are in trouble come to the chief and they accept his decision.

The case which looks so complicated at first is solved by acceptance. Rose gets ready to pay money of Tsetso, which is spent by Gobosamang. Rose is victim of harassment in the village, she suffers, at last she accepts. The story “Looking for a Rain God” also reflects the conflict between tribal law and modern law of Christianity. Sometimes the law accepted in tribal customs is not acceptable in modern law. Ritual murder is acceptable in tribal law but not accepted by modern law that is why at last Ramadi and his father are punished by the police.

Religion plays an important role in African tribal societies. Though there is change because of the invasion of colonial powers in the social, political and family life of the Africans; still, they adhere to their tribal customs. They obey the chief, still follow evil remedies of witchcraft, they believe on superstitions to solve their problems. Sometimes they become violent as Dikeledi kills her husband in the story ‘The Collector of Treasures’.

In another story 'Looking for a Rain God', they come to 'ritual murder'. Here, Bessie Head deals with racial discrimination, unjust treatment, exile, alienation, voice against inequality and tribalism. She has presented women continuing to function traditional role which expresses how ancient tribal gender hierarchy has persisted into modern times. ■

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Breaking the Linguistic Binaries: Deconstructing Signs, Reconstructing Gender in Flora Nwapa's *Cassava Song and Rice Song*

Biswajit Mondal

Language is not only 'a system of voluntary produced (symbols) signs' (Sapir 1921) or 'a means of communication', but it bears the load of a nation's culture, its ideology and hegemony; and constructs the dichotomy of "insiders" and "outsiders", and the differences of male and female. It constructs our thought, our perception of reality, and thus assigns our individual and cultural roles. Hence, Saussure states, "Without language, thought is a vague, uncharted nebula"(Course in General Linguistics 1966:112). As soon as we enter the system of signs, we become acculturated, and social and individual meaning is imposed on (which Lacan calls the Symbolic Order). Marks and de Courtivron has explained this, "Meaning is located not in the thought of the enunciator but in the system of signs itself". Man, for being the maker of language, imposes negative meaning on the female. They are always presented as mute, vulnerable, and submissive, in short, with negative connotations manipulating the linguistic process of signification to control power and patriarchal hegemony. The Nigerian woman writer Flora Nwapa refuses to use 'the alien tongue', and intends to break the dominant way of signification and emphasizes to present the woman with positive connotation. In her interview, she frankly declares, "I try to project the image of women positively." The present paper emphasizes on Nwapa's only poetic volume *Cassava Song and Rice Song*. In Igbo culture, the crop cassava is signified as 'female-crop', a foodstuff of poor folks in contrast with the yam, a male-crop. Breaking the prevailed binary opposition of cassava and yam, Nwapa glorifies woman and womanhood through the glorification of cassava and its significant attributes and roles during the Nigerian civil war.

Keywords: Signification, Signs, Gender, Womanhood, Patriarchal Hegemony etc.

Introduction:

Western feminist linguists strongly believe that there is no neutral language in existent. The entire system, since it belongs to men and is controlled by them, is masculinized. Moreover, male language is 'a species of Orwellian thought-control', by which they construct reality and make women see things in their way. Therefore, American and European feminists

and scholars have emphasized again and again for linguistic reformation in order to reject patriarchal derogation and domination on the woman. This feminist dissatisfaction is bitterly expressed in Annie Leclerc's views:

Nothing exists that has not been made by man- not thought, not language, not words... We have to invent everything anew. Things made by man are not just stupid, deceitful and oppressive... More than anything else, they are sad, sad enough to kill us with boredom and despair... We have to invent a woman's word (Leclerc 1992:74).

Leclerc's call to deconstruct the dominant masculinized language and its symbolic presentation is quite significant. Indeed, feminist critics and linguists object that linguistic signification and cultural production of meaning is man-made which reflects 'dual hierarchical oppositions', with the woman always placed on the negative pole. This masculine structuration has far-reaching consequences, especially as language is a powerful instrument in social and political life. As Spender has asserted persuasively, 'the group which has the power to ordain the structure of language, thought, and reality has the potential to create a world in which they are the central figure'(Spender 1992: 106).

These linguistic tensions in women's writings are ubiquitous and, to a large extent, universal. West African woman writers also struggle with masculine language and meaning. As the victim of double colonization, they wrestle with three problems: first, they resist universal feminist standpoint; second, they deconstruct androcentric, culturally accepted meaning and attempt instead to generate meaning favorable to African women; and third, women writers tend to be less committed than men to the 'domestication' of language and meaning.

The Igbo society is very much patriarchal: 'a dual-sex hierarchy in which men and women exist in parallel and complementary positions and roles within the society' (Acholonu 1995:6). Gloria Chuku (2016) has also observed that Igbo society is highly stratified. Gender differentiation is the vital force of the social organization. This perception has presented a picture of superior masculinity vis-à-vis inferior or subordinate femininity (46). In a typical Igbo society, 'when Igbo talk about farming, they talk about yams' because it is 'central to Igbo food culture, food security and the prevailing gender ideology of male and female crops.'

Flora Nwapa rewrote the images of women in the attempt to rupture the masculinized Igbo culture, presenting a woman-centered interpretation of gender relations. So, she has attempted to reinvent the language and fill it with 'feminine' voices. She tries to deconstruct the inherited meanings and images, particularly when they attach to images of women. 'To deconstruct' in this case does not necessarily mean the total rejection of modes of meaning. As Butler has explained, "to deconstruct is not to negate or to dismiss, but to call into question and perhaps, most importantly, to open up a term, like the subject, to reusage or redeployment that previously has not been authorized" (Butler 1990:18).

Cassava Song and Rice Song (1986) is the only collection of poems of Flora Nwapa. She makes her major intention clear in her poetry that she covets to subvert the gender hierarchy of Igbo society and wants to establish woman's subjectivity in the male-oriented milieu. So, she employs local metaphors and similes, and deploys language to present the female gender as a positive and strong factor rather than as a negative and weaker being. Her gender-oriented counter-rhetoric revolves around food and agriculture, a significant choice of focus as West African women are the primary participants in food production and supply networks. Through the treatment of food and farming images, she seeks to signify a socially productive Igbo womanhood going outside the socially constructed circle of 'feeding into' the Mother Earth or 'good housewife' stereotypes that pervade West African cultures. Instead, she portrays the woman undertaking culturally specific female tasks.

Traces of male control and power in Igboland are found in various cultural practices, including crop-production where Cassava, labeled as a staple and 'common foodstuff' is associated with women, who are traditionally its rightful cultivators. The woman-cassava association undervalues woman assigning the negative attributes of cassava to her: she becomes common, low in value and odoriferous like her crop. The crop and the cultivator are conflated as 'same', and the derogation of one becomes the derogation of the other in the male-dominated economic system.

Many more instances of gender differences and discrimination are signified clearly by the crops: in some areas of Igboland, yam suggests maleness and cassava, the subordinate crop to femaleness. Not only that some husbands do not allow their wives to plant cassava alongside yam or cassava cannot be planted until the yam crop has grown richly from the soil. Thus, just as man is in control of human society, yam is empowered to control the farm, which might be regarded analogically as a crop version of society.

The cultivation of cassava and yam thus is closely related to gender roles; cassava is considered to be such a 'low' crop and it would be referred to as *di ji* (husband of yams) and never *di akpu* (husband of cassava): to be addressed as *di akpu* is to be greatly insulting. As Spender states, "All naming is of necessity biased and the process of naming is one of encoding that bias, of making a selection of what to emphasize and what to overlook on the basis of a 'strict use of already patterned materials'" (Spender 1992: 107-8).

Nwapa, a poet with an intricate awareness of Igbo gender politics, takes the woman-cassava association as a literary paradigm: by glorifying cassava, the muted crop, she glorifies the woman, the muted social being. In rewriting women's cultural roles, she implicitly questions masculine logic. By reframing linguistic signification, she responds to masculine presuppositions, attempting to transform prejudice into glorification, hate into love, dishonour into honour, and disadvantaged weakness into privileged strength. She opens the poem by highlighting some of the attributes of cassava:

You grow in poor soils
You grow in rich soils

You grow in gardens
You grow in farms.
You are easy to grow
Children can plant you
Women can plant you
Everybody can plant you.
(Nwapa 1986, 1)

In these stanzas, the poetic persona tries to show the simplistic and accommodating nature of cassava that anybody can plant it. And because of this, she says, “we must sing for you/ Great cassava, we must sing/ We must not forget/ Thee, the great one” (Nwapa 1986). This is resonated by Korieh (2007) who opined that cassava has advantage over other crops because “It has the capacity to withstand extreme stress and survive in relatively poor soil” (230). The poem also shows how, after serving its purpose of replenishing people, they turn their backs at her. This shows how ungrateful people are, usually to women.

Image of woman is presented in the poem by feminizing cassava and devoting it with positive significance. Inheriting the negative association of cassava and women, Nwapa re-evaluates cassava in order to rewrite and re-evaluate the role of women in the family as well as in the society:

As children, you fed as
You were like a mother
You fed us fat
But we easily forget
You must pardon us
Great Mother Cassava
Great Mother Cassava
You must pardon us
(Nwapa 1986: 2)

Cassava is personified. It is compared to a mother and finally referred to directly as ‘Mother’. In asking for pardon from cassava, Nwapa suggests that it has consciousness, elevating and empowering it to the position occupied by human and spiritual beings in Igbo culture. This metaphorical personification enables Nwapa to construct cassava as female. Cassava is not just ‘like a mother’, for this simile facilitates the subsequent metaphorization, making the relationship closer and stronger. Cassava *is* ‘Mother’. Verbrugge argues that metaphoric language activates a ‘transformational process’, in the sense that one event is transformed into ‘another event that was previously experienced as very different in kind’. He also argues that this transformational process is ‘fanciful in quality, since it alters conventional identities. It is directional, in that one event (the topic) is transformed by a second (the vehicle). It is partial, in that the topic is not completely reidentified as the vehicle ... it is fusional, because there is a plastic remodelling of the topic by the vehicle, rather than a preservation of separate identities (Verbrugge 1984: 168).

Proceeding from one stanza to another, the cassava-motherrelationship is made more stronger and that image is again fused into the image of ‘Great Mother Cassava’ (Nwapa 1986: 2). This inseparability is repeatedly emphasized, not merely as an implicit bonding, but as an explicit event:

Who will wash the pot?
Who will wash the mortar?
Not me.
Not me.
‘Never mind’
Mother says quietly
‘I’ll wash the pot
Mother and Cassava are one.
Yes they are one
One loves her children
The other
Also loves her children.
Both you and Mother
You are long suffering
You love your children
You are wonderful.
(Nwapa 1986: 11)

Motherhood and its admirable qualities therefore constitute the semantic core to the metaphorization of cassava as woman. Existing in a positive relationship to culture, *Cassava Song and Rice Song* subverts the patriarchal Igbo interpretive tradition in which the link between women and cassava is derogatory.

Other gendered terms for cassava in *Cassava Song and Rice Song* include Great Mother, Great Woman, Lover of Children and Mother Cassava. This variability in naming opens up and pluralizes cassava, which is resistant to the monocentric masculine-ordered culture. The multiple references triggered by Nwapa’s rewriting of cassava conforms with Spender’s assertion that: ‘if more than one set of names were available, users of the language could elect to use those names which best reflected their interests ... But because it has been males who have named the world, no such choice exists and the falseness of the partial names they have supplied goes unchecked’ (Spender 1992: 109). The otherness of mothers and female cassava-producers in Igbo societies is thus not regarded by Nwapa as an inferior otherness; it is presented instead as an empowering difference that places Mother (cassava) in a relationship of equality – even superiority – to Father (Yam):

Don’t be angry
Great Mother
You were our Saviour
During the war.

You have been our Saviour
Long before the war.
When the yam disappeared
Great Mother was with us.
We sing for the yam
We have yam festivals
Why, oh why are
These denied you?
(Nwapa 1986: 9)

Through the above image of Mother-Cassava association Nwapa not only glorifies the significant role of women in the daily domestic life, she also glorifies the role of women during the Nigerian civil war. The disappearance of yam during the Nigeria-Biafra war reflects not just aliteral scarcity, but also the irresponsible disappearance of the father from the home and farm, shirking his responsibility, leaving the mother saddled with the role of primary provider. Ironically, rural Igbo societies recognize and celebrate the father, just as the father's symbol, yam, is celebrated annually. Nwapa's presentation of female strength is ambiguous. The pounding process implies that, while women's self-sacrifice, suffering and endurance might sustain others, they are, like the cassava, pounded down and consumed by the process:

We pound you
We pound you
We continue to pound
We pound and pound
You endure the pounding
For our sake
For the sake of your children
You endure.
(Nwapa 1986: 8-9)

'We pound you' could also mean 'we beat you' or 'we torture you', suggesting the hardship and brutality some women suffer. The feminization and personification of cassava as 'Dear Mother' (p.34) expresses the reverence for motherhood manifested throughout African societies.

Conclusion

Nwapa idealised cassava as mother figure to express reverence to motherhood. The voice in *Cassava Song and Rice Song* expresses the request to be recognized by a society where the economy of female pounding and giving has been silenced. This voice describes the 'positive face' of women. These sentiments are not necessarily directed towards the food-crop called cassava, but towards women and mothers whose social and domestic roles are made visible through the crop. Through the glorification of Cassava, Nwapa has drawn

attention to a neglected aspect of cultural life in Igboland. By focusing on the food culture, she has highlighted the silence of women, making their derogated daily activities visible and socially valuable. ■

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Immanence of Boredom : A Study of Philip Larkin's *The Whitsun Weddings*

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Philip Larkin is regarded as one of the most significant poets of post-World War Britain who made his debut as a highly promising talent with the publication of his first collection *The North Ship* in 1945. It is rather a sentimental throwback to Yeats's preoccupation with love, sex and death. These poems are slow and sad in their movements and rhythms, and uniquely romantic, often, echoing lines of Yeats and Auden. As Anthony Thwaite observes :

A wan Yeatsianism, a steely touch of Auden here and there – these are the books characteristics, and remarkable only in that they show none of the influence one would expect from an Oxford poet in the 1940s' : there is no studied literariness and no flushed and verbose New Apocalypse rhetoric. These poems are careful, yearning and little dim. (873)

It becomes obvious from the above assessment that Yeats was Larkin's early formative influence. Yeats's romantic mystification of life and world could not, perhaps, permanently satisfy Larkin's fastidiously reasonable sensibility. The mind that was in search of a more sagacious idiom of rational lucidity turned, instead, to Hardy.

Hardy's poetry opened Larkin's eyes towards the empirical world as such. Romantic vision gave way to a demystifying perception. Hardy's poetry helped Larkin to look at life's reality without any illusions about the limitations of hopes and happiness. Largely under Hardy's influence Larkin came to write only of personal experience in a conversational idiom, in the language of common people. All the volumes published after *The North Ship* give a clear-eyed view of contemporary living and its problems. Larkin spoke in a radio programme which appeared in *The Listener* under the title Philip Larkin Praises the Poetry of Thomas Hardy, refers :

When I came to Hardy it was with the sense of relief that I didn't have to try and jack myself up to a concept of poetry that lay outside my own life – this is perhaps – what I felt Yeats was trying to make me do. Hardy taught me to feel rather than

to write One could simply relapse back into one's own life and write from it.
(25 July 1968 p.11)

From Hardy he also learnt to employ traditional forms and techniques with subtlety and variety, the style which the Movement poets eventually found to be so congenial to their temperament.

Larkin, along with the Movement poets, rejected both the politically committed poetry of the 1930s (of the young Auden, Spender, C. Day Lewis) and the neo-romantic poetry of the 1940s. Repudiating the rhetoric and the irrationality of the earlier poetry, the Movement poets looked for poetry which expressed the ordinary, rational self, gave emphasis upon the intellect and made use of traditional forms, a conversational idiom and adopted a strongly ironical tone of voice. The Movement poets, therefore, discredited T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and a whole range of modernists. The Movement poets believed in and wrote, was expressed by Robert Conquest in the introduction to *New Lines* published in 1956. He observes:

If one had briefly to distinguish this poetry of the fifties from its predecessors, I believe the most general point would be that it submits to no great systems of theoretical constructs nor agglomerations of unconscious commands. It is free from both mystical and logical compulsions and – like modern philosophy – is empirical in its attitude to all that comes. This reverence for the real person or event is, indeed, a part of the general intellectual ambience ... of our time.
(XIV-XV)

The Movement poets repudiated the cosmopolitanism, multilingualism, and foreignness and mechanistic technique; and went back to British tradition, re-established and rejuvenated it.

After *The North Ship*, Larkin's second collection, *The Less Deceived* was published in 1955 that marks a sharp turning point in Larkin's content, form, language and technique which got coagulated in his master collection *The Whitsun Weddings* published in 1964. The poems of this collection painfully expressed his disillusionment with love and life lived in a mechanically monitored, socially insipid, chaotic world, in a highly affective common language and melancholic tone. Boredom is a major theme of this collection, delineated in simple British traditional style. The dominant mode of the collection is pungently melancholic, the atmosphere grey and gloomy. Throughout the book we find no pretension of transcending the ordinariness of existence in this world. There is a pure attention bestowed on particulars, how much trivial they may seem to be, to register the fact that there is nothing other than the familiar.

Like most of the great poets, Philip Larkin has also dealt with the most popular themes like Time, Life, Love and Death which cause all disillusionment, frustration, despair and futility turning everything into seer boredom.

Larkin's most of the poems measure the static distance between human expectation and the inevitably inadequate provisions of reality. Unlike the romantics, disillusionment in

Larkin is not a consequence of entertaining illusions, rather it would be more appropriate to say that he begins from and with disillusionment. Hopes dreams and ideals are present in Larkin's poems as residual relics, as concave forms of absence, as vague reconstructions of memories, divested of any inspirational significance however remote or destitute.

Time

Time is associated with life for life exists in the eternal flow of time, with its own transience. Time teases our life to death, as an invincible force, time corrodes everything:

This is the first thing,
I have understood:
Time is the echo of an axe
Within a wood."Poem XXVI" (CP, 295)

Time consciousness in Larkin's poetry can be regarded as a basic thematic substratum which differentiates the cognitive content and affective quality of his work from such other attempts that treat of a similar theme. Time, for Larkin, is a destructive power, an agent that brings about change, decay and death, and every moment adds up to our losses :

Truly, though our element is time,
We are not suited to the long perspectives
Open at each instant of our lives.
They link us to our losses.(Larkin, TWW, 40)

Time is the principle of change, but it brings nothing new; it strips man off illusions and leads him to wither into reality, that the illusions are unreal:

Time is a chain that binds us to our earlier hopes and dreams which, as we grow older, we realize will never become reality. (King, 6)

Time is not a human element, we deposit our dreams in time and it shatters them. The indifference of time cares nothing for our differences. We belong to time but time does not belong to us; it leaves our questions unanswered. As in "Days" :

What are days for ?
Days are where we live.
They come, they wake us
Time and time over.
They are to be happy in:
Where can we live but days?
(Larkin, TWW, 27)

The answer to this question is not even provided either by the priests or by the doctors. Thus both religion and medical science have failed to answer the fundamental question:

An, solving that question
Brings the priest and the doctor

In their long coats
Running over the fields.(Larkin, TWW, 27)

Larkin's protagonists take attempts to conquer time's corroding forces, but fail. Time, for them, remains an eternal riddle. For Larkin, time is only "oblivion, true".

The theme of man's helplessness to make any sense of life is again taken up in "Nothing To Be Said" in which the persona is baffled by the thought that 'Life is slow dying', and he observes the slowly passing time that leads him towards death and finds 'Nothing to be Said':

Hours giving evidence
Or birth, advance
On death equally slowly.
And saying so to some
Means nothing; other it leaves
Nothing to be said.(Larkin, TWW, 11)

Larkin sees time, with its glittering flickers of movability and transience to capture human nothingness in time's fluxes and refluxes.

Love

Love is a recurrent subject in Larkin's poetry that is supposed to lead the lovers to success and happiness but in Larkin's poems love fades away to be futile, culminating in nothingness.

Language has also become an illusion. To capture meaning from any thing has become useless. Love always turns to futility and sadness. Aging and consciousness of death makes love vulnerable and volatile in the flux of time:

Always too eager for the future,
We Pick up bad habits of expectancy."Next Please" (CP, 51)

Love is another supreme illusion of man which Larkin cynically dismisses as an evasion of reality and denies the belief that love may comfort human soul, which is impossible. Larkin's poems like "Faith Healing", "An Arundel Tomb", "Love Songs in Age" etc. register such pessimistic view about love.

Love, for Larkin, never sustains the promise of the lovers as they fail to be honest. They are rather destined to be dishonest and insincere, but the dream of a union which is always distant, remains distant and impossible:

For the skirl of that bulletin unpicks the world like a knot,
And to hear how the past is past and the future neuter
Might knock my darling off her unpriceable pivot
"If, my Darling" (CP, 41)

Life

Life then becomes a vast expanse of nothingness and boredom.

Larkin's poems combine universality with contemporaneity, situating man's life in the flow of time which functions a dramatic role in man's life, corroding man's hopes and desires, dreams and expectations. Life gives nothing but takes away all that man heaps. Man harvests nothing from life what that he sows:

Something is pushing them

To the side of their lives."Afternoons" (CP, 121)

Life is, thus, subjected to vulnerability in the realm of time. Life of man, like a flower blooms in transience to collapse in timelessness. Like foams of a sea man's life mingles in the unfathomable darkness of time's ocean. Life is just a transient travel from womb to tomb.

Death

The theme of death is a Larkineque recurrence to mutilate the subtlety of death, which is elaborated in his poems like "Going", "Absences", "Next, Please", "Triple Time", "Nothing to be Said", "Wants" and "Age" etc.; where Larkin has shown his poetic obsession to death like an emerald beauty. Death is a concept, though that transports life to a new world and rejuvenates to a new life. Death is nothing but a rebirth that destroys the past and brings a new present and future.

The very appearance of an ambulance, in Larkin's poem "Ambulances" is frightening which may take someone to the dread world of death. The ambulances thus serve as the grey area between life and death, a ubiquitous arena of life. Who knows, who is carried in an ambulance, would survive or die. However everyone will one day die. Death is inevitable and all powerful :

A wild white face that overtops
Red stretcher-blankets momentarily
As it is carried in and stowed,
And sense the solving emptiness
That lies just under all we do,
And for a second get it whole,
So permanent and blank and true.
"Ambulances" (CP, 132)

As man grows, due to the ravages of time, not only gets his dreams and desires lost, but also becomes conscious of death that would one day take life in tis wholeness. In the river of time, life advances from birth to age and ultimately to death :

The sure extinction that we travel to
And shall be lost in always. Not to be here,

Not to be anywhere,
And soon; nothing more terrible, nothing more true.

“Aubade” (CP, 208)

When man becomes a victim to time’s eroding agents, he becomes, as he grows in age, more and more conscious of death:

All know they are going to die.
Not yet, perhaps not here, but in the end,
And somewhere like this. That is what it means.

“The Building” (CP, 191)

In the poem “Building” Larkin uses the building as the symbol of hospital where patients remain closer in the realm of death, and suffer its horror. Likewise ambulance also serves as symbol of horror of death. The patient, who is taken in the ambulance, his family members and friends sense the horror of death :

And sense the solving emptiness
That lies just under all we do,
And for a second get it whole,
So permanent and blank and true,
The fastened doors recede, poor soul,
The whisper at their own distress: “Ambulances” (CP, 132)

Death as an essential truth that sublimates everything into its embrace devouring all human efforts to conquer time and the desire to materialize his hopes and desires, dreams and expectations. But, Death as the supreme corroding agent, churns under its feet man’s manliness in whole.

Man grows more conscious of death in old age, and finds life to be dreary and drab. Larkin’s persona in the poem “Toads Revisited” dreads the approach of death who causes all emptiness, yet accepts:

Give me your arm, old toad,
Help me down the Cemetery Road.

“Toads Revisited” (CP, 147)

The dread of death is reflected in Larkin’s poems like “Ambulances”, “The old Fools”, “The Building”, “Aubade” etc.:

Till then I see what’s really always there
... yet the dread
Of dying, and being dead. “Aubade” (CP, 209)

Larkin is very much aware of life’s uncompensable fragility and ultimate nothingness. Time leads man’s life to the drabness of old age and ultimate boredom.

Conclusion

Philip Larkin, thus, throughout *The Whitsun Weddings*, presents the ubiquitous presence of absence and conveys a pervasive sense of failure. In his poetry we find a tension between opposing attitudes: sociability and singleness, work and idleness, hope and despair. But, what ultimately, after the completion of concealed dialogue between these polarities his poems result in, is a sense of disappointment, disillusionment and dissipation. His view of the world is neither tragic nor comic, but ironic, and often nihilistic. His poems convey neither a grand note of philosophical pessimism out of a speculative unhappiness nor a compensatory beam of optimism, but merely a feeling of boredom. "Life is first boredom, then fear", Larkin says in "Dockery and Son" (TWW 38)

The immanence of boredom in human experience remains as the object of ultimate perception in Larkin's poetry. Thus all human preoccupations, engagements and fantasies are presented as futile attempts to render the tyranny of boredom invisible. Those such attempts may occasionally succeed, but they inevitably fall in overcoming what in a certain sense constitutes them. Action is the most common way of escaping from boredom and hence life is measured according to the actions which activate it. For Larkin, however, all actions finally lead to a time-tired world-weariness in which the result of action appears to be vain and burdensome. Needless to say, for Larkin, from boredom the enterprises of life ensue, through boredom such precarious maneuvering continue, and into boredom they finally sink to disintegrate. Boredom is the groundless ground, the sub-terranean sub-stratum of being. ■

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Reflection of Socio-economic and Cultural Life: A Study of Tribal Folk Literature of North Odisha

Bimbadhar Behera

Odisha is one of the largest states of India consisting of 63 tribes out of which 13 are aboriginal. The tribal population as per 2001 census was 8145081 and it would be 92 lakhs by now. A sizeable portion more or less 22.13% of the population of Odisha constitutes the culture of the state since centuries. The tribes of Orissa though belong to three linguistic divisions such as Indo-Aryan speakers, Dravidian speakers, Austric speakers yet they have lots of socio-cultural similarities between them. They share certain common characteristics and by these they are distinguished from complex or advanced societies. (1)

In spite of different tribal groups living together in forests and mountain terrain they have undergone changes due to socio-cultural evolution equal condition not noticed among them. Some tribes more or less have kept their tradition and culture till now. Considering the general features of their eco-system, traditional economy, super natural beliefs and recent impact of modernization the tribes of Orissa can be classified into six types such as hunting. Collecting and gathering type, cattle herder type, simple artisan type, hill and shifting cultivation type, settled agriculture type, industrial urban worker type. (2)

It is not easy to search their root source of racial status due to multy hybridation and also culture contact since long long years. In course of time some tribes have lost their earlier languages, through which they formed stories, songs, music etc. may be search to regain some indications of their life style and world view. Those tribes have possessed languages till now it is easier to trace out the motto of their past and present attitude and life style reflected in folk literature. Impact of linguistic acculturation is an important phenomenon among tribal languages and it is a natural process by means of which their life style and world view stories undergone manifold changes handed over generation to generation.(3) The synthesis of culture of Odisha indicates a mixture of tribal, dravidians & Aryans. It is said that a Hence, geographically and sociologically Odisha is like a melting pot where various cultures and traditions have mingled and yet people of Odisha have withstood all these presence made their own culture and tradition continually flourishing through the ages”. (4) Mesor role was played by tribal for formation of the culture where their important

components of socio economic picture available along with their oral composition supplemented. So rightly it is said that “The social, cultural and religious life of Orissa has been considerably shaped and influenced by tribal traditions. XXXX or that the existence of a classical folk-tribal continuum in Orissa is today a generally accepted fact of sociological enquiry.” (5)

In the above back drop the present study titled as “Tribal folk literature of North Odisha relating agriculture and forest economy” may be driven forward by four aspects such as Tribal communities of North Odisha, folk literary resources, agriculture, forest economy. The aim and objective of the project is to reveal systematic picture of agriculture, forest economy and life style based oral creation of songs, stories and other related literary and art forms. The internal texture of which can be studied to draw out the essence of the folk resource reflected their society and their motive in detail. In this connection the area North Odisha is a vital tribal tract. Many populated and influential groups are there. The study is to be limited to major tribals of this region with availability of folk literatures. Generally we mean north Odisha area as the combination of three districts such as Keonjhar, Mayurbhanja and undivided Balasore and from the geographic point of view this area consists of mountain plateau and plain coastal regions having a geographical area of 25032 sq kilometers and according to 2001 census, the population of this area was 7143703. Now approximately the population may be exceeded to 83 lakhs out of which scheduled Tribal Population also approximately slight more than 25 lakhs. In North Odisha there are twenty two tribal communities having a sizeable population more or less settled down since centuries. This tribal tract is nourished by three big rivers such as Baitarani, Balanga and Subarnarekha along with the biodiversity of similipal, Gandhamardhan and Nilagiri covered by forests. The cultural flow of the area is a synthesis of tantric Buddhism, Jainism and tribal believes and tradition which gives special feature of it as compared to other parts of Odisha. (6)

The Buddhist tantrism in different ways have influenced the common people since hundreds and hundreds of years. The presence of Bathudi, Bhuyan, Bhumij, Gond, Ho, Juanga, Kharia, Kissan, Kolha, Lodha Mahali, Mankidia, Munda-lohar, Mundari, Oran, Pentia, Rajuar, Santal, Soura-savar, Sahara, Sounti enrich the cultural corridor of North Odisha.

Folk literature of tribal is a special and distinct feature not only from the anthropological but from socio-economic, grass root level traditional community political setup point of view in general and in this study their agricultural and forest economy is to be traced out from the oral literature. Folk or oral literature handed over generation to generation is a precious resource of the tribals which contains the evolution and development of their all kinds of features. Folk literature is indigenous and there is no particular creator, it is automatic over flow of their experiences, peace and pleasure, ups and down in a very simple, real languages they talk in everyday life, of course these folk creation might undergone some kind of changes in different stages of time and place depending upon their

migration & mobility. Folk literature known as folk lore was used by W.J. Thomas in 1846. Oral tradition is its identity. (7) Folk lore is the creation of common men of villages, in agricultural based joint family, illiterate or half literate, simple way of living, Eminent Odia critic Chakradhar Mohapatra considers folk lore as the verbal creation of common village people. (8) But in the case of tribal folks lore is a vital part of their day to day life, struggling for existence in the inaccessible closed mountains and forest tract, their experiences, believes, community entertainment etc. It is rightly said “Folk Lore is not something far way and long ago, but real and living among as, for here the past has something to say to the present and the bookless world to a world that likes to read about itself, its basic oral and democratic culture.”.(9)

In continuation of the study the last part of which agriculture and forest economy reflected in the folklores of tribal are the most vital point of their day to day life for existence. Considering the general features as earlier mentioned in the study Hill and shifting cultivation type and settled agriculture type and relating other aspects are to be dealt with in particular. In very earlier periods the tribal had been adopted the shifting cultivation for their livelihood. Shifting cultivation or Podu chasha is a pattern of cycle of activities which are selection of a patch of hill slope, cutting of trees bushes, burning of these, spreading of ashes in the area, worshipping their deities etc. for the “Taila” chasha shifting cultivation is not only an economic pursuit of tribal communities, but it all counts for their total way of life. Their social structure, economy, political organization and religion are all accountable to the practice of shifting cultivation. (10) This type of agricultural practice is not enough to fulfill their food requirement, so they depend on forest for further supplement by hunting, fishing, collecting minor forest products of tubers, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds etc besides bamboos and woods for making their huts and houses, Some of them who are nearer to Bazar or advance place, have exchanged or sale remaining things to earn something which in their forest economy. The other type of tribes who have descended to plain areas and engaged in settled agriculture as other non-tribal do, they are certainly better in socio-economic strata and more exposure to market economy along with other occupation like cow and goat rearing etc. The first type of tribal as mentioned above as hunting, shifting cultivation are in the stage of food collecting as hundreds and hundreds years back and second type of tribal having settled agriculture are in an advance stage of food producing, though in many fields they are in same condition. Their practices, day to day livelihood experiences, relaxation in the evening or special day have reflected in the oral stories and songs where we can find their age long traditions and changing behavior also and modified language.

In the above context some important tribes of North Odisha may be presented along with song and story based folklores (Literature). This kind of analysis is required not only for research scholars but also for planners to assist. Govt and other agencies for their overall development and presence of essential part of their traditions and positive sides of their culture.

JUANGA:

Juanga is an aboriginal tribe. They are considered a branch of Mundari group. Their first native place is Gonasika mountain terrain where river Baitarani starts and later they were spread to undivided Dhenkanal district. The community divided in the two sections such as hill Juangs and plane Juangs. The Juangs in Gonasika and its adjacent area are called at staniya and those who are spread to pallahara or other plane areas are called Bhagudiya' Whatever it may be but all still in aborigine condition as compared in other tribals considering from the economic, education, health & hygiene, exposure point of view. They are still dependent upon shifting cultivation and forest economy. Juanga Development Agency a micro project was operated since many years in Keonjhar district but the result is not encouraging. In mini compact of Juanga villages there are at the centre a dormitory house called 'Majanga'. It is the centre of the socio-cultural life. They believe in supernatural power and now they are in dilemma between tradition and change. In spite of all hurdles, they enjoy their community life through entertainment and art which are their part & parcel of life. Changu dance is their favorite of all. Different kinds of marriages are with them including "Ghincha" (forcefully marriages). There are six 'Pirha' in Keonjhar district of Juanga community and each have a Sardar to advise and control their grass root level socio-religious economic problems.

In the above indication some folklores of them relating to agriculture and forest dependant may be given as examples.

Juangs have a separate spoken language belonging to Central Mundari family. (11) Their folklores especially songs are formed in their language in some cases few words of local language Odia may be present.

"Rangagama ringigima kalara lo Raimalli
Badunge Badunge megam keju badu Kandaa
Gatang bade lanka lo Raimulli
Ki Selan Daare iti Segam muan di khandi
Gantara Kai Lo Raimulli
Basanja Batanja Megam Keja Raimulli".

The meaning of the song is connected with forest economy, food gathering indications such as "Oh maiden, there is ahead old man & women watching crabs, your said to go, but it is too distance, that girl was Kept two muhan" (made by Khai Sugar cane juice) to eat in the path. In the way 'Kai Pimpudi' red tree ant are there on the trees but it is difficult to gather there as they may bite in the eye and nose.

Red tree ants and winged ants are the two kinds of insects as precious food menu of all types of tribal collected from forests as traditional hunting pleasure. Hence crab also is mentioned which to catch is a traditional fishing pleasure they get in everyday life in the forest and fountain.

HO, SANTAL, KOLHA, MUNDA :

Ho, Santal etc. are more advanced in many fields as compared to Kolha, Munda etc. These groups of tribals are the inhabitants of Mayurbhanja and Keonjhar districts. All these tribes belong to Mundari race and present in different names in different places with minor difference in their socio-cultural life due to settlement in varied places and circumstances. "The forest clad, undulated and hilly regions of the districts of Mayurbhanja, Keonjhar and Balasore are inhabited by many Mundari speaking tribes of which the most important and pre-dominating community is the Santal".(13) described by researchers with regards their conglomeration of North Odisha. The Santals speak "Santali" language which belongs to Mundari group of Austric Family. Their original home land is still to be investigated but they claim describing a legend which tells Ahiripiriri as their birth place and Chaichampa as their fort located somewhere in Bihar. The HOs are linked with Kol, Kolha etc. However, many scholars are of the opinion that the Ho, Kol, Kolha etc are off-shoots of the same origin. (14) The groups are developed agriculturist and who have less lands depend upon forest economy. Settled agriculture and other agro-business of course adopted In spite of their economic and social development better than other tribes they are still interacted to some characteristics of aborigine tribes like Akhinparidhi (mass hunting) and also they are obedient to their traditional community forces.

The settlements as village and isolated hamlets are now unified and improved with comparison to other tribes and their earlier arbitrary settlements in the terrain areas. Centrifugal force of their community feeling is still strong and they practice many funeral rites called Damodar Jatra is a very colourful tradition in different river side where they now dwell. Most of the functions of these communities including mass dances and music in different occasion represent their rich culture and folk creations.

In the above content we can draw their folk literary activities from where their socio-economic evolution may be analyzed. These may help other to understand better and propose to take necessary projects and programmes for their further upliftment. Hence we only put forth their folk creation relating to their agriculture and forest economy here.

"Saharaya Parab" is an agriculture based festival of Santals and it is observed during harvesting of main crop. i.e. Paddy. The observation day of course varies from place to place. Dance, music are the inseparable part of their life pattern. In this context it is worthy to mention that the folklores prevailed earlier were modified with the changing time and society and it is difficult to get their original form in the younger generation exposed to different media and they also do not care for the very traditional songs. The following songs are the examples of "Saharaya Parab".

"Cheddham chekdya Raninem
Gej Gurij ade
Cheddham chevaya Ranirem
Likhan Gaj han ade
Hatilekan Saharaya

Nayag bal anda
Onalagid Tehenja
Gej Gunjade
Onalagid Tehenja
Likhan Gal han ade.
Sing chand nayag bela hasuren
Gaika kadak lebada aderating.”

This means why Rani you clean home and door by cow dung and bleaching “Jhoti” (Powder of rice) so beautiful, oh Saharaya has come like elephant for whom these cleaning and bleaching of Jhoti and the sun goes for setting evening may come and ox and buffalo may disfigure by their feet to the ‘Jhoti’.

In some Santal folklores indication of agro-related lively hood and emotions on the family affairs were reflected such as.

“Mathaye aie harai ana pera gamba aa aa
Babui harai ana gatike banu
Majhi Koya dhinki sadhe
Lu-lutu setek petek
Inan join holu-lutu”.

Which means daughter and son were eligible for marriage but there was no proposal amidst which only sound of ‘Dhenki” husking pedal- block with lever arrangement) was listened by all, a routine family agro based activities for lively hood.

Mass hunting of Santals called Sendra whose experiences were reflected in oral poems such as.

“Jhalma bururema Silak atinjan Kan
Adam jharna salak jabeten
Harinja tuntiya be nuinja Tunjia
Salmans tunjakeda Salmaya bhindrajen
Sarmanj Jalawakeya papachha tapaa ane
Sarad chalwaya ana dadanja kalmre
Salad gagepeha darbar chatani
Dadanja Sara Sengale atu baherer.”

Which means in the thick forest prey animals like deer, Rusa Aquinas were grazing and Bisons were in groups to come and drink water near the Adam fountain. The hunter thought there were many preys that he would kill. In the strike of arrow one Bison fell down in the jhalma forest and another arrow was hit his brother who was died there also. (17)

Though the folk lore of Santal is a traditional hunting story of food gathering stage from the forest which also related to forest economy, often they misaimed to human being also with them was an episode of sad killing.

Spring comes, the forest looks more beautiful with new leafs on the trees, and the tribal also feel the change while roaming there for their livelihood to collect forest products. Here is a folk lore of Munda Community which depicts their feelings even if in their struggle for existence.

“Sar jome bame kuilim
Hadgu benaya kuili
Sude Sangerne kuilim
Hosore lene
Ili manda nangen ge kuilim
Hosare lene
Ili Mandi Chabajana kuilim
Senon Janaya kuili
Simkat tudujan kuilim chhad lene”.

In the above song they refren Cuckoo as ode form that it descends down on the branches of Sal trees blossom with new leafs and as they take rice and “Handia”, (Country liquor) they feel the Cuckoo also comes for it and as they fetch forest hen from the new bushes for their feast in the season. They say that the Cuckoo also come to join with them in their merry making in the forest. (19)

There is another HO song which relates their forest economy of ‘Mahul fula’ and Sal trees in the spring.

Hatukuti kudi madukam
Ribiken Ribikena
Besauli bale Sarajam
Lese Ken lese Kena
Kulim Kachim nelaiche
Kudimadukam ribiken ribikena
Gateem kachim nelaneche
Bale Sarajam lese ken leseken”.

This means they collect “Mahul Fula” in this season for edible and other purposes like liquor etc. in the dense forest of Sal trees and they also enjoy the beauty of spring through the livelihood activities. (20)

Munda, Ho, Santal, Bhuian etc. family of Mundari, have a rich folk culture since centuries, not only in songs but in oral stories handed our generation to generation with modified form. In this context some folk stories may be supplemented here relating to agriculture and forest economy.

First plough of ‘Ho’ – Singhbonga had created luku lukumi in course of time they got older and faced many difficulties in agriculture, there in the old age luku started to make plough for which he brought a thick trunk of a tree from the forest to make all the parts the plough. He tried his best and focused his keen interest without looking day to day affairs. So

Lukami has sent mesquito to disturb the Luku otherwise he would not come to the home but the mesquito also failed to break the mediation of making plough after which lukumi sent a tiger to disturb him. The growl sound of the tiger of course broke the mediation of the old man but fled away by forest dogs connected the wood piece thrown by the Luku to the tiger assuming it was a forest dog. After some days the Luku had come to the house with a plough and shown to Lukumi but the old woman was not considered it proper due to its thickness and fold Luku to throw it out. At last Luku thrown it away due to which it was broken to two halves. Then Lukumi tried herself to make it and as it was two parts which helped them to make a proper plough with its other parts by Lukumi like shaft joining plough with yoke etc and thrown it but it was not broken due to its mechanical improvement of the lukumi, So She was successful to make it. But Luku though surprised to see if but was angry upon the lukumi from that day women were barred to touch the plough but this plough was utilized by the farmers for agricultural purposes.

In this story one of the vital part of the agricultural process was invented gradually whose evolution was described in the Ho folk story. (21)

Like other tribes the Ho, Kolha, Santal, i.e. forest and shifting cultivation was there, now settled agricultural activities they of course adopted, their other life style like dance, music and art reflecting the nature and forest. “The Santals paint their walls purely for purpose of adoring it and there is no association with ritual worship..... The designs they incorporate are a variety of flowers, creepers, trees, animals and social events”. It is difficult to draw a clear line of demarcation between their life and art. (23)

SOUNTI:

Sounti's main concentration is in the districts of Keonjhar and Mayurbhanja though in a small number their presence can be located in some other district of Odisha. The total population of Sountis according to 1981 census was 67,871 now which may be approximately exceeds one lakh seven thousand. This tribe as per different beliefs and theories are a intermixture of Bhuyan, Bathudi, Bhumij of the State, Sounti means collection of different tribes and formed a separate section of touchable community by royal patronage and its root village is Mushakhori of Keonjhar district. In 16th Cen. Their racial affinity is with Mundari family and they have no language of original because of intermixture and they talk in local odia, Aryan language group with a slight pronunciation difference which also different in place to place. They are more aryanised as compared to other local tribes. In spite of all these they have some songs to be analyzed with respect of forest and agriculture.

- (1) “Kutunita kutuni je katha Baunsara kutuni
Barara bhaunike dakidioje ghinchidebi nutuni
Dalaje dala je katha baunsara dalla.
Bara pilata basiachhije muhanta kari dela
x x x x x x
Dhanata dhan khetudi kadha dhana
Barapillata Barapillata Hua chhana Chhana”.

(2) Asiburenani bhalu bhalu
 Anara khulichhu Alu
 X x x
 Dhanagachha Sana Sana
 Geetanahin jadi thekata ana
 Geeta neiliba rura. (24)

These folklores are items of agricultural reflection and earlier they were practiced with community dance in different occasion singing the songs which contains house hold utensils made from bamboos and woods by which they extract rice from paddy etc. And they refer different kinds of early harvest paddy named and locally as Khetudi Kandha and digging forest potatoes. While they work in the paddy field during rainy season song competition between boys and girls, agricultural workers they sing song uttering the paddy trees waving in the breeze as ‘Sana Sana’ etc. They have also different songs and experienced stories of the forests handed over generation to generation described in the winter harvesting period at the paddy after harvesting and collection for processing in a place “Khala” encircling before fire by the old people.

BATHUDI:

Bathudis main concentration is in pachprirh (Karanjia) and Kaptipada Sub divisions of Mayurbhanja district, Champua and Sadar Subdivisions of Keonjhar district and also Nilgiri Sub-Division of Balasore district. According to 2001 census the population of Bathudi is 198269 which now may exceed two lakh thirty thousand and their settlement is in plain forest area with settled agriculture with pasteurization. They are still now depending upon to some extent to the forest economy though they are of the greatly Hinduised tribes of Odisha primarily on settled cultivation, pasteurization and agricultural wage earning. They are simple and life loving peoples with recreation of different kinds. If we go to the early period of hundreds year back there was dormitory system in their villages at least maidens of their communities sleeping together in a place. Their socio-community centripetal force is stronger. Earlier as I know from my own experience from Bathudi villages like Janghira of Harichandanpur Block in Keonjhar district that their social life was very cordial and co-operative among them selves. They used to prepare a big cake for which every family contributed rice. The process of making the cake (Pitha) under the digging tunnel of 3 to 4 fts long where fire pieces of woods there. And also thus were participated in mass hunting (Akhin Pardhi) etc. Here we can give some example of their songs which reflect agricultural activities with forest economy and some isolated items of there.

“Juhar tate Badam Sabu tohari dan
 Shita, Khara, Barsha Bilabadi Beusha
 Chashanagi basmima hua uchhanna
 Juhar toto Badam
 Hala nangala dhariba Nakhmi Maa Chahinen
 Barashra dukha jiba dhana faline

Juhar toto Badam
 Ashinara dukha kashana Shimilpal Je Bana
 Mahu, Tunga, Alu, Kayan Je Pitalu
 Khuli, Tala, Khaikari Katiba dina
 Juhar tato Badam.
 x x x x x x x x
 Dalipuja kariaba pain chaita je ase pakhei
 Nua fula dei Badam ku Dhyai
 Changu nachi anandare Katiba dina
 Juhar tato Badam.(25)

They pray to their ‘Badam’ deities and say everything is gifted by him. They realize by cultivation they may be happy through ploughing the field. They want to collect forest products for their livelihood like honey, forest potato, manna of bamboo, tamarind, “Pitalu” (a local name of one kind of forest potato). The meaning of the song indicates their livelihood though settled agriculture and collection of forest products.

Another song also flushed early paddy and the cake made from it along with collection of “Mahulfula” from the forest which is used to prepare a cake with paddy dusk. Their simple livelihood arts food menu relating to cultivation and forest are contained in the song as follow.

“Asudhana Pachila, Balhudi Changu basila
 Dhangulinani nachila
 Asudhanare pitha khaine nagaimitha
 Aine Dhangili nachi beta
 Mahula gachhre mahu bandhi chhein
 Kundapitha sange khuibeta ?
 Aire tanguli nachik beta “ (26)

BHUYAN:

Bhuyan tribe is a influential community in ex-feudatory states of North Odisha. There are two types of Bhuyans, i.e. Pauri Bhuyans and Bhuyans. Pauri Bhuyans are placed in primitive group of tribes. They belong to Mundari group of tribes and lost their language and now they speak local languages where they settled mainly Indo Aryan language group. Still at least Pauri Bhuyans depend upon shifting cultivation as S.C Roy said, a shifting cultivation is the main occupation of the pauri and the food thus obtained has to be supplemented by hunting wild animals and birds and collecting edible roots and fruits in their native jungles and occupational fishing in their native hill streams”. (28)

In the above context few examples of their folk lore and folk tale may be given with connection to agriculture and forestry to signify their livelihood based on these factors which are intermingled in their dance, music and oral creations.

“Barapatra dhala dhala
Ai guchhamule dekhili Bhalu Nanire
Pitalu Bainga alu
Khulu thiba Jebe
Nieit milu, Nanilo
Purba Purusha kalu”.

They collect different kinds of roots and tubers like Pitalu, Bainga alu (one kind of forest long yami) for which they expect it may be available always to meet their food menu.

“Ashina gundiaghasha guji nangalare
Karani chasha
Bhuda upasia masa”.

Besides their main crops they go for other cereals and grass type cultivation which reflects in the above song.

There is also a forest hunting song of Bhuyans as follow,

“Bindhanabo amare lepadhunaki
Sambar akhi dekhi, Kana dekhi
Pet dekhi, akhi dekhi,
Lepa dhunki”.

This feature is a preparation hunting for *Rusa acquina* (Sambara) by arrow and bow in the forest of course they acknowledged the grace of their ancestors for the available of water, fruits and tubers, creepers etc. for them. Before going for Taila Chasha (high filed agriculture). They worship their Badam thakura alongwith Diha (field) for which they collect rice from every family and prepared a common cake (Pitha) to offered it in the Sala as Bhoga. It also signifies their community consciousness and obligation of unity. Nuakhia is a festive occasion and thus collect it Nangakhia separate for black gram, bean etc. (29)

These days, though tribal people of North Odisha have under gone changes in different spheres due to developmental programmes and other education factors, still they observe their traditional festive, dance and music etc. Their exposure to the market economy slowly increases but still they depend in some places on forest economy. Thus these events relating to their lives and livelihood are reflected in their songs and folk tales with a modified essence and language. ■

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Politics of Populism in Different States of India

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The lexicon of Political Science is replete with a number of Political Ideologies. What are, after all, Political ideologies? Political Ideology is a systematic pattern of political deliberation. All Political ideologies can be classified under two watertight compartments, one is democracy and the other is totalitarianism. Democracy, liberalism, Gandhian thoughts, individualism and utilitarianism are considered democratic political ideologies which put emphasis on individual's well-being. Totalitarian political ideologies are Nazism, Fascism, Anarchism, Syndicalism, Marxism, Dictatorship, Authoritarianism etc. All these ideologies put emphasis on the state, government and authority. Now the question is what does the term 'Populism' mean?

Populism is a political tradition especially, prevalent in Latin America through various European and North American Movements. Nazism, McCarthyism have been delineated as populists. The term 'populist' implies appealing to the mass of people. It claims to support the interest of the ordinary people. Hence it is very much an alluring phenomenon.

The essence of populism is that it mobilizes masses of the weaker sections of the society and the existing institutions of the state. Populism is survived in European and Latin American countries through movements heading through a spiral or zigway. It has crossed its track in democratic countries. Populism has framed its own extra-territoriality especially in 20th and 21st century. During these periods it has gained a commendable momentum. In democratic countries of the world populism is not only prevalent rather it has become deep-rooted. In this context a case study may be made on the basis of Indian political spectrum.

Historical Background of the Politics of Populism in India : It is a fact that there is a strong correlation between rise of income inequality and a rise of re-distributional measures initiated by the government. Hence, in order to understand the rise of populist measures, we have to understand the extent of inequality in India. In a case study Piketty and Chancel 2017 observed that over the 1950-80 period, the bottom 50% group captured 28% of total

growth and income of this group grew faster than the average, while the top 0.1% income decreased. Over the 1980-2015 period, the situation was reversed; the top 0.1% earners captured a higher share of total growth than the bottom 50%, while the top 1% received a higher share of total growth than the middle. These findings suggest that much can be done to promote more inclusive growth in India. In another study made by Oxfam International (2019), India's top 10% holds 77.4% of the total wealth, while the top 1% holds 51.53% of the wealth. The bottom 60% of the population holds only 4.8% of the national wealth. The Gini coefficient of wealth in 2017 was at 0.83 which put India in the club of highest inequality countries. There are many such findings, but the fact that there is demand for Populism because of this appealing form of inequality associated with a sense of insecurity and loss of resources at the bottom needs to be emphasized while looking at the history of populism in India.

Much of India's economic policies after independence were shaped by a passive revolution of accommodative politics. The congress party in power under the leadership of Nehru faced the twin challenges of maintaining its support base and enacting its reformist agenda of capitalist transformation and redistribution. After Nehru, various movements challenged the inequalities created in the system as the benefits accrued mostly to urban groups and the rural elite. Her daughter Indira Gandhi adopted a strategy of agrarian populism to woo the poor class in her much touted slogan 'Garibi Hatao'. Her redistributive policies included launching an expansion of the public sector, nationalization of banks, abolition of Privy Purse, and the introduction of MRTP act for big firms and so on. By the late seventies, rising inflation, oil price hike, difficulties in implementing pro-poor policies led a change in policies towards private sector growth. Her successor, Rajiv Gandhi further eased state control of private sector, introduced corporate tax cuts and reduced some import barriers. He also maintained public investments in agriculture and infrastructure which increased the growth rate of the economy. But inability to raise resources through taxation while maintaining spending led to a fiscal and balanced payment crisis at the end of the 1980's. This finally led to IMF style of structural reform in the early 1990's. The reform produced modest liberalization of the economy, greater internal deregulation, continued growth in the service sector but stagnation in agriculture and unstable growth in industry. The growth was therefore highly unequal and uneven, with a lack of broad based consumption-led growth and job creation. In 2004 the BJP with its 'India shining Campaign' focused more on the urban and affluent middle class Indians to boost consumer spending. But this was successfully challenged by the congress party which promised economic growth for all, particularly for the poor, the vulnerable and the backward with freedom from hunger and unemployment. In adopting the policy of inclusive growth, the party wanted to reach people through its common minimum programme. However, lack of proper implementation of the programmes like MGNREGS and others rather the government rattled with 2G Scam and the anti corruption movement by Anna Hazare lowered the image of the party before the electorate. Coupled with pervasive corruption, higher inflation, policy paralysis at the highest decision making unit gave vent to voter's frustration and Narendra Modi was elected as the Prime Minister of India.

Economic Repercussion of Politics of Populism: Populists use expansionary macroeconomic policies for distributive purposes without regard to the existence of fiscal and foreign exchange constraints. In the beginning people are largely dissatisfied with the economic performance. This is strongly influenced by an ever increasing inequality in income and wealth over the years of economic performance of the incumbent party in power. The highly uneven income distribution presents a serious political and economic problem, providing the appeal for a radically different economic programme thereby rejecting the conservative paradigm of fiscal rectitude. The median voter model, the public choice literature provides one theoretical justification and correlation between the rise in inequality and rise in government expenditure, with voters forcing the government for a greater role in redistribution. When median voter has less income than the mean, the decisive median voter will apply income tax for redistribution (Metzler & Richards, 1981). This is corroborated by many empirical studies, such as demand for social security services in the USA and other western countries. Another approach was adopted by Becker (1983, 85) using the pressure group politics in redistribution and was tested by others for different countries. It is found that the size of social security increases with the proportion of elderly people, higher growth rate and greater inequality in the distribution of income. From the perspective of public choice theory, it then appears that rising growth and inequality create fertile ground for populist policies to be implemented. All political parties with a intention to stay in power, ultimately succumb to the pressure of demand by the voters and the interest groups. As Dornbusch and Edwards (1991) noted: "Populist Programme emphasize three elements namely reactivation, redistribution of income and restructuring of the economy. The common thread here is reactivation with redistribution". Typical policy measures include, decline in taxes, rise in subsidies, large real-wage increases, an over-valued currency which in the end leads to severe resource constraints with high fiscal deficit and serious balance of payment problem at external front. The budget deficit which deteriorate violently because of a steep decline in tax collections and increasing subsidy costs, forces the government to stabilize by cutting developmental expenditure and by a real depreciation of the currency. Here the nation runs into a crisis and approaches before the IMF for an orthodox stabilization policy.

Rise of Populism in Contemporary India:

Of all that notwithstanding, India is the largest democratic country in the world. In democracy, voters or electors are given the nomenclature 'Voter Bhagwan' which means voter is God. Again a question comes to mind, when did God incarnate? In fact, in democracy since popular sovereignty prevails, the ultimate power of the state lies with the people. When Abraham Lincoln exhorts, democracy is a 'government of the people by the people and for the people'; that everything lies with the populace. They exert their power during popular elections. In the multi-party system of India, the party which secures majority support of the voters forms the government and rules over the people for a specific period i.e. five or six years. This is how there is hectic parlays among the political parties to secure political equation in national or state politics. A national political party is one when it secures

at least six percent of the valid votes polled in any four or more states in a general election. If it wins at least four Lok Sabha seats from any state or states then it will be declared as a national political party. The Election Commission of India recognises all political parties either as national or regional party. At present the Congress, BJP, CPM, CPI, BSP, RJD are recognised as national political parties. On the other hand a political party gets recognised as a state party or regional party if it secures at least six percent of the valid votes polled in a state either Lok Sabha or Assembly election of the state concerned and in addition to that it must have secured at least two seats in the state legislative assembly. There exist a large number of regional parties. It is a fact that, in Indian political system such a syndrome is quite natural that gives rise to Social Pluralism. A regional party is one which enjoys its popularity in one or two states and is committed to secure the interests of these states vis-a-vis the Union. The DMK, AIADMK, JMM, BJD, TMC, Vishal Hariyana Party, Kerala Congress etc are some regional parties of India which come to power with their respective populist slogans.

Populist Policies in Different States of India:

Party politics based on populism is the key dimension of Indian Politics. Political parties are the major players involved in the struggle for power in each state. The parties which are in minority, act as opposition parties and start performing the important functions of criticizing the policies and decisions of the ruling party. After each election, the political parties begin preparation for next election which is to be held after four or five years. In this context political parties act as key players in organizing and operating the system of democratic governance of the people of India.

Political parties are extra constitutional structures in so far as those do not find any mention in the Indian Constitution. Despite this, political parties continuously and effectively get involved themselves in the entire operation of the political system. Hence, Political parties play a vital role in the political process of interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, political socialization, law making and its implementation. Whatsoever, contesting elections and holding various offices are the most important functions of the political parties along with their populist agenda.

All citizens of a democratic country like India act as voters and candidates for seeking public offices and active political actors or leaders. They act as active partners of the democratic political process. Participation in the political system, particularly in the election system is the first and foremost duty of every citizen of a democratic state. This makes it important for all the people, more particularly the students of politics to know the meaning, importance and modes of election and voting. Election is the process by which the voters or electors select their representatives by casting their votes freely in favour of candidates of their own choice. It is a system of selection of the representatives of the people through casting of votes by the voters.

The elections, electoral systems, voters and the electorate constitute the primary factor of Indian parliamentary democracy. When there is a question of majority support to

be gained by a party or coalition group is the *sine qua non*; the concept of election can never be underestimated, overlooked, neglected at any rate. India is a democratic country; a federal one with parliamentary system of governance. Here the Election Mahakumbha is organized to conduct Lok Sabha, State Assemblies and local bodies election directly. Political parties leave no stone unturned to form the government. The parties use various methods to win the heart of the voters; formulate public opinion by framing populist slogans. They resort to the principle of allurements in order to get support of the majority people. Keeping this in view, the politics of populism occupies pivotal place to procure votes of the populace. The history of electoral politics in India depicts a very lucrative picture in this regard. Hence, let there be a glimpse over it.

Almost all political parties adopt and follow populist policies and raise populist slogans to protect their vote banks. The party in power uses its power to formulate policies to allure the people. Some of the populist policies are 'Rojgar Yojanas' (Employment Schemes), 'waiving of farm loans', 'Free power and drinking water supply to the people', Enhancement of reservation, Minority appeasement by providing subsidies and reservation in government jobs, Pulses and flour at rate of Rs.2/- per K.G. are key populist slogans to procure votes. Some examples are cited below:

1. In 1971 Lok Sabha midterm election, Indira Gandhi's Congress party secured overwhelming majority in Lok Sabha through "Garibi Hatao" slogan.
2. In 1995 the Telugu Desham Party in A.P. assembly election secured thumping majority by promising to sell rice @ Rs. 2/- per K.G. 'Bhook Hatao' is still prevalent as a populist slogan not only in Andhra Pradesh or Telangana but also all over the country by implementing Food Security Act in 2013 by U.P.A. Government.
3. Exploitation of caste sentiment, religion, linguistic and regional interest is unscrupulously practised by almost all political parties for securing votes.
4. The Shiromani Akali Dal and BJP alliance after coming to power in Punjab in 1997 decided to provide free electricity and water to farmers. They also promised to provide pulses and flour at the rate of Rs. 20/- and Rs.4/- per K.G. respectively to the families of Green Card Holders in 2007.
5. In Delhi the Aam Admi Party which comes to power in 2015 waived water and electricity charges considerably. Recently, the party has given free travel facilities to the female folk in DTC buses and has promised to extend the same for Metro Railway keeping in view the forthcoming Delhi Assembly Election.
6. In Odisha various yojanas like Rice @ Re. 1/- per kg, KALIA YOJANA to provide financial incentives to small and marginal farmers, Pitha Yojana to allure self-help groups, Opening of Ahar Kendras in urban and semi-urban areas are all meant to allure the weaker sections of the people and to get their votes in support of the party.

Conclusion:

Populist policies framed for the interest of society and for the interest of the nation are appropriate to some extent. To provide subsidies to farmers on fertilizer, pesticides and other agricultural equipments will definitely help them to grow. But to provide them free electricity and waving of their farm loan will definitely tell upon the state exchequer. Waving of farm loan is in no way helpful to small and marginal farmers or share croppers as they do not borrow loans from the state co-operative banks or any other nationalized banks. They normally borrow loans from the village Mahajans (Debtors). The real beneficiaries of waving of farm loans are the Landlords and big farmers. Moreover the policy which comes under Food Security Act, i.e, rice at the rate of Re.1/- per kg is not properly implemented. As a result, this makes the young people of the rural area shy away from cultivation and makes them idle. They don't prefer agricultural work any longer. They feed themselves with the subsidised rice supplied by the government and do not bother to work anymore. This has created acute shortage of agricultural labour in the rural areas to undertake farm work. If this trend continues, our agrarian economy will definitely be ruined. There will be a shortage of food grains. In this scenario, food security becomes irrelevant. Secondly, the hurry with which Kalia Yojana has been implemented on the eve of last Assembly Election is a total mess. Actual beneficiaries have been omitted and unworthy ones got the benefit. In view of the above, politics of populism should not be mingled with allurements policy rather it should be based on sound vision, i.e, to promote social justice, employability and self-reliance. So far as my knowledge is concerned, populist policies are not income generating. Income generating schemes should be launched to provide work to the rural unemployed youths. Last but not the least, populist measures are short-lived and they can never be a panacea to cure the long term problem of our country. ■

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Indian Democracy: A Case Study in Political Violence and Peace Building

Saroj Kumar Sarkar

India is the largest liberal democratic country in the world. For more than seventy four years we have been witnessing the conduct of successful elections, peaceful changes of government at the Centre and in the States, people exercising freedom of expression, movement and religion. India has also been developing and transforming economically and socially. At the same time we, quite often, listen complains about prevalent inequalities, injustice or non-fulfillment of expectations of certain sections of the society. Indian democracy has been suffering so many problems as like as political violence, intolerance, poverty, illiteracy, casteism, communalism and religious fundamentalism, unemployment, corruption, criminalisation of politics. At present time , Indian democracy is passing through various crises and difficulties. Political violence and political murders are rapidly increasing at present times in India. It is dangerous threat to Indian democracy.

Keywords: Democracy, casteism, criminalization, Political murder, competitive politics.

India is the largest democratic country in the world. It is a democratic country which is mentioned in our Constitution . What is Democracy ? Meaning of Democracy long back, former President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln said, “Democracy is a government of the people, for the people, and by the people.”¹ Today , democracy is defined as a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic free elections. Democracy has been defined in many ways. Bryce believes that “Democracy really means nothing more or less than the rule of the whole people, expressing their Sovereign will by their votes”.² In the present age, democracy is just not limited to political democracy. It means more than a mere form of government. In its comprehensive form, democracy means, or ought to mean, (i) a form of government, (ii) a type of state, (iii) a pattern of social system, (iv) a design of economic order, and (v) a way of life and culture.³

Political Violence: Political violence is the deliberate use of power and force to achieve political goals.(WHO,2002). Political violence is characterized by both physical and psychological acts aimed at injuring or intimidating populations .⁴ Violence has been

with us for long, but use of violence for political end is dangerous for the existence of any system. In India we have been witnessing various forms of violence. Communal violence, caste violence and political violence in general have attained serious proportion. Communal riots are engineered by vested interests for political, religious and economic reasons. Caste violence in various shapes has been increasing. Despite agricultural development, abolition of zamindari system, and developments like green revolution and white revolution, there are still powerful feudal elements in the society. A serious conflict of interests has emerged between higher and middle castes and this has led to aggressive competition for political power which many a time leads to violence.

Another aspect of caste violence is the backlash of the higher castes against the growing awareness and assertion of their rights by the *Dalits* and lower castes, particularly the Scheduled Castes and the backward castes. During elections, violence is being adopted either to mobilize voters or to prevent them from exercising their right to vote. Moreover, violence has been associated with demands for separate States, reorganization of States or adjustment of State boundaries. Violence has also been used quite frequently during industrial strikes, farmers' movements, and students' agitation.

Violence is not only a negation of moral values but is opposed to the democratic spirit. After 2nd May 2021, political violence had scattered in different parts of West Bengal. It was reported that 15000 cases of post-poll violence in West Bengal, 7000 women molested, 29 people were killed in political violence.⁵ The Report said that due to the post - poll violence, many people have left their homes in West Bengal and had taken shelter in Assam, Jharkhand and Odisha. NHRC has given a report on post-poll violence to high court. On 20th August, the Calcutta High Court ordered CBI probe into West Bengal post-poll violence cases of murder and rape, while accepting the recommendations of the NHRC panel.⁶

The Culture of violence in India is not new. The number of victims of Political violence in the Gram Panchayet election and right up General election and Domestic conflicts like Intra- state, Inter-state or communal and sectarian and caste conflicts is much higher than the number of deaths due to terrorist attacks.

Between 1970 -1990, there were always sporadic incidents of violence either during the Pre-poll and Post-Poll period in the border states of India especially in the Northeast states, Viz, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Kashmir valley.

Until 1990, Political violence was limited to targeting Government property or particular officials which eventually forced the government to negotiate. However, the general public was not affected at a scale that is witnessed today. The assassination of a particular leader of a politically motivated community during the election period began with 1985 General election in Bihar when 63 people, including four candidates were killed and 200 people were seriously injured. Between 1990 -2004 period as reported, almost 644 people lost their lives in various elections in Bihar. Political power was seized in Bihar by the "Bahubalis" who resorted to violence and gave birth of private caste Militias whose activities

were a precursor to political violence in India. Bihar has witnessed more caste wars in the name of political violence. However, that phenomenon is on the wane. ⁷

Political violence is not new to West Bengal and Kerala. Incidentally, both have a history of being ruled by the Left for long period of time. While the Left ruled West Bengal for 34 years till 2011, so many incidents occurred in Left Front ruling period such as, Marichjhapi Massacre(1979) ,Sainbari Killings (17th March 1970), Anandamargi Group murder,17 monks and nuns were killed by beating , Bantala rape and murder, Nanoor massacre, 11 landless labourers were killed by CPI(M) activists in Suchpur near Naroor. Nandigram Police Firing (2007)- 14 men killed, Maoists killed 100 CPM Cadres in the Junglemahal region in the period of 2008-2011. Former Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharyay said that 28000 political murders were committed in the period of 1977-1996, in reply to an Assembly question at Legislative Assembly . Every month 125 men ,daily 4 men were killed in political violence in West Bengal at that period. ⁸ A political murder is organised to make political gain or achieve a political objective or to terrorise a group of persons who hold views contrary to the political party which commits it. CPI(M) activists used to murder as an instrument of political aggression in Marichjhapi inland of Sundrabans.

Nandigram Police Firing (2007)- 14 men killed, Maoists killed 100 CPM Cadres in the Junglemahal region in the period of 2008-2011. 12 people were killed in political violence during the Panchayat polls in West Bengal in 2018. After the poll, more 13 people were killed due to political clashes in West Bengal . Highest number of political murders had taken place in West Bengal during the Loksabha election,2019 as per the table given below.

Table 1 : Political Assassination in India in 2019

1	West Bengal	12
2	Bihar	6
3	Jharkhand	6
4	Andhra Pradesh	5
5	Karnataka	4
6	Kerala	4
7	Punjab	4
8	Arunachal Pradesh	3
9	Maharashtra	3
10	Tamil Nadu	3
11	Uttar Pradesh	3
12	Madhya Pradesh	2
13	Telangana	2
14	Gujrat	1
15	Haryana	1

16	Jammu and Kashmir	1
17	Uttarakhand	1
	Total	61

Source :Business Standard, 20th December 2020(NCRB)

Violence took place during the Kolkata Municipal corporation elections, by local-made bombs hurled outside polling stations. 72 nos. accused of violence were arrested. BJP, CPI-M, Congress party leaders had gone to election commission office for appealing to cancel the poll and demanded re-polling. They proclaimed that polling was not fair, rigging, booth capturing, threatening voters were occurred on polling day, and people could not exercise their voting right in proper way.

The 2020-2021 Indian farmers' protest was a protest against three farm acts that were passed by Modi government in September 2020. While protesting against farm laws of India, the farmers of UP, Panjap, Haryana and Rajasthan. 750 farmers died in October and November 2021.¹⁰ On 19 November 2021 the union government decided to repeal the bills.

Communal violence

On June 18 2019, in Jharkhand a mob assaulted Tabrez Ansari, on suspicion of theft. He was tied to a pole and lynched while the crowd surrounding him, giving the slogan 'Jai Shri Ram'. He did not do so and the beatings were continued until police reached there. The police rescued his wounded and bruised body, but took him to the police station instead of Hospital. Unfortunately, Ansari, a 27 years old young man was forced to leave this world being brutally victimized by communal violence.¹¹ Communal violence is related with religious fundamentalism and communalism. It is opposed to secularism and even humanism. One of the manifestations of communalism is communal riots. In recent past also, communalism has proved to be a great threat to our social and political life on several occasions. In February, 2020 more than 50 people, mostly Muslims, were killed amid communal and protest-related violence in Delhi that followed weeks of demonstrations against discriminatory changes to the country's citizenship law.¹²

Attacks against Muslims and others in connection with the alleged slaughter or mistreatment of cows, which are held to be sacred by Hindus, continued in 2020. A nonprofit group, India Spend, documented 45 killings by cow vigilants between 2012 and 2018. More than 120 cases of cow-related violence, including lynching, have been reported since Modi came to power, and the BJP has faced criticism for failing to mount an adequate response.¹³ (Freedom House Report- 2021).

Growth of Hindu-Nationalism is spreading torture against Muslim Community. Indian secular democracy is under threat in the ruling period of BJP government. BJP and their associate parties are inspiring people for communal violence, riot.¹⁴ Islamic political parties like Indian Muslim league, All India Muslim league, MIM (Majlis-E- Ittehadul Muslimeen) are also creating communal sentiment among Muslim communities which creates

political violence in our country. BJP is the political branch of the RSS. The RSS declared cultural Nationalism which mean 'one nation, one state and one culture. BJP and the like minded organisations like Vishaw Hindu Parishad (VHP) , Brajrang Dal and Shiv Sena want to spread Hindu nationalism resulting in politicization of Hinduism, and national secularisation. The resultant, political violence is increasing at present times throughout India which creates problem in democratic atmosphere and damages national integrity and peace among the people.

India is a multi-party state. There are many national parties, state level parties, regional parties in India. These are created on the basis of caste, language, region and religion. Different regional parties are involved in competitive vote bank politics. They want to capture political power. In this way they are involved in conflict and create violence.

Political violence is correlated with Political criminalization. In recent years, criminalization of politics in India has become a debatable issue. There have been allegations that there are some elements in politics that do not have faith on democratic values and practices. They indulge in violence and take refuge in other unhealthy, undemocratic methods to win elections. Undoubtedly, this is not a healthy trend in politics and there is an urgent need to apply serious check on such tendencies. Criminalization of politics is the very negation of democratic values and has no place in a democratic set up. Democracy can be strengthened by adopting and promoting democratic values and shunning criminal activities. Recently, the judiciary, while taking a serious note of criminal tendencies in politics, has showed signs of adopting remedial measures to apply a serious check on such elements. The Central government and many State governments have been taking steps to address this issue effectively. This is a matter of great satisfaction and a healthy sign for the successful functioning of democracy in our country. We, as awakened citizens and as voters of the largest democracy in the world, can also contribute by discouraging such persons who have a criminal background, from contesting elections. We find some unfair means like booth capturing, vote ragging, threatening the voter by the party muscleman or *goonda* in election period. The general voters are failed to vote as per their own choice. It is a very bad culture in our country which is increasing day by day.

Unemployment is also related with political violence. Educated unemployed men join with different political parties with a hope to earn. They take it as a source of income, so we find group conflict in a party which creates violence among them. Party members and cadres want to grip the power which moved the competition and conflict.

Casualties: The victims in these clashes are mostly innocent people like students, teachers, labourers, farmers, agricultural workers and small shopkeepers. Most affected people in West Bengal pre and post poll violence are from *Dalit* community¹⁵.

Political violence is implicated in a range of mental health outcomes, including depression and anxiety. It is a great threat to the democratic values and peaceful situation in

the country. Political leaders are instigating the common people to cause violence or quarrel among them. They used it as a means of political goals. Common people are mostly victimized but the leaders remain safe from the violence. The political activists remained only activists and followed the orders issued by their party leaders. In a way, political violence is becoming a determining factor in elections.

Conclusion

How to solve the problems of violence in Indian democracy? There are urgent need of administrative reforms to solve the problems, the following reforms are recommended in this regard

- (i) to make administration accountable and citizen friendly
- (ii) to build its capacity for quality governance
- (iii) to orient administration for promoting peoples' participation, decentralization and devolution of powers
- (iv) to make administrative decision-making process transparent
- (v) to improve the performance and integrity of the public services
- (vi) to reinforce ethics in administration and
- (vii) to inculcate readiness for e-governance.
- (viii) Instilling a sense of Honesty in public and ruler
- (ix) to enhance tolerance among the party leaders and workers
- (x) to spread consciousness among people on democratic values and ethics
- (xi) to spread the spirit of brotherhood among people

The Government should take bold steps against political violence, maintain the law and order, spread the education and provide employment opportunity to educated unemployed young men as they join different political parties with a hope to earn. In order to remove the castism, communalism, fundamentalism which lead to violence and chaos in the society, the Government as well as civil society and judiciary should play a pivotal role to control this unexpected situation and restore peaceful democratic values in the society in all respect. ■

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Dr. Namita Laxmi Jagaddeb, Mahima Degree College, Jharsuguda, Odisha

Dr. R C Sheila Royappa, Seetalakshmi Achi College for Women, Pallathur, Tamil Nadu

Dr. Dhrubajyoti Das, Cotton University, Guwahati, Assam

Dr. Amrendra Sharma (retd), C M College, Darbhanga, Bihar

Dr. Sayeed Abubakar, Sirajganj Govt. College, Bangladesh

Dr. Amar Singh, Govt. P G College, Chhindwara, M P

Dr. Radhashyam Dey, Yogoda Satsang Mahavidyalaya, Ranchi, Jharkhand

Prof. K. Sripad Bhat, Goa University, Goa

Dr. Binu K. Devasy, Govt. Law College, Thrissur, Kerala

Dr. Syed Wajahat Hussain, Govt. Degree College, Poonch, J & K

Dr. Anuradha Chaudhuri, Lanka Mahavidyalaya, Dist.- Nagaon, Assam

Dr. M.S. Wankhede, Dhanwate National College, Nagpur, Maharashtra

Dr. Rajendra Padhi, B.B. College, Chandikhole, Dist.- Jajpur, Odisha

Dr. Prakash Bhadury, Sri Sri University, Cuttack, Odisha

Prof. Neeraj Kumar, Magadha University, Bodh Gaya, Bihar

Prof. Pinaki Roy, Raiganj University, Uttar Dinajpur, W. B.



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Peer-reviewed Journals are at par with UGC Approved Journals

In a bid to make it easier for university and college teachers to earn points to enhance their research score for recruitment and promotion, the University Grants Commission has decided to treat all peer-reviewed journals at par with its own list of approved journals.

The recently-notified UGC minimum qualifications regulations make the point amply clear. The methodology for calculating academic/research score offers points for "research papers in peer reviewed or UGC listed journals". For each paper in languages, humanities, arts, social sciences, library, education, physical education, commerce, management and other related disciplines, teacher will earn 10 points.

The regulations say: "Assessment must be based on evidence produced by the teacher such as copy of publications..." This step has been taken to make recruitment and career growth easier for college and university teachers.