

# ROCK PERBBLES

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opportunity to consider unsolicited research  
papers. ■

### Editor speaks.....

March signifies a reigniting of the  
hearts and consciousness. This month we feel  
the underlying kicks of Spring from deep in  
the womb of Mother Earth. We are  
rejuvenating... our spirit yearns for action  
and we are attuning ourselves to a forward  
moving-energy. This is a powerful time for  
new ideas to take root and begin flowering.  
Our ancestors knew this and revered the  
cycles accordingly. This energy carries  
creativity. We can work with this energy to  
give birth to new ideas and use this energy  
for finding creative solutions! So, the  
energies of this month can help us take action  
on our thoughts and aspirations. It is a time  
of advancement and forward movement  
propelling us into the future. We cannot  
control our future. We all are creating our  
outer reality and influencing each other's  
reality. What we can control is how we  
respond and whether we have the faith to be  
flexible and navigate our way forward from  
the present moment. It is true that we have  
the power in our hearts and mind to create  
our reality. Trusting what we see, sense and  
feel in the present, assists us to navigate  
ourselves towards the unknown future and  
it informs us with the truth of what may lie  
ahead. This is a good time to use our will-  
power and courage to act upon our intentions  
now. It is the clarion call to all to be a true  
warrior of spirit. A true warrior of spirit does  
not demand the outside to change for him,  
nor does he expect others to create the ideal  
conditions for him. He cultivates in himself  
the qualities he wishes to see in his world.

It is hoped that the March issue of  
*Rock Pebbles* will satiate the readers thirst  
for knowledge and ignite their spirit of  
creativity. I am reminded of a beautiful line  
"A poet may create but a critic does create  
because it is the business of the critic".  
Hence, neither can we undermine the  
importance of the litterateur nor can we  
ignore the critics. We have to respect both  
and maintain a balance as it is the trend. It is  
time to give equal justice to the creative  
writer and the critic. Let us be the worshipers  
of "Satyam Shivam Sundaram"; Eternal  
Truth, Consciousness and Beauty.

-Editor

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# Gandhi, Ambedkar and Martin Luther King Junior: Three Pilgrims of Social Justice

**Anand Mahanand**

It is interesting to note that though the twentieth century witnessed the rise of two prominent dictators, Hitler and Mussolini, who ruthlessly suppressed their targeted people; it also gave rise to many committed leaders who fought selflessly for the emancipation of different oppressed communities. M.K. Gandhi, Dr B.R. Ambedkar and Martin Luther King Jr are good examples of these saviours. Gandhiji fought for the freedom of the Indian people and also for the emancipation of the dalits in India. Ambedkar struggled for the upliftment of the untouchables of India and Martin Luther King Jr fought for the rights of the Negroes in the U.S.A. Gandhiji's guiding force was the Bhagavad Gita, Ambedkar drew inspiration from Buddhism whereas Martin Luther King Jr was inspired by Christianity. Martin Luther King however was deeply inspired by Gandhiji. Ambedkar on the other hand was a critic of Gandhiji's approach to the dalits. The reason for Ambedkar's difference with Gandhiji's ideals was due to their convictions. Both Gandhiji and Ambedkar had love and concerns for the dalits but each of them had different approaches for their freedom. Gandhi believed in the goodness of hearts of human beings. He thought the oppression of the dalits would end when people listened to their conscience whereas Ambedkar was not sure of that but was convinced that laws made in favour of the oppressed would safeguard them. Gandhiji, Ambedkar and Martin Luther King all followed the path of non-violence in their respective struggles. For the title, I have taken the phrase from King's essay "Pilgrimage to Non-violence" and called these three crusaders pilgrims of non-violence. One finds a lot of similarities as well as differences among these three. In this paper, I would like to study the select writings and speeches of these leaders and explore some of the common grounds of leadership in them. I would also like to study the difference in their approach. This will hopefully help in understanding the life, ideas and activities of these three great leaders.

**Keywords:** Gandhiji, Ambedkar, Martin Luther King Junior, emancipation, oppression, freedom

## Introduction

The issues of untouchability and racial discrimination are two prominent problems confronted in the twentieth century. Though these problems had been there since ancient times, it was mainly in the twentieth century that the social reformers fought against them vehemently. Whereas the untouchability was practised in India, racial discrimination was the norm in the U.S. This paper looks at these two issues at length and studies the approaches of the three leaders in dealing with them.

## Untouchability

The untouchables are in the fifth rank of the caste hierarchy in India. They are outside the four fold Hindu religious order. They are called *panchamas*. They are the underprivileged people whose population will be around 16 crore constituting 20% of Indian population. Their habitats are situated at the outskirts of villages or towns, cut off from others. They are the lowest in the social order. Describing an untouchable, Sangharakshita states:

Untouchable is one who cannot be touched because his touch automatically pollutes the one who touches him or when he touches. Such touch is not limited to direct physical contact. Pollution can be transmitted indirectly, through the medium of an article which touchable and untouchable are in direct physical contact as when both stand on different parts of the same carpet, as well as through anything previously touched by an untouchable. In particular, pollution is transmitted through food and drink. (29)

Even the touch of shadow of the untouchable person can pollute a touchable person. Earlier, the untouchables had to tie a broom to his back and a pot below his neck and work on streets so that their foot prints won't be touched by any Savarnas and they won't spit on the streets but in the pot they hang on to their necks. They were also engaged in unclean occupations such as removal and disposal of dead animals. It was god given dharma or religious duties assigned to them. It was hereditary and the castes were in the following order.

The Brahmins  
Kshatriyas  
Vaishyas  
The shudras  
The untouchables (Atisudras)

Because it was graded inequality, the greatest inequalities will be those between the castes at the top and castes at the bottom of the system.

As a result of this system, the untouchables suffer from social, religious, economic, and educational disabilities. Sangharakshita describes four kinds of

deficiencies suffered by the untouchables. They include Social Deficiencies, Religious Deficiencies, Economic and Political Deficiencies and Educational Disabilities

### **Social Deficiencies**

The untouchables were made to live on the outskirts of the villages or towns. They served the savarnas but were not supposed to touch them. They were denied to temple entries, public tanks, use of metals and wearing decent clothes. It was taken into granted that their presence used to pollute the savarnas. These social restrictions lead them to lead a sub-human life.

### **Religious Deficiencies**

The untouchables are made to suffer from many religious restrictions. As a result of this, they were not permitted to enter Hindu temples. They were also prohibited from studying Hindu scriptures, prevented from listening to the Vedas. Defiance of all these led to severe punishment. In ancient days if an untouchable attempted to read the scriptures, his tongue would be cut, if an untouchable attempted to hear the Vedas, his ears would be filled with lac or molten tin. But they were allowed to participate in religious activities in a limited way like beating drums and cleaning plates and so on.

### **Economic and Political Deficiencies**

Economic and Political restrictions imposed on them restricted them to certain profession. They were not able to sell their products or buy goods for their consumption in market places.

**Educational Disabilities:** Educational restrictions imposed on them prevented from formally acquiring education. They were not allowed to enter schools, to learn certain subjects like Sanskrit and so on. As a result, they lived in misery and ignorance.

### **Mahatma Gandhi's role in the eradication of untouchability**

Many saints and social reformers attempted and contributed to the eradication of this age old social system. The Bhakti poets are the obvious examples. We also have social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swamy Vivekananda, Dayanada Saraswati, Jotiba Phule, Periar and others. Mahatma Gandhi took a few important steps for the eradication of untouchability.

Earlier the untouchables were called by various derogative caste names like, Pan, Domb, Bhangi, Hadi and so on. To counter these derogative names, Gandhi called them Harijan or "the children of God" though this term was opposed by Dr B.R Ambedkar for its religious connotations. Ambedkar preferred the term dalit for them.

Gandhi founded the Harijan Sevak Sangh in 1932 and worked for the abolition of untouchability and also for the welfare of the untouchables. It created awareness among people. The members worked among people to create awareness and give up the practice of untouchability. His attitude towards untouchability can be studied from the following words: “what I am aiming at is not every Hindu touching an untouchable, but every touchable Hindu driving untouchability from his heart, going through a complete change of heart” ( qtd. in Kapur 24).

Gandhi considered Hinduism as a tolerant religion and urged people to be tolerant to all human beings including the untouchables. He was critical of caste discrimination. He said caste must go if Hinduism is to survive” (16). He also organized meetings and urged people to work for the dalits. Leaders like AV Thakkar and others supported the movement. “Between 1921 and 1946 Gandhi visited Odisha eight times” (Nath 565). Gandhi said, swaraj would be meaningless as long as untouchability is not abolished. He also declared that “the caste system is a hindrance, not a sin. But untouchability is a sin, a great crime, and if Hinduism does not destroy this serpent while there is time, it will be drowned by it.” Gandhiji believed that God resides in every human and he preached “Nar Narayan seva.” He also said, if one understands the pain of the depressed he is a true vaishnava or worshipper of God. We are familiar with his favourite bhajan: vaishnava jana to tene kahiye jo pida paraye janere.” This means A person can be called a “Vaishnava” if he is able to feel the pains of others. Gandhi was in favour of caste system as he thought it provided stability but was against untouchability. Gandhi wanted every citizen to drive away untouchability from their hearts. He said, “what I am aiming at is not every Hindu touching an untouchable, but every touchable Hindu driving untouchability from his heart.”

Gandhiji believed in the conscience of the people. He wanted everyone to recognize their deep faith in their goodness and translate that in dealing with others including the dalits. He thought they would understand and apply their conscience. Although Gandhi believed in traditional texts of India, like the Vedas, smrutis, Puranas including the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, he insisted on applying reasons in reading and interpreting them. He said, “Nothing can be accepted as the word of God which cannot be tested by reason or be capable of being spontaneously experienced” (qtd. In Omvedt 5). Gandhi’s teachings and ideals had a greater impact on people, both in rural and urban areas. They were reflected in the policies and practices of the government and non-government organizations. All these efforts contributed in reducing untouchability to some extent.

### **Ambedkar**

Dr B.R. Ambedkar had a different background than that of Gandhiji. Ambedkar was born in an untouchable Mahar family. He experienced humility and

caste discrimination since his school days. Once he was asked by his teacher to come to the blackboard and solve a problem. The students had kept their tiffin boxes behind the black board. They thought Ambedkar's touch would pollute their food, that was there in the boxes behind the blackboard. So they rushed to the blackboard and took their tiffin boxes once Ambedkar was getting up to go near the black board.

Another incident was that he and his brothers went from Satara to meet his father in Koregaon. Ambedkar had informed his father to come to the railway station and pick them up but the message somehow did not reach his father. After getting down at the railway station, not finding his father there, they wanted to hire a bullock cart and travel on it. When the station master discovered their caste, he refused to help them. No cart man was ready to take them in their carts because they were mahars. Thus, Ambedkar was ill-treated for his caste many times. On many occasions Ambedkar had to go for hours without water as he was not allowed to drink from common pots or tanks. In spite of deprivation and difficult circumstances he could establish himself as a robust and rare intellectual, who hardly had parallel to argue in intellectual term. He is an icon and example for the children of the dalits. But there is hardly any place for him in text books which dalit children could have emulated.

With the support of the Maharaja of Baroda Ambedkar entered Elphentine College, Bombay and passed his undergraduate degree. Then with the support of the same Maharaja of Baroda, he went to Columbia University for his higher studies. After completing his studies in the U.S., he joined London School of Economics in the U.K. While in the U.K. he could complete his Bar-at-Law. Ambedkar came back to India and joined the Baroda state to work under the Maharaja. Though he was in a high profile job, there too he was ill-treated by the office staff. Papers were thrown to him by the peon. His colleagues would not touch him. He was not allowed to drink water kept for the employees. He was removed from the Parsee inn because of his caste in spite of his education and position. He had experienced the discrimination himself and observed people being discriminated. He was determined to take steps to eradicate untouchability also work for their dignity and self-independence though he had professional and personal problems. After three years he went back to U.K to complete his studies. He taught in Sydenham College in Bombay and proved himself to be an intelligent, articulate and committed teacher with social commitment. He organized conferences and sensitized people on caste exploitation. He started his social work in March 1924. His concerns and dream for the depressed classes can be seen from his following words:

My heart breaks to see the pitiable sight of your faces and to hear your voices.  
You have been groaning from time immemorial and yet you are not ashamed

to hug your helplessness as an inevitability. Why did you not perish in the prenatal stage instead? Why do you worsen and sadden the picture of the sorrows, poverty, slavery and burdens of the world with your deplorable and detestable miserable life? You had better die and relieve the world if you cannot rise to a new life and if you cannot rejuvenate yourselves. As a matter of fact, it is your birthright to get food, shelter and clothing in this land in equal proportion with every individual high or low. If you believe in a respectable life, you must believe in self-help, which is the best help. (qtd. in Keer 60).

The above speech of Ambedkar shows his sincere concern for the pitiable plight of his people. He also awakened them from their slumber and urged them to assert their place in the society as human beings. He wanted to see them as self-reliant and self-dependent people.

Ambedkar referred Indian untouchables as “slaves of slaves”, termed Hinduism as a form of imperialism and advocated goals of nationalists were meaningless unless they committed themselves to liberate the ‘depressed’ from the century old prejudices and in human behaviour. He led the Depressed class movement and also founded a magazine called *Mook Nayak*. He also worked for the promotion of education among the Depressed classes by opening hostels and colleges. For instance, he founded the Siddharth College for Arts and Sciences in Bombay which was named after Siddhartha Gotamma. He made efforts to promote the spread of culture among the Depressed classes by opening libraries, social centres and classes and study circles. One of the convictions he had was that the depressed classes should adopt Buddhism to get rid of caste. He was interested in Buddhism since his school days. He read books on Buddhism since his high school days. He was given a book on the Buddha by a teacher when he passed out his matriculation. He came to Buddha through books. While he was busy in the struggle for socio-economic development, he kept reading books on Buddhism. He visited many Buddhist shrines. He was influenced by Buddhist concepts of *Prajna*, *Karuna* and *samata* and finally decided to embrace Buddhism. He saw it as a liberating religion. After converting to Buddhism he said, “I started the movement of renouncing the Hindu religion in 1935 and since then I have been continuing struggle. This conversion has given me enormous satisfaction.” (qtd. in Ahir 11). Ambedkar said so because he associated caste system with Hinduism. He thought as Gail Omdevt points out, “Hinduism gave rise to inequality whereas Buddhism was opposed to caste from the beginning. In many ways, the Buddhist texts show a leading role for the untouchables of the time, known as the Chandalas” (13). Along with him many of his followers got converted. He also wrote a book called *The Buddha and His Dhamma* which is very popular. Ambedkar’s approaches and ideals were helpful in providing the dalits some amount of dignity and social justice. The social goal of Buddhism was “Bahujana

sukhaya bahunjana hitaya” which inspired Ambedkar very much. The policy of reservation vehemently supported and introduced by Ambedkar has helped them to be self-reliant and safeguard their rights and dignity. Another significant contribution made by Dr Ambedkar is his valuable research and publications on the dalits; their history, economy, culture and religion. Ambedkar took it on to himself that he should do rigorous research and write about his people because he thought there was no serious study on them. He points out in his book *The untouchables: Who Were they and why they Became Untouchables* the reasons for undertaking the task himself. He states:

I must pursue the task I have undertaken. For the origin of the these classes is a subject which still waits investigation....The orthodox Hindu does not think that there is anything wrong in the observance of untouchability. To him it is a normal and natural thing. As such it neither calls for expiation nor explanation. The new modern Hindu realizes the wrong. But he is ashamed to discuss it in public for fear of letting the foreigner know that the Hindu Civilization can be guilty of such a vicious and infamous system of social code as evidenced by untouchability.” (Ambedkar 10)

Hence he took up the task and wrote on issues related to caste and untouchability after rigorous research and investigation. These show his scholarship and conviction.

### **Martin Luther King jr.**

The African Americans or Negroes were discriminated by the white Americans. They were not allowed to enter schools. They were segregated in buses and trains. During the colonial period most of the Negroes were enslaved, oppressed and discriminated. Even after the abolition of the slavery, the African Americans were discriminated based on their colour. They were subject to physical torture, lynching, segregation and other forms of oppression and discrimination. There were separate laws for the Negroes known as the Black Codes and Jim Crow laws. There were white only schools, white only swimming pools and white only hospitals. The blacks were tortured, discriminated and segregated by the whites. Martin Luther king was a crusader against these forms of discrimination. Born in 1929 Martin Luther King was a civil rights activist, who worked among the African Americans for their rights and dignity. He was educated at Grozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pennsylvania. He received his Ph.D degree in theology at Boston University. King was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence. He founded a society called Gandhi Society for human Rights and “in 1962 King and the Gandhi Society produced a document that called on the President to follow in the footsteps of

Ahraham Lincoln and issue an executive order to deliver a blow for civil rights as a kind of Second Emancipation reclamation” (25). Describing his philosophy he stated; “I believe in a militant, non violent approach in which individual stands up against an unjust system, using sit-ins, legal action, boycotts votes and everything else- except violence and hate.” (Ezekiel V). He also states that “From my background I gained my regulating Christian ideas... from Gandhi I learned my operational techniques” (Ezekiel V). King’s speeches reveal his belief in Christian philosophy and the principles of Gandhiji. He visited India in 1959 and was deeply moved by the memories shared by people.

King not only used Christian theology as an approach for his struggle but used it reminding the white people the basic tenets of Christianity and awakened them to be alive to the principles. He said, “As chief moral generation of the community the church must implore man to be good and well-intended and must extol the virtues of kindheartedness and conscientiousness” (King 82). He further said, “but if we call ourselves Christians, we had better avoid intellectual and moral blindness. Throughout the *New Testament* we are reminded of the need for enlightenment. We are commanded to love God not only with our hearts and souls but also with our minds.”(82). He used the teachings of the *Bible* to evoke a sense of righteousness among the white Christians. His fight was based moral and righteousness. He rightly said, “I am not interested in power for power’s sake but I am interested in power that is moral, that is right and that is good.” (26).

## Conclusion

It can be said that, all three leaders were concerned about the plights of the oppressed people. Mahatma Gandhi was deeply disturbed to see the inhuman treatment mitigated to the dalits. He urged people to end this malaise as soon as possible. Ambedkar too was deeply moved to see the plight of the dalits and made efforts to safeguard their interest. While Gandhi followed the path of the *Bhagbad Gita* and principles of the Sanatana dharma, Ambedkar adopted Buddhist principles of *pajna*, *karuna* and *samata* for the abolition of untouchability. Martin Luther king Junior on the other hand viewed Jesus as his hero and followed the principles of love and brotherhood in the struggle for civil rights of the African American people. All of them show love and compassion towards humanity. It was not that for the urge of becoming leaders they spearheaded these struggles but they truly loved the oppressed masses. They also believed that human beings have the innate nature of love and compassion and that can be evoked and awakened. All of them used religious principles to awaken people’s conscience and they were successful in achieving their goals and the rest is left for us to carry forward. ■

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# Literary Voyage of Damodaram Sanjivayya: A Logical Study

**D. Murali Manohar**

Among the politicians, especially the Chief Ministers of Indian states in the post-independent era, Damodaram Sanjivayya shines as an outstanding luminary in the contemporary literary arena. This paper deals with the literary aspects of Damodaram Sanjivayya such as his oratory skills, reciting poems, devotional songs, plays based on the Indian epics and his patriotism about the Telugu language.

**Keywords:** oration, plays, dalit, discrimination

## **Introduction:**

In the history of India when it comes to Chief Ministers of India of the states, among the Dalits, Damodaram Sanjivayya stands out and remains in history. It was not out of reservation but out of his own talent he had become the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh between 1961 and 1962. However, it was not a cakewalk as the Chief Minister in the caste-ridden society where the upper castes did not tolerate a Harijan being the Chief Minister. He had to resign after 27 months as the Chief Minister who was loyal to the Congress party. After his resignation, he was elevated to Minister in the Central cabinet in the portfolio of Labour, Industry etc. apart from being the President of the All India Congress Committee. In the Congress party whatever the high command says the leaders have to follow, resignation or appointment. Even today that is the practice of the Congress party. One of the reasons why Congress party recognized Sanjivayya was that he was a good orator. In politics, the first quality of any leader is to have oratory skills which Sanjivayya had. Apart from the oration he had exposure to Telugu language and had shown interest in Telugu literature.

## **Scope of Study:**

So far there have been very few books and articles on Sanjivayya dealing with his political and personal life. And there has been no study on his literary skill of oration, creative writing, enactment of plays, recitation of poems etc.

## **Hypothesis:**

No one has done on the literary aspect of Sanjivayya in an exclusive form with which Sanjivayya became one of the well-known persons in the country.

## **Review of Literature:**

Potukuchi Sambasiva Rao, very close friend of Damodaram Sanjivayya, wrote a biography on Damodaram Sanjivayya in 1987 and published it in Telugu language entitled *Sanjivayya Dashanam*. It was published by Sanjivayya Memorial Trust established in Secunderabad. This book was an exhaustive kind of book on Sanjivayya, drawing sources from newspapers especially the *Andhra Patrika*, *The Indian Express*, the *Deccan Chronicle* and All India Radio.

In school, Sanjivayya stood first in his Telugu subject. Racharla Raghavacharyulu was Sanjivayya's Telugu Teacher at Kurnool Municipal High School. Raghavacharyulu was unaware that Sanjivayya was a Harijan. One day during an Essay Writing in Telugu while the teacher walked towards Sanjivayya and he moved aside from the teacher. Raghavacharyulu asked Sanjivayya why he was moving away from him. To the utter surprise Sanjivayya replied that, he was moving away for he was Harijan. Raghavacharyulu pointed out that in Public Schools, such discrimination was not shown and he was not shown any discrimination from then onwards. Whenever, Sanjivayya had any doubts, he went to him for seeking clarification. (Quoted in Racharla Raghavacharyulu's article in 1976 on the occasion of his Death Anniversary)

The school Headmaster Kuppu Swamu Iyyer liked Sanjivayya very much. Another Social Science teacher named Sessaiah announced Sanjivayya's standing first in History in front of all students loudly. Further Sessaiah announced Sanjivayya gets first rank in Telugu and History subjects. Sanjivayya also reads poems nicely. So many poems he can recite. (Ramalingam 1991: 12)

After Sambasiva Rao, Ramalingam the best work that one could find is Venkata Rajam's *Damodaram Sanjivayya and His Times* (2001) that has a chapter entitled Sanjivayya's "Flair for Art and Culture" with many important details of Sanjivayya's literary credentials. This can be dealt with in the main argument.

## **Argument**

Damodaram Sanjivayya was born to Mala Dasari family. Very few members know that he was a Mala Dasari. He is assumed to be known just as a Mala. But he is not. Some people have categorized him so. One such man is Paka Raja Rao (2010) who says that these Mala Dasaris are Hindus. They are also called Mala Brahmins. They follow Hindu tradition as per Vedas and other smritis. Since the Brahmins do not perform death or birth rituals for these Mala and Madiga caste people, Mala Dasari have been chosen for performing such rituals. They are called Mala Brahmins.

They conduct Karma Kandas, priesthood, and spread the Hindu religion especially Vaishnavism. They pertain to the Mala and Madigas and they are educated. At present they have extended to other castes too. After independence, these Mala Dasaris have got the position in society of the first generation Dasaris. Some of the Dasaris had the opportunity to be the Ministers in the government in undivided Madras state. The beneficiaries were Sri Vemula Kurmaiah, Sri. B. S. N. Murthy, Sri Damodaram Sanjivayya and Sri Damodaram Muni Swami.

Sanjivayya was born to his parents named Muneiah and Sunkulamma on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1921 and died on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1972. Sanjivayya was the last son and his eldest brother named Chinnaiah looked after him and was responsible for his education and his endeavours. Sanjivayya belonged to a Musician family which falls under Mala Dasari caste, one of the Scheduled castes listed under 59 sub-castes. His brother Chinnaiah also had proficiency in music. Chinnaiah used to sing songs extracted from the *Bhagavatham* and *Mahabharata*. Sanjivayya heard them when his brother was singing and reciting and developed interest in music, literature right from his childhood. The seed of interest in literature was sown in him. He was an excellent orator who mesmerized people in public speeches using the anecdotes, examples and sources from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. It would be appropriate to also quote two Satakas that Sanjivayya penned himself on Ganapathi Prarthana (Prayer on Lord Ganesha):

#### Ganapathi Prarthana

Kanikarambu chupivega  
Ganapathi mamu gaavara  
Karivadana tharivadana  
Ninnu madilo kadu madamuga talachedara  
“Ghanamuga tholi mrokkulella  
Gnapathi nee karpincheda  
Karunakara nanu brovara  
Karamu ninnu koniyaadaga”  
Sarvaloka janulu ninnu  
Sarvadinamulande gaka  
Sarva panulu modalidutari  
Sarve purraa saagimpumu  
“garvamu nannu jerakunda  
Nirvagnamuga maa pani  
Parama purusaa nera verchumu (Quoted in Rao 1987: 9)

In the prayer Sanjevayya asks Lord Ganesha to shower blessings on him for worshipping him not from his heart but from his bosom. All the first prayers will be offered with salutation. I bow to you for the blessings.

Everyone worships you everyday not only on auspicious days but also for other normal days. Finally Sanjeivayya asks for not to develop any ego in him and enable him to bless with uninterrupted work with fulfillment.

The other poem that Sanjivayya wrote was Sarada Prarthana (Prayer on Goddess Saraswati) as follows:

### Sarada Prarthana

Sarada Vedula  
Sarva kalanidhi  
Vereti paalintuo  
Bharathi nirambu ninnu  
Naa manamuna talicheda  
    Karuna naa painajallave  
    Oh vani kambukandi  
    Thajijanahindumukhi  
    Ambujaakshi nannadarimpu  
Modambuthodanee poja jetu  
Entati vedi nayinaa  
Suntaina dayaleda  
Pantama naa meeda  
    Oh naluva rani  
    Santasmunavakku nandu cherave  
    Kantu janakuni pedda kodala  
    Teliyagade needu mahima  
    Vedantulaina kedara gowla sakhi! (quoted in Rao 1987: 10)

Sanjivayya composes the prayer on Goddess Saraswati addressing her as a universal goddess whom may be worshipped through soul whose universal cultural tempo may be heard all over the Bharata.

Further, he asks Goddess Saraswati to shower kindness, and addresses as *vani*, who is eloquent in words, *ambujhakshi*, whose eyes are like lotus, asks her blessings for the worship he makes every day leaving the adamancy at him.

The proof for this was that he seems to have written three works /plays such as “Sashirekha Parinayam”, “Gayopakhyanam”, “Bhismuni Jananam” and “Krishna leelu”. Unfortunately so far there is no trace of those written works in Telugu. I am still searching for them.

Apart from Sambasiva Rao and Ramalingam, Venkata Rajam has done full research on Damodaram Sanjivayya for ten years. The outcome of his Ph.D is the book entitled *Damodaram Sanjivayya and His Times* (2001). Once a newspaper correspondent asked Sanjeevayya “Where did you get such good acquaintances with

literature and how did your language become so sweet?” He humbly replied, “it was because of the sweet water of Tungabhadra and the broad heart of our Racharla Raghavacharyulu (his teacher at Municipal High School, Kurnool) (cited in Rajam 2001). Sanjeevayya was also good at grasping and retaining the language. He was fluent both in Telugu and English, speaking off and on the stage. Rajam also says that from the source of Ramalingam that Sanjivayya was groomed during his college days by great poet Puttaparthi Narayanacharyulu.

Quoting the oratory skills of Sanjivayya, Rajam says,

his maiden speech he delivered at the Constituent Assembly won the laurels and encomiums even from a distinguished and talented speaker like Alladi Krishna Swamy. Even Rajaji was good admirer of his oratorical talents. Rajaji used to say in the assembly: Sanjivayya will now give replies to the question which you have risen. Even to listen to him in English you have to stop your criticism. (2001: 278-279)

Talking about the patronizing poets, Rajam says:

Sanjivayya always extended his patronage to poets. It was during his stint as Minister in Madras, Boyi Bheemanna dedicated his two works *Rasodayam* and *Madhubala* to Sanjivayya. It was on the insistence of Sanjivayya, Boyi Bheemanna was appointed as Chief Translator to the government of Andhra State. (2001: 279)

Arudra the well known poet of Telugu wrote a poem on Sanjeevayya and read out in Sanjivayya Memorial Lecture on 23-24 November 1974 under the auspices of Telugu Sahiti, Delhi:

The train you would wish to take  
Is forever a life time too late  
And bored with the wait you board  
An old train that comes your way  
The weight of your ideals that you drag  
Behind you is far in excess of what  
The rules permit, and I am afraid  
You'll have to leave your laden heart  
In the brake-van of your dreams  
There is no room for all that you've brought  
For you can't take it with you, and before  
You're hardly in it the train  
Has moved away  
This train will not take you for sure  
The place you would wish to reach

So why not blame Gods  
And stay right where you are. (2001: 288)

In the above poem the poet is referring to “the train” is the train of politics that Sanjeevayya caught hold off. The “wish” that he had, was a clean and non-corrupt way.

In 2003 K. Murali Krishna writing about the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh in his compilation touched upon Damodaram Sanjivayya’s political credentials as well as literary spur in him. Krishna says that Sanjivayya won the hearts of people with his kind nature.

Damera Venkata Surya Rao in his book *Telugu Keerthi Ketanalu: 125 Mandi Telugu Pramukulu* (2013) refers to Damodaram Sanjivayya in his article “Toli Dalita Mukyamantri’ Samskara Sampannudu: Sri Damodaram Sanjeevayya” says that, Sanjeevayya comes from the family where they are acquainted with music knowledge who are called “Mala Dasarlu”. Sanjivayya’s brother Chinnaiah used to sing melodiously from the *Bharatam* and *Bhagavatam*. Sanjivayya also acquired the same culture from his brother. (p. 488) Rao further says that, Sanjivayya among the literary genres used to like poetry verse more than any other genre. Being educated and civilized from the Dalit community, Sanjivayya patronized music and literature not just as an individual but as a Chief Minister. As a student Sanjivayya wrote a play named “Bhisma Jananam”. In Kurnool district a Hari Dasu (an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu) called Rangappa used to sing in the form of “Burra Katha” (an oral story telling). Sanjivayya’s speeches had a flavour of literary elements and aspects were encompassed. During his term as Chief Minister, Sanjivayya conducted All India Telugu Writers conference. He was invited as the President of this conference when he was the Union Minister for Labour. (p. 491)

After the book, let us move on to the weekly in the Telugu language where Damodarm Sanjivayya has been highlighted with his interest in Music, literature and culture. In the same editorial Sanjivayya has been referred to as a great orator. Those who are close to Sanjivayya remember and interpret that Sanjivayya was fond of culture and literature. Sanjivayya’s speech in the political circles was mixed with the fondness for literature and it would appear that the speech was encompassed with music. (*Jagruiti* 2) The speeches should have been recorded both in print and electronic media but unfortunately during his days they were not used in large scale.

Apart from that, Sanjivayya was responsible for bringing out the Telugu-Telugu dictionary composed by Sri Chalamarla Rangacharulu, Professor of Telugu, Osmania University in 1960, with his genuine support. Rangacharlyulu also refers to the All India Telugu Writers Conference in 1960 as “na bhuto, na bhashyat”. (*Jagruiti* p.2)

In his Biography Sri Avija Venkateswara Reddy mentions about Sanjivayya as follows.

Toli Dalita Mukyamantri Damodaram sanjivayya gari swagramam kurnoolku aanukuni unna pedda padu gramam. Veeriki sahityamante kadu preeti. Marii mukyanga padyam ante praanam. Oka maru Sanjivayyagaru ennikallo odipoyaru. Aa pimmata Peddapadu gramani sameepamlo unna maa graamam “Parla”ku vaccharu. Maa gramapu congresu peddal, abimanulu vicharamto aayana ootamini prastavinchaga virata parvamloni pandavula sthitini gurtu chestu (Thikkana) varninchina padyanni ee vidanga (Maaku) gurthu chestunnaru Sanjivayya garu. (Telugu Version)

Damodaram Sanjivayya belongs to Peddapadu village under Kurnool District. He loves literature. Especially the genre of poetry is his passion. Once Sanjivayya got defeated in elections. After that he came to the village “Parla” which is very nearer to Peddapadu. The elders of the village Congress leaders and his fans with sorrow remembered the topic of elections. Sanjeevayya quotes from the Tikkana’s poem about the situation of the Pandavas described in Virata Parvam comparing his situation with us. (Translation)

“Sarvasarvam saha chakra rakshana cheyadagu teadu sanyaasiyayye  
Karaghaatamuna mearu girineani nurumu cheyengala dhorbhaludu  
suukariyayye  
Sheethams mouli gelchina joadu buggapai vrelidikoni naatymaadu  
pediyayye  
Thavilikalanaina sheelambu dhappavoni punya varthanudu golla boyadayye  
Vasi gaanchina dorasaani dasiyayye kakataa ye managavacchu kaal  
mahima....”(Telugu Version) (*Jagruti* p.3)

Continuing to appreciate Sanjivayya, Venkateswara Reddy introduced him and his interest in music. At the end of the conversation “Vande Mataram” was recited. At that time, Sanjivayya stood up to respect the song. Sanjivayya also had great respect for national anthem. Tears would come in the eyes when the leaders like Sanjivayya are remembered on that auspicious function.

Sanjivayya is compared with the poet Thiikkana. The poem of Thikkana has always been beautiful and simple, so is Sanjivayya’s culture as the above situation suggests. Perhaps among the Telugu chief Ministers such as Andhra Kesari Prakasam Panthulu and Burgula Ramakrishan Rao, Sanjivayya may be compared with them as far as literature taste is concerned. (*Jagruti* 4)

The latest addition to Sanjivayya’s scholarship is to do with the person who knows Sanjivayya well was Kalkura Chandrasekhar. While presenting about Sanjivayya in a seminar as a Chair of the session in “Damodaram Sanjeevayya: Political and Literary Endeavours” organized in Rayalaseem University, he quoted from *Hans India* (14<sup>th</sup> February 2016):

Addressing the Telugu Basha Samithi of Osmania College, Kurnool in January 1963, Kavisamrat Viswanatha Satyanarayana said: “It is a matter of pride and honor for me to speak in a literary meet presided over by an intellectual Celebrity and a Statesman, Damodaram Sanjivayya (President of AICC) and a gathering attended by a Scholarly poet Sheik Dawood. Earlier in his President’s opening remarks Sanjivayya said: “It is since long that I have heard the Kavisamrat. I am present here to listen to him”. (Chandra sekhar 29)

In the above passage we could see how the poet and the political leader praise each other which show their generosity.

Chandrasekhar further says about Sanjivayya’s style of speaking in his own words and the sources from which he draws his examples in his speech:

I am glad that this Symposium is emphasizing on his literary talent, taste and career of Sanjivayya. I have heard him speaking on four or five occasions. He was an outstanding example of rural intelligence. He used to quote anecdotes from **scriptures, proverbs and folk literature**. He used to construct small sentences in a simple language. Economy of words was the hallmark of his speeches. “Use as few letters as possible in a word; as few words as possible in a sentence, as few sentences as possible in a paragraph and as many paragraphs as in a page; but again as few pages as possible in a document or writing and a few minutes as possible in a speech;” a Gandhian concept. (Chandrasekhar 29-30)

Sanjivayya has played different roles in Dramas in the village. One of them was in “Chandragupta”. Sanjivayya also wrote a play called “Sivaji” which was enacted in the law college. (Venkata Rajam 2021: 18)

### **Limitation of the study**

It is very difficult to trace some of the materials on Sanjivayya as very few scholars have worked on him. The list that I have mentioned need to be traced to have a whole understanding on Sanjivayya. The researcher does not claim that everything is researched. There is always a lot to be researched. It can be considered as a working paper on Sanjivayya as far as literary endeavours are concerned.

### **Further Scope for Research**

Political Scientists, Linguists and Advocates or law students can make further research on Sanjivayya for their respective specializations.

### **Conclusion**

The paper tried to study Sanjivayya from the literary point of view; exclusively on political and economic angles have been dealt with. Yet there has been so much

to research on him if materials are available. His flair for Telugu literature, language in speech, references to Hindu religion and his patronizing for literature, be it at Writers Conference, laurels from Viswanath Satyanarayan etc., make him elevate his literary tilt in his life.

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## Co-operation and Support to Face High and Mighty in Bama's Short- Story *The Woe, The Way*

Jillella Mercy Vijetha

Dalit Literature is one of the first emerging genre of Indian English Literature. The literature is written in English and many regional Dalit writings are translated into English. Bama is one of the Dalit writers who portray “the actual world... filled with dreadful, terrible, humiliating events”.<sup>3</sup> *The Woe, The Way* is one of the fifteen short stories from the collection of short stories titled ‘*Just One Word*’ by Bama, a contemporary renowned Tamil woman Dalit writer. Theme and setting are distinctly different from one story to another. The characters of these stories present the dilemma on the basis of gender, culture, religion, caste and class on their immediate social or physical environment. The story ‘*The Woe, The Way*’ revolves around a conflict among the crows and cuckoo fighting for existence. To bring such an outstanding change in the society Bama and other Dalit writers through their writings have immensely contributed in protest of the system. The writers wrote in their writings to question the system, establishment and government rather than caste or group. *The Woe, The Way* is such a story that mirrors everyday deceptions towards Dalits.

**Keywords:** Dalit, humiliation, conflict, existence, phenomenon, attack, high, mighty, deception etc.

Dalit Literature is one of the first emerging genre of Indian English Literature. The literature is written in English and many regional Dalit writings are translated into English. In Dalit writings, the Dalit writers are seriously involved in “... portraying the life through personal experience and empathy, absorbing it from all sides in their sensibility. To live this life is painful enough; it can be equally painful to react it on the mental level ...it is not easy to extricate themselves from it and write. The creation of literature has its own laws. Higher literary creation is possible on the basis of these laws. Those who have the right to say that ‘our humanity is our burden’ can easily master these rules of literary art. The gift of art can never be as

heavy as the burden of humanity”.<sup>2</sup>Bama is one of the Dalit writers portraying “the actual world... filled with dreadful, terrible, humiliating events”.<sup>3</sup>

*The Woe, The Way* is one of the fifteen short stories from the collection of short stories titled ‘*Just One Word*’ by Bama, a contemporary renowned Tamil woman Dalit writer. The stories are originally written in Tamil, competently translated into English by Malini Seshadri, “who emphatically keeps active the spirit of the stories and sincerely reflects the content and style of the original text” edited by Mini Krishnan. The collection of short stories spans over three time periods, “...seven stories published in 2003 under the title *OruThathavumErumayum* (The Old Man and Buffalo), five stories from the collection *Kondattam*(celebration) published in 2009, and the rest are written over the period from 2003 to 2015”<sup>4</sup>

The stories are in standard Tamil, with colloquial dialogues interspersed, traversing from the rural to the semi urban and urban landscapes, and from caste issues to social evils to human failings. (TWTW p. XVI) Bama’s stories are about the “... human condition...what humans do with their lives and with those of others. They highlight the universal prevalence of tolerance, prejudice and discrimination of various kinds” (TWTW. P. X) Theme and setting are distinct from one story to another. The characters of these stories present the dilemma on the basis of gender, culture, religion, caste and class on their immediate social or physical environment.

The story ‘*The Woe, The Way*’ revolves around a conflict between the crows and cuckoo fighting for existence. Kumar son of Nagamma finds a lot of crows all swooping around the cuckoo chicks screeching Kaa! Kaa! near the Neem tree at a Dalit chavady. At first everyone thinks that the crows may be mourning for a dead crow. Kumar curiously runs to the Neem tree and his mother follows him cautioning him not to go too near because there are lots of crows. Meanwhile lots of people gather around the Neem tree and chase the crows.

Kumar sympathizes with the poor black sparrow, so frightened, bleeding and sitting. Arayi the old woman reveals that “It’s not a black sparrow but a cuckoo chick. No wonder the crows are attacking it so fiercely” (TWTW p. 18) The old woman’s idea about the bird is a result of the general understanding i.e., a natural phenomenon. The bird’s feathers are scattered everywhere and blood oozed from its neck. When the adults moved away the children curiously sat near the chick. Nagamma volunteers to lift the cuckoo but the chick hardly pecks at her hand. She says,

“Did you see? What cheek! Out of sympathy I tried to help it, and it’s turning on me and pecking me! Why couldn’t it peck those crows instead and chase them away? It’s been attacked and is bleeding badly... still it’s acting high and mighty” (TWTW p.19)

Nagammain agitation questions the different reactions of the cuckoo bird, the bird in spite of its suffering, reacts aggressively. Kumar asks his mother eagerly to permit him to take the bird home and raise it. He is so sympathetic towards the bird. He tries to convince his mother and says,

“Amma, poor baby cuckoo, Ma...! It doesn’t even know how to build a nest. We learnt about it in our school lesson... so, let’s take it home and raise it”. (TWTW p. 20)

Listening to the innocent words of Kumar old Aarayi dismissively says,

“Enda, everyone knows cuckoos can’t build nests, you don’t need a book to tell you that... then how do cuckoos lay eggs and hatch chicks?... it lays its eggs in the crow’s nest. It’s the crow that hatches the cuckoo’s eggs... the poorcrow collects stick and thorn and painstakingly builds a nest, and this one just goes there... no work, no exertion... just lays its eggs and files away. What a sly creature!” (TWTW p. 20-21)

Kumar doubts as to why the crow let the cuckoo lay eggs in crow’s nest and hatches the cuckoos’ eggs. Aarayi reveals the deceptive nature of the cuckoo bird. She says,

“The crows don’t *let* it come. This one’s a clever scoundrel. It chooses a time when the crows are not there, and it goes and lays its eggs and files away... it’s work is not just to hatch the eggs. It has to go and find food for the chicks and look after them till they are grown... After all baby crows and baby cuckoos are both black and look alike don’t, they? (TWTW. P.21)

The innocent crows are unable to trace out the difference between its own chicks and cuckoo’s chicks. Hence, they grow up together. The crow finds out the difference only when they are little big and begin to sound differently. Thus, the crow is so angry because the cuckoo has duped it for a longtime. Out of rage the crow attacks and tries to peck the cuckoo chick to death. If the cuckoo chick grows enough to fly it escapes otherwise it ends.

Kumar still argues with Patti saying that’s why the baby cuckoo is in trouble, the crows co-operate one another and support that one crow, The boy continues his argument saying there should be one to one fight. It’s so sad that so many crows attacking the poor and helpless cuckoo chick. Aarayi is disgusted with the ignorant argument of Kumar who is unable to discriminate what is just and what is not she says.

“Oh, stop it! What do you know da? Don’t waste your sympathy on the cuckoo. Think how hard the crow works to build its nest. What about that?” (TWTWP. 22)

The Cuckoo and Crow in the story represent the characteristics of the ‘oppressor and the ‘oppressed’. Since time immemorial the ‘Oppressor with all the superior’ traits oppress and suppress the weak is an important phenomenon. The weak innocently toil and suffer for the wellbeing of the oppressors. Kumar is passionate about cuckoo bird for its good voice. He attempts to lift the chick and preserve it. But Aarayi discourages him and cautions him.

“Elai, drop it da. The crows are circling. They’ll Peck your head... you’ve kept it conveniently shaven. If they peck you, you’ll have holes in your skull...” (TWTW p.19)

Kumar exclaims about the integrity among the crows. Patti asserts, Crows’ unity and their support to their own race.

Crows always cooperate with one another, da. If one of them finds any food, it calls out the other crows at once and they all eat together... all the crows come to fight the battle on behalf of one of them. (TWTW p.22)

Aarayi, the Patti’s observation of crows is a fact that co-operation and support is a principle to overcome the conflicts particularly between the weak and the strong. She “... draws a moral lesson based on the behavior of crows.” (TWTW p. XVII) To bring such an outstanding change in the society Bama and other Dalit writers through their writings have contributed immensely protesting the system. The writers’ effort in their writings is to question the system, establishment and government rather than caste or group. *The Woe The Way* is such a story that mirrors everyday deceptions towards Dalits. ■

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# Harold Pinter's *The Room*: A Study of Man's Illusion for Security

Monalisa Das

Harold Pinter is one of the world's greatest dramatists who has established himself as one of the most influential playwrights of our days. He is famous as an English absurdist dramatist.

One of the dominating themes in all his plays is the theme of "the room". Pinter chooses the room "as a microcosm of the world." In the room people feel safe. Outside are only alien forces and inside there is warmth and light. Ambiguity lies in the fact that though one feels safe inside the room, but, because of existential anxieties, he feels alienated both from the outer world and from himself. The room is as safe as a womb to its inhabitant, but this security is shattered by an outside force which reveals the so-called "security" to be an illusion. When the door of the room is opened, the cold hostile world, gets in and the inhabitants of the room are frightened and their end is tragic. This paper analyzes Pinter's first play *The Room* as an image of this human condition. It exemplifies the notion that the "Being" and the "Non-Being" are two facets of human existence and everyone should ultimately face one's alienation of the Self from the other. This paper focuses on the character Rose, her existence from moment to moment and finally crushing her into a cipher of nonentity. Rose symbolically presents the perplexity of the human situation and man's struggle for security to be an illusion.

**Keywords:** The Room, Existential Anxieties, Being and Non-Being, Security, Illusion

Harold Pinter has so far two main types of subject matter: one, the little allegory about life, death and cosmic concepts, the other, the undercurrents and drives in human relationships. The latter is no doubt his more important one, though the allegory in the style of the absurd is a neat form deftly handled. Pinter is surely indebted to Beckett in this concept, but we should find nothing wrong with that as

he has his unique version of it. No writer can be independent of his styles and trends dominant in his own time. The living conditions of England during the formative period of Pinter has influenced Pinter. The dominating factor of this condition was the existential anxiety prevailing in the society. Majority of the characters in the plays of Pinter manifest this existential anxiety. The individuals projected are at the mercy of authoritarian system. The system makes an individual anxious in his existence, and thus the character is perceived in his shrinking away from taking-up responsibilities.

As an absurdist Pinter discusses in *The Room* the existential issue of security and the importance of having a secure home, especially a room. Pinter chooses the room “as a microcosm of the world”. Pinter through the room tackles several themes like alienation, violence, menace and fear, all this resulting in death. The image of death challenges man with the mystery as to why he is born and why he dies. With the analysis of who he is and what he is, he finds friendship with others and makes relationships in this world. But neither these relationships nor any of his materialistic assets is enough to provide him serenity of life as the intrusion of death annoys him by bereaving him of all these. An excruciating fear of death with its ramifications is a consistent obsession of the play *The Room*. In the play Riley (The Negro) comes to the house where Rose and her husband Bert live in comfort. The life of the couple is presented in such a way that any intervention is perceived as a threat to them. As John Pesta contends in “Pinter’s Usurpers, “The play calls for a symbolic interpretation. Riley, threatening the womb like security of the room, serves as a death figure” (p.55). When Kidd tells her that Riley is going to meet her, she recedes away showing her displeasure to encounter him:

Mr. Kidd: (rising) I don’t know what’ll happen if you don’t see him.

Rose. : I’ve told you I don’t know this man. (p.121)

This displeasure is a manifestation of existential anxiety.

Pinter describes Rose as a creature who likes, to be imprisoned in her own place. She frequently expresses that she likes her room and never leaves it throughout the play. She is shown to be scared outside her room. She expresses to her husband Bert, “It’s very cold out, I can tell you. It’s murder..... the room keeps warm. It’s better than the basement, anyway”. She repeats many times, her hatred to live in the basement. She tells Bert, “It’s good you weren’t down there, in the basement .....” I am quite happy where I am. We’re quiet, we’re all right, you’re happy up here. It’s not far up either, when you come in from outside. And we’re not bothered. And nobody bothers us. At the end of the play she shouts at the Negro (Riley) when he asks her to leave the room. She is even more reactive when she hears that the messenger Riley has come to take her to her father. She asks Riley :

Rose : Who have you got a message from? Who? Riley : Your father wants you to come home. (pause) Rose : Home?  
Riley : yes.  
Rose : Home? (p.124).

Here the recurrence of the word “home” shows the embarrassment the word creates in her. She speaks as if she did not know the meaning of the word; but the fact is that she feels so because of her total ignorance of the outside, the mystery that remains outside, the mysterious operation on the house she resides in without her participation in it. Rose is symbolic of this existential panic which is something of real and ordinary as a day-to-day situation.

To Rose, a room in *The Room*, as L.P.Gabbard says in *The Dream Structure of Pinter's*

*Plays: A Psychoanalytical Approach*, is “the womb that nurtured her” (p.19). This is applicable to most of the Characters of Pinter. The existentialist Walter Kerr in the above mentioned book argues:

The dictionary defines Angst (Anxiety), a feeling of dread, anxiety or anguish

.....

‘anxiety is the expectancy of evil or danger, without adequate ground’ ..... a man in the state of anxiety is anxious about everything- his dread is not confined to responsibility for an act but is disturbed throughout his environment and becomes his environment (p.19).

The comfortably familiar and secure room stands in sharp contrast not only with the mysterious and implacable world outside but also with the dark and damp basement. These three locales –the room, the basement, the outside- are merged into one of Rose’s longest speeches just before the first intruder, Mr. Kidd makes his entrance:

This is a good room, you’ve got a chance in a place like this. I look after you, don’t I Bert?

Like when they offered us the basement, here I said no straight off. I knew that’d be no good. The ceiling is right on top of you. No, you’ve got a window here, you can move yourself, you can come home at night, if you have to go out .... You can come home ... And I’m here. You stand a chance (p.105).

The first actual intrusion occurs with the entry of the landlord, Mr. Kidd, whose evasiveness and oblique responses to Rose’s inquiries serve, as much as Bert’s

silence, to increase Rose's uncertainty about the world outside and, in effect, undermine the security of her room. Being pestered by Rose with questions about the house, Mr. Kidd scarcely ever gives a direct answer:

Rose : How many floors you got in the house?

Mr. Kidd : Floors? (He laughs). Ah, we had a good few of them in the old days.

Rose. : How many have you got now?

Mr.Kidd : Well, to tell you the truth. I don't count them now. Oh, I used to count them

once ..... I used to keep a track on everything in this house.... That was when my sister was alive, but I lost track a bit after she died (p.108).

When Rose asks him if anyone lived upstairs "up there ?" Mr. Kidd ponders, "There was one but gone now."

Rose : What about your sister Mr.Kidd ?

Mr. Kidd: What about her?

Rose: Did she have any babies?

Mr. Kidd. : Yes, she had a resemblance to my old Mum, I think. Taller, of course.

Rose : When did she die then, your sister?

Mr.Kidd. :Yes, that's right; it was after she died that I must have stopped counting.. (p.109)

The conversation between them eventually becomes a series of attacks, evasiveness and counter attacks; Mr. Kidd seems very perceptive in pinpointing Rose's vulnerabilities when he claims that Rose's room has once been his bedroom. This inevitably reminds Rose of her status as tenant and temporary occupant of the room she so depends on:

Mr. Kidd : This was my bedroom.

Rose : This? When?

Mr. Kidd : When I lived here.

Rose : I didn't know that.(p.107)

To Rose whose life is so intimately bound up with the room, this is indeed a vulnerable area.

So Rose keeps on repeating herself. "I didn't know that," and "well, I never knew that" (p.107).

The intrusion of the Sand's couple, the prospective tenants, is also a threat to Rose's own tenancy. She is again subjected to series of attacks. Initially she is shocked and frightened and then tries to get rid of the Sands by denying that there are any rooms for rent "you won't find any rooms vacant in this house" (p.118 ). But when Mr. Sands says that "the man in the basement said there was one room, Number Seven" (p.118) Rose is shaken. Her hidden fears and anxieties, previously manifested her constant dwelling on the security of her world, now actualize themselves as she is told it is her "own room" (Number Seven) that is to let. Like Mr. Kidd, the Sands not only threaten Rose's real self, undermining her very security, they also, by conferring Rose's fantasies about the basement bring her hidden fears to the surface and implicitly link her with them. Again Rose's fears are heightened When Mr. Kidd returns with the news that a man in the basement insists on seeing her:

Mr Kidd: He just lies there... waiting ?

Rose : Who?

Mr. Kidd: The man. He's been waiting to see you. He wants to see you. You have got to see him.

Rose : See who?

Mr. Kidd: The man, He's downstairs now.

Rose : Who is he? (p.120).

By this assertion, the presence of the stranger materializes for Rose. At this moment, the reader can distinguish his presence that is the outward projector and concretization for Rose's hidden anxieties. He enters the room with the message of darkness from the outside to her and makes Rose aware of the "delusion on which she is basing her life," according to Pinter. Rose's hidden fears are externalised and she is forced to face the brute reality of life in the figure of the blind Negro.

The Negro is the key to all unanswerable questions, which come out of the world of nothingness. He is also a suppressed wish of the other which betrays the Ego (Rose) by bringing her a message of Non-Being (Death). Only by death the harmony between the selves of the being can be created as the Negro's blindness should be transferred to Rose (Ego). Hamedreza kohzadi reaches a possible interpretation that:

"Rose's insistence on the security of the room has, a close relation to her sense of guilt. Later when the Negro calls Rose 'Sal' this significance comes to reality. She has lived with Bert under one assumed name. Perhaps she has been a prostitute that has no desire

to hear about. The fear of outside is a projection of Rose's inner guilt. She fears for her own being to be exposed to the other (p.53).

Finally Rose loses her sight. Her loss of sight confirms, on the one hand, her fundamental link with the blind Negro and on the other hand points to her mental deterioration. The loss of sight is a mental rather than a physical state. Rose, who has been afflicted by blindness, is actually being crushed into nonentity along with the herald of death and nothingness which are personified in the figure of the blind Negro. The blind man is an externalization of the other as he has broken into the room to rob Rose of her true self or identity. Martin Esslin in this context says:

The blind Negro is all too manifestly a symbol, an allegory. He has been lying down below and had foreknowledge of the future. He must therefore be a being from beyond the confines of this world: a dead man or a messenger of death. His blackness and his blindness reinforce these allegorical implications. The blindness in the end belongs to the same category of symbolism that most mean her own death (p.66).

Existentialists believe that the consciousness of death is the call of anxiety and survival then delivers itself its own legal call through the mediation of consciousness. Eventually she bows to death and sends for Riley, the blind man.

Rose : Fetch him, Quick ! Quick. (p.122)

Then Riley enters. Here the stage direction is worth regarding "Enter a blind Negro. He closes the door behind him, walks further, and feels with a stick till he reaches the armchair." (p.122)

Though Pinter refuses employing symbols and that he has never been aware of symbolic importance in his play, the blindness and blackness of the character are indicial of death. In "Messages from Pinter", Augusta walker remarks,

"Figuratively the basement denizen must be death and his room the Coffin" (p.4).

Conclusion :

Death is inescapable, that is why he enters Rose's chamber without her consent, though he is an uninvited visitor. She does not want to be touched by him still he touches her in the teeth of her objection. He not only touches her but attempts to take her away. Pinter illustrates the way she responds to him;

"She touches his eyes, the back of his eyes, the back of his head, and his temples with her hands' (p.125)

She gladly receives it when she feels cornered. Thus man's reply to his inescapable death is portrayed here very poignantly, but with a philosophical non-chalance.

Human being is a part of the whole called by us Universe, a part limited in time and space and man's thoughts and feelings always seek for security in this space. This sense of security is just an illusion on his part. In practicality life is full of insecurities and the craving for it always remains incomplete. ■

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# Theme of Alienation in the Novels of D.H. Lawrence

Yashu Rai

**A**lienation, the most prominent characteristic of modern life, has assumed various forms and is caused by the most varied factors. It has been defined as separation of men from society, an impossibility of adjustment, formlessness, loneliness, invalidation of the individual, isolation and estrangement. Hegel defines it as an estrangement from the Absolute spirit. According to Karl Marx, it is the loss of identity of the labour from his product. Jean Paul Sartre sums it up as self-objectification. D.H. Lawrence's remarkable contribution is that he attempts to convey the inner life, in other words, the psyche, to analyse the subconscious without reference to visible outward behaviour. The psycho analytical study of man is a symptom of modern man's alienation. Thus Lawrence's characters display the strange contrast between inner life to which the outward life does not correspond and an outward existence unrelated to what is within. That's why they are alienated persons.

**Keywords:** Alienation, loneliness, consciousness, marriage, fixation,frustration.

Alienation is caused by many factors. Among the sources of alienation are:

- 1) Social Sources: based on class division and antagonism between the social man and natural man.
- 2) Material Sources: which emphasizes Karl Marx externalization of activity, separation of men from matter, and fetishist attitude towards money.
- 3) Religious Sources: which preach the imposition of the Absolute Spirit and the cult of law.
- 4) Philosophical sources: which stress the opposition between abstract thinking and sensuous actuality.
- 5) Psychological Sources: such as mutual incapability, struggle of wills, repression, women's domination, lack of polarization, non-gratification of sex and Freudian Oedipus complex.

The novels of D.H. Lawrence reveal these varied sources of alienation.

D.H. Lawrence was an alienated soul. His life, from personal to professional, is a picture of alienation. Parental Discord and conflict between puritan austerity

and sensual warmth were the most potent factors conclusive to his sense of alienation from his parents. Class Distinction and Non-participation in school activities due to his frail physique were responsible for his alienated school life. He was alienated from his beloveds due to the over-possessive nature of his mother. In fact, it was Mother-Fixation, a characteristic of Freudian Oedipus Complex, which kept Lawrence apart from his women. He was a social outcast and T.S.Eliot, his giant literary contemporary, engineered his literary alienation. Above all, owing to his German wife, he was a suspect in his own country and this led to his internal exile and ultimately national alienation,

The dominant source of alienation in D.H. Lawrence's early novel *The White Peacock* is frustration in love. It is abundantly evident from the abortive love affair of George Saxton and Lettie Beardsall. The other sources of alienation in this novel are George's inarticulateness, lack of self-assertion, disillusionment, Cyril's emotional under-development, husband wife, hostility the pride of motherhood and Annable's contempt for spirituality. This novel, written during first year as a student at Nottingham University College, is the story of the alienation of George Saxton from Lettie whom he loved but failed to win her as his wife. Lettie marries Leslie Temple who is rich and socially more acceptable. George marries his cousin, but this marriage intensifies his sense of alienation. He is obsessed with his love for Lettie. Thus the sense of alienation dominates his life. About George's alienation Cyril concludes at the end of the novel thus, "We were all uncomfortably impressed with the sense of our alienation from him. He sat apart and obscure among us like a condemned man." Moreover the title of the novel itself is a symbol of alienation the modern woman as peacock all vanity, screech and defilement is correctly applicable to Lettie as well as the first wife of Annable, the gamekeeper.

In *The Trespasser*, the dominant source of alienation is marital maladjustment. Incompatibility, resulting from a sense of superiority in marital life leads to husband-wife alienation. The suppression of the instinctive makes marriage a duel of the sexes, so sexual disorder causes alienation. This novel is the story of Siegmund's alienation from his wife Beatrice and his pupil-beloved Helena. Beatrice alienates her husband with her sexual indifference and female domination. Helena Alienates Siegmund with her unreciprocated sexual desire. Thus the principle of female reality pro-dominates the novel. In fact D.H.Lawrence was, at that time, irritated with women who refused to acknowledge the genital character of male sexual desire and he made Helena one of those woman whose culture castrated their men, refined vampires in the last throes of romantic agony, dreaming women whose passion exhaust itself at the mouth. Rejecting the animal in man such women have grown abstract and their kindness is full of cruelty. They destroy the natural man. As such Siegmund, who cannot get Helena and who cannot live with Beatrice, commits suicide, a fatal consequence of alienation.

In *Sons and Lovers*, Oedipus complex is the dominant source of alienation. Mother Fixation pre-dominates the novel. The other sources of alienation are class differences, temperamental hostility, discontentment, platonic love, the idea of husband existence and individualistic perspective. It is the story about real people carefully individualised with familial conflicts, a tragedy of thousands of young men in England, of the sons who are ruined as lovers or husband because the mother acts as the mistress. The earlier chapters of the novel reveal the alienation of Walter Morel from his wife Gertrude Morel. The terrible destructive conflict, the bitter antagonism between the husband and the wife originates in the failure of Walter Morel to live up to certain moral and social demands made of him by his wife. She sought to make him undertake his responsibilities, to make him fulfil his obligations. But he was indifferent to all this. She strove to make him moral, religious but he was purely sensuous. Walter's irresponsibility and Gertrude's uncompromising determination create an unbridgeable gulf in their lives. Walter becomes an outsider, a stranger, an alienated being in his own home. Being alienated from her husband, Gertrude takes shelter in the tender arms of her sons but in the process destroys them as well as herself. She makes them emotional cripples who fail to make a place in the hearts of their women. Later the story of Paul's birth and growth into adolescence is a story of his alienation from his father, his mother and his beloveds. He is alienated from his father on account of hatred and hostile attitude, developed by his mother, towards him. His alienation from his beloveds is based on the mother's over possessive nature. In his love for Miriam and then Clara, he makes a desperate attempt to free himself from his excessive attachment to his mother. But this he cannot do. He cannot break the navel string either during the life time of his mother or even after her death. Miriam's platonic love and Clara's excessive physical passion, to which Paul cannot respond to their satisfaction, cause his alienation from them. Clara demands demonic sexual gratification and Miriam Wants the Christ in him. So he is alienated from his beloveds. He is alienated from his mother by her death. He hastens her death to escape the pangs of frustration in his failed love-affairs. The novel ends with Paul wedded to the spirit of alienation. In his total isolation Paul realizes that he has nothing to do, nothing to say, nothing to himself, nothing to live for and nowhere to go. Such is, the profound sense of alienation in his life.

D.H.Lawrence's next novel *The Rainbow* is a psychic drama of attraction and repulsion. It is a novel of psychological alienation. Therefore love-hate Rhythm is a pro-dominant source of alienation in this novel. The other sources of alienation are soul-storms of sex, the impulse of possession, absorption in procreation, foreignness, withdrawal from social marital conflict and father fixation. There are some symbols of alienation also such as The Moon, The Church and Anna's notorious naked dance. The story of Tom Brangwen- Lydia is based on the psychic battles of the sexes which creates in them a sense of alienation. Tom finds refuge in his step-

daughter Anna in his emotional disruption and so does Anna becomes a victim of father-fixation. Likewise William Brangwen Anna's life is a story of their alienation which is based on love-hate rhythm. William Brangwen also develops Oedipus relations with his oldest-daughter Ursula who too is involved in father-fixation. Ideological incompatibility causes Ursula- Skrebensky's alienation. Lawrence also investigates the challenges and disruption of modern life not by engaging his characters in a public conflict with the social change as such but through an exploration of an area in which they most intensely experience the encroachment of modernity i.e. their sexual relationships. He is able to grasp the vital inter-connection between sexuality and society. But the conflict between the double needs of his characters their craving for a deep sensual relationship and their desire for self-realization in the world beyond causes their alienation both within and without the self. Thus personal relations are also progressively isolated from the community over the course of three generations and so alienation of characters ensues.

In *Women in Love*, the dominant source of alienation is separateness-in-union. The other sources of alienation are conflict of wills, temperamental incompatibility, non-surrender, mate companionship and the psychology of singleness. Gudrun and Gerald fail as lovers. They remain apart, aloof. Being together, there is a sense of alienation in their life. The sense of separateness permeates their life. In his death on the Alpino, Gerald's alienation is complete. Birkin-Ursula relations are also governed by this dominant source of alienation. They are united in love and marriage, yet remain alienated because they cannot merge their personalities. They cannot surrender their individuality. They can't be two-in-one. Moreover Birkin's desire for male companionship and his psychology of singleness intensify his sense of alienation from Ursula, she too feels alienated when she can't persuade Birkin to abandon his desire for male companionship.

In fact, these characters live in the cage of self-controlling will, in the cage of social restriction, in the cage of mental alienation. The novel also probes into the human psyche and man's desire for destruction and disintegration. It is out to make a social critique in which the primary evidence against modern civilization is the sense of alienation it induces. It is concerned with the areas of feeling that shade at their borders with paranoia and schizophrenia. There is a recurring desire in different characters to wish other people or society or the world out of existence. Ursula is afraid of the depth of her feelings against the home, the whole atmosphere and condition of the obsolete life. Gudrun wonders why she submits herself to the insufferable torture of the ugly, meaningless people, the defaced country side she would have liked all of them annihilated, cleared away so that the world was left clear for her. Hermione Roddice, who lacks spontaneity and whose every gesture seems an artifice, also desires the same. Gerald, who tends to act the part that social propriety has written for him, has about him a strange guarded look. He seems always

to be at bay against everybody. Birkin agrees with Mrs.Crich that the people she meets have no identity. Essentially they don't exist. It would be better if they were just wiped out. Thus, by repudiating people, society and the world, these characters imprison themselves in their isolation in the cage of alienation. It might have been the novelist's aim to make his characters live to satisfying relations with others. But the characters aim at maintaining the individuality of the separate human being. So the novel works away from the apprehension of relationship towards the creation of a world where all the characters are manifestations of one central fragmented consciousness, the consciousness of alienation

In Aaron's Rod, the dominant source of alienation is the concept of Inherent Singleness. The other sources of alienation are the implacable female will, self-abandon in love, fear of the loss of identity, unrest in married life, the arrogance of the unyielding male, British insularity, man as a husband and quasi-homosexual ganging up of men against the female There are symbols of alienation also such as the title of the novel Aaron's Rod and The Pillar of salt. D.H.Lawrence has split himself into two characters Lilly and Aaron. Lilly's name identifies him with the spontaneous transcendent male power and Aaron is a synthesis of manhood and art in his phallic flute. Aaron seeks to achieve independence and maturity in the world of man by avoiding psychological and financial parasitism on his wife and society. He abandons his home because the domestic world of wife and children seems threatening to him, thus urging him to run away, to become the solitary outsider. As a matter of fact his intrinsic and central aloneness is the very centre of his being. He goes to London and is rescued by Lilly from psychosomatic illness by his mother-like treatment. Lilly too, is a victim of alienation, he is alienated from his unyielding wife Tanny. On Aaron's recovery both unite in mutually consoling criticism of marriage and women who possess and dispossess their men, thus causing alienation in life. Later on there is a split between the two characters. Aaron criticises Lilly's theory of self-possession and so is estranged with him. It intensifies their sense of alienation. Aaron returns home to attempt reconciliation with his wife, Lottie, but he finds her un-humbled. She accuses him of being too weak to love a woman and give her what she wants. She also accuses him of domestic irresponsibility. She wants to win his own self-betrayal out of him. But Aaron is as unchangeable as time. He feels the iron of her threat under her female pleadings. He does not yield, nor does she. The fact is that he cannot stand her vile accusations. Once again he leaves her and children, never to return. He walks out of his marriage and job for ever. He permanently dissociates himself from marital responsibility. On Aaron's alienation Lawrence states thus, henceforth life single, not life double.... As for future unions too soon to think about it. Let there be clean and pure division first, perfected singleness. That is the only way to final, living unison through sheer, finished singleness. Thus the novel traces a progress from jealous resentment of and escape

from woman as life creator and sexual being to a state of isolation. Aaron resigns himself to the spirit of stoical acceptance of uncertain solitariness and attains lonely insecure position on the outside of life, a complete creature of alienation, an incarnation of alienation

The later novels, *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent* deal with the idea of leadership. The first relates to political leadership in Australia and the second is concerned with religious leadership in North America. In *Kangaroo*, the dominant source of alienation is the Principle of Externality, the exclusion of woman in purely male activity. The other sources of alienation are the innate tendency to separateness, male dominance in marriage and life, and the eternal indifference of the Australians. Ben Cooley, *Kangaroo*, the anti-thesis of Lawrence ideal self, is the enemy of mother and love. He is a hardened male isolationist. His leadership of the Political Movement keeps him aloof, apart from social and family life. He lives alienated and in his death is alienated from all. Richard Somers sense of superiority in all matters of marriage, friendship and politics leads to his alienation. He believes in male domination in marriage which is resisted by his wife Harriet and this causes their alienation from each other. Harriet feels alienated on account of another factor also. She is excluded from participation in male activity. She demands her right as a wife to be a partner in all her husband's activities. But Somers rejects it. Hence the feeling of alienation governs their life. They enter Australia as aliens and live as alienated. The novel is a thought adventure and the theme of alienation has been brought out by the assertion of male dominance in marriage.

In *The Plumed Serpent*, the dominant source of alienation is Anti-Christ Attitude. The other sources of alienation are repudiation of the modern spirit, disillusionment, religious incompatibility, politico-religious-culture here and hopelessness. There is an intensified disgust for the world that resists religious renewal. It would restore the old blood consciousness with the expulsion of the whites and half-breeds. The white consciousness had corrupted the natives. Its death was necessary. D.H. Lawrence attempts reconciliation between law and love, man and woman. But alienation ensues during the process. Don Ramon Carrasco, the now God of Mexico, is alienated from his wife and children. Carlota, the wife cannot tolerate the termination of Christianity. Religious incompatibility causes their alienation. In fact Carlota dies on account of her husband's anti-Christ attitude. Kate, the Irish lady who joins the religion and accepts the role it imposes, is incapable of total acceptance. She remains as alone and alienated at the end of the novel as she appears in the beginning. Thus Lawrence visionary achievement in illicit-god making leads to the alienation of characters.

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the dominant source of alienation is Paralysis. The other sources of alienation are social division, desertion, sexual malice, egoism and dislocation of the stream of desire. The novel opens with Connie's position

rather than Clifford's in the aftermath of world war first. The consequences of her husband's war-induced paralysis are greater for her than for Clifford and she learns to cope with them. She must care for Clifford, physically and emotionally, without much chance of self-care. The most obvious result of this arrangement is not only sexual frustration but also the cold, depleting way of life Connie shares with her husband and this causes a profound sense of alienation in her life. Moreover, Connie suffers from disconnection of mental life at Wragby. Clifford gathers round him his own circle of writers and critics, admirers of the smart spiteful stories he has begun to publish. But Connie feels no real closeness with those unconventional friends who pride themselves on sexual frankness even as they deprecate or deny sex connection. She begins to sense the negation of vital possibilities and in her growing restlessness resulting in alienation; she makes common cause with Michaelis a playwright. Her brief affair with him is an attempt at human contact. She yields to his abjectness out of maternal compassion, prefers his unscrupulousness to Clifford's false pretensions. But, then, Connie begins to hold herself back. Michaelis must hang on grimly. At first he prides himself in giving satisfaction this way but he explodes in resentment after running the sexual show their love-affair smashes. He finishes as a lover and Connie's sexual feelings for him collapses. The game of using the other is exploded and they are alienated. For Clifford, sex is not necessary though it perfects the intimacy of marriage. The war accident has freed him from this obsolete organic process. He also believes that casual sex is nothing. So he tells Connie to have a son by another man so as to help him preserve his estate intact. Connie agrees, then she comes into contact with the gamekeeper, the unpredictable father of her oddly sanctioned child, she wants to brook with all that Clifford represents. The gamekeepers separateness, his singleness, inward aloneness rouse her consciousness and she submits to the risk of self-abandonment Their relations to phallus worship or vagina worship also lead to the purgation of the gamekeeper sexual hostility and Connie's social shame. So Connie turns from Clifford's world to the refuge of the hut. She alienates from Clifford but she has yet to get the gamekeeper as a socially acceptable husband. Thus the rousing call to sexual freedom deepens the sense of alienation.

In short, the novels of D.H. Lawrence are many studies in alienation, the theme of the isolated individuality, the solitary man, the outsider. The novelist's own alienation is inherent in his characters. Cyril in *The White Peacock*, Paul Morel in *Sons and Lovers*, Birkin in *Women in Love*, Lilly and Aaron in *Aaron's Rod* and Richard Somers in *Kangaroo* are clear projections of Lawrence's own self. Emotional under-development of Cyril, mother-fixation of Paul Morel, the psychology of singleness of Birkin, the concept of sheer finished singleness of Aaron and the principle of externality of Somers, which are conclusive to their alienation, are the various studies of Lawrence's own alienation.

A comparison with his contemporaries Joseph Conrad, John Galsworthy, Somerset Maugham, E M Forster, and James Joyce shows that Lawrence's treatment of the theme of alienation is unique. His contemporaries were naturalists who depicted human beings in terms of environments. Their plots had moral issue to be brought to a conclusion, conflicts of interests to be settled, misunderstanding to be ironed out, and intrigues with mysteries to be solved. But D. H. Lawrence moves away from the conventional idea of the novel as an arrangement of characters and scenes. He discards the depiction of characters as statuesque. He has a passionate belief in the importance of the development of each unique individuality, the slow building up of an integral personality through the years. He places his trust in the experience of the senses. The elemental impulses which spring from the sub-conscious are the safest guides of man's life. In fact he scorns intellectual faculties. He says, "All I want is to answer to my blood, direct, without fribbling intervention of mind or moral or what not." He is a prophet of the primitive instincts and passions. His appeal is to the heart rather than the head. He seeks to persuade not by the reasoning faculty but by emotional impact. His procedure is the exhaustive method which reveals the development of separate characters in action. It is an attempt to express directly the life of the deeper self. Expression of the human feelings is the substance of this method. Neither artistic qualities nor novel as an art form has any consideration in Lawrence's mind. He is deeply involved in his theme and its impassioned presentation. This is his distinct and singular contribution. D.H. Lawrence, though concerned with the problem of inter-human polarity, depicts the failure of human relationships in novel. ■

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# Straddling Multiracial Identities in the Select Novels of Sindiwe Magona, Nadine Gordimer & Zoe Wicomb

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Apartheid and Post-apartheid writing in their transitional phase refer to the unpredictability of South Africa's new literature. The dynamic nature of change is at the root of the nuance that distinguishes literature from literature in transition. Apartheid and the post-apartheid eras have been retold in many works including Nadine Gordimer's, Sindiwe Magona's, and Zoe Wicomb's works as examples. This paper aims to examine the representation of the past in the novels of Nadine Gordimer, Zoe Wicomb as well as Sindiwe Magona. Since the trauma of their past has influenced their current behaviour and situations, this paper is predicated on the assumption that these novelists' characters have been affected by their past experiences. As a result, the characters hold grudge against those who wronged them in the past and look back on them with bitterness and resentment.

**Keywords:** Apartheid, Post-apartheid, Racism, Literature, South African literature.

Emotions are the driving force behind all of humanity's literature. Many literary works provide us with new information and insights into the various subjects they address. Race and racism are two such issues that have been explored in literary works. Racism is more than just a matter of speculating and demeaning others. There is no rational basis to defend the actions of persons who judge others based on their race or ethnicity.

One of the major topics in Post-Apartheid literary and cultural discourses is the memory of apartheid and post-apartheid. Authors like André Brink, Gillian Slovo, and J. M. Coetzee, produced works that were first-hand accounts of the horrors of the Apartheid era in South Africa. As a result, whether the authors intend it or not, even when addressing post-Apartheid topics, their works are retroactive. Nadine Gordimer's "*None to Accompany Me*," Zoe Wicomb's "*Playing in the Light*," as well as Sindiwe Magona's "*Beauty's Gift*", "*Caching the Tails of My Fathers Cattle*" and "*Mother to Mother*" are considered as post-apartheid books that address the past and how it has affected the characters' ontological condition, are the focus of this work.

Zoe Wicomb's *"Playing in the Light"* makes use of post-apartheid. Memory is explored in this novel through flashbacks that illustrate the cruelty of the apartheid regime.

*"[...] the past is contained in endless dreary rows of parcelled days, wrapped in tissue paper, each with its drop of poison at the core."* (WicombPITL61)

The character, John Campbell, had an identity struggle when he was younger. *"Why do my brothers and I have English names?"* he used to inquire as a child. (WicombPITL5) Many details regarding John Campbell's early life can be gleaned from the text just quoted. It is clear from the narrator's description of "the farm homes" that he comes from an agricultural background. To make matters worse, his father was unable to explain to him why he had given them English names. As a person's name is also a carrier of his identity, this biographical information reveals that John was experiencing an identity problem.

The authorities were very harsh towards coloured people. The narrator of the novel claims that the police officer at the Traffic Department mispronounced John Campbell's name when he first spoke it to him. The officer misspelled Campbell as "Kembel." However, fear prevented John from correcting him. The narrator confesses this as a result of this situation:

*"[...] John, who could read and write perfectly well, knew that it would be a mistake to correct a man so dapperly turned out in khaki – yes, those were days before the air force-blue uniform"* (Wicomb PITL 20).

The reader will find it amusing because the speaker is scared to correct someone when they spell his name incorrectly. Hidden beneath the jokes is a critique of the apartheid-era police brutality toward South Africans. It reveals that the populace was frightened to challenge the authorities because of the brutality of the Law-and-Order Forces.

In a discussion about the state of violence and instability in society, Brenda accuses Boetie of complacency with the Apartheid system by voting for it the first time it was implemented in 1948. Brenda screams.

*"Really? You don't think that years of oppression and destitution and perversion of human beings, thanks to the policies that you voted in, have anything to do with you?"* (WicombPITL36).

When Dr Malan and his National Party won the election in 1948, the policy of racial segregation was legally adopted in South Africa, and Brenda believes that the current turmoil and insecurity in post-Apartheid South Africa is a direct result of this policy. Brenda is sceptical of Boetie's claim that he voted for Apartheid, although he denies it.

Later, Brenda sarcastically declares,

*“It’s impossible to find a person in this country who voted for the Nationalist Party. God knows how that phantom called apartheid came into being all by itself [...]”* (Wicomb PITL 39).

We are making fun of individuals who voted for Apartheid because no one wants to be associated with it now that it has been abolished. With the aid of recollection, it becomes clear that tensions existed between the church and the Apartheid regime. The church is founded on the principle of social justice and equality. As a result, the church’s disagreement with many Apartheid policies was entirely understandable. The narrator claims that Father Gilbert, an Anglican priest, was constantly in conflict with the regime. When it came to condemning the Apartheid regime, the church did not hold back. In this context, the narrator quotes Father Gilbert and adds,

*“The church must make a stand, he said, or so Trevor Huddlestone preached, and history, he was sure, would prove him right in his endeavours to fight the iniquitous [Apartheid] system”* (Wicomb PITL 166)

Memory is used to illustrate the hardships and poverty of the apartheid era. Non-whites, including blacks, were denied the same economic opportunities as whites under apartheid’s policy of racial segregation. According to the narrator, “Father Gilbert” said:

*“Spoke with passion about the parishes in the townships, the poor-coloured people who were so lacking in facilities and resources that they were vulnerable to devil’s work and dagga.”* (Wicomb PITL 67)

Nonwhites were unable to continue their education above high school because of the tremendous poverty in which they lived. The nickname “Thomasina” has been bestowed upon Tokkie by Flip Karelse as a result. Flip Karelse fell in love with her because of her intelligence. But the narrator claims that her family could not afford to pay for her to attend high school (Wicomb PITL 135). While in her mother’s room,

*“Marion sits cross-legged on the floor, leaning against her mother’s dressing table, from which she has taken the Black Magic box”* (Wicomb PITL 116).

In this box, one of the most memorable objects is Helen’s identity card (a misinterpretation as she is a member of the coloured race, and her spouse was incorrectly labeled as white during Apartheid). This ID card is a reminder of the segregation and tagging of South Africans during the apartheid era. The importance of a person’s racial identification was greater than any other factor. This is demonstrated by the fact that her race is bolded and capitalised on the card.

Apartheid regulations in South Africa are also parodied in Zoe Wicomb’s

work. South Africans' racial inclinations are depicted in the novel as diverse and difficult to define, especially for the coloured population. In the National Library, Marion, and the librarian

*"[...] pore over the laws and confusing racial definitions."* (Wicomb *PITL* 120).

As the narrator notes, apartheid's racial laws were riddled with anomalies. A new regulation passed in 1950, intended to formalise and fix the categories of "coloured" and "white," was at odds with the 1946 franchise rules, which allowed for mixed blood in one parent or grandmother. After the establishment of a distinct coloured voters' list, whites who had previously considered themselves European were forced to switch to the newly constituted coloured voters' roll in the 1950s. The law is concerned with how people perceive things, rather than how things are. Coloureds who supported Apartheid were considered white, whereas whites who opposed the ideology may be termed non-white.

The librarian adds that in South Africa, the Apartheid state had difficulty defining whites in the fifties and sixties. This misunderstanding is the result of some black South Africans being mistaken for whites. The narrator observes, *"Must have been a hell of a confusing time, between the fifties and sixties, when whiteness was not yet properly defined, the narrator says."* (Wicomb *PITL* 121).

This statement illustrates the notion that even the Apartheid system had difficulty defining what a white person was in those days. During the Apartheid era, the white superiority complex was prevalent. Just like Marion, Flip Karelse enjoys the benefits of being perceived as white in South Africa. The narrator describes him and white superiority as:

*"[...] a handsome, light-skinned man with dreamy hazel eyes."* (Wicomb *PITL* 135).

*"No girl should be brought home after sunset; that was the rule, and it was because the Karelses thought of themselves as white, and therefore superior, that he dared to disobey."* (Wicomb *PITL* 137).

According to the narrator, this statement illustrates the idea of racial superiority and misidentification during the Apartheid era. They were mistaken for white people by the white population. It is clear from this paragraph that the white race was regarded as superior, and members of this race were allowed to break the rules of society with impunity.

Also, throughout the time of Apartheid, Zoe Wicomb criticised the ethical and moral corruption that persisted. Councillor Carter is one such figure. For a declaration of facts from Carter proving that Helen Campbell and her family are well-known white community members, Helen visits Carter's office and he demands a sexual encounter with him first. (Wicomb *PITL* 143).

Helen warns him that she is married, but Councillor Carter is firm in his desire to get physical with her. Councillor Carter's behavior exemplifies the immorality fostered by the ruling class during South Africa's period of racial apartheid. Since Carter is a representative of the whole South African elite, he serves as a metaphor for the entire system.

A traumatised John Campbell wants to unleash the past on his daughter Marion. He is determined to reveal to her the secret history of his family that he has been keeping hidden from her. Marion, a colored South African, has lived up until this point under the false impression that she belongs to the white race. John chooses Wynberg Park because he wants a place where he can have a conversation without interruption. It is said that

*"John barely recognises his own courageous voice: Come child, we'll go to Wynberg Park, and I'll buy you an ice cream. There we can talk nicely in the shade, clear up this whole business and forget about the past."* (WicombPITL155).

Upon arrival, John Campbell recounts his life story and how he and his ancestors were tricked into thinking they were white members of the town, despite their colour (Wicomb PITL 156).

Narrators tell us that the Traffic Superintendent mistook John for a Boer, making him incredibly happy. However, this does not imply that he was a fan of the white race. When apartheid was in effect, white people were considered the superior race. People of colour, in particular, were delighted to be mistaken for whites. As a result, they were able to enter the white population and take advantage of the resulting political and social divisions.

There was a near-constant demonstration by non-whites against the racist Apartheid laws. This was a major contributor to the period's high levels of violence and unrest. The narrator suggests that Elsie's husband, Fourie, was one of the most vocal critics of the oppressive Apartheid regime. The narrator remarks:

*"On the front page of the Cape Times there'd been a photograph of colored men waving defiant fists, and Fourie in the center named as a prominent Unity Movement rebel. They'd led a procession through the streets of Cape Town, congregating on the Grand Parade, where Fourie and others had spoken against the new laws."*(WicombPITL 170).

The Soweto Massacre was one of the most horrific, unpredictable, and explosive events in South African history. Soweto's children began a widespread protest against the use of Afrikaans as the predominant language of teaching in their public schools. Hundreds of students were killed as the police and military opened fire on the throng. Many literary works were inspired by this macabre episode. *"Burgher's Daughter"* (1977), by Nadine Gordimer, is a fictionalised account of

these events of 1976. Because of this, the work was forbidden from being read by the general population in South Africa.

Nadine Gordimer is one of South Africa's most influential novelists. When it comes to the apartheid system in South Africa, the author of *"Burger's Daughter"* goes into great detail about his political views. When Gordimer published the book, the limits of white liberalism were becoming increasingly apparent in South Africa, where Black Consciousness was beginning to develop. Rosa Burger, the book's protagonist, lives and works in apartheid-era South Africa from 1974 to 1977. Rosa's parents, both white anti-apartheid activists who died in prison, raised her to be an activist herself. White communism and the life of Bram Fischer, the head of the then-outlawed South African Communist Party (SACP), are among the topics addressed in the book. Gordimer paid tribute to Fischer by including passages from his writings and speeches throughout the book.

She said that *"the book was about more than a white communist suffering from white guilt, but rather that it was a story of commitment."* *"Unless whites are allowed in by blacks, and unless we can make out a case for our being accepted and we can forge a common culture together, whites are going to be marginal,"* Gordimer said (Shukla).

Sindiwe Magona, a South African novelist, social activist, motivational speaker, poet, and dramatist, explores themes of African spirituality and her experiences of political and gender enslavement in her autobiographical works. She is able to write candidly about the challenges faced by young black women in an underprivileged and culturally isolated setting because of her strong cultural and spiritual roots (Shoberl).

She writes the following in *"Beauty's Gift,"* the title of her second book: *"God knew the African woman was going to have an extremely hard life. That is why He gave her skin as tough as Mother Earth herself. He gave her that tough, timeless skin so that her woes would not be written all over her face, so that her face would not be a map of her torn and tattered heart."* (MagonaBG1).

Mandisa in *"Mother to Mother"* 1998; Beauty and Amanda in *"Beauty's Gift"* and Shumikazi in *"Chasing the Tails of My Father's Cattle"* by Magona are all examples of Magona's strong female protagonists, all of them are rooted in their spirituality and are able to persevere in the face of adversity because of it.

Her first autobiographical book, *"To My Children's Children"* reveals that as a youngster in the remote farmhouse, her grandmother would tell her stories of African ogres and kings, villains and the virtuous. She recounts her father's role in the Anglican Church:

*"As soon as a child could speak, in my father's house, that child was taught*

*the Lord's Prayer. After the evening meal, evening chores and some family pleasantries, everyone was rounded up for evening prayer. Father's booming voice would announce the hymn to be sung at the onset of prayer. Following the singing, the children standing huddled together, arms folded, and eyes closed, would recite the Lord's Prayer."* (Magona TMCC p. 55)

While Magona confesses that she is a Christian and follows Christian moral values in her writing, she also appreciates African traditional religion, cautioning that "we scrambled to be civilised and westernised and Christianized" and "we lost ourselves" in the process of becoming so.

In her older years, Magona remembers her involvement in the fusion of African and Western spirituality. She joined the Anglican Church. During this time, Magona's mother decided to enroll in a school for witch doctors, which caused her to have a crisis of conscience. Magona was shocked at first that her mother would be the one to 'bring [her] backwards with her barbarian ideas. She explains: "*I am proud of Mother, for she has travelled extremely far in her life's journey. And being a witchdoctor [traditional healer] is just one more way in which she has amazed me.*" (MagonaFTG 75).

Magona's Christian teaching on personal responsibility intoned condemnation and was viewed as lacking grace. Guilt engulfed her when she discovered she was pregnant with a kid conceived by a penniless migrant labourer. To make matters worse, she married a man her parents despised because he lacked sufficient financial and intellectual resources. Fearful and ashamed, Magona gave in to the twin oppression that the spiritual legacies of apartheid and patriarchy had wreaked on African women. Magona claims: "It was natural."

*"...given such teachings, that I readily took the blame for the disastrous situation in which I found myself. My understanding of my religion offered me little solace. Indeed, by encouraging self-blame, it deprived me of a sense of injustice ... of being the injured one.* (MagonaFTG18).

Personal and social censures are often the outcome of breaking scriptural prohibitions, which can be a double-edged spiritual sword. However, when her husband walks away from her, she sees it as an unexpected moment of freedom.

Her first respite after her husband's abandonment and the birth of her third kid was a trip to the beach with friends. While swimming, her wedding ring falls off her finger. While reaching for it, she realises that thering was a symbol of social construction oh her freedom. As a result, she lets her ring wash away in the Pacific Ocean's refreshing waters.

*"On that first day of a brand-new year, in my twenty-fourth year of existence, in the agitated blue waters, I was born anew."*

In spite of her thrill, she contemplates suicide. But in her hour of need, she remembers her father's spiritual counsel:

*"The doors of a church are never locked...because God's house should always be ready and waiting for anyone who needs it, whether they need it physically or spiritually."*

Magonasays. *"In that church, that evening, I cried; and I prayed. Both activities were no strangers to me. I have, since then, known both, together and separately. There I received strength from God."*(Magona TMCC 170).

Thereon her efforts grew more focused and eventually resulted in her securing a new teaching position and a scholarship from University of Columbia to pursue a master's degree. After all that she has been through, Magona still writes about how thankful she is to God for the incredible turnaround in her life (MagonaFTG227). That is why she even paid for her ex-husband to come down to Cape Town so he could see his kids. I had let go of my resentment towards him without ever making a deliberate decision," she adds. I had long since forgiven him for what he had done. In fact, she interprets his abandonment as a sign from God:

In addition to her memoirs, Magona examines the connection between Christianity and African traditional religions in her work. *"Mother to Mother,"* her first novel, depicts a grief-stricken mother struggling to come to terms with the murder of her son by a white lady. By the time Magona learned that she had grown up with one of the murderers' moms, she was forced to write the narrative since she felt her own son was capable of similar cruelty.

Sindiwe Magona, a writer from South Africa, appears to be a person who believed that she was positioned in history to leave her imprint and illuminate a road for future generations to follow her. A poem by Magona (Please Take Photographs), entitled "Being," demonstrates her ability to harmonise spiritual and artistic aspects of her religious and cultural beliefs in order to create an enduring legacy of emancipation that is both hard-fought and well-deserved. This study aims to examine how Sindiwe Magona's Christian faith and African spirituality are intertwined in her literary works by analysing her autobiographies and fictional works. The dual spiritual manifestations are shown to have helped her and her characters build a sense of self and autonomy through the use of these synthesised spiritual practices in her creative writings.

This article has attempted to explain apartheid and post-apartheid fiction in the literary works of Nadine Gordimer, Zoe Wicomb and Sindiwe Magona. After apartheid, writers and artists have used memory to show how people in post-apartheid narratives "look back in anger" when omniscient narrators or the characters themselves invoke memories of the past. This paper posits and affirms that this is

the case in literary and cultural discourses after apartheid. Slavery and the slave trade's history continues to haunt the Caribbean and African Americans today, just as the legacy of apartheid continues to haunt the non-white South Africans. ■

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# The Role of Art and Literature during the Time of Global Crisis

Pallishree Pattanayak

Literature is the mirror of society. Whatever happens to any social community, anywhere in the globe, is addressed by writers in various forms. Crisis of various sorts like bonded labour, migration and displacement problems, child marriage, terrorism, subjugation, political upheavals, social stigmas, economic crisis, war, conflict, pandemic, gender disparities, hunger, poverty, and the like issues are emphasized by writers in their creative works. Even many global issues are resolved with the help of great writings, as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has its role to play in drawing the curtains on the bonded labor in America, and the dawn and voyage of International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement after the publication of *A Memory of Solferino*. This article explores a wide range of crises and the role played by literature during crises. Especially it lucidly focuses on the present scenario.

**Keywords:** Crisis, global, art, literature, change, social stigma, world, people, war, pandemic

Literature has a vital role in shaping the world, strengthening and promoting resilience and resourcefulness at the time of global crisis. This essay depicts how change comes after literary interventions of certain problems.

Is it an idealistic claim that literature can change the world; can it help in times of global crisis? And the answer to this is a big Yes, it can. Human civilization has transformed itself into a modern, rationalistic, educated, intellectual society by removing various social stigmas, bad practices, and superstitions through various social activities and powerful writings. "Literature and the arts have always held a prominent place in helping to define who we are as human beings and enriching our lives. This is all the more apparent during moments of crisis, like the current COVID-19 pandemic."<sup>1</sup> We lead a normal life with all basic amenities but during crises like war, and pandemics the situation changes. Shortage of food, water, medicine, and other necessities during the period affect mental conditions of the sufferers too. Their art and literature help the lonely and worried souls. They try to restore their

hopes and dreams of life, a life which people used to live regularly. Cascardi says “If we don’t have a sense of what that hope is like, we don’t understand what a crisis is. They have to be understood together. I think that is a very important point to keep in mind as we struggle through a crisis with a very uncertain and unknown end”.<sup>2</sup>

This paper examines the role of literature during a crisis through four case studies.

**Case Study One: *A memory Solferino* by Henry Dunant:** The foreword of this book depicts, “In normal circumstances, in the organized society in which the usually lives, man is protected by laws and finds sustenance close to hand. But there are also situations, such as armed conflicts or natural disasters, when society is thrown out of kilter, laws are violated, man’s natural environment is turned into chaos, and his safety, health, and very survival are threatened: in times like those the Red Cross strives to help and protect the victims.”<sup>3</sup>

Today Red Cross is one of the greatest organizations working across the globe during any crisis which is impelled and guided by its humanitarian ideals which find their concrete expression through deeds. “The movement has become worldwide, showing that it is not confined to a particular time, race, religion, or culture. Suffering is universal and the Red Cross strives to give assistance and protection to all those suffering, wherever they may be.”<sup>4</sup>

Henry Dunant is known as the father of the Red Cross. A man from Geneva, Switzerland was born into a very affluent family. While on a business trip to Italy, Dunant chanced to arrive in Castiglione DellaPieve on the same day in June 1859 when the Battle of Solferino was fought nearby. He witnessed the sufferings of the wounded and felt the inadequacy of medical services. He tried to help each casualty to lessen the suffering, especially the wounded army personnel. He wrote the book *A Memory of Solferino*, which originated the Red Cross movement. The book is very slim having only a hundred and forty-five pages but it could bring a remarkable change globally. Finally in 1901 Noble committee awarded him its first Peace Prize. The book could create sympathy and people understood the grave situation of the crisis which opened up a window of solution. Now each country contributes its part to help each other in the time of crisis through Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.

**Case Study Two: *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* or, *Life Among the Lowly*.** This book is an anti- Slavery novel by American author Harriet Beecher Stowe. Published in two volumes in 1852, the novel had a profound effect on attitudes toward African Americans and slavery in the US and is said to have helped lay the groundwork for the American Civil War. At that time slavery was a great inhuman practice by English people and indeed a crisis for human civilization. Stowe a Connecticut-born woman of English descent was part of the religious Beecher family and an active abolitionist. She wrote the sentimental novel to depict the reality of slavery while also asserting

that Christian love could overcome slavery. The novel focuses on the character of Uncle Tom, a long-suffering black slave around whom the stories of the other character revolve. The influence attributed to the book was so great that a likely apocryphal story arose of Abraham Lincoln meeting Stowe at the start of the civil war and declaring, “So this is the little lady who started this Great War”.<sup>5</sup>

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* was the first bestselling novel. The author's courage to pen about the most practiced inhuman activities in her community inspires all to believe in our ability to make positive changes. The book challenges to confront America's complicated past and connect it with today's global issues. Her candor on the controversial subject of slavery encouraged others to speak out and unitedly all marched towards the 1861 civil war and finally slavery ended. This is what literature does in times of global crisis. A magnum opus has no boundary of country, caste, creed, race, or religion; it affects global citizens, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a burning example.

**Case Study Three: *Deshantara*** Published in two issues in a reputed Odia magazine in 2018 by Aditeswar Mishra an acclaimed Odia writer focuses on realistic problems faced by local and tribal people in the poverty-stricken belt of Western Odisha. This literary piece covers diverse issues such as strengthening labour rights for migrant workers, improving migration data as a basis for the evidence, and child trafficking. Some people move in search of work or economic opportunity to other places and some in search of a living. These migrant labourers are called Dadan in Western Odisha. This is rampant here and in this novel the writer has shown the realistic picture of migrant labour (Dadan in Odia) by the character Baranaand and his family members. How the family has been harassed by Sikandar (the contractor) of the brick kiln, the torture, and all the inhuman practices done to other migrant labourers and their families. The second part of the Novel says about child trafficking; a heart-wrenching story of Tara, how she is sold and forced to get married at a tender age and then exploited repeatedly. Her character picturizes innumerable unspoken stories of children who are going through serious problems. The novel is written in the local dialect has depicting a grave problem that occurs everywhere. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that 1,00,000 children are trafficked each year. In 2012, the UNO office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported the percentage of child victims had risen in 3 years span from 20 percent to 27 percent. Every year 3,00,000 children are taken from all around the world and sold by human traffickers as slaves, and sex workers. 70 percent of child sex trafficking survivors were at some point sold online. In today's century where we all talk about human rights but in practice it fails in some poverty-stricken belt of the world.

This novel is a research work that identifies the cause of these crimes as poverty, humanitarian crisis, and lack of education even pointing a finger toward the political system, and law enforcement agents as well. Though United Nations

Organization is working towards peace, dignity, and equality on a healthy planet, still these goals are not achieved yet.

**Case Study Four: COVID-19** approached as a pandemic and the globe just thrilled with worries. People died like insects and invisible viruses created havoc. People have been locked within four walls and the planet earth came into a standstill. At that time media played a vital role, technology opened a new vista of online entertainment, education, medical assistance, and many more. Research shows that at the time of COVID-19, an international crisis reading, writing, and other creative engagement benefitted people's well-being in a greater way. It helped to release anxiety, stress, and depression and made a stronger community though all were physically separated but connected socially and finally winning over the situation.

Tyler Stovall writes for San Francisco Chronicle and has given a list where novels and stories that explore the impact of Pandemics on humanity. "I've listed below a few novels and stories, from the past to today that explores the impact of pandemics on humanity. Doubtless, you can add your own favourite works, and I encourage you to do so. Hopefully, they will serve as a resource and as an inspiration as you negotiate these difficult days with your family and friends a reminder that even the hardest times can prompt and illustrate the triumph of the human spirit."<sup>6</sup>

Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron* (1353): The granddaddy of pandemic fiction, *The Decameron* relates tales told by refugees from the Black Death in 14<sup>th</sup>-Century Florence.

Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722): The Plague Year gives a literary and historical account of the bubonic plague in 17<sup>th</sup> century London.

Katherine Anne Porter, *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (1939): A short story about the great flu pandemic of 1918-1919 by an author who survived it.

Ahmed Ali, *Twilight in Delhi* (1940): Another novel about the 1918-1919 flu pandemic, in this case, set in colonial India.

Albert Camus, *The Plague* (1947): A novel about the plague in French-ruled Algeria after World War II, often seen as a metaphor for everything from Nazism to colonialism and the existential crisis of the human spirit.

Kenzaburo Oe, *Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids* (1958): The story of a group of reform school boys sent to a plague-stricken Japanese village during World War II.

Michael Crichton, *The Andromeda Strain* (1961): A classic science fiction about medical attempts to combat a pandemic.

Octavia E. Butler, *Survivor* (1978): A novel about the survivors of a widespread plague on the Earth who settle on another planet.

Gabriel García Marquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985): A novel by the great Colombian writer that explores analogies of love, passion, and disease.

Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *The Year of the Flood* (2009): The two novels explore how women and men adjusted to a world torn apart by the disaster.

Philip Roth, *Nemesis* (2010): A novel about the impact of the 1944 polio epidemic on a Jewish neighbourhood in Newark, N.J.

Colson Whitehead, *Zone One* (2011): A portrait of New York City as a post-apocalyptic dystopia infected by a plague that turns its inhabitants into zombies.

Art has promoted health within our homes during COVID-19 as families have been getting creative at home. As we are spending more time with ourselves during this pandemic, art and craft-making have rocketed. Public art allows us to see ourselves and our identities within a larger society and to feel comfortable in our surroundings. It's no surprise that statues of oppressive historical figures are being removed as a part of the current social justice movement. When our environments represent and reflect our experiences and communities, we are healthier and happier.<sup>7</sup> ■

At the time of global crisis, literature offers important insights into how people have dealt with trauma in past, what is the present situation and how to overcome it. Literature in many forms gives an intimate view of the crisis and its effect. The literature says about social justice and demands for equity. With entertainment being the prime motive, it encourages people to face the situation bravely restoring the essence of life.

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# Neurofeminism in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* – A Study

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Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* deals with the futile struggle of women against dependence and subordination of women in the portrayal of a few select characters in the novel following the prejudice of supposedly inherent and inborn mental inferiority as women in general are branded with. A detailed study of these women shows that they are not inherently inferior in their brain to men and reveals that the women remain subjugated or subordinated due the age-old social practice of treating them so. In other words, it emphasises that it is a social construct rather than the male-female brain variation. This theme corresponds itself to Neurofeminism which rejects the notion of the sexed brain and argues that such a belief was constructed by the patriarchy to subjugate women. Therefore, the women characters in the novel are analysed with reference to their dependence on and subordination to men and establishes that women are equivalent to men in terms of their brain as they strive hard for education and employment but are defeated by the social practices of male domination. The theory of Neurofeminism is employed as the backdrop of study of the women characters in this paper.

## **I. Introduction:**

About the author

Tsitsi Dangarembga is a novelist, playwright, and filmmaker from Zimbabwe. *Nervous Conditions* (1988), her debut novel and the first to be published in English by a black woman from Zimbabwe, was selected one of the top 100 novels that have impacted the world by the BBC in 2018. Her novel *This Mournable Body* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2020, and she has received important national honours such as the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, the PEN International Award of Freedom of Expression in 2021, and the Windham-Campbell Literature Prize in

2022. The choice of neurofeminism as the theme for *Nervous Conditions* stems from a desire to depict gender prejudice in Zimbabwean culture. In this paper an attempt shall be made to study in the novel with reference to neurofeminism.

## **II. Methodology**

The study employed an analytical and applied research design and adopted the textual analysis methods for the critical reading of the primary text by Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*. The electronic materials, journals, and any other sources relevant to this study are carefully examined.

## **III. The Plot of *Nervous conditions*- A Brief Note**

The plot revolves around the struggles of several female characters in a male-dominated culture. This novel offers a unique perspective on the country's traditional way of life. It is written in the first person and is divided into two sections. The first phase occurs prior to Nahmo's death, while the second occurs after his death. The story follows Tambu, a bright young woman from a rural hamlet who wishes to see the globe through education. Her dream of education, however, will not be realised because her family does not have enough money to pay for both of their children's education, therefore Nahmo will be sent to a missionary school. They believe that a boy's education is especially important because he will be the family's future guardian. Tambu is disappointed by this discriminatory choice, and she works hard to persuade her parents by selling vegetables and working in tobacco fields to acquire enough money to enrol in a missionary school. She set aside some funds to use for her own schooling, but she was unable to do so. Her parents spend all of that money on Nahmo's education. They even consider arranging Tambu's marriage in order to secure financial support for Nahmo's future. After a few months, when she turns 13, the second section begins with news of Nahmo's untimely death and descriptions of several other people. As a result, she seeks to establish a new life in Umtali town with her aunt and uncle. The plot does not revolve around Nahmo's death. Furthermore, it is about women's modest existence. Following Nahmo's death, Tambu can look forward to a brighter future with educated family who will continue to support her education after Nahmo's death. As a result of her brother's death, she can pursue her educational goals, which she was unable to do during his life because her parents regard a male child as more admirable than a girl child. This viewpoint leads to discrimination in the household between male and female children, leading Tambu to rejoice at Nahmo's death. She is given the opportunity to study in a secondary missionary school and receives a scholarship after passing all the required tests. She makes significant progress in her educational learning and witnesses' cultural changes in lifestyle and institution. The novel depicts the subservient battle of female characters such as Maiguru, Nysha, Lucia, Netsa, Mainini, and Tambu, who are oppressed by a patriarchal society based on gender distinctions in the human

brain. These female characters' ambitions are stifled by their inferiority complexes as a result of being female in a male-dominated culture that does not enable a woman to be treated equally to a man in any way. In nerve condition, the theme of Neurofeminism is distinct. An attempt is made to outline and examine this type of Neurofeminism phenomena, as well as its implications for human life. As follows, a full examination of the novel is done.

#### **IV. Neurofeminism in *Nervous Conditions***

The term Neurofeminism refers to a critical examination of gendered assumptions in brain research, as well as an examination of the impact of neuroscientific research on gendered order and cultural ramifications, and an attempt to unify gender discrimination.

The concept of Neurofeminism in *Nervous Conditions* is attempted to be validated in this work. The author is attempting to reveal the presence of gender bias in Zimbabwean culture which is learned concept from the society and followed by generation to generation. The human brain, like other organs in the body, is a meaning-making device or machine, but stereotype thinking is a result of society and culture rather than being intrinsic. The liberal and radical perspectives on Neurofeminism are the two basic types. Individual perspectives are shaped by social and cultural factors; femininity is a construct that is learned through socialization to maintain men's dominance. This issue is well-represented in the novel, since the female characters are describing their complete reliance on men in every way.

#### **Neurofeminism in *Nervous Conditions* an analysis**

Neurofeminism is a relatively new term that arose as a reaction to neurosexism in neuroscientific research, which drew the sexist conclusion that men and women have distinct brains. In Baron Cohen's Empathising- Systematising (E-S) theory, which describes the behavioural split between male and female brains, the history of science has been given various illustrations to establish women's inferiority with reference to males. He investigates the differences in behaviour between young boys and girls. Boys are more likely to play with plastic vehicles and have a mechanically inclined mind. Plastic dolls and kitchen sets are popular among girls' toys. This type of investigation exemplifies the neurosexism phenomena and describes additional sexist conclusions that lead to detrimental cultural stereotypes.

Cordelia Fine coined the term neurosexism (neuro=study of nervous system, sexism=discrimination based on sex) in her book *Delusion of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and 'Neurosexism Create Differences'* (2010), which exposes the sexist ideas that men and women's brains have permanently different interests. Cordelia and a few other scholars suggest that the distinctions between men and women are due to socio-cultural and bio-cultural factors rather than hardwired brains.

These distinctions have long been used in culture to maintain male dominance over females. As a counter to neurosexism and to unite gender differences, a feminist scholar group offers the provocative word Neurofeminism, which has now penetrated mainstream academic circles.

The novel's portrayals of female characters are as follows: The nature of Maiguru, Netsa, Lucia, MininniNysha, and Tambu is passive. The characters' meekness develops because of the established social customs in their milieu, which are more gender discriminatory.

Maigur's Entanglement in gendered culture:

Tambu believes that Maiguru is enjoying an autonomous and equal life in Umatli with her uncle at the beginning of the story. Tambu's aunt, Maiguru, is a brilliant and well-educated lady who obtained a master's degree and a teaching position in a missionary school but has not followed any independent career equivalent to her qualifications due to the sexist culture and tradition she lives in. Even though she is just as qualified as Babamukuru and possesses equal intellectual power, she is still expected to play the traditional female role.

Mothers' Entanglement:

Tambu's mother is another excellent example of the Neurofeminism element in the novel, as depicted by the author. She is suppressed by the male dominating generation, first under her father, then married to an alcoholic husband and has repeated miscarriages, all while adhering to the culture of keeping sorrow and misery within. She is reared in an environment that considers and teaches women to be second-class citizens who must serve men until they die. She never encouraged Tambu to receive a decent education to change the village's social attitude about women; instead, she tried to bind her to the same circumstances, forcing her to live passively in a male-dominated culture. She never encouraged Tambu to receive a decent education to change the village's social attitude about women; instead, she tried to bind her to the same circumstances, forcing her to live passively in a male-dominated culture. Humans' perceptions of the universe are shaped by their surroundings, not their brains, according to their habits, traditions, and way of life.

Nysha's identity crises:

Nysha is a very ambitious and free-willed girl in the novel who aspires to have the same freedom in life as her brother Chido. She is highly intelligent and a researcher by nature, but she later suffers from psychological disorders because of the cultural divide between the sexes. She criticises the family's gender bias treatment of Chido when they permitted him to do combined studies at a friend's house but not for her. She is also barred from reading some of the novels from her father's library since she is a woman. This type of discrimination stems from patriarchal society,

and it is passed down from generation to generation by believing in male superiority and forcing it on females, leading to the deterioration of mental and physical characteristics in Nysha. She adopts a western lifestyle and manner of life, which is not well received by her family, who continue to reject her, causing Nysha mental distress.

Tambu's triple oppression:

In the novel, Tambu is put in triple jeopardy. She is subjected to oppression both within and outside of her family. To begin with, her father selects Nhamo as the most deserving child to receive an education. He believes that women are expected to handle housework and care for children at home, while also working in the fields with their children on their shoulders. Human nature is static when it comes to these types of cultural activities. Tambu's family followed the similar patterns, with her parents preferring chido to send missionary school to Umatli because to male power. Other female characters in the novel, such as Maiguru, Netsa, Lucia, and Mininni, are oppressed as patriarchal rules predominate the society, and they have developed a mindset that they are inferior to men, as well as the patriarchal approach that the cause of women oppression is due to gender differences, and the root cause is patriarchal society's oppression of women. It conveys the need to talk about the issues that exist in the area, such as patriarchal gender relations that lead to oppression and suppression, as well as male supremacy. The main goal of Neurofeminism is to unify gender inequalities that are socially constructed rather than brain based. The female characters mentioned above in the story, whose decisions are not taken into account by the family's male members. They don't even participate in masculine discussions since they've learned femininity through socialization and have been socialised to act as an inferior object to men from generation to generation.

### **Conclusion;**

1. The study reveals that these characters struggle to prosper in their careers, which is evidence that their brains are not inferior to those of men- indeed; they are labourers and lack a background in formal education. Despite the patriarchal system being in their favor, women are striving for higher positions of responsibility, proving that their brains are equal to those of males. However, they were unsuccessful due to male dominance, leading to the conclusion that women are equally as strong as men in their brain size. ■

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# Feminist Theories and Praxis

Devaraj Hanchinamani

Feminism has been defined variously by the theorists. Mary Wollstonecraft in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) highlights that man dominates family and society. She is of the opinion that capitalism is the basis of discrimination between men and women. Charles Fourier, a utopian socialist and French philosopher coined the word 'feminism' in 1872. Feminists have different causes and goals in different cultures and countries. But all the movements that contend women's rights are feminist movements. The pre-modernist feminists' movements are termed as proto-feminist, sometimes. This research paper is a critical analysis of feminist theories.

**Keywords:** empower, feminist, homophobia, suffrage, discrimination

Feminism is a range of socio-political movements and ideologies that define and establish political, economic and social equality of sexes. Feminism holds that patriarchy dominates society.

Feminist movements emerged long back. The 12<sup>th</sup> century South Indian Lingayat pioneer Akkamahadevi and other sharanas fought for equality of gender. Basava, the founder of Lingayatism emancipated and empowered them as well as dalits. The Chinese Communist Party integrated women into workforce. Arabian Nawar at Hasson Galley wrote *The Liberation of Women* (1999), and he argued for legal and social reforms for women. These are a few sporadic attempts for woman rights in history. Most religions have enslaved woman both in theory and practice.

**Waves:** The histories of modern-feminist movements are divided into four feminist waves. Wikipedia writes:

The first comprised women's suffrage movements of the 19th and early-20th centuries, promoting women's right to vote. The second wave, the women's liberation movement, began in the 1960s and campaigned for legal and social equality for women. In or around 1992, a third wave was identified,

characterized by a focus on individuality and diversity. Additionally, some have argued for the existence of a fourth wave, starting around 2012, which has used social media to combat sexual harassment, violence against women and rape culture; it is best known for the Me-Too movement. (Wikipedia-Feminism 3)

### **First Wave (19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> c):**

In *Feminism* Cathia Jenainati and Judy Groves think, “We think of first wave feminism as referring to the organized feminist activity which evolved in Britain and the USA in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This organized movement relied primarily on the various independent and sporadic activities of 18<sup>th</sup>-century feminists.” (Cathia Jenainati 20)

The first wave feminist movement that took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century focused on the promotion of equal contract, marriage, parenting and property rights for women. New legislation included the Custody of Infants Act 1839 in the UK, the Married Women’s Property Act 1870 in the UK (and its extended 1882 Act), and also in Australia subsequently the women’s suffrage and women’s sexual, reproductive and economic rights. New Zealand granted suffrage rights in 1893, followed by Australia in 1894; England granted voting rights to women (above 30 years with property) in 1918. Emmeline Pankhurst campaigned in England bravely. *Time* said, “Pankhurst shaped an idea of women for our time; she shook society into a new pattern from which there would be no ‘going back’ (Stearman 22). Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan Anthony campaigned for the abolition of slavery. Quakerism influenced them. The US women got voting rights in 1919.

Gradually France (in 1944) and Switzerland (1971) granted voting rights to women. Feminists continued to reform family laws which gave husbands control over their wives.

### **Second Wave (1960s):**

M.H. Abrams’ thinks feminism “As a distinctive and concerned approach to literature, feminist criticism was not inaugurated until late in the 1960s.” (Abrams 124)

French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir provided a Marxist solution and an existentialist view on many of the questions of feminism with the publication of *Le Deuxième Sexe* (The Second Sex) in 1949. The book expressed feminists’ sense of injustice. Second-wave feminism is a feminist movement beginning in the early 1960s and continuing to the present; as such, it coexists with the third-wave feminism. Second-wave feminism is largely concerned with issues of equality beyond suffrage, such as ending gender discrimination.

Second Wave feminists focused on equality between sexes. Feminist Carol Hanisch declared 'The personal is political.' Egypt President Nasser (in 1956) initiated state feminism. However, Islamic feminism argues for women's equality within Islamic framework. Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique* (1963) voiced American women's discontent. The book sparked the second wave feminism in America. Australian feminist Germaine Greer published *The Female Eunuch* (1970) and posited that men hate and suppress women.

**Third Wave (1990s):** The emergence of the riot grrrl feminist punk subculture in Olympia, WA, USA in the 1990s initiated the third wave feminism. The context was Judiciary Clarence Thomas' harassment to Anita Hill. Rebecca Walker wrote:

So I write this as a plea to all women, especially women of my generation: Let Thomas' confirmation serve to remind you, as it did me, that the fight is far from over. Let this dismissal of a woman's experience move you to anger. Turn that outrage into political power. Do not vote for them unless they work for us. Do not have sex with them, do not break bread with them, do not nurture them if they don't prioritize our freedom to control our bodies and our lives. I am not a post-feminism feminist. I am the Third Wave. (Wikipedia 6)

Third Wave feminism focused on micro-politics. It tended to be a post-structuralist interpretation of genders and sexuality. Non-white second wave feminists Gloria Anzaldua, bell hooks, Chela Sandoval, Cherrie Moraga, Audie Gorde, Maxine Hong Kingston and others sought a space in race related subjectivities. They initiated debates about internal differences. Their Standpoint Theory (stating a person's social position influences his knowledge) called the traditional theory as biased. They speak of rape, incest, prostitution, female genital mutilation, race, homophobia, class, and matrix of domination.

#### **Fourth Wave (2012):**

Fourth Wave feminism is an extension of the Third Wave. It is associated with social media. Prudence Chamberlain argues for justice for women and opposition to sexual harassment and violence against women. Media like Face book, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Tumbler and blogs are used to challenge misogyny and further gender equality. Issues that fourth-wave feminists focus on include street and workplace harassment, campus sexual assault and rape culture. Scandals involving harassment, abuse, and murder of women and girls have galvanized the movement. These have included the 2012 Delhi gang rape, 2012 Jimmy Savile allegations, the Bill Cosby allegations, 2014 Isla Vista killings, 2016 trial of Jian Ghomeshi, 2017 Harvey Weinstein allegations and subsequent Weinstein effect, and the 2017 Westminster sexual scandals.

**Theories:** Feminism itself is a grand theory. And it encompasses a variety of disciplines like anthropology, sociology, economics, literary criticism, art history, psychoanalysis and philosophy. The theory aims at understanding gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations and sexuality. It promotes women's rights and interests. The areas of study are discrimination, stereotyping, objectification, oppression and patriarchy. Examples of fourth-wave feminist campaigns include Everyday Sexism Project, No More Page 3, Stop Bild Sexism, Mattress Performance, 10 Hours of Walking in NYC as a Woman, #YesAllWomen, Free the Nipple, One Billion Rising, the 2017 Women's March, the 2018 Women's March, and the #MeToo movement. In December 2017, *Time* magazine chose several prominent female activists involved in the #MeToo movement, dubbed "the silence breakers", as Person of the Year. ■

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# Migration and its Chaotic Interface in Select Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto

**Bondita Baruah**

Saadat Hasan Manto witnessed the Partition of India in 1947 on religious lines, while living in the city of Bombay congregated with multiple and mixed ethnicities. Being a revolutionary and a progressive, Manto used his stories as a strategic device to position them against the political rationality of territorial division of the country. Taking select stories of Saadat Hasan Manto, the present paper will attempt to explore how the partition induced migration led to a chaotic interface where cities divided, harmonious communities of people became enemies, and the interchange led to a fusion where the migrant's sense of 'self' became vague and distorted.

**Keywords:** migration, partition, border, chaotic interface.

The history of human migration is eponymous to the origins of human civilization. Earlier this movement involved moving long stretches for the basic amenities of food and shelter. With the initiation of agriculture, people shifted from temporary movement to permanent settlement in alluvial soils with ample water resources for sustenance. With changing times, the features of migration underwent alterations. In the contemporary scenario migration basically occurs in between two sovereign states or internal migration within them, bound and controlled by the sovereign laws of legality or illegality.

Modern mass migration from the 1800s well into the 1930s was chiefly a result of European industrial and colonial expansion across the globe that ushered in the idea of 'newness' that was witnessed. This migration though uneven, inconsistent and multidirectional, was significant in altering the trajectory of world population. Two very basic features of migration are voluntary migration and involuntary migration. While voluntary migration for the want of exposure to better opportunities is a choice, involuntary migration is often "driven and accompanied by extraordinary events such as wars, partition and ethnic/ religious strife" (Bharadwaj 39) which involves large scale or mass movement of people in a particular period of time.

Migration literature, especially of the involuntary nature generates stories of migrants, their lived experiences and testimonials of being exiled and branded refugees. Saadat Hasan Manto witnessed the religious separation of the country into India and Pakistan, while living in a city that constituted a population of mixed race and ethnicities. The mass migration of over 15 million people at the ‘post-colonial moment’ between the newly truncated borders was the biggest involuntary migration in history. Being a revolutionary and a progressive, Manto used his stories as a strategic device to position them against the political rationality of territorial division of the country. Taking select stories of Saadat Hasan Manto, this paper will attempt to explore how the partition induced migration led to a chaotic interface where cities divided, harmonious communities of people became enemies, and the interchange led to a fusion where the migrant’s sense of ‘self’ became vague and distorted.

Migration is a universal phenomenon resulting not just from war or partition, but also for economic and social reasons, demographic and climate changes, fear of political persecution, better exposure to opportunities and so on. Literary narratives give voice to all these forms of migration from different vantage points. The production of such literature revealing varied perspectives of the mood, orientation, methods of migration, both positive and negative, that interfaces with race, ethnicity, language, politics, culture, has led to the vast gamut of migration literature in postcolonial times.

India was partitioned in 1947 into two nations, India and Pakistan (East and West wings) and in the duration of a few months nearly 14.5 million people migrated across the border. Muslims were travelling west to their designated country, Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs were leaving for the east, that is, India.

Saadat Hasan Manto was in Bombay when the partition or independence of India was declared in 1947 and speeches made by Jinnah and Nehru over the radio. He experienced the violence that came with partition and quite casually declared that the reasons were the same “mandir and masjid, cow and pig” (*Why I Write* 59) but for him the former signified only stone, and the latter meant only flesh. While Manto does not mention any religion in his stories, in his non-fictional work *Why I Write* he declares in a neutral vein that “equal blood was drawn and shed by both sides” (63). Manto observed the “chaos, mayhem, panic everywhere” and realized that the two nations of independent India and independent Pakistan were born “from the womb of this anarchy” (63).

People migrated because they did not feel secure in their homes where they had lived for generations. The violence that accompanied partition was genocidal in proportions and was “coloured by racial, religious and social prejudices” (Hildyard 4). Horror and fear of rapes, murders and social stigma of being excluded from the community propelled people to migrate. Ayesha Jalal in *The Pity of Partition* describes

partition as a “blot in the face of humanity” (141) when ‘unpardonable horrors’ were committed and the looming nostalgia of bestiality that made most people unwilling “to outgrow the psychological nightmare of partition” (141).

Urvashi Bhutalia in *The Other Side of Silence* offers a vivid picturesque of the exodus of people crossing borders,

People travelled in buses, in cars, by train, but mostly on foot in great columns called kafilas, which could stretch for dozens of miles. The longest of them, said to comprise nearly 400,000 people, refugees travelling east to India from western Punjab, took as many as eight days to pass any given spot on its route. (3-4)

This is how population exchange or migration was witnessed in general terms. Those in authority tried to depict a glossy picture of how an orderly process of dividing a nation into two had been solemnized in pen and paper. But partition was also the fuzzy moment of statelessness, loss of homes, violence, macabre deaths of innocent people, the psychological trauma of fright, rage, hatred and bitterness.

Manto’s story “Toba Tek Singh” depicts the confusion and bewilderment of Bishen Singh, a lunatic when he hears the news of his deportation to India along with other non-Muslim lunatics. Inmates of the asylum reacted in different ways, one of them got on a tree and declared that he neither wanted to be in India or Pakistan, but wished to live in the tree. As he got down from the tree he embraced his fellow Sikh and Hindu friends with tears in his eyes, “fully convinced that they were about to leave him and go to India” (*Bitter Fruit* 10). Another inmate, a Muslim radio engineer took off all his clothes and ran stark naked to the garden. Yet another lunatic declared himself as Jinnah and a Sikh as Tara Singh, the leader of the Sikhs. Though the prevalent confusion, Manto in his characteristic style subverts “the hierarchical privileging of the sane over the insane” (Mukherjee 95).

Bishen Singh who was a prosperous landlord from Toba Tek Singh had suddenly gone mad and had been in the asylum for the last fifteen years. From his original name, he began to be called by the name of his native village. He hardly talked but occasionally uttered a few lines of gibberish “Uper the gur gur the annexe the bay dhayana the mung the dal of the laltain” (*Bitter Fruit* 11). But when the declaration of exchange was made, he began to question other inmates and guards as to where Toba Tek Singh was, in India or Pakistan.

On a cold winter evening when the exchange of lunatics took place, Bishen Singh could not be convinced to cross the border to India. He stood all night in between the two borders and as morning dawned he collapsed with a scream.

There, behind barbed wire, on one side, lay India and behind more barbed wire, on the other side, lay Pakistan. In between, on a bit of earth, which had

no name, lay Toba Tek Singh (*Bitter Fruit* 15).

“Toba Tek Singh” is Manto’s triumphant representation of the bewilderment that Partition caused. The political division caused social turmoil where the conventional markers of identity such as language, birthplace, family and culture stopped to bear any significance. As Anuparna Mukherjee in her work observes, “...many men and women failed to reconcile with the conflicts in their inner and the outer worlds, and thus succumbed to a baffling incomprehension” (94). The confusion in the story concerns Manto raising some perplexing questions on the absurdity of the arbitrary borders.

In *Why I Write*, Manto expresses the joy of the Muslims of Bhendi Bazaar in Bombay that they had been granted a Pakistan. But the irony lay in the fact that they did not know where and what this Pakistan was (64).

Having lost all secure markers of identity and not knowing where they belong, the migrating people or refugees became what Giorgio Agamben terms as the ‘homo sacer’. Agamben in *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, discusses that the homo sacer is a sacred man who has committed a crime for which he has become an outcast. Agamben notes, “It is not permitted to sacrifice this man, yet he who kills him will not be condemned for homicide” (71). In *Homo Sacer* Agamben, explains the term using two Greek words, *zoe* representing the biological or natural life that could be lived by all animals and *bios* that denotes the human amongst the community and its social sphere. Agamben unveils this figure of the homo sacer as an autonomous one and tries to locate itself within a political structure. Since the homo sacer has a double expulsion (human and divine) therefore, it represents a figure that is under a ban from the sovereign leading a ‘bare life’. But since it is living, it could come under the biopolitics of the outlaw and could be killed without a penalty or punishment since it has no protection from the law. So the homo sacer blurs boundaries between citizen and non-citizen and lies in the ambiguous situation that Pozzato in *The Refugee Crisis* observes as “The bare life/ political existence binomial is a central point in the practice of biopolitical power; it is precisely at the borderline created between *zoe* and *bios* that the Homo Sacer is to be found” (32). This position challenges the ever foreboding presence of the sovereign’s lack of accountability and responsibility for millions walking on the roads, crossing borders, dwelling in refugee camps in miserable conditions without security and protection.

The lack of accountability was the depravity that people witnessed as being inessential and inconsequential as all laws of the civil society were nullified and the sovereign not taking any notice beneath the façade of the inglorious Partition. The bare life existence was doubly witnessed by the woman’s body for—first, they belonged to a piece of land and were therefore a part of the process of migration following partition; second, their sexuality. Thousands of women were raped, mass

raped, brutally murdered thereafter and abducted for they were mere property owned by men. Since women's sexuality was associated to purity and was a matter of honour for the family, violating this private sphere was considered an act of bravery and valour on both sides of the divide.

In "The Dutiful Daughter", Manto relegates the penury of abducted women, but they were ones who had been taken and violated against their will. Many had committed suicide thinking that they had brought disgrace to the family and many lost mental sanity. There were others who retorted to alcohol because of the pain of their traumatic experiences and became abusive in their language. The sight that disturbed the narrator of the story most was their pregnant bellies. He expresses his concern thus,

What was going to happen to them and what they contained? Who would claim the end result? Pakistan or India?

And who would pay the women the wages for carrying those children in their wombs for nine months? Pakistan or India? Or would it be put down in God's ledger, that is, if there were still any pages left? (*Bitter Fruit* 188)

There were many women who refused to return to their families when rescue operations began in 1948 where hundreds of volunteers were employed to recover such abducted women and children to bring them back to their families. Manto offers a pertinent critique of these rescue narratives in the story "Open It" when Sakina was separated from her father in the station in course of their migration. The volunteers or 'khudai khidmatgars' who assured Sakina's father to bring her back to him in the refugee camp, turned out to be her perpetrators who gang raped her for days before retuning her to the camp almost like a corpse.

For Manto these efforts of rescue initiated by the state were illogical for the volunteers were engaged in rectifying or undoing "the effects of something that had been perpetrated by more or less the same people" (*Bitter Fruit* 187). All this was done because the private sphere of women was violated, "the bodies of women became privileged sites on whose surface the political programs of both states were brutally inscribed" (Mukherjee 94).

In the story "Free for All" Manto caricatures the absurdity of the entire partition paraphernalia through the observations of the grief stricken wandering minstrel Kabir. Kabir was sad when a refugee lawyer from India was given two hundred abandoned handlooms for from then on the looms would operate for making profit. The lawyer would not have the patience to understand that noise of the "clickety clack of a loom...is a weaver's only reason to live" (*Bitter Fruit* 230). When the statue of the Hindu goddess was covered with a length of cloth for the religion of the present occupants forbade idolatry, Kabir began to cry and asked "Does it not forbid

the degradation of beauty?” (*Bitter Fruit* 231). In another occasion when a new law proclaimed prostitutes to get married within thirty days, Kabir was baffled as to “Who will find them husbands?” (*Bitter Fruit* 232). The wandering minstrel was called by names, declared a communist and even a lunatic for his observations. But he retorted saying that he bore no robes or wore any armament of any affiliations.

Manto in his stories offers a pertinent critique of the grand narrative of Partition and the ruptures that came with it. Each of his stories on Partition is representative of the turmoil, penury and trauma of millions who set out to migrate, to cross borders towards their designated country. The pain was not only physical but psychological. Manto depicts that Partition induced migration was not unilateral, but its interface caused a complex of mixed identities or blurring of identities with which one had to recuperate, having landed in a new country.

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# Role of Subaltern Men in Subjugation of Subaltern Women - A Critical Study

Atul Ranjan

This article is written in context with a different perspective about how acts and actions of subaltern men are responsible for the suffering of subaltern women. I have taken two instances from the novel of Mahasweta Devi's '*Outcaste*'. One story is about a widow girl who was '*Dousadhin*' by caste and was forced to turn into a prostitute for survival. She was pregnant by upper caste zamindar of the village who were called '*Mishras*' or '*Deveta*'. The younger Mishra lured Dhouli into love and later betrayed her after sowing the seed of a child in her womb. Another story deals with a tribal girl who was sexually abused and exploited in the lieu of a 'better life', and finally, she had to kill herself to save the future of her husband and child from being 'an outcast'.

These two stories show one perspective of the subjugation and exploitation of people who are residing in power such as capitalists and the upper class. Readers are shown reality in a fabricated way, the voice behind closed doors is never heard, but a whimpering murmur is heard with a great deal when it comes to upper-class men's subjugation and domination of subaltern women. The question here arises about the eyes being shut on the actions of these subaltern men. This paper is drawn to show the actions of Sarjom and men around Dhouli, who put their women into jeopardy of the upper class and let them come into direct contact with exploitations of hegemony. Subtle readers understand, certain pre-established notions and perspective which is molded to show one side of the dilemma of subaltern women but what is happening '*behind the closed door*' and '*voice within voice*' is never understood or if understood is always being neglected, diverted to blindfolded reality. Through this work, the action, involvement, and subjugation carried by subaltern men are shown without any biases. The story itself mirrors and reveals how subaltern men play a very important role in the exploitation of their females. The motives, ambition of '*power*', and search for utopian imagination of subaltern men lead

subaltern females like Dhoul and Josmin into exposure and later into abuse and exploitation.

**Keywords-** Fabricated reality, Dual standards , Outcast , Sexual exploitation, Voice within the voice, Voice behind the closed door.

### **Voice behind the closed door**

Dhoul was a young girl, who was married at an early age but was kept at her parent's house before sending to her in-laws. Dhoul belonged to the '*Dhusadh*' caste in the village, which was the lowest in the social hierarchy order, they were called untouchables, and were also denied access to places where '*Mishras*' or '*Devata*' who were upper caste would go. They had miserable life which was dependent upon the mercy of '*Mishra's*'.

After Dhoul's '*Gauna*,' was sent to her in-law's house which was of her caste and also belonged to almost the same social condition. Her parents could only find a '*better*' husband for their daughter who was abusive, illiterate, used to beat Dhoul, and also forces her to submit to his conditions, now the most interesting part here in this picture are two words that we all are quite familiar with in our society as they are '*abusing*' and '*beating*'. Most scholars and critics only relate this term to a particular caste or strata of people who are residing in higher social order and position, writers often to draw these words with people who are at top of hegemony and have power, money, and position which they use to exploit and force women to submit to them and their needs. But Ironically, neither Dhoul nor his husband belonged to the 'higher social order' and they were also not in a position of some huge fortune yet she was tortured by her own man without mercy. Beating a woman is often related to which man who is weak, submissive, and who couldn't raise his voice in hegemony, he feels power in his hands when he uses his body parts to submit and harass girls like '*Dhoul*' to their feet.

To mention, Dhoul never rebelled against or raised any voice against her '*man*'. Neither critic asked Dhoul to speak nor did another man of her caste said to do so. This is not a reason of interest but in my opinion a reason for ignorance from the side of critics. Mahasweta Devi could have easily omitted the beating and exploitation of Dhoul by the hand of her husband and would have shown only the exploitation of upper caste men on lower caste women, which has now become a kind of ritual for today. She could have hidden it easily but she didn't do it as she also wanted her readers to listen to 'the voice inside of marginalized woman/girl like Dhoul. Devi's insight on Dhoul showed us how this '*subaltern man*' wants power to harness women to maintain their place in hegemony. Dhoul's father died, husband died from the disease. I would say that they put her into jeopardy of survival and on the mercy of other men, now she was widow, she was thought to be cursed and now even more untouchable not only to Mishra's but also by her own society. This

dogma was created by those residing in power but this power was practiced by those subaltern men more to outcast her and throw her out of village.

The Story moves and so does her misery, now she was pregnant by one of 'Devta' and her condition was now into girth to survive. More 'names' were added to her. 'Randi' was her new epithet to recognize, Randi is a term used for women, who sleeps with more than one man usually for money. Dhouli till now never did something like this to survive. She was duped, cheated in the name of enchanting love from 'Mishras/Devta'. My question here to the readers is that do you really want to blame a young girl? Her society did, they blamed her for believing in promises of Devta, Nevertheless, she had child in her womb, she was now a mother, a creator and most beautiful a believer in imaginative world of 'hope', but this wasn't understood by other 'Dhusadhs', 'Ganjus' and coolies. They saw a girl which could be pregnant by 'Devta' could also be easily handled by them, she was starving had no food to eat. She was left with no option as she wanted to survive, now no more promises, hope, life, she accepts collies for money, food and clothes, she buries her soul, her body was no more palace of love which she was known for. Everything stops for her, most of those coolies belonged to her caste or even were of her same condition, they came one by one at her and quench their soul until they wanted. Not a single tear was dropped from Dhouli's eyes, neither she enjoyed nor denied this processes. She was now officially a prostitute a girl who just want to survive to feed her child.

Normally, it is said that 'numbers make unity' but what was wrong with men of that village was that they themselves wanted to practice power in their hands, Mishras declared Dhouli as outcaste but this was more practiced by men of her own caste, they couldn't feed a girl who was widow, nor could provide shelter to her after she bore a child but these men were much interested into 'opportunity' rather than into helping Dhouli. In my opinion Dusadh men were equally responsible to be blamed as of Mishras were of her condition. Rules are made in society often by men to women, men of any class want power, without power they feel worthless yet they are suppressed by power above them. It takes top down improvised filtration here, where people residing at bottom feels the wrath much more than people above them. Men of Dhouli's village were people at lowest position in social strata, they wanted to practice power, they were like vultures looking for prey and Dhouli was there for them to be hunted. Already widow now becomes prostitute, guess who were her customers? Her own men of her own society. These were the same men who creates rules for girls like Dhouli and make them outcasts and label them as a prostitute.

### **Voice within voice**

The narrative of Sarjom and Josmina was also not a fairytale. Sarjom a tribal boy bought home Josmina after the love he had for her, perhaps an established

archetypal love story. Their tribe had a ritual of giving presents from the male side to the female. Sarjom wanted Josmina at any cost so for that, he borrowed money from Nandlal Shahu to pay the bride price for his love. He for that gave *three cows* (P 58) to Josmina's father. Josmina was with him now, Josmina never knew about the money he lend from Nandlal Shahu, she wouldn't have cared either if she had known. Love blinds everything, and when you had a bride like Josmina '*bubbling and lively as river koyena in the monsoons*' ( P58) no one would have had cared either.

Sarjom put thumb on the blank sheet of paper for his ambitious efforts of brining Josmina at his house for any cost .He made mistake , yes he did a mistake not only for himself but also for Josmina, his actions of lending money did not limit to him but now they both had to suffer in the hand of Nandlal Shahu. '*Ho*' tribe had their self respect , they never left any debts unpaid .Sarjom started working day and night in the fields of Nandlal to repay and he came back home with '*paila of makai*' p(59) , while Josmina collected roots and tubers from the forest they both ,were content with their life and the way life was proceeding, they had son named Masidas looked all on track but life never remains same , times changes everything so does it changes the water of Koyena into vapor . Starvation was everywhere and time was hard for both , Nandlal Sawan opportunity and lured Sarjom into false promise of '*better life*', a better wage. Yes an improvised imaginative life , a utopian dream. Sarjom who was already in a debt to Nandlal did one more mistake of trusting his words again .Actions and ambitions of Sarjom puts Josmina in jeopardy with him. Josmina a content wife , with no unnecessary dreams , living peacefully with her child , doing all chores with hard labor she could bore. Let me remind you here that Josmina never asked or demanded anything like Nandlal's wife did, as Nandlal's wife was greedy and ambitious women who wanted two stories pukka house to maintain her standard of living , this demand forced Nandlal to earn more money through other defective and crooked means .

In proceedings, we see that Sarjom accepts the proposal of Nandlal as he was promised to have ' plenty to eat, four hundred a month, enough clothes', this articulation ends all doubts of Sarjom –"*baap re baap*".Sarjom was convinced and now it was time to convince Josmina, he did convinced her too.As a reader I feel pity yet have to maintain my composure. I assure you that Josmina had no choice, she couldn't be blamed at all as she never knew where Punjab or even Ranchi was, all she knew she had to be with Sarjom in all his times of life, she asks him '*What about me*'"(p64) leads them into unknown roads of life.

Nandlal sold them for four hundred rupee and their journey of omniscient experience starts on the farm of Niranjana in Punjab, he was rich farmer .They were given tiny room , and fed well, Sarjom was given duty of taking care of the cows ,buffaloes from four to eight in the morning than to fields to irrigate the sugarcane and wheat fields,they were paid eighty rupees instead of hundred, it was less than what Nandlal promised .Due to greed and over hyped imagination of Sarjom now

Josmina was also trapped , *she was paid 40 rupee a month*(p69) for sleeping with Niranjan .Sarjom never knew what to be done now ? *"I cant figure it out , Josmina:"* shows his helpless for situations.This line ended all the hope for Josmina of better life , they knew they were trapped. A week man who couldn't decide and see concise pushes his female counterparts also into jeopardy .Josmina had faith on Sarjom's decision if this was not for Sarjom than she would have never came out of his village . Few days latter the process of hegemony's subjugation begins as 'Malik' came to hut and stripped her naked in front of baby Masidas .She had to bear this pain , she knew it was consent of her man as he had plan of escaping and told her to *'dance on their tune for a while'* . This procedure continued for days, it made her broken , ghost ridden. But day came and with the help of 'Sukhram' they escaped.

Next destination in the escape from better life was house of Karnal Singh in Johan village , he bought them for two hundred rupees . Karnal Singh took Josmina every 9 in the evening and do what was to be done , she kept silent in search of better life. Would you still blame hegemony for this ?most of reader would get an idea now how the actions of subaltern men in search for better creates problem for woman around them or related to them .

They ran once again from this 'better life' as this time was Pritam Singh and than Gyan Singh. Work, abuse and work was now part of their life, the life which got stuck into no where. The next stop was Sarban Singh, he treated him with care and fed them nicely, but faith of Josmina couldn't last long as his son Dileep Singh grabbed Josmina but now Josmina was habitual of this procedure. The seed was sowed, and they finally reached Rajbhasa, and the search for a better life came back to starting. But the trouble for Josmina never ended as it was time for other subaltern men to commence their power practice of 'outcast'. Josmina didn't bleed for two months now she knew what was going to happen. Yes, an 'outcast' carrying a 'Bikus' child was not permitted by those men and her society. These were the same men of her tribe who would have physical relations with other women, would make them pregnant yet they would not be outcasted from their society for Josmina it was either to be outcasted or to end their life, she choose to end her life to save her family from suffering. Her bare naked body washed by the waters of clam river Koyena(p83) looked so innocent and pure.

**Conclusion-** This article contains two stories of two different females of two different social orders, as a writer I have tried to pick out points from the stories to reflect what is happening behind the 'closed doors of subaltern women'. Most scholars, writers and readers are shown the reality of fabricated and certain perspectives. The reality to them is that only men of the upper caste and capitalist class are involved in subjugation but this view differs from the fictitious world created by them. I have tried to draw a whole new dimension through two stories in this article.

The narrative of subaltern men is quite different and hypocritical when it is seen closely. These men are already weak, fragile, and subjugated by hegemony and other substances in social order and by those who are in power. They are mistreated, manhandled, and given the status of subhuman by upper-class men and other dominating classes. It seems to us that they are in sense true subalterns in society, and all theories, articles, works, and stories need to be written and focused on them. It might be true from one perspective of narration yet on narrowing it down and enhancing our looking angle into literature carefully, we see that we are being diverted, duped, and blindfolded by the actions of these subaltern men. To say this in layman's terms ' *Looking behind the closed door*' we see that there is the cry of voice waiting to be heard. Now the question arises who are these voices and if these voices are already on the stage then what else needs to be heard? the question might seem to be very normal for readers but truth is that there is ' *voice within voice*' . The story of Dhoulī and Josmina concludes here that they both were common , simple girls , discharging their duties of parents and society, they both were ambitious lessor could be better-said greedless. They were happy and content with their faith but things started to get worse for them is a matter of grave and keen interest to us. In the very first story of Dhoulī, we see her widow, her husband, and her father both die of diseases, husband tortured her, and abused her but she kept the composure of the ideal wife and never raised a voice against her husband or in-laws, she suffered all in the name of marriage but when her husband died the problem started for her, she could have stayed at her in-law's house but this elder brother in law saw the opportunity as she was a widow and started harassing her, not to forget this his elder brother in law was also subaltern. His actions drove her out of their in-law's house. Now she had no option but to return to her house of parents in the village but as a widow, she was not accepted by the men of society. When Mishras/Devata got her pregnant and she carried ' *Dikus*' child in her womb, all other men of her community saw an opportunity to practice hegemonic domination . These men had no power and position in society , they were deprived of basic life yet they had position for practicing pseudopower on their own females. Dhoulī was outcast , became prostitute to fulfil her need of food . The ironical thing was about her being prostitute was that her own men of community were her customer. Orthodox and liberal scholars have had practiced a brilliant manipulation the technique of blaming and framing only men in power. Yes I agree they were the subjugator and exploiters but what about these subaltern men ? their actions were no less than these capitalist men. What they did to Dhoulī and Josmina is an example of the actions that they practice on these women.

While concluding Josmina's story, we saw that she was no other girl, like Dhoulī she had no desire for a better life, she was happy with her goats and tuber collection from the forest yet the greed of her husband put her into the ditch of life that. Sarjom at the very start took money from Nandlal puts him into bondage and a

trap of debt, a usual debt that makes him prone to exploitation, the main catch here is that lending money not only puts Sarjom into the trap but also Josmina unintentionally went into the clutches of Nandlal Shahu. Sarjom's actions put her life in jeopardy, she was raped by different men, and became a hollow ghost-ridden female, nothing was done, all was the fault of Sarjom. When Josmina knew she had a child of Sardar, she knew instantly she had bought trouble for her family. As strong man could have saved her life and would have fought society for her but she knew Sarjom wouldn't be doing anything like that so, she had no option but to kill herself to save future of her child and husband for being an 'outcast'. ■

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# Ruskin Bond's Innocuous World of Children

Ishrat Ali Lalljee

Ruskin Bond in his child-centric writings explores the innocent, guileless, fantastical and imaginative world of children in which minor matters become mega issues. He even presents amusing, zany characters with eccentricities and peculiarities to tickle the funny bone and intertwines moral lessons about reverence and care for elders, generosity, benevolence, forgiveness and like virtues in a non-pedantic manner. While Ruskin Bond has frequently been catalogued as a writer of children's stories, perhaps since some of his early stories did appear in children's magazines and the fact that his writings are increasingly finding their place in academic syllabi in India and abroad, his narrations in fact transcend the age barrier and make for delightful reading across the spectrum. Besides their high entertainment value for all age groups Bond's writings even offer an opportunity to adult readers to rewind their lives, albeit imaginatively and relive their childhood.

**Keywords:** Child-centric, Innocent, Amusing, Morals, Entertainment, Transcend

## Introduction

Ruskin Bond, in his writings celebrates the naiveté, mirth and frolic of childhood sheltered in the affection and guidance of caring adults and the company of loyal friends. In a distinctive career spanning over 07 decades Bond has over 120 titles in print which include 64 books for children. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ruskin\\_bond](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ruskin_bond)) In "Adventures in Reading" Bond has instantiated his inclination towards Children literature by resurrecting and giving due credit to John Newberry, a path breaker in the genre who set up the first major printing press and bookstore, especially for children's books and published the first ever children's storybook titled *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* in 1744 CE. (*The India I Love*, 97)

Besides Padmashri and Padmabhushan awards, Ruskin Bond has been conferred with the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship in 2021 which is India's highest literary honour that has to date been received only by 92 Indian litterateurs, famously described as 'the immortals of Indian literature'. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahitya\\_Akademi\\_Fellowship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahitya_Akademi_Fellowship)) Awards conferred on Ruskin Bond especially for Children's Literature include Sahitya Akademi's 'Bal Sahitya Puraskar' for his total contribution to children's literature in 2013; an award in recognition for his pivotal role in the growth of Children's Literature in India by the Indian Council for Child Education in 1987 and his nomination for the Hans Christian Andersen award by the IBBY (Indian Section of the International Board on Books for Young People) for his contribution to Children's Literature in 1996.

Even though Ruskin Bond's readership transcends the age barrier, he has somehow been moored with the image of being a writer of Children's Literature. He has clarified that though he never set out to be a children's writer he is frequently questioned about his inclination to write for children in particular. Nonetheless, he believes that "[S]mall children are the only sacred things left on the earth." ("Simply Living" *The India I Love*, 31) And also opines, "...I have so strong an empathy with children I can enter into their minds when I am writing about them." ("Introduction" *The Night Train at Deoli and Other Stories*, 11)

With an instinctive understanding of child psychology, incredible narration skills and underplayed humour Bond demonstrates how in the cocooned world of children trifling matters assume mega proportions. Interestingly and ironically, the titles of many of Ruskin Bond's stories for children (who are in fact little) contain the adjectives 'big' and 'great' since small is big and great in a child's world. The author takes his readers into the minds and hearts of children fully justifying Roopa Pai's affectionate description of him being the 'Pitamaha' of Children's Literature. (*The Telegraph*, June 03, 2021 np) In his writings Bond has also created idiosyncratic characters, inspired by his close relatives for the amusement of his child readers and even delivers many a palpable, yet palatable moral lesson for his young readers with an aplomb that brings with it credence and conviction.

### **Delving into the Minds and Hearts of Children**

A common fear among children of the consequences of poor academic performance has been brilliantly described by Ruskin Bond in his short story titled "The Long Day" through the ostrich approach of Suraj, the central character of the narration. The little boy leaves home early one morning and spends a long day loitering around the town aimlessly just to avoid being at home when the postman arrives with his results which he presumes will declare him 'Failed'. He whiles

away his time all day waving out to passing trains; fantasizing himself to be an engine driver; contemplating on the lives and destinations of the passengers in the trains and dawdling around all day long till hunger, exhaustion and having no other place to go to redirect him home. Then there is a humorous twist in the tale, which is a characteristic of Bond's writings. The little boy had made a mistake in the date. His results were expected on the following day!

In "Ranji's Wonderful Bat" Ruskin Bond expounds how a compatible and motivating adult can transform the world of a child and reinvigorate his self-confidence and determination. Ranji was a member of his school cricket team, but a spate of poor performances had made his place in the team uncertain. On his way home Ranji used to frequently stop at Mr. Kumar's Sports Shop to look at the goods on display and chat with the genial owner of the shop who had once been a State level player. One day a perturbed Ranji didn't stop by so Mr. Kumar called out to him; heard out his apprehension and comforted him with a homespun philosophy. He said: "Never mind, where would we be without losers? There wouldn't be any games without them – ... No sports shop for me!" (*The Road to the Bazaar*, 19). Mr. Kumar then gifted Ranji a bat and said that it had been his luckiest bat. The bat worked magic for Ranji whose performance kept improving till one day he lost the bat and became despondent, but was once again pepped up by Mr. Kumar who simply told him:

"[I]t's the batsman and not the bat that matters.  
Shall I tell you something? The old bat I gave you  
was no different from any other bat I've used...A  
bat has magic only when the batsman has magic!  
What you needed was confidence, not a bat. And  
by believing in the bat, you got your confidence  
back! " (24)

The guileless realm of children; their fantasies and implausible future vocations are explored in Bond's story titled "The Big Race" in which three children, Bhim, Ranji and Koki organized a race for their pet beetles with unusual names such as 2001, Moocha and Rajkumari. The children created short, narrow race tracks with cardboard strips and set a giant beetle which would be used to breed racing beetles as a trophy for the winner, even though the genders of none of the beetles was known. Koki's beetle Rajkumari emerged as the proverbial dark horse and Koki walked home proud, with two beetles in her hands – one the winner, the other the trophy. Walking homewards she fantasized that as an adult she would set up a beetle farm and breed racing beetles.

Giving an insight into the wild imagination of children and their mood and imagination swings from buoyancy to gloom and again upbeat is "The Great

Train Journey” undertaken by little Suraj who while strolling on the railway platform was prompted by curiosity to enter the bogey of a goods train stacked with apples. The train unexpectedly began to move out. An alarmed and frantic Suraj then saw a glimmer of hope in a shabby-looking man who entered the bogey and pulled a fast one on the boy. He told Suraj that the train was heading towards a sea from where he could board a ship to China. Suraj’s fear suddenly dissipated and his imagination took over. He thought about how his parents would miss him and the police would look out for him, but one day he would return home with a fortune. He was glad that he had escaped the trauma of academic results, forced feeding and questions about returning home late. Just then the train pulled up. The engine had changed ends and the local train after ferrying the apples returned and halted as did Suraj’s imaginative odyssey. He was angry. The man who anchored his dream had bluffed him; his flight of fancy had had an abrupt and crash landing, but Bond’s pen very rarely has ink for despondency. In a couple of moments Suraj bounced back and found solace in the thought that he had had a joy ride and reassured himself that he would someday travel the world.

In “The Fight” Bond illustrates how trivial ownership issues sometimes assume immense importance for children who are as quick to fight as to forget. Two young boys, Vijay, a Punjabi, proud of his ancestry and Anil, an honourable Rajput claimed ownership of a pool in the forest. After five minutes of a futile physical struggle they suspended their fight and decided to resume it on the following day. When they met as appointed Vijay challenged Anil to swim across the length of the pool which he did with ease, much to the consternation of the other. Moments later, forgetting their self-claimed property right to the pool and their earlier animosity they befriended each other and Vijay was seen giving swimming lessons to Anil with an amazing bonhomie. The ancestry about which they had earlier boasted and which had given them a pseudo sense of superiority, quite likely picked up from adults, simply vaporized serving a much needed moral lesson.

Bearing a similarity to “The Fight”, though not relating to two children, but to a father and son is Bond’s simple story titled “Home” in which an angry Suraj resolves to leave home and move over to his friend Ranji’s place because his father had humiliated him for faring badly in his studies. Ranji however was outstation and with no other place to go to Suraj returned home where he saw his father struggling with a yo-yo and derived a vain delight in his father’s incompetence. Forgetting their earlier squabble they conversed:

“How do you work this stupid thing?” said Mr. Kapoor.

Suraj didn’t reply. He just stood there gloating over

his father's clumsiness...

"It's easy," he said. "I'll show you." And he took the yo-yo from his father...

They both had forgotten the morning's unpleasantness. That had been a long, long time ago. (*The Road to the Bazaar*, 89)

Ruskin Bond usually concludes his tales for children on a compassionate note, but there is at least one exception i.e. "Wild Fruit" which exhibits a vicious streak in a child. Besides lending an element of realism to his writing the author also drives home the point that there are exceptions to every rule and that everything cannot be hunky-dory at all times. A poor and hungry Vijay had been eyeing the foodstuff on display in the market and had been observing an apparently well-off boy who had just bought a bag of sweets for himself. From time to time the boy smiled at Vijay raising hopes of generosity on his part and then left a bag ostensibly containing sweets as if for Vijay. Hurrying homewards Vijay excitedly opened the wrappers in the bag only to find stones instead of sweets. A disappointed and hurt Vijay then ate wild fruit as he headed homewards. (*Stories of Wisdom*) An observation made by Bond in his story titled "Most Beautiful" which reads, "Few can be more cruel than a gang of schoolboys in high spirits." (*Collected Fiction*, 281) finds an echo in this narration.

### **Amusing Idiosyncratic Characters**

Among the risible characters quite likely created especially for the amusement of his child readers are the semi-autobiographical characters of Ruskin Bond's grandfather and his close relative Uncle Ken.

In "Grandfather's Many Faces" the narrator has reminisced comical incidents about his grandfather's pranks when he pretended to be a maharaja, a beggar, a vegetable vendor and the driver of a pony-drawn buggy besides a side-splitting narration titled "All Creatures Great and Small" in which his grandfather and a ticket collector had a fall out at Saharanpur station. The ticket collector demanded a fare for grandfather's pet monkey whom he classified as a dog. The narrator's piqued grandfather then drew out a tortoise from his pocket and cattily asked the ticket collector about the fare for the creature to which the ticket-collector with matching tart replied, "There is no charge for insects." (*Collected Fiction*, 427).

Various instances of Uncle Ken's eccentricities have been narrated by Ruskin Bond with rib-tickling humour and gentle irony. In "A Bicycle Ride with Uncle Ken" the loony man led his nephew to the 'Rest and Recuperation Centre' of a lunatic asylum mistaking it to be a hotel. There Uncle Ken was misunderstood

to be a prospective patient and was nearly admitted. Gratefully the actual patient was brought in just in time and Uncle Ken was set free. In “White Mice” Uncle Ken was asked to drop his nephew to a train that would take him to Delhi, but he boarded the boy in a train headed for Lucknow, in the opposite direction.” Uncle Ken’s Rumble in the Jungle” though highly implausible is a fast-paced, hilarious account of the narrator and his uncle’s escape from a furious herd of elephants who chased and later flattened Uncle Ken’s rickety car into a flat metal sheet. Perhaps the most uproariously laughable incident about Uncle Ken who had been pronounced as a “catalyst for confusion” (*The Parrot Who Wouldn’t Talk*, 57) is narrated by Ruskin Bond in “At Sea with Uncle Ken” when aboard a ship he lost his heart to an Australian lady and escorted her around Port Said where the ship had docked for a while. There the couple got separated in a market. Uncle Ken’s new-found beloved found her way back to the ship in time, but he was left behind and then stayed back for the next four years doing odd jobs in Port Said before he returned home with an ambition to set up a poultry farm.

### **Didacticism**

Among the long short stories penned by Ruskin Bond *The Angry River* and *The Blue Umbrella*, both of which were adapted as comic books by Amar Chitra Katha publications merit especial mention. In *The Angry River* little Sita who is dislodged from her home by a river in spate has a chance encounter with Vijay and they both move together to a town to search for her grandparents. Their adventures en route to the town where they meet an honourable wrestler and his son whom they accompany to a fair and the happy ending of the story where Sita unites with her grandparents present the narration with a Wordsworthian idealization of childhood as a state of essential goodness. *The Angry River* has all the necessary components for a classic children’s story which conveys didactic messages of courage, honour, consideration, forbearance, faith and such virtues. While Bond’s stories have a measure of didacticism, it is subtly infused, not overlaid. Neither does Ruskin Bond overrate pedagogy nor does he underrate entertainment value. To quote Saaz Kothare,

“Research indicates that what children read plays a large part in shaping their character – with behavioral changes emerging sometimes even on a day-to-day basis” (“Reach for the Sky” *The Sunday Times of India* (Mumbai). November 15, 1992).

In *The Blue Umbrella* Bond has presented an umbrella as a symbol of pride of possession, admiration, envy, greed, magnanimity and reformation. Little Binya had exchanged a leopard claw pendant with a picnicker for a dainty blue-coloured

umbrella which became her prized possession and went everywhere with her like Mary's little lamb. The pretty umbrella discomposed many people in Binya's village including Ram Bharosa, an old and wealthy shopkeeper. They felt that Binya was unworthy of its ownership. Ram Bharosa even offered to buy off the umbrella and was so frustrated when Binya refused to sell it that he paid his servant a price to steal the umbrella for him. The thief was caught in action and Ram Bharosa's name was disclosed and his reputation was sullied. Though blameless, Binya felt sorry and in a sense guilty for the old shopkeeper and one day she purposely left behind the umbrella at his shop as if to discretely gift it to him. Amazingly, her gesture transformed Ram Bharosa into a generous man. Bond has used the character of Binya both to critique adult attitudes and assumptions, and as an agent of moral reformation. *The Blue Umbrella* was subsequently made into a Hindi motion picture by Vishal Bhardwaj, an acclaimed movie-maker and was awarded the National Award in the 'Best Children's Film' category in 2007, as well as several international accolades for its brilliance.

While conventional tales for children preach morals like justice, tolerance, duty and the like, Bond takes a step forward and addresses contemporary and relevant issues such as care for elders as in *Getting Granny's Glasses* and environmental concerns with a study of natural history incorporated in a non-pedantic manner. Bond's especial collections of children's stories, *Of Birds and Beasts* and *The Parrot Who Wouldn't Talk and Other Stories*, besides several solo short stories penned by him serve to awaken an eco-consciousness in all readers, particularly younger ones.

Suitable for all age groups, yet containing a wonder element especially attractive for children is Bond's story titled "The Cherry Tree." In this narration a commonplace incident of eating cherries and discarding their seeds is narrated with subtle didactic overtones. One day little Rakesh walked home from the bazaar eating cherries. By the time he reached home he had just three cherries left and gave one to his grandfather. He kept rolling the last cherry stone in his mouth for long, then placed it on his palm, examined it and asked his grandfather if cherry seeds are lucky. The grandparent replied that to be lucky it had to be put to use so the two of them planted the seed. The plant suffered several mishaps, but eventually survived and even bloomed. It bore cherries and became home to small creatures. In conversation with his grandfather Rakesh realized that among the large number of trees in the forest the cherry tree was special for them because they had planted it. Filled with wonder the little boy uttered, 'Is this what it feels to be God?' (*The Night Train at Deoli and Other Stories*, 137)

Bond does not consider children to be future adults, but adults to be grown-up children (Unpublished Personal Interview. May 20, 2003) and brings to mind a dictum by Dr. Seuss, American writer and illustrator of books written for

children which reads, “Adults are obsolete children”. ([https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/dr\\_seuss\\_106059](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/dr_seuss_106059)) Since children do constitute a sizeable portion of Bond’s readership, especially since his writings are increasingly finding their place in academic syllabi, both in India and abroad, his opportunity to influence their impressionable minds is much enhanced.

## Conclusion

While Ruskin Bond explores the innocuous world of children; amuses and instructs them, his encyclopedic vision with its mass appeal transcends the age barrier. He “...can make his work attractive at the same time to children, adolescents and adults...” (Wasi, Muriel. “Bond: Boy, Man and Writer” *The Hindustan Times* January 29, 1994, np) In his historical world, he, in fact, offers the adult readers an opportunity to go back in time and relive their own childhood. He is a contemporary writer with a universal and timeless appeal who debunks the traditional definition of Children’s Literature which essentially includes books that are read by children just the way in which J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series which was originally written and marketed for children had such a huge adult readership that *The New York Times* had created a separate bestseller list for it or inversely books such as Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* which were originally written for adult readers are also popular stories for children. ■

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# Towards Victorian Post-humanism: A Study of Werewolf Stories in the Nineteenth Century

Greeshma Syam

“Encompassing evolutionary, ecological, or technological coordinates” (Wolfe, *Posthumanism* 16), there are two main tendencies that are identified by Louise Westling within posthumanism, the technological (or Cyborg) and the animal. The very idea of posthumanism is that human beings are determined from the central sphere of discourse and exposes the vulnerability that there is a nonhuman otherness in every human being. According to Wolfe, there is a profound sense in which an individual feels as a human subject but with the advent of posthumanism one began to recognize the non-human element in us. Posthumanism, therefore, posits a challenge to move away from ‘anthropocentrism’ to a more harnessed indulgence with ecological aspects. This need has been usually associated with the mid and late twentieth-century thoughts of scientific and aesthetic productions. But a look into the literary productions surprisingly represents a post-humanist perspective in the concept of human and his natural environment even in the Victorian period.

The dawn of the Victorian age was marked by scientific innovations such as the evolutionary theory proposed by Charles Robert Darwin. Therefore, literary expression had a touch of scientific taste and temper. This was a new beginning for people of the age as they were confronted with so many contrasting ideas. For example, they believed in the religion as well as at the same time doubted its authenticity. An entirely new system of thoughts and imaginations about the existence of human beings popped up critiquing age-old conceptions about the authority of men on earth. Sparked by their love for romanticism and medieval stories many new characters emerged in the literature of the time including vampires, monsters, werewolves, ghosts, etc. Such figures never challenged the existence of normal life as they had been in Victorian literature. It can be linked to the doubts and anxieties every human being has faced in the light of new inventions. These doubts and anxieties might have raised an existential crisis in them. Moreover, the Industrial Revolution has already wrecked human life and its surroundings. From an ecological perspective, it is this threat of nature that provoked the prophets inside the writers to create such vivid and daring characters. This in itself indicates how human interest is not only

the legitimate interest; ultimately animals and the surrounding environment have a pivotal role to play on the earth.

Posthumanism or post-humanism is a critical theory that challenges the notion of humanism or the idea that man is and will always be the only agent of the moral world. It encompasses an umbrella term that combines philosophical, cultural, anti-humanistic, trans-humanistic or post-human aspects of the present world where Artificial intelligence is predicted to take over human intelligence. It even seeks a “post-human future” a case where there is a future without human beings. A post-human reading is intended to deconstruct the understanding of what a human being is. It projects an otherness or the inalienable to the human self. Critically reading the books, *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf* (1847) and *A story of a Weir-Wolf* (1846) exposes the link the story has with the post human idea of this otherness in human being. For years, the books have been read as a Victorian age Werewolf narrative, the story of a man shape shifting to a werewolf and performing beastly actions. However, looking at the stories in post human environment reveal layers of deeper meaning which is our point of discussion in this article.

### **Significance of werewolf in literature**

The werewolf is a mythological animal in European folklore. According to some legends, it is a man who shapeshifts into a wolf at night and devours people, animals or corpses either purposefully or under some curse following the transformations occurring on a full moon night. *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is believed by some scholars to be the oldest known Western prose that tells the story of a werewolf. The werewolf literature utilizes its setting to examine the impact the changes in the Victorian era had on the hybrid existence of human world and nature. The presence of werewolf in human habitat embodies nature’s claiming back of its own space from the human settlement as werewolves in both their animal and human forms prefer nature. The werewolf represents the duality of human beings as both animal and spiritual being. The animal-human hybrid of werewolf also acts as a reminder of the fear of the “animal” within human beings which was often referred to in werewolf literature. This has very clear links to personal atavism mentioned in Charles Robert Darwin’s seminal texts *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871). As these changes occurred, the werewolf in literature also made a striking shift from poetry to short stories. Initially, this genre mainly relied on the natural world settings and its horror meanwhile; exploring the relationship shared between man and nature. Certainly, in the Victorian Era, the changes in this relationship affected its depiction in literature too, as can be seen in the works of Catherine Crowe and George William MacArthur Reynolds. Now there arises a question that why among all other animal-hybrids, the werewolf seems to be an effective literary device. The reason is simple because it has a long narrative history from the infamous Werewolf of Bedburg to *Eclogues* by Virgil and *Metamorphoses*

by Ovid in the Greek mythology. The werewolf is the best example to show a living being's adaptation and evolution to one's changing environment. Historically, this might represent the "serial killings" of the era.

### ***Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf: Post-truth or a Post-human Reading***

George W. M Reynolds was a British prolific popular fiction writer and journalist known as the 'Master of the Penny Dreadful'. Though not celebrated virtually, he enjoyed a lot of popularity in his time and had more readership than authors like Charles Dickens. Superficially a romance novel, *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf* tells the love story of aged and deserted, Fernando Wagner with the beautiful, glacial and sensual, Nissida. Though there are only a few instances of Fernando turning into a werewolf, it plays a pivotal role in the plot of the story. The book is a predecessor of Brandon Stoker's *Dracula* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. The depiction of Fernand Wagner turning into a wolf under the persuasion of the devil, John Faust for the sake of material and worldly needs like wealth, youth and beauty symbolizes Everyman. Every man can turn animalistic for satisfying their greed in a more increasingly capitalistic world. The story is gruesome and intriguing that depicts the bloody battle of werewolf with a python, skeleton and a more bloody murder of a character by an unexpected sword through his heart. Advancements in science and technology have failed human beings in many ways. Nowadays, people know less about each other and rarely have humane feelings. The characterization of Wagner is in a way that it exposes the two sides of a human and is the best example of fear of "animal" within human beings. Wagner, who is initially presented as a good human, becomes purely evil as he turns into a werewolf in the latter part of the story. Therefore, villains in such stories, especially that of G.W.M Reynolds, is irredeemably evil. The same idea is reiterated in Robert Louis Stevenson's work *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* forty years later. As a religious person, Wagner undergoes religious dilemma that makes him waver in his decision whether to accept the pact that curses him with lycanthropy or not, but finally he is allured into the devil's entrapment. This shows the failure of religion and church as an institution.

Post humanism is also characterized by post-truth. Post-truth means beyond truth, that is, the avalanche of information propagated through media and internet which cannot be considered as fact but they are merely fiction or figs of imagination. Similarly, the whole story of Werewolf is a myth as much as religion is (reduced to a collection of terrifying superstitions by Reynold). All the beliefs till then, disseminated in the name of religion was nothing but post-truth. Those people with power and authority spread false ideas and in the end these are accepted as the ultimate truth with the passage of time. Whatever religion propagated was not the opinion of public. It slipped out certain facts replacing it with alternative facts, knowledge, or beliefs as to suit their purpose. Later science proved them wrong by giving prominence to scientific methods and enquiry, thereby giving less importance

to emotions and feelings. Therefore, post-truth is not a characteristic of post-modern world, but it had already existed centuries before.

Reynold has written from a protestant Victorian's perspective associating Catholicism with a historical other. Wolf is presented as inherently in harmony with the Church although it was considered an enemy producing guilt and violence much like the witch is considered by the church. The author theorizes that it is the Church that creates and at the same time becomes, the very beasts it persecutes. Through this narrative the author showcases the Gothic morphology that is the part of Victorian culture. It is the first narrative with some importance in English Literature to treat the theme of werewolf in fiction. Like a horror movie, it offers a ghastly feast for the readers packed with supernatural events and gothic passages tracing blood hunt of Wagner in sixteenth century Italy. The horror of unkind animalism is portrayed not only in his *Wagner the Wehr-Wolf* but also in *The Mysteries of London* which was a penny dreadful narrative belonging to "urban mysteries". Deviating from the usual formula of haunted castles, the author focused on the graves and murders and was the first to introduce in literature. The story of Wagner opens with the descriptions of his poverty. It is a hint that desire and starvation can take out man's animal instincts outside even when he claims to be cultured and educated. The monthly transformation of Wagner into a homicidal werewolf is not just a simple pact with a devil but it is the provocation of inner devil in one's own being turning a man back into his ancestral manners. So, when a man is confronted with an existential crisis, all the technology and science he developed through his intellect, willpower and resources seem nothing and the need for existence eventually transforms him to his ancestral nature. The events in the story is a harsh reminder of what Charles Darwin said in his *Origin of Species*, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change". *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf* was republished by *Dover Books* in the year 1975.

### ***A Story of a Weir Wolf: Post-truth and depiction of Post-human Environment***

Catherine Crowe's *A Story of a Weir Wolf* is another tale that can be seen through the lens of posthumanism. It is the first story about a werewolf written by a female writer. Crowe wrote a few novels, *Susan Hoploy* being the most popular among them. However, she is remembered for her supernatural stories. Crowe published a collection titled *The Night-side of Nature, or Ghosts and Ghost Seers*, a compilation of short stories, supernatural but inspired by real-life events. It was the first story to be adapted into a play written by a female. William Forster in 1876 produced *The Weirwolf; A Tragedy*. Her life was an extraordinary story or to say in post-human terms, unreal. Catherine Crowe went mad at her sixty-fourth age. She was found naked on the streets and was haunted by the influence of spirits in her mind. It appeared that she would be invisible if she walked in that trim. This is a

very striking reminder of a primal man - the only difference is that bamboo leaves of primal man is replaced by pocket-handkerchief of modern man.

Another striking factor of the story is its setting. The story is set in the Middle Ages. It was not included in her collection, *The Night side of Nature, or Ghosts and Ghost Seers*. Published in 1846, it is a fine tapestry of tragedy and love with intrigue and betrayal to flavour it. The story was included in the collection *The Best Werewolf Short Stories 1800-1849: A Classic Werewolf Anthology*, edited by Andrew Barger. It is the story of a seventeen-year-old girl Francoise Thilouze and her alchemist father Michael Thilouze. She had grown up lonely without much contact with the outside world and her only acquaintance was her cousin Manon Thierry. Her old father had spent his whole life in quest of finding the Philosopher's Stone which is of much significance in the context as it stands as a symbol. Francoise can be compared to nature with regard to high rank, innocence, and purity. During her father's visit for his study purposes to Italy, notable that the other story also had Italy as its setting, Francoise stayed with her cousin, Manon. In the course of her life, the superstitious people of the village of Loques had cost her nothing less but her life. The love encounter with high rank Count De Vardes aroused doubt that some witchcraft has been committed to win the count's love who was already betrothed to a lady of higher rank. In the eyes of wealthy people, no merit other than rank of a person can gain a man's attention as a suitor to a lady. Inner beauty of a cultivated mind and even the beauty of eyes represents nothing for them. Their love therefore aroused the suspicion of villagers and his family that some witchcraft upon the Count had made him so "senseless" in his perceptions.

During those times, the learned and the ignorant believed in witchcraft. Since Michael Thilouze was interested in occult and was doing prevalent research, the belief reinforced. Apart from this, a story spread that when the couple were having their usual pleasure in the remote parts of forest green glade, a forester saw Francoise catching the glimpse of the forester quickly transformed into a wolf and ran off. This was according to another common belief that witches can transform into wolves, cats and hares and weir-wolves. When the villagers saw the large wolf in the human habitat, they presumed that it was the metamorphosed Francoise. The rustics were horrified at this story. The villain of the story Pierre Bloui sets traps to captivate Francoise but what he gets is one foot of a wolf. As the story proceeds, Francoise is said to be seriously injured in one arm and lost her arm. What was merely an accidental coincidence now put her and her father's life at risk. A rumour spread out soon like a forest fire that Francoise herself is the wolf that lost one of its feet or arms in the bait. From an ecological perspective, the exploitation of Francoise by the sensationalism of the public sphere to say, in modern terms can be considered similar to man's tainting of nature - virgin, pure and perfect. The fact that wolf turned out to be lame can be compared to that of nature becoming lame due to inhuman activities

and needs. The story depicts the devolution of natural environment in the Industrial era. The book evokes nostalgia of good old days before Industrialization. Like the innocent soul of Francoise, nature is also being destroyed by hunters. They are unaided and poor and are at a disadvantage to protect themselves and therefore condemned to die guilty - wolf in the name of occupying and threatening human habitat and poor women like her in the name of being 'seductive beasts'.

The she-wolf appears in Victorian literature often as a sexual beast. In the same way, Francoise is treated as a seductor of men who is of high rank. Clemance Housman and Frederick Marryat are examples of authors who wrote stories about female werewolf in the nineteenth century. The story throws light on the Victorian double standards of moral values. While men can have occasional liaisons with women or casual affairs with them, women had to suppress their sexuality. An integral part of the book is this intersection of Victorian posthumanism with gender identity where women need to follow the standards of Victorian morality but at the same time men are free from censure. A parallel representation of female werewolf as hypersexual can be seen in Werewolf literature of the Western culture. The Count de Vardes had many love relationships in the past but when the society came across a woman of low rank indulging in love advances, the approach towards her is entirely different. In the Victorian Era, it was the religious superstitions or occult practices that ruled the unthinking masses as it is in modern times done by capitalism and consumerism. The average, low rank or poor people are excluded and marginalized in society and hence they are devoid of a voice of their own. They are regulated by the higher rank who tries to exhort their authority on these poor people with their hegemonic power and sometimes try to take power over their hands and rule above the state authorities. The post-truth propagated orally, in the past through witchcraft and superstitions are now propagated through media, newspapers, journals, and articles in the print and digital era. Not only women (as mentioned in the story had to hold their tongues), but every man must try to find the Philosopher's Stone that can bring youth and prosperity. It can happen only when such fictitious 'facts' stop spreading hatred and malice around. Wrinkles and poverty cease to deform Earth only when facts come out in the limelight and falsities stop being propagated among the unthinking masses. Otherwise, the poor become victims as depicted in the story as a result of superstitions, malice or passion. Strong passion can only bear fruits of hatred and harm and it can only result in the witch-burning of 'poor' helpless victims. Superstition of the Church is the theme of this story. The narrator questions its authority and beliefs. The burning of a heretic or witch-burning is watched upon by the people as a grand spectacle that pleases both God and men. The vanity of the witch hunt can be seen in its description: a mass for the soul (when in reality poor souls are tortured and tormented) is held along with the lengthy narration on enormity of an unsubstantiated crime. It is clear that the Institution of Church hunts the poor

in the name of religious beliefs through inhuman and ruthless acts rather than punishing those who commit a hideous crime. The 'animal' within a human being can be powerful enough to harm another human but also weak to save in time of need as a story depicts. However, it is sacrifice, love and conscience that triumphs over fear and passion.

## Conclusion

The traits of fear and servility towards the machinery system decenter a man while conscience is what makes a man who he is. The loss of conscience in the industrial era makes a man a robot. Technology is far away moving from playing the role of an entertainer or spectacle to become sources of malicious content or hegemonic ideas of the capitalists. The difference between a postmodern subject and a Victorian subject can be well deferred here.

Man is turning into a cyborg with the growth of technology. Science should be a mixture of nature, politics and technology. Nothing should be a challenge to the existence of a human being and his surroundings. Most of the notorious stories about werewolves are without any evidence. It exposes us to the fact that it is the people who participate in the werewolf hunt who are actually animalistic in nature. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the belief in werewolves developed parallel to the belief in European witches. So, the fact is both the werewolf hunts and witch hunt manifests the cruelty or "animal" within human being. While Victorian posthumanism is about bodily transformations of human beings into werewolves or similar creatures, post humanism today is about robotics and virtual bodies.

Men while seeking a posthuman experience of time travel in all his pursuits including story-telling, added superstitions in narratives in earlier times, now use technological advancements to cross boundaries of space and time. This can only threaten his own pleasurable existence. The theme is not only discussed in Victorian and postmodern literature or art productions but it existed all the time including the romantic age, but the best example can be seen in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. ■

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## Socio-cultural Constructs in Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Crow-Eaters and Ice-Candy Man*

Surabhi Panwar

Kalpana Purohit

“It strikes everyone, in the beginning to form an acquaintance with the treasure of Indian Literature, that a land so rich in intellectual products and those of the profoundest order of thought...” (Riencourt 301). The history of Indian English Literature is one and a half century old. The immense contribution of women writers belonging to different communities is noteworthy. One such community is the Parsi community. Community emerged as a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations and settings. It was Aristotle who first defined the term “community” as a group established by men having shared values. Robert Stebbins in his book *Sociology: The Study of Society* defines community as “a social group with a territorial base; those in a group share interests and have a sense of belonging to the group” (534). The Parsis are one of the minor ethnic communities not only in India but also in the world. The Parsis landed in India in between eighth to tenth century and were allowed to reside on a few conditions. They accepted all the conditions and continued to practise their rituals and customs. These rituals and customs are reflected in the works of Bapsi Sidhwa. As a post-colonial writer, she has focused in her novels on the subject of identity crisis. This paper is an effort to trace the socio-cultural dynamics and post-colonial impact in Bapsi Sidhwa's novels *The Crow Eaters* and *Ice-Candy Man*.

**Keywords:** Socio-Cultural, community, Parsi, identity, post-colonialism, Bapsi Sidhwa.

“It strikes everyone, in beginning to form an acquaintance with the treasure of Indian Literature, that a land so rich in intellectual products and those of the profoundest order of thought...” (Reincourt 301). Indian English Literature originated

with the introduction of English education in India during British rule. Indian English writing is the significant contribution of writers belonging to different communities; one such community is the Parsi community. Community can be defined as a social unit that shares a common religion, values, rituals and customs. According to Bell and Newby, community is “[a] set of interrelationship among social institutions in a locality” (19). Allan Johnson in *Human Arrangements*, defined Community as a “collection of people who share a common territory and meet their basic physical and social needs through daily interaction with one another” (692). For Sylvia Dale, “Community is a body of people living in the same locality . . . Alternatively, a sense of identity and belonging shared among people living in the same locality . . . , Also, the set of social relations found in a particular bounded area” (Dale 562).

The Parsi community is one of the minor ethnic community around the world. The Parsis are of Persian decent. “Pars” or “Fars” is the native land of Parsis which at present is located in Southern Iran. Cyrus, the great was considered as the founder of Persian Empire around 550 B.C. Sasanian Dynasty took this empire to its crest of glory. Zoroastrianism was the state religion till the Sasanian Empire. The Arab conquest of Persia marked the decline of the Zoroastrian religion in Persia. Their religious scripts were burnt and people were forced to convert their religion. So, the Zoroastrians decided to flee from their homeland to protect their religion from the Arabian invaders. Zoroastrianism was presumed to be found around 2000 B.C. It arose from the teaching of the faith founding prophet Zoroaster or Zarathustra. It teaches monotheism that is the religion of one supreme God, Ahura Mazda. The account of Parsis migration to India is available in “Qisseh-i-Sanjan” and “Qisseh-i-Zarathustian- iHendustan”. Jesse S. Palsetia mentioned in his book *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City*, “The Zoroastrians first migrated to Khurasan, where they stayed for a hundred years, and then migrated to the island of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, where they resided for some fifteen years, before finally undertaking the sea voyage to India” (4). The Parsis landed India in between eight to tenth century. After residing for some nineteen years on the island of Diu, they landed near Sanjana harbor on the Gujarat coast which was under the rule of king Jadhav (Jedi) Rana. He allowed them to settle permanently in Sanjana on few conditions – They would have to explain their religion to the King, they had to adopt Gujarati as their native language, their women would wear sari, they were not allowed to keep weapon, marriage ceremonies shall be performed at night only. The Parsis accepted all the conditions and continued to practice their traditions, rituals and customs. The Parsi community very successfully assimilated in the Indian society just as sugar in the milk. Later, the Parsi writers made people aware of the culture of their community through their writings. Culture in itself a very broad spectrum which encompasses norms of a society, behaviour, law, arts, beliefs, habits, etc. According to House, Javidan, et. al, Culture is a “shared values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations or

meaning of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collective and are transmitted across age generations” (494). Such socio-cultural aspects of the Parsi community are reflected in the works of Bapsi Sidhwa.

Born on August 11, 1938 in Karachi, Bapsi Sidhwa is a Pakistani American writer. She belongs to the Gujarati-Parsi community. She received her bachelor degree from Kinnard College for Women in 1956. At the age of nineteen, she married an Indian businessman but this marriage did not last long and later she got married to a Parsi man, Noshir. She moved to America in 1983 and became an American citizen in 1993. Her notable works include *The Crow-Eaters* (1980), *The Pakistani Bride* (1983), *Ice-Candy Man* (1988), *An American Brat* (1994) and *Water* (2006). She has also edited *City of Sin and Splendor: Writings on Lahore* (2006). She is the recipient of several imminent awards such as Bunting Fellowship at Radcliff/Harvard, Lila Wallace Reader's Digest Writer's Award, Sitara-i-Imtiaz, New York Book Review and Prime Mondello Award.

*The Crow-Eaters* (1980) is the first self-published novel of Bapsi Sidhwa. The novel describes the fictional saga of Faredoon Junglewalla. R.K. Dhawan and Novy Kapadia in the book *The Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa* opined, “Almost a three generational saga, it renders the adventures of an insouciant rascal who lives by his wits. The narrative depicts the meteoric rise of Freddy, the Parsi protagonist and his worldly prosperity. *The Crow Eaters* is a novel about Sidhwa's own community, the resourceful and accommodating Parsees. In capturing the Parsee ethos, she strikes an “unexpectedly rich vein of humour” “ (33). Her work *Ice- Candy Man* (1988) dealt with the theme of Partition but in both the works, Bapsi Sidhwa has given minutest details about Parsi traditions, values, rituals, beliefs and ceremonies such as Navjote, Marriage, Death ceremony, Parsi traditions, Charity, significance of Fire in Parsi religion. Bapsi Sidhwa's works reflect deep love for her Parsi community. She herself wrote in Author's note, “Because of a deep-rooted admiration for my diminishing community – and enormous affection for it – this work has been a labour of love” (*The Crow Eaters* 7). Navjote ceremony is one of the most significant ceremony in Parsi culture where children between the age of seven to eleven are formally initiated into the Zoroastrian religion. V.L.V.N. Narendra Kumar writes about Navjote ceremony in *Parsee Novel*, “Besides being an institutive with certain symbols, Navjote is also an initiation at which one has to face one's own personself, his own short comings and limitations. After Navjote, a child is born, though symbolically. He has to direct his efforts mainly for the uplift of his soul” (25). Bapsi Sidhwa is of the view that, “Freedom of choice is a cardinal doctrine in the teaching of Zarathustra. A child is born of Zoroastrian parents is not considered a Zoroastrian until he has chosen the faith at the Navjote ceremony” (*The Crow Eaters* 124). Following the introductory prayer, the child is given Sudra and Kusti to wear on their bodies which symbolizes Zoroastrian faith. Both Sudra and Kusti are sacred

items associated with Zoroastrianism and are symbolic in their structure. Sudra, a white muslin shirt is a symbol of purity and righteousness. Kusti is a sacred thread which symbolizes and indicated a direction in the path of righteousness. It is made up of lamb's wool. Explaining the meaning of Sudra and Kusti, Sidhwa asserts, "Each twist of the knot was meant to remind him that God is One Eternal Being, that the Mazdayansi faith is the true faith, that Zarathustra is the true Prophet of God and that he should obey the three commandments: good thoughts, good words and good deeds" (139).

The novel also gives a peek into the pre-wedding rituals of the Parsi community through the wedding of Billy and Tanya. The Parsi wedding ceremony comprises of several pre and post wedding ceremonies. It begins with "Rupia pervanu" ceremony where only ladies of both the houses are included and the bride and the groom are given gifts and money as an omen. In the novel this ritual is mentioned as "token money" ceremony. The detailed description is provided by the novelist in the following words, "Rodabai anointed his forehead with vermilion, touched vermilion to the toes of his shoes and pressed rice on his forehead. The ceremony was restricted to women, except for Billy. . . Rodabai garlanded Billy. She gave him a little envelope containing the "token money". She gave him a heavy gold watch on a chain. . ." while Putli "presented the girl with twenty-one Queen Victoria sovereigns . . ." (210). The Parsis are very particular about marriage within the community. To keep the community pure, they do not allow inter-faith marriage. This is reflected in the novel as well; Faredoon does not give his consent to Yazdi to marry an Anglo-Indian girl, Rosy. The novelist also brings the fact that the Zoroastrian religion does not allow divorce.

V.L.V.N Narendra Kumar opined "According to Zoroastrianism, a true marriage is the sacred union of two souls, completing each other, in the ideal practice of self-abnegation. The marriage- ritual is symbolic: fire which is present at the agreement-stage is taken as the witness to the union of the two souls. The religious spirit of Parseeism is against divorce. Monogamy is still cherished ideal for the Parsee community" (25-26). Fire held a significant place in Zoroastrian religion as put forth by Bapsi Sidhwa. She asserts, "Fire, chosen by the Prophet as the outward symbol of his faith, is venerated. It represented the Divine Spark in an everyman, a spark of the Divine light. Fire, which has its source in primordial light, symbolizes not only His cosmic creation but also the spiritual nature of His Eternal Truth" (*The Crow-Eaters* 49).

Unlike other communities, the Parsi community follows different rites for disposing of dead bodies. As a dead body is considered impure so the dead person is kept away from the pure things including fire, earth and water. As there is great importance attached with fire in the Zoroastrian religion, so the dead people are not burnt in the Parsi community. Thus, the Parsi community neither defile the earth

with burial nor throw their dead ones in rivers and lakes. The dead bodies are laid in the dakhma, also known as Tower of Silence where it was consumed by the vultures and crows as Godmother (Rodabai) puts in *Ice-candy Man*, ““We call it *Dungarwadi*: not Tower of Silence . . . it is quite a simple structure: just a big round wall without a roof” . . . The dead body is put inside the *Dungarwadi* . . . The vulture pick it clean and the sun dries out the bones” (*Ice-Candy Man* 113). Jesse S Palsetia in his book *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City* asserts, “The ceremonies surrounding death were particularly important as the greatest pollution resulted from contact with carrion (nasa)” (16). Zoroastrians believe that touching a dead body is dangerous. There are corpse-bearers to carry the dead body to the dakhma to prevent any physical contact as mentioned in the novel *The Crow Eaters*, “Soli was laid on two slabs and a corpse-bearer drew three circles round it with sharp nail. Now none could enter the circle, except the corpse-bearer” (*The Crow Eaters* 176).

Charity is an integral part of Parsi value system. “The nature of charity was fundamentally born of the Zoroastrian life-affirming philosophy to contribute to the welfare of world” (Palsetia 44). Parsis act of Charity makes them discernable during the British rule and even after the independence. Parsis like Jamsetji Tata, Ratanji Manakji Enti and Eduljee Nusserwanjee Colabawalla, Mr. Dinsha are well known for their generous heart. Sidhwa in both her novels puts forth the importance of Charity in Parsi community. Bapsi Sidhwa opines, “The moment a Parsi strikes it rich he devotes a big portion of his energies to charity. He builds schools, hospitals and orphanages; provide housing, scholarships and finance” (*The Crow Eaters* 21). In *The Crow Eaters* the character of Faredoon was involved in the act of Charity throughout the novel. He himself mentioned, “I donated toward the construction of an orphanage and a hospital. I installed a water pump with a stone plaque dedicating to my friend, Mr. Charles Allen” (10). Later the novelist highlighted many acts of generosity where Freddy financially help his community and friends. As Bapsi Sidhwa opines, “Faredoon Junglewalla, today, philanthropist and shrewd businessman, was renowned for his loyalty to the community and friends. People came from afar seeking his help in bagging prime jobs, securing licences, contracts, permits and favours. They travelled two thousand miles from Bombay, expecting Faredoon to extricate them from “tight spots” “ (150). The act of Charity is followed by every generation as depicted in the novel where Faredoon’s son Yazdi takes charity to the extreme level. V.L.V.N Narendra Kumar rightly pointed out, “Thus *The Crow Eaters* progress as in the rich web of Parsi life both extrinsically and intrinsically. Extrinsically he celebrates the institution of family life, social organization and marriage rituals. Intrinsically, the narrative renders the Zoroastrian value of charity” (41). In *Ice-Candy Man*, Rodabai helps not only her community with Charity but also come forward to arrange Ranna’s education and to rescue Ayah from Hira Mandi and send her to rehabilitation center. Thus it can be said that Charity became the potent Symbolic Marker of Parsi identity.

As a post-colonial writer, Bapsi Sidhwa has also exposed the identity crisis, displacement and cultural adaptation in her works. The term Post-Colonialism covers “all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (Ashcroft 2). M.S. Nagarajan in *English Literary Criticism and Theory* defines Post-Colonialism in the following words, “Postcolonialism examines and analyses the aftermath of colonization, and the effect of colonial oppression. In other words, it analyses the literature that was affected by the imperial process, the literature that grew in response to colonial domination . . .” (185). The novel *The Crow Eaters* depicts the Parsi community’s quest for an identity in British rule. Novy Kapadia in “The Parsi Paradox in *The Crow Eaters*” writes, “With her ironic perspectives the flattery of the Parsees is humorously revealed in the novel but it also expresses an underlying identity crisis and quest for security among the community as a whole” (127). In the novel Freddy visits the Government House to sign his name in the visitor’s Register as soon as he lands in Lahore. In the words of Bapsi Sidhwa, “Having thus paid homage to the British Empire . . . Freddy was free to face the future” (*The Crow Eaters* 22). The term “identity” is generally defined as a set of personal and behavioural characteristics which define a person as a member of a certain group. While discussing the evolution of the concept of identity, J.L. Ibanez remarks, “The modern philosophical conception of identity was based on the belief in the existence of self or inner core which emerges at birth, like a soul or essence, and which, inspite of being able to develop different potentialities in time, remains basically the same throughout life, thus providing a sense of continuity and self-recognition” (4). Identity is used in both social and personal sense. Ethnicidentity simply means the desire of the people of a minor group from other communities to know and understand the religion, rituals, customs and tradition of their community. Freddy and his family after migration from India try to adapt to new land but at the same time they maintain their ethnic identity by following their tradition and customs and dress code of their community to colonial domination. The novelist has given the detailed description of the dressing style of the Parsi community, “The Parsi women . . . tied their heavy silk saris differently, with a triangular piece in front displaying broad, exquisitely embroidered borders. The knotted tassels of their kustis dangled as if pyjamas strings were tied at the back, and white mathabanas peeked primly from beneath sari-covered heads . . . They looked quite distinctive” (*The Crow Eaters* 56). But later the new generation follow modern dressing styles which shows cultural hybridity. Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994) asserts that the interaction between the colonizer and the colonized results in fading identity. He contends that all cultural systems are constructed in a space that he call the “Third Space of enunciation”, “the willingness to descend into this alien territory (the third space) can create opportunities to conceptualize an international culture, based not on the exticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the

inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (37). Tanya, Freddy's daughter-in-law, though wear sari but "[s]he became daring in her attire and tied sari in a way that accentuated the perfection in her body. She took to wearing a little make-up and outlined the astonishing loveliness of her lips" (*The Crow Eaters* 246). In *Ice-Candy Man*, Bapsi Sidhwa has presented the repercussions of Colonialism after the independence of India. The novelist has portrayed the underlying fear and insecurity of the Parsi community during through the first- person account of eight years old girl Lenny. P.D. Nimsarkar in the paper "Dimensionally of History and Politics in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man*" remarks, the novel *Ice-Candy Man* is a complex array of "themes, different characters, voices, cultural varieties, communal conflicts and ques of burdened identity" (Pathak 78). In the novel Bapsi Sidhwa described the incident where Lenny and Adi are inquired about their religion by the other people in the park. When Lenny tell them that they belong to Parsi community, the people expressed their surprise saying, "O Kee? What's that?" (*Ice-Candy Man* 96). The incident reflects the negligence of other communities for the existence of Parsis in their nation which makes them to assert their cultural identity. The novel depicted the loyalty of the Parsis for the British rule. Colonel Bharuch, president of the Parsi community in the novel advises her community to remain neutral in the Partition. He asserts, "I strongly advise all of you to stay at home – and out of trouble". He says, "Hindus, Muslims and even the Sikhs are going to jockey for the power: and if you jokers jump into the middle you ll be mangled into chutney" (*Ice-Candy Man* 36). Further the depiction of political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and Jinnah in this work reflects the features of post-colonialism.

We can say all the peculiarities of Parsi culture come into the periphery of Bapsi Sidhwa's creative world. Bapsi Sidhwa's depiction of the Parsi culture together with the major themes of novels in her writing reflects her deep love for the community. She has beautifully presented both the non-Parsi world and the inner world of her Parsi community by giving a detailed picture of the rituals, customs, traditions and values in her works *The Crow Eaters* and *Ice-Candy Man*. The reflection of socio-cultural constructs in her writings make her one of the finest Asian writers of English fiction. ■

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# A Fine Blending of Realism with Pessimism in the Selected Poems of Louisa Gluck: A Study

Ananya Mohakud

The Nobel Laureate of 2020, Louisa Gluck's poetry bubbles with realism. Her marital hazards influenced her to create legendary poems. She hopes to heal up the suffering of women through her philosophical poems, which tell the realities of life. She presents how the human life ends in death. However, she presents most of the poems with pessimistic themes based on realism. In some other poems, she emphasizes on the need of the freedom of women.

**Keywords:** Destiny, dignity of women, patriarchy, Fate, marital life, divorce, death, etc.

The American Nobel Prize winner 2020 and the contemporary iconic celebrity, Louisa Gluck hypnotizes all with her dazzling poesies of realism, feminism and existentialism. Though disturbed with marital hazards like Kamala Das and Sylvia Plath; living within tragic atmosphere like Keats and Frost, she does not fall and fail from the realities of the dark experiences of betrayal, mortality, sense of loss and pain in life. The poems also record the harsh realities by exploring the innermost and most intimate feelings of our day to day life. Her impetus for writing sometimes upholds Greek and Roman mythology with nature imageries and human suffering. The presence of isolation and oblivion, the unfulfilled love, the failure of relation and the destruction of spirit strikes the bell of morality, sadness and trauma. She tries to heal up and renew the loss of hope, suffering and failed relationship through idyllic imageries and self-interrogation. The philosophy of life is presented in the poems like, "The Wild Iris", "Aboriginal Landscape", "Afterward", "Anniversary", "Averno", "Archaic Fragment", "Dawn", "Dead End", "Elms", "The Empty Glass", "End of Winter", etc. They present dark realities of life. She presents how the beautiful life is entrapped by death, which is inevitable. Every happiness ends here, i.e., in the grave. She upholds the truth of the great Pre-romantic poet Gray, who writes: "The paths of glory leads, but to the grave."

Gluck presents her poems on the realities of life and death. Basically, she presents her poems on the canvas of pessimism. Feminism is another important characteristic of her poems. Like Keats's "Negative Capability" she distances herself from emotions in her works of art. However, they indirectly project the flavour of her disturbed and pathetic personal life in the anthologies like "The Wild Iris"; "Poem 1962-2012"; "Faithful and Virtuous Night", etc.

Gluck's poems like "All Hallows", "The Wild Iris", "Aboriginal Landscape", "Afterward", "The Drowned Children", "Parable of Hostages", "Nocturne", "Mother and Child", "Midsummer", "Archaic Fragment", etc. present the pessimistic note of life.

She also presents feministic ideas in the poems like, "Anniversary", "Monologue at 9am", "Dead End", "The Untrustworthy Speaker", "Mock Orange, etc., where she voices for the dignity of women and goes against the patriarchy. It seems that her personal disturbed marital life of divorce and conflict is reflected in her poems.

Optimism leads to pessimism in the poem "The Silver Lily". It presents the philosophy of life and death. Gluck finds life as beautiful, but it ends in death, which is undesirable for a man. The Death is uncertain. It might come at any moment. Every joy and fear ends here. Gluck's personal conjugal life marks the end of the day, i.e., the end of the life. It dissolves with every cry and silence. Finally Death grips all.

In the poem, "Afterward" Gluck seems to face certain problems in life, which affect her poetic career. An autobiographical touch hovers the poem with a note of pessimistic feeling. Poet is disturbed with the complexities of life. She refers it as the result of fate and chance. She writes:

"Fate, destiny, whose designs and warnings  
Now seem to me simply .....immense confusion  
.....darkness silence: that was the feeling". (L. 17-23)

She feels that she cannot write any more and refers to "crisis of vision". In a sad moment she expresses that her parents also face the same problem. While they face it, she fails and retreats back. Within asymmetric position, she finds out a sort of solace. It may be due to Kant, with whom she observes birthday.

It is the Christmas time. The poet observes a lover's love. It incites her love intensity. In the next moment she finds a chained life in reality. She consoles and says:

"Bravo! The door is shut.....  
I felt the desert" (L. 54-55)

She finds the only solution from religion and writes: “referred to religion, the cemetery where/ questions of faith are answered.”(L. 70-71)

However, nothing survives in the world. Death entraps all living beings. Here every honour expires with hazards and without solution. Glück’s another poem, ‘*All Hallows*’ is a haunting example of the feelings associated with Halloween. Throughout this piece, the poet uses the images to paint a landscape of darkness and loneliness. She connects the barren fields to the mother’s barren womb.

In the lyric “The Gold Lily” Glück becomes emotional and complains against the mortal life. A beautiful flower, which is so attractive, dies early. She complains God addressing him as father and says: “.....How / Can they Know you see / Unless you save us?” (L. 11-13) She points out how her friends are dying and she is also going to die. But the God does not care for them, i.e. , for their difficulties in the short worldly life.

In the poem “Parable of the Swans”, the couple of the swans represent the conjugal life of the poet. The swan couple tries to do something great, but they face certain difficulties, which harms their life. This is the test of love. When they become old, they quarrel and live a disturbed life. Glück’s divorced marital life was full of worry and distress. She complains against the purity of the male partner, who complains first and starts quarreling.

In the poem, “Parable of Hostage” the poet discusses about the suffering of the soldiers. They miss their family, wife and children for a long time. They are devoid of familial love and affection.

War snatches away their congenial relationship. According to her, war is a male-oriented job, where males are more active than females. For example, she cites on the heroes of Trojan War, who could not reach their family even ten years after the war. Though they are not tortured physically, they are also tortured mentally. They have to live like hostages or they are enthralled by the situation.

This is the matter of not only the Greek soldiers, but it is all about the soldiers of the current time. This is the reality of the world. The soldiers suffer more than others in the society. Poet writes:

“.....some / begin to miss their families a little / to miss their wives” (L. 18-20)

Likewise, her own suffering is projected in the poem, “Nocturne”. It is written on her mother’s death. She becomes sad and records how death is the ultimate end of life. It devours all. Her mother always remains in her heart. Though it is spring time, the good days of life, still then her death is painful for the poet. She feels herself lonely and says: “How alone I am,/ no mother, no father-/ my brain seems empty without them” (L.13-15). The repeated line of loneliness proves her feeling of dejection.

The common factor of Gluck's poems is pessimism. Normally she presents the complexities of life suffered by the man. In the poem "Midsummer", poet presents the volatile life of the adolescents. Such boys and girls make merry even till the late night. They bathe in stone pits. The stone makes them happy. Here poet contrasts the importance of marble stone from the normal stone. While stone becomes the point of enjoyment, the marble, the extraordinary stone, is used in the graves.

According to the poet, the life of children becomes charming at the arrival of summer. There remains no restriction. They are free to live a happy life. But this life is contrasted with an adult's life, whose life is full of complexities, problems and disturbances. Man forgets village and settles in the cities and gets rich and lives a nuclear life. He becomes selfish and escapist. So he turns deaf ear to the society. Poet writes:

"You will leave the village where you were born

And in another country you'll become very rich." (L. 44-45)

Here rich symbolizes selfishness. However, the simplicity of childhood life changes to the complexity. Finally, the old person seeks the life of his or her own village for a peaceful serenity.

Gluck's most of the poems also deal with the stark realities of life. In the poem "Averno" she deals with the hazards of old age. The old age remains spiritless and useless for an old man. She writes: "You die when your spirit dies." It is inevitable to meet old age, which is difficult to live. The young sometimes tease them, insult and harass them. There is none to support them. The old man has to live alone. However, it is terrible to live alone as everyone gets busy in his usual everyday job. Society seems to be selfish for them. Gluck finds the reality that she is going to meet such a situation soon and hence, she is ready for the old age and death.

In the poem, "Dawn", the three stages of life is discussed. They are: childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The childhood is based upon simplicity. When it passes away, he faces the life of entertainment in adolescence. They meet and mate by being passionate. Gluck refers: "even a little blood on the sheet" (L. 24). This refers to their unchecked sexual intercourse. Then the adulthood comes, when they meet the real complexities of life. Everything turns upside down. At that time, conflict starts and they depart. The realities of Gluck's personal life are projected here.

In the poem, "The Drowned Children" Gluck observes the painful condition of poor children, who suffer in winter, especially in snowfall. They live without support and protection from even government. The Death waits them in their simple and innocent life. Finally, they meet painful death. Their suffering is unbearable. So, the poet proposes an early death for them. As a result they won't have to suffer more.

In the poem, “Visitors from Abroad” the poet expresses her personal experience. Through magic realism, poet meets her parents and sisters, who are dead earlier. Her dead family members met and complained her that she had forgotten to include them in her anthology. They complained:

“We read your books, when they reach heaven.

Hardly a mention of us anymore, hardly a mention of your sister. (L. 19-20)

They informed her about the reality of life and death. They alarmed her that Gluck would also die like them one day, which is the only reality on the earth. To their question, she presented her feedback that she had placed them while writing “I” in the poems. This “I” refers not only to herself but to her family members also.

In the poem “A Summer Garden” poet Gluck presents the philosophy of life and death. She recounts her nostalgic past. Looking to an old photo, she memorises the past happy moments of her childhood life. She thinks how every gold moment melts through the passage of time. As one grows, he enters into the world of complicity and in this way moves towards the life of futility.

Man witnesses every change, where every “breathing is an intrusion” to witness the reality. Poet sees the life of her family without the love from husband. Once, she dreamt for a golden future, but it faded with the harshness of summer. Poet writes:

“There was no wind. The summer day

Cast oak shaped shadows on the green grass.” (L. 85-86)

Finally, the poet refers how the ferocious ‘Death’ grips all with its sharp claws. This is the only eternal truth of the life.

“The Wild Iris” is a poem of Gluck. It tells about death, rebirth, and transformation. The personified iris assures its human readers that death isn’t the end of life. In fact, death is just a step in a mysterious transformation. Death, in this iris’s view, is really just a stage of life. It’s not an ending, but a process, which continues eternally. The ‘iris’ refers to the disturbed condition of life. In the first stanza, the *door* is opened towards death. She thinks that going through the door is to end *suffering*. But in the second stanza we see that the person wants to talk about ‘death’.

The next two stanzas change thoughts from personal death to the death of iris. The process of death carries the iris to a new life with new powers. Having spent time in the “other world” of death, the ‘iris’ emerges with a new “voice”: an ability to communicate its experience. That voice appears in the form of a “great fountain”. ‘Dying’ *allows* the iris to blossom again, and its blossoming is itself a

“voice” of consolation to people. It assures them that death is the only end in life. The mysterious flowering is a stage on the journey toward a beautiful resurrection.

The whole purpose of the iris is to flower in glory. While the speaker is talking about a flower, there are obvious implications for humanity, and the human soul. What do we mean to become? Is life a continual cycle of re-birth? Are we naturally beautiful? She presents the poem in an optimistic way, that is, not to fear death and not to be pessimistic.

In the poem “Celestial Music” Gluck presents the philosophy of life. The poet’s friend wants her listen the celestial music. She believes on the God and heaven. So, she persuades Gluck to believe on the God and heaven and refers to celestial music, but Gluck cannot hear the music as she is a realist. The religious belief of her friend is contrasted with the realist, Gluck. She finds no change on the earth. Rather, she observes the real clouds, snows, and the trees with sunset. Poet cites the example of a dead caterpillar in the dirt, who is encircled by the masses of ants. According to her, this is the reality. There is no value of the realization of divinity. The caterpillar image reminds the poet about the mortality. The caterpillar’s existence is based on eating, breathing and just simply living, without any greater purpose or meaning. The reality of the earth says how every living being suffers and expires. No God can change the Nature. Everything is inevitable. It is said, “what is lotted cannot be blotted”. Even the God is helpless to change. Hence, one has to suffer according to fate, which is prefixed. The poet writes:

.....the road turning suddenly dark, the air

Going cool, here and there the rocks shining and glittering-

It’s this stillness we both love.

The love of form is a love of endings.(L. 36-39)

The stillness is experienced by a series of images, which conveys calmness; a solitude. She uses the images like: (1) “inside the caterpillar does not move”

(2) “an image capable of life apart from her”

Here she tries to prove the inevitable truth of life.

Regardless of one’s choice, life is real, and real enough for everyone to experience his/her share of it. The caterpillar imagery presents reality. The life is inevitable with its reality. The “Celestial Music” ultimately shows the harshest dualities – the speaker and the friend, the physical and the divine, the secular and the sacred.

Gluck cannot hear celestial music. She sees something beautiful in her surroundings: “Only clouds, snow, a white business in the trees / Like brides leaping

to a great height.” (L. 24-25) In the fifth stanza, all she hears is “silence pierced by a birdcall” (L. 29). That’s all she hears and senses — what’s real, what’s in our earthly existence. The real world of despair is visible to her.

However, “in reality”, the air is warmer, and so is the atmosphere between the friend and the persona. They are sitting beside the road and watching the sunset. Here in this sight, the persona feels peaceful atmosphere. “It’s this moment we’re trying to explain” (L. 30), she muses, “the fact / that we’re at ease with death, with solitude”(L. 30-31). It seems that both of the friends are at ease with the endings of the sunset, death, and solitude. Both of them agree on the ultimate end of life.

Gluck’s presentation of the philosophy of life is really artistic. The intricacy of life-relationship is presented in her poems. Sometimes she becomes confessional, sometimes a realist, sometimes a feminist, while sometimes she becomes a pessimist. However, pessimism covers in almost all her poems. As a professor of English at Yale University she has attracted all the scholars of not only in the UK, but the world. Her writing style and her allegorical presentation have hypnotized the elites of the world. ■

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# A Paradigm Shift in Education through NEP 2020 : A Critical Study

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As per the approval of the Central Cabinet on July 28th, 2020, NEP 2020 is a step in transforming the existing education system towards modern, progressive and equitable one. The new policy focuses on re-structuring the education system into holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary aiming to fulfil the contemporary time – emerged requirements. Considering around 350 million school-going and college going age group Indians, NEP 2020 demands large-scale implementation on a broader scale which is never endeavored in the Indian context. The policy documents and framework look like standard ones but the key to success of its implementation depends on the proper execution which itself is a time-tested process. In the light of widespread phenomena of NEP 2020, the article tries to explore the new education policy 2020 from the perspectives of different stakeholders.

**Keywords:** NEP 2020, Foundational Stage, National Mission, Gender-Inclusion Fund, Academic Bank of Credit.

## **I. EVOLUTION OF NEP 2020**

Under the Chairmanship of former Cabinet Secretary **Late Shri T.S.R. Subramanian**, *'The Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy'* submitted its report on the core of new education policy in May 2016. Because of this report, the ministry for Human Resource Development Department, government of India prepared the Draft National Education Policy, 2016. Once again in June 2017, a Committee for preparing Draft National Education Policy was formed under an eminent scientist **Dr. K. Kasturirangan** as the Chairman. The Committee submitted The Draft National Education Policy, 2019 to the Honourable Minister for Human Resource Development

on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2019. The draft policy was made available on MHRD'S website and 'My Gov Innovate' portal so that all the concerned stakeholders can provide their observations, insights, and suggestions. On 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the Union Cabinet of India finally approved the new 'National Education Policy 2020' (NEP 2020). NEP 2020 came into existence to replace the 34 years old National Education Policy, 1986.

## **II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this study is to examine the different dimensions of NEP 2020 alongside the challenges thereon. The research also explores the noticeable landscapes of NEP 2020 and outlines the successful implementation strategies.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is descriptive in nature. The required secondary textual contents are collected from various sources including websites, commentaries of Government of India, magazines, journals, other published works etc. This data is then revisited and critically analysed to explore its various dimensions.

## **IV. SALIENT FEATURES OF THE POLICY**

1. The new National Education Policy 2020 looks to restructure the school curriculum and pedagogy. It aims at establishing a new '5+3+3+4' structure while putting emphasis on the requirements and interests of the students at various levels. Different stages of schooling articulated by NEP 2020 include- a 'Foundational Stage' (5 years), a 'Preparatory Stage' (3 years), a 'Middle Stage' (3 years) and the 'High Stage' (4 years, comprising the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> standards)
2. The new policy targets at achieving comprehensive introductory literacy and numeracy in the elementary levels by the year 2025 and a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development towards materializing this objective.
3. A uniformly balanced assessment and accreditation process of all the schools, both public and private, except for the those governed by the central government, on equal standards, is aimed at by the policy.
4. It also looks forward at achieving a 100 percent Gross Enrolment Ratio in the levels from the pre-school to secondary by 2030. ("GER is the ratio of the total enrolment in education – irrespective of age – to the official population in a particular school by every year"). NEP 2020 also affirms that partaking in schools shall be looked after by the way of tracing students and their learning levels to make it sure that they are registered in schools and have ample opportunities to be at par with other students in case of dropout.

5. The policy also reiterates that the medium of education shall be the student's mother language, or a vernacular language till grade five and preferably till grade eight and beyond. However, the existing structure of three languages shall continue to exist and two out of the three languages will be the student's native languages.
6. NEP 2020 also projects to organize the school curriculum for Indian Sign Language throughout the country.
7. The Union Government will initiate a 'Gender-Inclusion Fund' to provide unbiased and quality education to all female and transgender students and all the states will be responsible to the enactment of the scheme to support the girl and transgender students. The state governments may take up the initiatives like providing adequate toilet and sanitation facilities, cash transfers and offering bicycle to such students.
8. The policy also looks up to set up such 'School complexes' wherein secondary and other institutions offer lower levels of education. These complexes may include the *Anganwadi* centres which will be set up within a range of 5 to 10 kilometers. These complexes will have "greater resource efficiency and more effective functioning, coordination, leadership, governance, and management of schools in a cluster."
9. Educational institutes throughout the country will be governed with similar standards of financial audit and disclosure as 'not-for-profit' organizations. If any educational institution realizes surplus, it can invest the same in strengthening the educational objectives.
10. The National Education policy 2020 also aims at converting all 'higher education institutions' (HEIs) to multidisciplinary institutions by the year 2040. It will also be ensured by 2030 that every district of the country has at least one multidisciplinary HEI. The policy also targets to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education from the 2018 value of 26.3 per cent to 50 per cent by 2035.
11. The HEIs will evolve such a system wherein they offer Master's programmes of two years for the students who have completed a three-year Bachelor's programme whereas Master's programmes of one year for those who have studied a four-year undergraduate programme. At the same time the HEIs will also place on offer integrated a five-year integrated Bachelor's and Master's programme. This arrangement on the part of the educational institutions will certainly bring flexibility and adequacy to them.
12. The HEIs will no more offer M.Phil. programmes.

13. Indian universities that perform well will be encouraged to set up institutions in other nations whereas universities from abroad with excellence will be facilitated to operate on Indian soil.
14. A National Research Foundation to facilitate “merit-based but equitable” peer-reviewed research funding will be set up centrally.
15. The policy ascertain that the centre and state governments will thrive to hike public investment in the academic sphere from the current 4.43 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product to 6 per cent.

## **V. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020**

### **Advantages:**

1. It targets to achieve an objective of school education for all.
2. This new approach will facilitate projected two crore students to come back to their educational institutions from their drop out status.
3. The new education policy 2020 and its 5+3+3+4 structure of education shall come into existence to replace the current 10+2 pattern. This will lay emphasis on the formative years of the students which correspond to the age groups from 3 to 18.
4. National Council of Educational Research and Training is required to build up a National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education for the children up to the age of 8.
5. Ministry of Education, Government of India will establish a ‘National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy’. Corresponding to this, all the state governments will have the responsibility of implementing the provisions till class 3 by 2025.
6. The salient feature of the policy is the initiative for the National Book promotion Policy.
7. The examinations for the classes 3, 5 and 8 will be governed by the regulations of the concerned authorities whereas the Board Examinations for class 10 and 12 shall continue to exist. The NEP 2020 aims at restructuring the examination pattern in a holistic mode.
8. The Central Government will set up the PARAKH policy.
9. Dedicated Day Boarding Schools namely “Bal Bhavans” will be set up in all the districts of the country. These institutions will focus on participative learning in the areas such as Games and Sports, Career, and Arts etc.

10. As per the provisions of NEP 2020, an ABC will be set up. The credits acquired by the students will be in the custody of this bank and will be considered upon the completion of the degree.

11. NEP 2020 aims at establishing 'Multidisciplinary Education and Research' Universities at the standards of IITs and IIMs throughout the country. These will promote and actualize the prospects of multidisciplinary studies.

12. Similar regulatory guidelines will be applied for the guidance of both the public and private educational bodies.

13. The colleges will be granted with affiliation and autonomy in a phased manner.

14. As per the provisions of NEP 2020, a mandatory Four Years' B. Ed degree will be required to join the occupation of teaching by 2030.

15. Online Education will be promoted to prepare the students for any sort of unseen pandemic situations.

### **Disadvantages:**

1. Language education is a problematic area in the implementation of NEP 2020. India is currently having a poor student teacher ratio and introducing regional language policy in each of the subjects is a real concern. As such recruiting a competent teacher has proved to be difficult and preparing study materials in mother languages as per the provisions of NEP 2020 will obviously be a real challenge.

2. The new education policy affirms that students aspiring to pursue their graduation will have to study for four years whereas they can easily earn their diploma in two years. This might have an adverse effect of the students as they may think to leave the course midway.

3. As per the provisions of the NEP 2020, English language will be introduced to the students of private sector schools much earlier than the Government sector schools as regional language theory will be applied to the students of government schools. This can ignite a wide gap in the perspective of communication for the students at the schools of different sectors and may result in a major drawback during the implementation.

## **VI. IMPLEMENTATION**

The new education policy in 2020 is introduced after considerably extended period of 34 years and is supposed to make a major change in the academic pattern of the country. It also looks at establishing Indian Education System at par with the international standards of academics. All the aspects of NEP 2020 must be sincerely monitored and implemented one by one till the target year of 2040. The reforms which are aimed at by NEP 2020 will only be materialized with a proper kind of

collaboration of the Central and the State agencies.

Conclusion: The introduction of NEP 2020 has brought many reforms and changes in the current academic system of the country and discontinuation of M. Phil programme is one of them. Although the new policy has many drawbacks, the merits that it possesses outnumber them. It is perceived that by the implementation of the ways of NEP 2020, the academic pattern and scenario of India will be elevated to a higher level.

## **VII. CHALLENGES TOWARDS ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

The overall success and acceleration of the implementation of NEP 2020 is dependent on the ways of the Government's attitude towards the challenges poised.

### **Curriculum and Content**

The New Education Policy aims to make a shifting from the current 10+2 pattern to 5+3+3+4 structure in which the elementary levels of the school education will mostly be focused upon. Apart from this, the policy also focuses on curtailing the curriculum contents to facilitate the learners with more avenues for analytics and creativity. This will further develop the students to become future ready with the imbibing the newer skills. Therefore, the curriculum and pedagogy approaches should drastically be restructured as per the present-day requirements.

One of the biggest challenges lies in the fact that the curriculum needs to be redefined as per the 'National Curriculum Framework'. The academicians also need to think critically about the learning contents and structure the textbooks to suit the newly projected situations.

### **Availability of Teachers**

NEP 2020 has a vision of restructuring the school curriculum. This must be kept in mind while actualizing the implementation of the policy that the educational institutions and the authorities need to provide training to the teachers so that a transition in the educational system is feasible. The paradigm shift in the approach of education is also important as it would make a shift from the current teacher-centric to student-centric learning. This will be able to foster the skills of collaboration, analytical thinking and creative capabilities among the students.

### **Teacher Skilling**

Admitting the lowly paid status of teaching profession, experiential learning and teaching that focuses on concept orientation is a challenging job. Therefore, is to be understood by the concerned stakeholders that unless this structural constraint is not addressed, implementation of NEP 2020 in the truest sense of the term will remain a concern.

The competent authorities should also have to work towards the setting up of a 'National Curriculum Framework' for Teacher Education alongside NEP 2020. Besides the conduct of Teacher Eligibility Tests (TETs), this framework should also work towards the building of a bunch of talented, creative, and efficient teachers who, in the real spirit, can impart quality education to the students. In doing so it must be observed that the present pool of teachers is given due recognition and training to uplift their teaching techniques.

### **Technology Perspective**

The New Education Policy also puts its onus on the use of advantages of technology in the process of making the youths of the nation future ready. However, building of digital infrastructure like smart classrooms, remotely accessible teaching and learning materials, audio-visual tools for making physical teaching more beneficial is really a herculean task. It is a matter of big concern that most of the presently existing educational institutions do not have such infrastructural facilities. The financial liabilities for each of the schools in making such provisions exist is also an alarming situation. Another aspect which poises the greatest challenge in the implementation of NEP 2020 is the weak or almost no internet facilities in the rural areas throughout the country. Henceforth, the Central as well State governments and other implementing agencies will have to develop the basic infrastructure to meet the required technological spectrum.

### **Evaluation Mechanism**

NEP 2020 aims at transforming the present examination system into a pool of assessment that involves continuous monitoring of the learning outcomes. This will define assessment as a platform of continuous tracking of foundational skills and progress in the AI-based software programmes. This, in turn, will enable the learners to make the best of the best career choices. It is to be understood here that continuous assessment requires the educational centres, and the educators to employ newer and creative evaluation mechanism and allocation of assignments in such a way that the students require thought provoking ideologies wherein they employ themselves.

The theoretical examinations will have unilateral questions and answers which give ample scope to score. However, holistic assessments will require the authorities to plan and invest significantly in creating such an atmosphere of thought provoking and creative assignments.

The new education policy is a result of the congregation of thoughts of the drafting committee, state and UT governments, global academic scenario, expert insights, and stakeholder feedback.

The vision put forward by the policy is visionary. The success pace and materialization ratio of the policy will depend upon the road map and zeal for implementation of the same. It is also a question of universal concern whether the policy will be able to foster education for all in the upcoming years and enthuse employability or not.

### **Examination Imperatives**

NEP 2020 puts its emphasis on formative valuation for learning rather than summative valuation of the students. Its main objective of changing the evaluation mechanism is to encourage unremitting monitoring of learning outcomes. This is to be noted here that a continual assessment requires the educational institutes and the educators to use creative evaluation mechanism and assignments. Technological intervention and a participative involvement of the teachers and students are the need of this newly projected approach.

This is apparent from the above discussion that the government needs to adopt a systematic phased manner in the effective materialization of the Policy. This is also the responsibility of the government that quality education is provided to all students, irrespective of their place of residence as per the leveraging provisions of the new policy. There is no doubt that NEP 2020 lays its focus on making education system holistic, flexible, and structured as per the requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. However, the governments and other related agencies should work towards the accomplishment of all the objectives of the policy in a time proof manner and work towards the sustenance amidst all the challenges in a sustained way for a completely beneficial outcome.

## **VIII. SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

The biggest challenge in relation to NEP 2020 is the implementation of the same given the fact that it is exclusively comprehensive. We also need to ponder upon the facts about the aspects for a failure of any policy before its implementation.

### **The following are the main reasons for a policy failure**

1. Extensively Optimistic aspirations: This may result in a failure as the cost and time required are underestimated.
2. Implementation in Diverse Governance System: When a policy is made fit only from the perspective of a single governance system, it is prone to fail.
3. Lack of Collaborations: Due to the lack of collaborations with all the stakeholders, any policy may fail at any given point of time.
4. Constraints of the Political Intervention: If the policy makers focus on short term results, the policy often fails as they are specially designed for the legislation rather than a full proof implementation.

Therefore, to achieve a full proof implementation of NEP 2020, all the stakeholders including the Central as well as the State Governments need to work upon the challenges posed which are discussed below.

### **Content, Curriculum & Pedagogy**

The existing 10+2 pattern of curricular pattern is to be revamped and substituted by a 5+3+3+4 structure which links to the age groups of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively. Thus, the new pattern will have a long 12-year term of education at the school level including the pre-schooling or Anganwadi.

A thorough modification and restructuring of curriculum contents and teaching pedagogy is the foremost need at each level of study. This must be actualized as per the NCF (National Curriculum Framework) and the curriculum content requires to be revisited to develop study materials and textbooks.

### **Role of Technology in Teaching-Learning Process**

NEP suggests setting up of 'National Educational Alliance for Technology' (NEAT), a regulatory body which will facilitate with the provisions of the use of technology for improved learning results. NEAT will use artificial Intelligence to make a more personalized and customized learning atmosphere which will work as per the requirements of any individual learner. It also proposes to enter a national negotiation with the EdTech agencies companies for achieving a better learning experience.

This technological intervention will require a robust digital infrastructure throughout the country which is the biggest challenge of the hour.

### **Assessment**

It is proposed by NEP 2020 that a national assessment centre PARAKH will be built which will constantly monitor the academic arena of the country. Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS) project will include CERC (Contingency Emergency Response Component) that will, in turn, help the Government handle the problems that may pop up in the course of time due to the closure of schools and any emergent situation.

The new education policy also recognizes that evaluation of "higher-order skills, such as analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity," is the need of the time. Assessment will have to be shifted from marks-based evaluation to competency-based evaluation. The questions shall have to be formulated in such a way that a child will be able to answer them as per his or her aptitude and they are evaluated accordingly.

### **Teacher Training and Availability of Teachers**

NEP 2020 discusses about developing better performance ethos for teachers

and thus states that the teachers have a pivotal role in the newly proposed education system. The teachers require expertise and competencies at different levels stage-wise and hence they need to be instructed and trained in a judicious way to make them capable in coping up with the paradigm shift of academics. The need for digital understanding and ability to deliver the corresponding maxims on the part of the teachers is of the highest priority.

### **Effective Implementation strategies of NEP 2020**

1. For a successful implementation of NEP 2020, the government and concerned agencies will need to generate a comprehensive stakeholder consciousness so that the effect of the implementation is even and uniformly accumulated.
2. The competent authorities should work towards the formulation of instruments such as legal, regulatory, and institutional.
3. Authentic information repositories should be developed for an easy access of all the stakeholders.
4. A collaborative attitude across HEIs, regulatory bodies and government agencies should be developed and patronized by the governing agencies.
5. Adequate and transparent principles of management should be developed and levied upon all the stakeholders, and educational centres.

**NEP 2020** is a policy draft only and there are still provisions for the augmentation of better and more accurate propositions. A better understanding of the policy is required to know how the policy operates and what are the measures that can be adopted at each level to support the same.

Execution of different strategies and interventions of different sorts are required for a successful implementation of the policy. They are:

- a) A proper and robust Coordination and cooperation mechanism between the Centre and states
- b) Time relevant Legislative interventions which include new laws and amendments
- c) An increased momentum of inter-ministerial collaborations and regulatory reforms
- d) Increased funding in the budgetary framework
- e) There is an instant need of setting up of a National level NEP Implementation Standing Committee with the representations of select vice-chancellors/directors of educational institutions. This committee will be responsible for monitoring the progress of NEP Implementation Plan in a time-driven method. The Committee under the purview of the Ministry of Education should have representatives as ex-officio members from all major regulatory bodies. This committee will work towards the strengthening of the strategies to implement NEP 2020 by removing all the obstacles.

## Role of schools

Schools need to lay their emphasis on the fostering of foundational skills to get a notable momentum in instilling the aptitudes of language arts among the children up to Class III. They will have to adapt to a new scenario wherein the schools need to revisit their teaching-learning strategies.

a) The schools will need to focus on practical and experiential learning that will enable the students to imbibe the 21st century skills concerning creativity and critical thinking.

b) A change in approach of teaching with shifted pedagogies centering the conceptual understanding of any given topic rather than the completion of the syllabus is the urgent need on the part of the schools.

c) Assessment Structure needs a complete revamping as NEP 2020 suggests that a child should be evaluated on qualitative metrics rather than marking criteria. It also must be reiterated that assessment criteria should have flexibility to allow the educators assess their children individually as each individual child is a separate entity having different capabilities.

d) As has already been stated a vast intervention of technology in education is inevitable in the present-day scenario. Digital literacy, development of scientific temperament and computational thinking must be emphasized properly in the newly emerged backdrop for holistic and all-round development of any child.

e) Introduction of vocational courses and ability-based learning should also be done from the 6<sup>th</sup> standard.

f) The educators should be encouraged to use bilingual approach in the classrooms because study has revealed that the children possess sharp linguistic capabilities. Mother language should be considered as medium for better concept and understanding of the students up to class 5.

g) Children should be motivated to develop multidisciplinary aptitude for better understanding and learning outcomes.

## IX CONCLUSION

NEP 2020 has been envisioned and designed to change the education panorama of the country after a long gap of 34 years. Without any doubt, it will be a paradigm shift in the academics of the country as it affirms the provisions which will allow the students prosper in their own ways rather than the imposed ways of the system. It will ease the burden of examination pressure from the students as it states to focus on experiential learning. A complete and successful implementation of the policy is dependent on the transparent and uniform execution at all levels with

an unreasonable channelization of resources. This obviously requires a complete collaboration and cooperation among the Central and State governments, regulatory bodies and all the stakeholders of the educational sector. In a nutshell, it can be said that NEP 2020, which looks for a revamped academic scenario of the nation in the coming years, will be a boon for the countrymen if executed in a sustained manner while overcoming all the hurdles. ■

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# The Power of Presence: How Cultivating Awareness can Transform Your Life

Shalini Aggarwal

Humanity has been suffering since ages because of the lack of knowledge of its identity, a word which is both a concept and evidence used to prove a person's individuality and traits that define him and by which he is viewed by the world. But it is not the one as perceived by us or others but just a designation given to us to ease our journey of life but whole of mankind have been trapped in their false identities considering it to be reality forgetting that they are just the characters of the drama called life playing their respective roles and has to depart from the world when their part is over. Humans' beings suffer most out of all the creatures on the planet because they differ greatly in their capacity to understand the complexities of their own lives as they have fully identified themselves with their characters they are playing with full attachment and missed their real selves which is the root cause of their troubles and misery. They are running after materialistic acquisitions, relationships, love, money, success for their happiness which is just an illusion and missed the very cause of their bliss and everlasting happiness that is right in front of them and the way out of all their miseries forever, their awareness.

**Keywords:** Awareness, illusion, bliss, materialistic, attachment, real self, identity.

## *Introduction*

Human beings have been conditioned since their birth that they are their 'mind and body' which has become a strong belief and their entire day is driven and dictated by this due to which they have created a world of illusions around them. Man gets so much attached to this notion of mind and body that he is taken away from the idea of his essential being. In order to protect his cherished beliefs, he is robbed of his true self and has become a slave to his mind which is not an actual identity but a mechanical process functioning on the basis of thoughts fed inside it just like the computer operates on the data entered into it. This dependence on outside sources and negative

conditioning via thoughts and beliefs stimulates most of his behavior and relegates him to the rank of a victim preventing true learning which comes from inside. He is trapped in repetitive behaviour patterns, and he focuses on his troubles, failures, hardships, negative self-talks making him feel self-abhorrent, worthless, frustrated and helpless due to which he looks for solutions out there in the world forgetting that these problems are not something that just happens to him rather created by him moment by moment moving through life and he has become accustomed to it. The reason of all his sufferings and miseries is the lack of his very awareness due to which he sleepwalks every day repeating same mistakes again and again and can never get past his struggles fighting with his destiny in the hope of getting it changed but it never does because he is standing in his own way and deserves to suffer. He lives his life with the mask of pretence which is approved by the society and in the process loses contact with his own essence. The moment he wakes up and realizes that he was asleep all these years he gets free of all his sufferings and miseries and finds his life on track with utter magnificence. This is the moment of awareness an ultimate truth.

### ***Review of literature***

Humans are social beings and cannot exist in isolation. Right from the birth humans' sense of self is developed unconsciously by the relationships that surrounds them and are the primary means to create an understanding of themselves. If a child in his childhood gets a sufficient atmosphere to feel nurtured, safe, approved and being understood then he learns to trust himself and unfolds into life feeling good about himself manifesting many true selves of himself while on the other hand if the parents impose their own beliefs on a child being critical causes the child to lose his true self inducing a feeling of insufficiency in him, distorting his perception of external environment and creating a feeling of distrust for the self and the world out as well. A child when born expresses his self spontaneously and naturally and not concerned with parents' biases or prejudices but when he grows up his uniqueness is lost in a bid to meet his needs for attention, security love and approval by his loved ones and in the process his individual essence is lost, and he becomes a submerged reservoir of unacknowledged, non-integrated feelings. These adaptations which are unconsciously made by a child's mind in later stages of his childhood to escape from the feelings of insecurity, abandonment and annihilation powerfully influence the way he presents himself to the world by constructing a false self formed by repressing certain aspects of his personality and presenting the image which is far away from reality in a large degree but exerting a great amount of influence in his life which in fact is real. Such an image formed is called as an 'idealized image' by Karen Horney, a German psychoanalyst in which the person in charge aims to efface his real personality in order to attain the feeling of superiority, significance and security in spite of the illusory nature of these feelings. By adopting this idealised

self, he is trapped in spider's web of unconscious pretense and a veil of unreality, shrouding his inner world which is bound to be extended to his outer world causing him to waver between self-adoration and self-contempt, between his idealised self and real self with no solid ground to fall back upon resulting in neurotic suffering. The true self cannot communicate because it has remained unconscious and undeveloped in the inner prison. There is an innate desire of freedom and authenticity in mankind which warns them not to live in denial and self-deceit and at that moment they outgrow their idealised or false selves becoming aware of their consciousness or true self. Alice Miller, a pioneer in parental abuse in children lives is known for her book 'The Drama of the Gifted Child' which was an international bestseller conveying the message that every child born on this planet is gifted in its own unique nature, provided it is recognised by her mother and not ignored because of her self-involvement as in that case child's world can never be its own and he becomes alienated of his own self. The power given to the other person be it a loved one, a deity, circumstances, society to get an approval is an indication of losing contact from one's own self.

Since ages the humanity is ignorant of its awareness because of these religious and moral teachings which tends to shape and define the human behaviour in this world and the man become accustomed to follow their knowledge and superstitions preventing him to undertake an honest search of his true self. By missing his true self, he falls prey to his ego or false self-shaped by so called political, educational and religious institutions reinforcing him to follow the same old patterns destroying his innocence with which he is born without his knowledge that he once had it. He looks upon his fate which inadvertently leads him into a downward spiral of helplessness and powerlessness which is hard to overcome. He becomes ignorant of the truth that has always been there because he is lost in his theories, creeds, dogmas, traditions, words making his vision clouded to look at reality. Truth is an organic unity and needs to be felt by the heart, by one's totality, by his very being, by being aware as it is just in front of him. The moment he drops his beliefs, discard all philosophies, theories, religions, and become empty and innocent, childlike, surrendered he become aware of awareness or truth which is immediate, ecstatic, radiant, profound, here now and he realise a new him is born which is spontaneous, awake, eternal, timeless and essential. The essential is absolute and whole and in it things are happening in its own accord and for an essential man there is no struggle and efforts to get things happen, he is not rushing towards the without, rather he starts diving within and start moving with the river of existence and start accepting the things as they are because in essential world he simply trust the things as they are unlike in accidental world in which beliefs are imposed on him and which excludes the possibility of understanding and healing. Everything in this world including pain and pleasure, success and failure, fame and defamation is accidental except one's awareness which

is essential and gives him endless possibilities directed by objective self-observation which is his single most important purpose and his greatest responsibility. Awareness gives him liberation and prevent him from going with the crowd no matter how strong its pull is as it gives him the understanding of reclaiming his free will and knowing his choices.

All their lives people being comfortable in their space just whine and don't find the reasons for their conditioning and ask questions, they simply accept it and never learn that happiness is a choice, and they fall into the devil's trap attributing their suffering to God's will and keeps themselves oblivious to the truth. They are like steeple who blindly follow the trend as they are too lazy and disinterested to find the way themselves and justify their actions in the name of some religion or leader and look for some savior to rescue them which is convenient for them as per their conditioning from their parents or so-called society.

Buddha said that, "Pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional" through which he conveyed the message that pain and affliction are an inherent part of life which comes in different forms as disease, wounds, loss of loved ones, financial crisis, social status, mistrust in relationships but the thing is how one perceive the challenges of life as the greatest misfortunes hardly affects some people while the slightest inconvenience leads others into misery. Nature is impermanent so is the life. There is always night at the end of the day, but it is in your hands to remain in darkness or switch the light on. Weather changes bringing all its shades with its own beauty, and one has to prepare himself to attune with it by making required arrangements to experience it in its own symphony but if a person resists without accepting the things as they are they will persist giving him more experience of it. Like if he keeps cribbing about excess rains rather than taking possible measures to protect himself it is obvious for him to drench. The world appears to one as per his operating principal which is derived from his belief system since his childhood.

Majority of the human race is operating from the mode of 'doing' and 'having' and lost connection with his 'being' with which he came to this planet. He is trapped in the rat race of doing things mentally or physically; to have material possessions at the physical level or satisfaction at the mental level. All his life he keeps running to serve his mind and body which will not stay with him and ignore his inner conscious that is ever present and imperishable, always there with him before he came to this world and go with him after he leave this world. He was born a 'human being' not a 'human doing' or 'human having' but his doing and having outweighs his sense of 'being' and it is from where his suffering begins. 'Being' in 'Human' is the small part of the 'Supreme Being' the highest consciousness who is the universe itself operating the whole existence. When we say that God is omnipresent it means that he provides his essence in the form of consciousness in every being born on this planet. God sends all his children with his traits of purity, peace, joy, innocence,

empathy, wisdom and knowledge to play their part using these traits and enjoy the journey of life with full contentment and return back to him but the majority of mankind gets so much trapped in the drama of life that they forget their true identity, their awareness with which almighty sent them and look for happiness and peace outside considering their pain and suffering to be real.

Amid all the noises in the world one has to find his way by making his own choices and decisions and discard the shackles of conditioned behavior to become free and take control as it is he who is responsible for all his miseries and neither the social structure, economic or political system or religion is going to help. Dependence on others for appreciation and approval disturbs his inner tranquillity because in the process his ego gets deceived as it cannot accept the truth, once he drops the ego, he drops the whole world of illusion and becomes receptive, starts flowing like a river, he becomes alive, relieved, released, creator of his own destiny. Staying in the realm of pure awareness makes him free from bondages of mind and body as it is the feeling of pure stillness and peace, feeling of presence and transparency, infinity of space that allows all that magnificence to be. Going beyond mind and connecting with his inner reality allows life to hold all things in the loving embrace of him knowing that the only power lies in the present moment, the moment of culmination of which he is aware and it holds the key to liberation but the mind is a reservoir to keep memories of the past and imaginations of the future by avoiding the present in which he can take charge of his own life which is always there. Time is an illusion as the past gives an identity which is false, and the future holds the promise of salvation which is uncertain and it's the present which is eternal and provides the space in which the whole life unfolds and the only factor that remains constant. According to Albert Einstein "The distinction between past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion". Mind has an incredible momentum to drag one's attention in the past like a wild river and projecting the future by same patterns and laws learned in the past ignoring all the beauty and miracle of life explored in the present moment. Paying attention to the mind destroys the infinite potential and power hidden in the present whereas observing the mind opens up the dimension of the timeless making you free of the psychological time and just be peripherally aware of it.

Human mind has a tendency to bear unmistakable testimony due to which events of childhood and adolescence gain power with the growing years and that which is conceived as an unbroken thread of consciousness is sometimes a train of discontinuous fragments.

Sigmund Freud in his "Studies on Hysteria" (1895) wrote about "transforming your neurotic misery into common unhappiness" by which in terms of psychoanalysis he meant that humans are shackled in the cage of their mind and striving for no reason by forgetting who they are and as humans they need to confront the life issues with balance and calm of mind and if they learn to live their life accepting all

ills and goods equally then neurotic miseries cannot happen. They need to reclaim their indigenous human nature, their original wholeness granted to them by nature itself; by acknowledging and accepting their feelings of trauma, distress, sorrows rather suppressing them and by understanding the totality of psychological capacities both consciously and unconsciously.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), an Austrian physician and one of the greatest pioneers of psychology of human mind has done a great contribution through his research in the discovery of 'Psychoanalysis', a science through which he gave insights to study the unconscious nature of the mind which was unexplored till date and which provided detailed study of the origin of the human personality as well as the causes of neurotic conflicts. Psychoanalysis emerged not only as a professional and scientific discipline within our culture but as a thought and an approach to human experience that has become constitutive of our culture and a way to understand "irrational" in the human life as consistent with what is known as "rational". Though, it is mentioned about the mental processes that they are not accessible to the conscious rational mind in a number of texts but no-one before Freud made a detailed study of the role of unconscious mind governing the human behaviour and as a driving force behind the human mind. His book 'Studies on Hysteria' marked the beginning of psychoanalysis.

According to Freud, normal life without any adventures is the most boring life and humans are like animals living the same monotonous life devoid of music and poetry in life because according to him it is just a fantasy and a repressed sexuality. The world is a great and better place because of the people who become abnormal and soar high crossing the norms to perceive and achieve more because they find their inner treasures and live their dreams. People like Einstein, Edison, Wright Brothers, Michelangelo, Van Gogh, Buddha, Jesus, Mahatma Gandhi were highly obsessed as they were being possessed by some idea for which they were criticised and condemned but they remained focused and aware for their purpose and everything else became secondary for them leading to great discoveries of all-time making the lives easy of these so called normal people who prefer to live in their comfort zones.

It was the passion of these scientists, inventors that we have electricity, phone, internet, computers, aeroplanes, technology at our disposal making our lives so effortless. Majority of the planet comprises of these normal people who are accustomed to the stories made by their minds and follow it to serve their own self to earn their living and raise their children without any spirit of contribution and are devoid of any science, art or religion. According to Carl Jung, "To be normal is the ideal aim for the unsuccessful, for all those who are still below the general level of adaptation". Such people are called unconscious and unaware who are comfortable in their space, clinging to their miseries in a fear to lose something but in reality there is nothing to lose whereas the ones who are conscious are the dare devils set to change the patterns of their lives by staking everything as they know that everything

is just a distraction pulling them in different directions and the moment they find the source, their spontaneity, their happiness they feel an unburdening making them go like an arrow towards their destiny. They make their choice as they know that life does not happen to them as it is an inward journey not an outward one and give them an insight into the magnificent process of universal interconnectedness that allows a human being to glimpse and experience the divine, making them realise that there is nothing to lose but everything to gain. The truth that everything in life is illusory just like ripples on the waves, like paper boats that are doomed to drown make the man realise the importance of his existence, his individuality, his authenticity with which he is born, his true religion his oneness with the whole, making an infinite power flowing through him where all boundaries and divisions are lost and he is free to live a life free of denial and self-deceit. The purpose of humanity is to pioneer a new possibility where each person is meant to recognize the songs of his own life and need not borrow his identity and authority from anything external as it rests on something substantial within him.

There is no thing as destiny because life is infinite and the concept of an ultimate destiny is inconceivable, it's being in our very awareness that we become the creator of our destiny moment by moment and become a light that illuminates the darkness where life shows itself as a miracle of renewal in which there is a gradual unfolding of the presence of our true essence, our true religion. Religiousness is something not to be forced upon us and it has to be unfolded in its own time spontaneously. True religion is an integrating force that makes us release from the prison of isolated individuality to the world of mundane and immanence with proper balance of both our longings i.e., our desires and belongings which are our passions and possessions as they give energy to live life with abundance and resilience. Religiousness is not about being obsessed about particular deity or religion as it is open to the whole, it is not to be sought outside in Himalayas or by renouncing the materialistic life or by escaping from our desires and responsibilities, it is something to be found within, in one's embodied existence and to be lived here and now. Renouncing the worldly life by repression of emotions is not spirituality but the fulfilment and integration of every aspect of life by honoring both material and spiritual realities and at the same time being aware of them makes a man spiritual. Spirituality makes us connect to our larger and supreme self by surrendering in relationship to something transcendent that will always be dynamic, evolving and changing; that is our very awareness. Awareness makes us live our truth by descending into our own reality and facing the demons in the dark places of our interior self: failure, depression, neglect, anger, suffering making us discover that life can be lived with more intensity, passion and clarity by facing these challenges on which all our existence, peace and happiness depends. Denying our false dark realities is missing our true self making us fall victim to the devilish aspects of these realities

and being possessed by them. Carl Jung, Swiss psychologist famous quote “I must have a dark side also if I am to be whole” makes it very clear that dark side represents the repressed part of the self that has been denied an access to the light of consciousness and that needs to be integrated in order for us to be a whole.

The twentieth century has been an age of scientific breakthroughs and an age of deep introspection of the thread on which the whole world hangs, the thread of human psyche which is the territory of an unknown realm termed as consciousness by Carl Jung (1875-1961), a Swiss psychiatrist and a founder of ‘analytical psychology’ used his creative thoughts to paint a picture of the inner world of the psyche understanding of which depends upon the state of one’s consciousness. Consciousness is the state of being awake observing all that is happening around outside as well as inside. It is not only the humans who are considered as the conscious beings on the planet rather animals and plants are also considered to be conscious as they can also react to their environments in a carefully modulated way.

Most of the human consciousness is overpowered by the trap of the mind which keeps a man engaged in his thoughts and beliefs and it’s only advanced spiritual and empowered souls whose consciousness is not defined by identification with selected thoughts and images as it is free from ego which is responsible for retaining contents in consciousness. Ego is a focal point that holds the contents within the consciousness and without an ego there is no relevance of consciousness according to Jung. It’s the ego that sets humans apart from other creatures of nature as it’s the individualising agent giving the human behaviour its purpose and direction and enough freedom to make choices to defy their instincts for self-preservation, propagation, and creativity. Ego is there as long as the consciousness is there as it is innate but highly elusive for the people who put their ego at the locus of their decision-making and consider it to be an integral part of their psychological life. They forget that ego is only a small part of a much larger psychological world just like Earth which is a small part of the solar system, and the freedom of the ego is limited. All their life people think that all the limitations on freedom is imposed from external factors, from societal norms and there is little awareness of how the ego is just as much controlled from within depending on his childhood conditioning.

Jung claimed that free will which is the ego has its limitations to exercise free choices in the same manner in the subjective inner world as well as the world outside which is bound by political and economic factors. He viewed that when one is aware or self-conscious than his ego is taken over making it feel defeated and accepting its inability to control inner reality. So, it is his very awareness that makes him embrace his reality with complete surrender to the flow of life by acknowledging it with complete openness, willingness and acceptance that allows the spirit to soar and live in alignment with forces transcendent to his self.

## Conclusion:

Awareness is an awakening of the self with which one is born but it needs to be felt by heart not the mind because mind is deceptive and diverting making one conditioned to its beliefs.

Humans who realise the essence of their being with awareness live life to the fullest despite all their challenges and become an inspiration for others. They get guided by their own awareness, the most undeniable and intimate aspect of them to make them sail through life effortlessly. They do not believe that inner peace and fulfillment comes from what they have or what they do in the external world, rather they simply witness it without resisting and enjoy their state of being in awareness. ■

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# Liquidity in Metropolitan City: A Study of Rohinton Mistry's Fiction

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Contemporary world has entered a phase of liquidity. As we know that liquids are essentially characterized by motion and shapelessness, similarly, life flows like a liquid and it is no more held by any structure or solid foundation. To be specific, life in a metropolitan space is always in motion because the world has entered into liquid modernity as explained by renowned Polish sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman. Bauman's theory of 'liquid modernity' will be taken into consideration to study urban subjectivity in the modern Indian English Fiction of Rohinton Mistry. Mistry is a prolific Indo-Canadian writer who has won many awards and accolades for his realistic portrayal of middle-class Indian family life caught in the web of the instability of political and economic structures. Rohinton Mistry has been studied from the perspective of Diaspora and Postcolonialism. This research paper will bring in the approach of urban sociology to study Mistry's fiction. The aim is to analyze the novelist's portrayal of the metropolitan city and its characteristics like flux and instability which characterizes the lives of lower-class people. It will try to figure out how politics encroaches on personal lives and affect human relations. The growing consumer culture of today's globalized world replaces the human bonds of love and care with competition and insecurities. The issue of internal migration and its associated hardships are least addressed in Diaspora literature in general. Rohinton Mistry engages with the less-discussed side of metropolitan cities like Bombay in his novels.

**Keywords** – urban subjectivity, instability, liquidity, metropolitan city

## Introduction

“In simple language, is that liquids, unlike solids, cannot easily hold their shape. Fluids, so to speak, neither fix space nor bind time” (Bauman 3). Fluidity or liquidity can be considered a leading metaphor for today's world.

In today's globalized and consumer world, there are numerous choices and options but it is accompanied by increasing anxieties and insecurities in the lives of people. The grand myths of modernization like freedom, emancipation, reason, and progress prove to be false for a few sections of society. Lower-class people or the people who live on the margins of society are the most vulnerable beings in today's competitive world because they are not able to interact with global forces. Urban space is characterized by change and motion. Life in an urban space is essentially characterized by liquidity because of increasing instabilities in the political and economic structures. In his novel, Rohinton Mistry is purposely intervening in the action of the plot to comment on the political environment of the nation by showing the city as a perfect visible site of people's discontent and anger. The novelist engages with some of the major historical events and their effects on the lives of lower-middle-class people in post-independence India. The metropolitan space of Bombay (now Mumbai) becomes the epicenter of the increasing discontent in the well-being of a few sections of society. Protests depicted in the novel are proof of increasing problems in the lives of people due to the everpresent loopholes and corruption existing in the administration. This reflects the failure of the central and state government to maintain peace in the nation.

### **Urban Subjectivity**

*A Fine Balance* published in 1995 is a story about an independent Parsi woman who becomes a widow at a very young age named Dina Dalal, two low-caste people Om, Ishvar who are displaced from their village in search of a job, and a young student Maneck Kohlah. These characters make a microcosm of the multicultural society of India. The fate of these characters brings them to the metropolis of Bombay during the time of the National Emergency of 1975. Dina supports Om and Ishvar who are migrants in the city of Bombay. Om and Ishvar have come from a backward village to escape the atrocities unleashed on the people belonging to the chamar caste. Om's father, Dukhi Mochi decided to teach his younger brother, Ishvar, and his son, Om a different occupation so that they can secure a regular income and escape the poverty existing among the low-caste people of the village. They were apprenticed as tailors so that they don't have to suffer at the hands of landlords in the village. Dukhi Mochi's decision to train his children in the occupation of tailoring is a sheer reflection of 'Sanskritization'. M.N.Srinivas describes 'Sanskritization' as a cultural process of social mobility in the caste system, whereby a lower caste can move up in the caste ranking by imitating the ritual way of life of a higher caste. Srinivas has well said that 'Sanskritization' is one of the three main axes of power namely the ritual, the economic, and the political. Om and Ishvar migrated to a metropolitan city in the hope of earning a stable livelihood. First, they faced problems in finding Dina's house because they were illiterate and were not able to read the names of colonies and addresses. Dina not only gave them

employment but also allowed them to stay in her flat. She helped these two poor people amidst several misfortunes. All three were working as tailors quite smoothly for one year but then, the readers encountered the effects of the National Emergency of 1975 on Dina's tailoring business. The shanty town where the tailors resided was knocked down in a government "beautification" program and consequently, residents were forced to move into the streets. In a matter of time, many poor migrants became homeless. At present also, newspapers have enough shreds of evidence of the destruction of slums and huts under the name of road broadening schemes and the city's beautification. The lives of Om and Ishvar become miserable amidst the flux and friction of the city. Dina sustained her living for some days in her flat till her landlord forced her to leave the flat by increasing the rent which she could not afford and also she was not supposed to run a business from her flat. She used to live in constant fear of her landlord. "The machines will be seen from the street, and the landlord will make trouble. It is against the law to have a factory in the flat, even if it is only two sewing machines. Already he harasses me for other reasons"(Mistry 79). We can see the lives of Dina, Om, and Ishvar, all of them fail to acquire permanent jobs despite being skilled and hardworking in a big city like Bombay. This reflects that there is no governmental security provided to the migrants. Life of migrants and informal laborers is vulnerable in a metropolitan space. Hence, there are a lot of insecurities and instabilities in the lives of the common masses. The literal representation of Bombay is in sharp contrast to Bollywood's representation of Bombay which only shows the glam and glitter of the city.

"Thus, while globalization and glocalization appear to be linked, the populations of the two worlds live on opposite sides of the coin; some benefit from globalization while others are ostracised. Thus, globalization is a paradox: while some benefit, others suffer. With today's consumer society's radical options and lack of stability, maintaining one's identity becomes a key worry. A resourceful person may easily access the various choices supplied by the consumer society. The current era of liquid modernity silences minority and underprivileged voices" (Bauman 2000). The persistent instabilities in political and economic structures and the lack of governmental security for minorities have led to growing anxiety and vulnerabilities in the lives of affected people. These things create a rift in human relations and affect familial bonds also. In essence, the rise of the capitalist economy has driven the evolution of modern cities. Mistry has portrayed the life lived and experienced in cities. As we know that a society is a web of relations. Therefore, space is created or produced by humans. Hence, it is called social space. According to Henri Lefebvre, this social space is highly contingent in the polarised urban world. The city becomes the site of social struggle. The lived space of the people is suppressed by the capitalists because the space is owned by the people who have

money. Hence, there is a dialectical tension between the common man and the people who own the land. Mistry portrays the pathetic conditions of the vendors and people who live on the sidewalks or roadsides. He poses a very important question what kind of urban environment are we creating? People who have toiled day and night in creating these modern cities have no space to live. Space is owned and controlled by powerful people in the modern capitalist world or economy.

One of the major conflicts in the novel, *Such a Long Journey* is the deteriorating relationship between Gustad and his eldest son, Sohrab. Sohrab has cleared the entrance of IIT, Bombay, and becomes eligible to take admission but he denies pursuing engineering because his interest lies in Arts and Humanities. Gustad had great expectations from his son, “Sohrab will make a name for himself, you see if he doesn’t, Gustad had said with a father’s just pride. At last our sacrifices will prove worthwhile” (Mistry 3). The proud father eagerly wants Sohrab to enter the Indian Institute of Technology, an esteemed government institute, and become accomplished in his career. Gustad is worried because he thinks that there is no stable future for minorities like Parsis in India. Here, Rohinton Mistry is trying to depict the minority consciousness in a cosmopolitan space like Bombay. Gustad feels betrayed by his son who is not ready to follow his decision. Gustad is right in his position because he worked hard to provide the best for his children sacrificing his studies and comfort. Sohrab cannot be deciphered wrong as well because as a grown-up boy, he has the right to choose the career of his interest. Gustad represents a model of Indian parents who want their children to become doctors or engineers. “It was never: my son will paint, my son will act, he will write poetry. No, it was always: my son will be a doctor, he will be an engineer, he will be a research scientist.”(Mistry 66). The novelist seems to be commenting on common Indian parents who cannot appreciate the Arts and Humanities.

Another incident that captures the attention is the rift in the friendship between Gustad and Major Billimoria. The sudden disappearance of Jimmy Billimoria without any notice leaves Gustad shocked and heartbroken. Later on, Gustad comes to know that his dear friend, Billimoria who was a RAW agent was used as a tool by the powerful politicians for their vested interests. This incident of Major Billimoria is a fictional representation of the Nagarwala Scandal of 1971. Mistry has tried to recreate the National Scandal of Rustom Sohrab Nagarwala who was accused of impersonating Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and convincing Ved Prakash Malhotra to withdraw 60 lakhs from the State Bank of India for some national cause. Although the government provided this information, no one knew the reality. The novel includes an episode where Billimoria confesses his entire story to Gustad when he later goes to meet him in jail. Then, the unexpected death of Billimoria in police custody proves foul play running in the government and corruption existing in high authoritative positions. The Nagarwala Scandal, according to the novel, was a plot devised by

prominent politicians to meet their purposes. In *Such a Long Journey*, Mistry expresses his contempt and attempts to correct the record. It is quite evident when Sohrab says, “Our wonderful Prime Minister uses RAW like a private police force to do all her dirty work” (Mistry 93). This is an example of how politics encroaches into the life of a common man like Gustad Nobe and generates misunderstanding in his old friend.

*Family Matters* best captures the emotional alienation prevalent in a metropolitan space. One can see how economic pressure creates estrangement between an aging father and his children. Jal and Coomy treat Nariman Vakeel like a burden. “Don’t be difficult, Pappa, please! Pleaded Coomy. If something cracks, how will we ever replace it? The whole set will be spoiled”(Mistry 37). Nariman is one of those emotionally alienated people whose old age becomes a very difficult journey in the city. Nariman is also haunted by his memories as he had a forced marriage with Yasmin. Rohinton Mistry tries to highlight the bias of the Parsi community for marriage outside the fold of its community which is one of the reasons for the decreasing population of Parsis worldwide. Nariman was pressurized by his parents to marry a widow as he had an affair with a Christian woman, Lucy. He was advised “No happiness is more lasting than the happiness that you get from fulfilling your parents’ wishes. Remember that, Nari”(Mistry 13). Nariman’s stepchildren treat him with utter contempt and rudeness because Nariman did not have a happy relationship with their mother. Nariman’s past is responsible for his present loneliness but the lack of resources and fast-paced city life is the major reason that his children feel burdened by his presence. “The next instant, she broke down weeping, saying it was too much for her, she no longer knew what to do, how to take care of Pappa, and now with Phoola gone, the burden of the housework was on her head as well. Looking after Pappa had been hard enough when he was not bedridden, and the things she had to deal with, the spatters in the toilet bowl, the mess in the bathroom sink, his dentures staring at her every morning and every night”(Mistry 77). These above lines are indicative of the filial ingratitude and fragility of human relationships typical of this liquid era.

“In Mistry’s narrative, the past and present collapse into the space of Bombay and add to the chaotic nature of the city’s space. The city’s overcrowded streets are teeming with individuals who each have a unique perspective on and a story about the city, but they also love Bombay and are frustrated by the city’s transformation into Mumbai, a city that no longer seems to welcome religious diversity and multiculturalism. Mistry’s oeuvre reveals a focus on the interactions of memory, history, and power relationships that are explored by many urban novelists. In his work, Bombay emerges as a decaying, unwelcoming place defined by pessimistic nostalgia” (Minerva 2063).

As portrayed in *Such a Long Journey*, the ruling party of Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena started changing the demographic profile of Bombay as propaganda to create an environment that this place belongs to only Marathas and one such strategy was renaming social places by the name of great Maratha personalities. This is one of the examples of regional politics wherein the ruling party, for instance, the Shiv Sena uses state identity as a tool to create differences among the common masses for their vested interest and aspire to continue their supremacy of power. Mistry portrays the insecurities of the Parsi community in his fiction as Gustad Noble remembers his Parsi friend Malcolm, who used to say that “we are minorities in a nation of Hindus”(Mistry 23). Dinshawji laments the change of the name of different places and asks Gustad: “So what happened to the life I have lived? Was I living the wrong life, with all the wrong names? Will I get the second chance to live it all again, with these new names?”(74). The fact is that the natives of Maharashtra, the Marathi people were threatened by the increasing success of the outsiders like minorities and non-Marathi people in the fields of commercial and Banking sectors. Parsis were dominating the banking jobs. Marathi people began feeling insecure because most of the prominent posts in jobs were taken by outsiders. That’s why the regional political party became successful in mobilizing the natives to claim their land of birth. Hence, they began renaming places with the names of great Maratha leaders and essentialized the Marathi language as a tool to create a feeling that Bombay belongs only to the Marathi people. In all of his works, Mistry continues to refer to Bombay rather than Mumbai since, in his memories of his youth, only the old city of Bombay existed; the renaming was carried out in 1996, many years after Mistry had left the city. Mumbai has been named after the Koli native Marathi people who worshipped Goddess Mumbadevi. The East India Company has played a pivotal role in making Bombay one of the major commercial hubs but Shiv Sena has tried their utmost to erase the legacy of the colonizers.

## Conclusion

Thus, we saw how Rohinton Mistry engages with urban subjectivity in his fiction that incorporates the experiences of diverse people belonging to the different strata of society. He realistically portrays the dynamics of middle-class Indian family life, the inter-generational gap, the instabilities of economic and political structures, emotional alienation, the fragility of human relationships, and minority consciousness. Metropolitan space is characterized by liquidity. Zygmunt Bauman says that liquid modernity can be understood as the progression or advancement of modernity. Contemporary life is no more held by any structure. There is a change in every sector of society because of the advent of new technology. The age of liquid modernity is producing different kinds of people as well. In today’s consumer world, we have ample choices to buy any product or service. But, there is no reliability. When the products lose value, we replace them instead of fixing them. This same

technique we apply to human relationships. Instead of mending our relations, we change and replace people. Lewis Mumford in his book, *The City in History: Its Origins, its Transformations, and its Prospects* published in 1961 throws light upon the fact that historically, cities were built for development and for people to come together. In the present context, city life is majorly dominated by economic concerns. Human emotions and feelings are given less importance in comparison to money and power. Science and technology have made humans mechanical beings who have no peace in their lives. Mumford says that modern cities are inherently self-destructive. Phenomenons like population growth, overcrowding, pollution, and construction projects are breaking down our environment. The ruling class encourages war and pillaging and disseminates the ideology that everyone must sacrifice for the greater common good; and in our pursuit of the common good, we lose our sense of individuality and freedom. Mistry's fiction highlights the persistent struggle for survival amidst change, flux, and friction sustained by city life. Mistry depicts the repercussions of regional patterns of oppression, slum clearance, religious majoritarianism, and many more challenges faced by urban dwellers from time to time. The dynamics of city life affect familial relations along with blocking the path of mental peace for the individuals. Middle and lower-middle-class people are mere victims of external forces like class hierarchy, caste system, minority issues, and regional oppression. City as a space fails to provide stability to individuals due to its contingent formlessness. This is indicative of 'liquid modernity' explained by contemporary sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman. Rohinton Mistry's fiction voices the struggle of mankind in the face of unprecedented times. The plight of workers and laborers depicted in Mistry's fiction can be compared to the present time when during the first wave of COVID-19, a large number of migrants residing in urban society lost their jobs due to the sudden lockdown imposed across the country. Rohinton Mistry can be deciphered as a realist writer whose primary goal is to address the social and political evils still prevalent in Indian society. Mistry's fiction also shares the characteristics of diaspora literature as it portrays the anxieties of displaced people in the face of globalization. Mistry maps the journey of Indian society through its dusty highways. ■

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# Raja Rao as a Conscious Artist with a Definite Literary and Artistic Creed Interpreting Indian Thought and Culture in his *The Cat and Shakespeare*

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This article aims at showing Raja Rao as a conscious artist with a definite literary and artistic creed, who interprets Indian thought and culture rather his prime object as a novelist, the revelation of the very essence of Indian life and character and also to show how, fully equipped with the mental endowment of a philosophy and a realist, Raja Rao has been able to apply his metaphysical erudition and mystical insights to the interpretation of the reality of life in his art by revealing that **The Cat and Shakespeare** is a fantastic hotch - potch of realism, philosophy and fancy and it is more a book of philosophy than a novel.

**Keywords:** Philosophy, Indian Thought, realism, realist, conscious artist, creed, essence, metaphysical, mystical

Raja Rao is a conscious artist with a definite literary and artistic creed interprets Indian thought and culture rather than any other novelist. No doubt, the revelation of the very essence of Indian life and character are his prime object as a novelist. For form a nostalgic admiration or a sentimental outburst, his praise of India takes the form of self-understanding for himself and interpretation of its values for others, particularly the people of the west. Though he lays greater emphasis on the essences and values, he evokes both the external life at its social and cultural plane and the inner meanings at the metaphysical plane. Fully equipped with the mental endowments of a philosopher and a realist, Raja Rao has been able to apply his metaphysical erudition and mystical insights to the interpretations of the reality of life in his art. Narasingh Srivastava comments thus:

“The blend of metaphysical vision and the realistic view of life has enabled him to depict the rope and the serpent

together and also to juxtapose the realm of the cat and the realm of Shakespeare for a greater understanding of the either at a level at which they interact” (P 14).

Raja Rao’s third novel *The Cat and Shakespeare* may not be either a great or successful work of art, but when this novel makes an experiment with an interesting innovation and to that extent can be regarded as a potentially useful contribution. It is an attempt to find a new genre metaphysical comedy. It certainly has implications and lessons for other novelists. Prof. P.P. Metha rightly observes:

“The entire story looks like a thread-bare plot full of metaphysical discussions about truth, woman, life etc” (P 203)

*The Cat and Shakespeare* is more a book of philosophy than a novel. It is a fantastic hotch-potch of realism, philosophy and fancy. The novel *The Cat and Shakespeare* appears to be Raja Rao’s own favourite, though it evokes a mixed response from many readers. For one thing it is not clear as to what Shakespeare is doing in the little. When asked this question in an interview, Raja Rao replied that he put Shakespeare in the title because Shakespeare was a sage. *Raja Rao has claimed that The Cat and Shakespeare* is a sequel to *The Serpent* and the *Rope*. In the words of Narsingh Srivastava,

“More like an expanded metaphor which is developed in a riddling style of the narrative and dialogue, this novel is closer to an unpanishadic parable and can rightly be branded as a metaphysical comedy or a philosophical fantasy” (P 90).

What is commonly understood is that if one wants to know about India and its customs, one may well read the novels of Raj Rao, thereby getting a clear picture of India.

Raja Rao is said to be representing the Modern Indian ethos which combine the ancient Indian tradition and modern western attitudes by combining the techniques of modern western fiction and age-old Hindu methods of literary expression. In Rao’s hand, the India novel in English acquires an epical stature. Like his previous novels like *Kanthapura*, this novel *This Cat and Shakespeare* also has the reflections of India. India customs, attitudes and Indian ways of living have been beautifully brought out by Rao here in this novel. The novelist wrote this story as if it had occurred in Trivendrum, a most popular city in Kerala State. It is the story of two friends Govidan Nair and Ramakrishna Pai dealing with corruption in the rationing

department. The very title of this novel shows the Whimsical, Paradoxical note that is the characteristic of Raja Rao.

The novel *The Cat and Shakespeare* deals with a few middle class families of Kerala during the period of the World War II. Nair and Pai are the next door neighbours Pai has a wife who is practical-minded and two young children Usha, the girl and vithal, the boy. Pai falls in love with a young school mistress Shantha who has a child by him. Shantha also gives him her private money for the purchase of a house. Pai's friend Govindan Nair loses his little son Shridhar who is supposed to marry Pai's daughter Usha. He is charged with bribery and is locked up in prison, though he is ordered to be released by the High Court. After release, he is shifted elsewhere from Trivendrum. The cat plays a central part in the incident at the office which was evidently meant as a practical joke against him. But the joke has a tragic consequence for the office boss, Bhoothalinga Iyer who dies when the cat jumps on his head. The cat is produced in the court too. The reader is persuaded to believe that the cat serves as the linchpin that keeps this whole fabric together.

The story is very small indeed. It is not as well-told as in *Kanthapura*, which has stood the test of time. Raja Rao says about the book thus:

“It is metaphysical comedy and all  
I would want the reader to do is  
to keep at every stage not for what  
he sees, but for what he sees he sees  
for me, it is like a book of prayer” (Preface 10)

Govindan Nair is typical South Indian character, intellectual, poor and devoted to philosophical arguments. His style of talking is a mixture of the ‘vicar of Wakefield’ and Shakespeare. The social scenes and cultural values of India have been picturized wonder fully well in *The Cat and Shakespeare* by Raja Rao. But the prime aim of the novelist is nothing but the affirmation of the ultimate reality in accordance with the philosophy of modified non-dualism of Ramanuja Chrya symbolized by the Cat-kitchen relationship. In the task of interpreting India in this novel, Raja Rao has moved a step ahead of the pure Advaitic path of knowledge of Sankara as enunciated in his master piece **The Serpent and the Rope**, by enumerating the doctrine of self-surrender which derives directly from Tungalai devotional school of thought of South India - one of the two chief off - shoots of Ramanuja's Vishishta - Dawaitvad. This theory of self-extinction and self-surrender is comically presented through the portrayal of the actions and attitudes of characters like Govindan Nair, Shantha and Usha or even Ramakrishna Pai. We are taught here though the medium of fiction, though in a partially successfully way, a new tenet of Indian philosophy as a path of redemption.

Raja Rao seems to believe that India can be known chiefly through the knowledge of Indian Metaphysics. But he has also done full justice to the depictions of a slice of Indian life at the physical and moral planes. The social scene in *The Cat and Shakespeare* shifts from rural to the urban India. A realistic view of Indian social and political life in a city of Kerala evokes the veritable picture of life as it was lived in whole of India during the days of the World War II. Mr. Paniker rightly remarks in his review thus:

“Raja Rao has delved deep into the  
charm and bane of Kerala life, a  
life steeped in superstition,  
traditions, casteism and corruption  
and yet full of colour, freshness  
vitality and Vedanta” (P 124)

The natural aspects of Trivandrum are vividly evoked through landscape features along with the recapitulation of history. Ramakrishna Pai’s wife approvingly describes Trivandrum

“Oh, it is just like a home, coconut  
trees, huts and the sound of sea” (*The Cat and Shakespeare* 6)

The real atmosphere of Trivandrum has been picturized before our eyes by the novelist. The way of the people of Trivandrum has been brought out wonderfully well. The depth of Raja Rao’s observation of India life can be clearly understood by reading. *The Cat and Shakespeare*. What adds significantly to the realism of the novel is the depiction of the material side of life symbolized by the ration shop. Food is the greatest need of life and that was most scarce during the global war, hence the mad race for it and the prevalent corruption in the ration office. The ration offices were centres of corruption and we are told that

“The kingdom of Denmark is just  
like a ration office” (*The Cat and Shakespeare* 83)

Raja Rao has brought out the corruption of ration shops in general. This kind of corruption happens in almost all the ration shops in India. Seventeen sacks of rice were lost from the goods wagon, and the office files were alleged to have been eaten by the rats. Some people do not have their cards but they get the ration all the same. In a ration office, one is shown as ‘married’ where there is no wife and card are issued to those who bribe the authorities. By presenting the real picture of ration shop, Raja Rao has depicted the ugly atmosphere of India and the sufferings of the poor people of India. To such accounts of the material side of life is added the colourful scene of the pomp and show of the procession of the Maharaja with elephants and horses which evokes the traditions of the princely State of Travancore of which Trivandrum was a

part till the independence of India. Thereby the novelist has brought out the life of the high class society people of India. The painting of the social scene remains sketchy though it is pardonable in a novelist who is by no means a regional novelist interested simply in the social and material aspects of a defined and distinguishable locality. His chief purpose is to create an interesting fantasy for the philosophical doctrine of the cat - hold theory as a way of deliverance from the mysterious and complex world of Shakespeare. ■

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# Alice Walker's Projection of Self-affirmation and Critiquing of Black Community and Sexist Racism in *The Color Purple* and *Meridian* : A Brief Appraisal

Joshiha Bell J.B.  
S. Chelliah

This paper attempts to describe to the reading public **Meridian**, as one of the Alice Walker's most celebrated novels, beautifully reflecting her strong belief in the black womanist tenets, which deals with the ordeals of black women's lives. It explains how by tracing the history of black people in terms of the lives of mothers, Walker shows how motherhood is an angle of seeing life, of making all life stating it is not merely a biological state's but an attitude towards life. It also shows that survival whole the value of life - the right to happiness - are the increment in an ever-expanding philosophy of Walker's fiction.

**Keywords:** Sexism, racism, belief, tenets, motherhood, attitude, black community, survival whole.

Alice Walker is acclaimed as a leading Afro-American novelist who fills her works with her own experience, feelings, ideas and principles, the lives of black women and their battle with the society for their equal economical, political and sexual rights. In a word, she is a well-recognized voice among black American women writers who has produced an acclaimed and varied body of work, including poetry, novels, short stories, essays and criticism. Walker's *The Color Purple* and *Meridian* are lessons for the black community in particular and for the female race in general. It is also a lesson in alternatives and attitudes. The novels move forward and backward with a series of juxtaposed findings suggesting problem of opposition which mutilates individuals especially a hopeless human being who is a victim in her own family and in the society.

Through these two novels *The Color Purple* and *Meridian*, Alice Walker presents meanings to activities and objects, to self and to others. Walker's intention

in her novels is to focus on the plight of black women and the way in which they were subjected to various types of oppression resulting in their mutilation of self at the spiritual and physical levels. The subjection has caused enough mental disorientation. The writers regard them as an apparatus for their physical satisfaction and their clean clan, the black men made them constantly as creative of destiny. “The social inequality each male has tried to keep it alive when it comes to the question of black women has continued from her birth mark. Constant oppression is their fate and destiny. The feasibility of dawn toward a new horizon is an elusive mirage. Walker wants to restore human bodies appropriated long ago by a patriarchal culture to them. The fear had crippled the mind of the black women from their early age itself” (Walker 183).

To overcome their set backs is not that much easy. They have to secure serial support, political backing and cultural awakening. In the absence of all these supporting factors, the uprising of the black women is impossible. According to Michael G. Cooke, “Walker prefers a plan, unaffected diction and moderately open forms which permit her to reveals homespun truths of human behaviour and emotion and sing quietly of love for family, friends, other black people” (P 2002). Violence and failures for Walker appear transitory. What Walker appreciates through her two novels, *The Color Purple* and *Meridian* is the enormous energies composed in true, choice in action, the great questions resolved in the endless debate of silence. She believes in the regeneration and refeminisation that her class could be brought to comfortable living. Michael G. Cooke observes:

“Walker’s heroines and heroes are “common”  
folk, distinguished by essential goodness  
and sympathy for others, life in a world  
of death, separation and sometimes  
birth” (P 204)

As regards the mutilation and its range across the globe suffer at the hands of patriarchal influence, women suffer and Walker discusses how fragile they are made by their experience. Walker’s feminism pours out on the pages like a kind of healing salve for the suffered women. It is unfortune that uneducated women especially in undeveloped countries like their survival to male power. Effective change can come in if a strong woman’s movement towards the basic social problems takes place. Women get mutilated because of their vulnerability and hopeless mothers become more spectators when their daughters face such physical attacks. Walker says it is not culture, it is fortune and she wants that writers should focus on such blatant violation of human rights. Addressing the Black students Association at her alma mater, Sarah Lawrence College in 1971, Walker said :

“The truest and most enduring impulse I have is simply to write my major advice to young artists would be that they short themselves up somewhere away from all debates about who they are and What color they are just turn out paintings and poems and writing. but there must be an awareness of what is practical and what is designed ultimately to paralyze our talents. For example, it is unfair to the people we expect to reach to give them a beautiful poem, If they are unable to read it” (CLC 423).

Alice Walker is very much convinced that the black woman's problems are multiplied by the black men's machinations. which becomes an operative force in bringing suffering to the black girls especially. These men in order to safeguard their lethargy which results in economic inequality, transfer their inefficiency on the young black girls in order to sustain in the society and the method these men adopt to thrive in bad enough and about which less said is better. All this culminated for Walker's hatred on black men, she showed her hatred even on the black writers who are guilty of presenting black women they are capable. “She claims that the blacks are universalists. In her family alone, they are about four different colors. Then a black human looks at the world, it is so different she looks at the people look like kinfolk, and in cube, they look like her uncles and nieces” (Sengupta, 173).

Alice Walker brings home her point that black women have potentialities and have to realize them without getting into the hands of oppressive forces. and they should have strong mind to face consequences which strong mind to face consequences which may thwart their very struggle to become their hurdles. Each woman has to struggle to affirm the ‘self’. Which she knows exists beneath the false images imposed upon her because she is black and female meridian possesses a deeply social and moral vision. She evolves from a woman trapped by social and sexual opposition to revolutionary figure, effecting action and strategy to bring freedom to herself and other poor slavish blacks in the south. She leaves her man in life in order to affirm herself and seek a fulfillment in life as a human being. She defines an essential humanity of her own race Walker in her *The Color Purple* and *Meridian* made her commitment as a writer writing in a Vehement way. The one is the Civil Rights Movement and the other is women's liberation movement and those two generated her intention to articulate against the oppressive forces to find a solution to the inhuman problems systematically perpetuated upon black woman. She feels that she should champion the cause she said one of her interviews to a journal:

I am preoccupied with the spiritual survival,  
the survival whole, of my people” (P.29).

Many of Walker's literary ancestors had attempted to illuminate one part of this

vortex of racism primarily because of the tendous oppression black woman and men have suffered because of their race but in so doing, these writers have not consciously probed the salient fact, that racism in most invidiously expressed in sexist terms and that often the forms used most effectively by racist institutions are based on this interrelationship. Thus, the slave was to relate to man, in a submissive, obedient manner essentially, as a role to the real person, who was master, white, made. This construct in Black woman novelists by analysing the plantation system the major ideology that buttressed American slavery, this interrelationship has been an underlying theme in all of black women's fiction though often unconsciously perceived by the writers themselves.

But Walker is certainly conscious about demonstrating the relationship between these oppressions. One reason why her maternal ancestors had not approached this interrelationship was their fear that the other, powerful other, whites, were listening could read their published works and that any critique of the behaviour of black people would further be used by whites to further oppress the race Walker, however, insists on placing black people at the center for her work both as subject and as audience. In portraying the sexism that exists in black communities and demonstrating its relationship, she is speaking to her community about itself and its many participants. Walker's focus itself is an important political one, a breaking of silence which throws the oppressive stance fostered by racism, that white people are all that is important, that they are to blame for everything. That black people have no responsibility to themselves, their families, their institutions. Like Andre Lorde, another contemporary Afro - American woman poet, Walker proclaims that speaking the truth is necessary for survival, especially for the black people.

Alice Walker's Critiquing of her own community her demonstration of the relationship between decision and racism is already focal in her first novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*.

At a time when the prominent black writers of the day emphasized confrontation between the beleaguered black community and the powerful white society, Walker's novel showed how that confrontation affects the relationships, between black women, and men and children, in other words, the family. If the family is the core of the community within which values are nurtured, the place where black people relate to each other on the most intimate level, than one needs to look at the interaction in order to discuss political reality, political possibility. As in her alter two novels, *Meridian* and *The Color Purple*, Walker traces the development of three generations of a black family in contrast to her second and third. This subject was certainly a taboo one in the early 1970's since black writers were intent on idealization of nationhood. What Walker did was to show how racism is capable of distorting the individual's relationship to his ownkin, because he is encouraged to blame everything on the white folks and not to accept responsibility for his own problem.

**Meridian**, Walker's second novel, is a graphic illustration of the importance of her story to black woman's lives one of the novel's major themes is both a rich critique of the ideology of black motherhood in this country and a celebration of the true meaning of motherhood. The most obvious measure of the color purple's political direction is the novel's focus on sexism within the black community. This is not a new subject for Walker. All her work exposes how sexism is tragically a part of black mores, a question of power in the black community. Walker picturizes historical movements that have had significant effects on the lives of black women, while narrating these movements she both celebrates and criticizes them. Her peculiar feature as a political writer has much to do with her contrariness, her willingness at all turns to challenge the fashionable beliefs of the day, to examine them in the light of black women's story of her own experiences, and of dearly won principles that she has previously challenges and observed. It is significant that the survival whole of black people which Walker focused on in *Grand Copeland* is extended to the value of she illuminated in between freedom and happiness in *Color Purple*, particularly for her women characters. While Margaret Copeland and men are destroyed in the third life of Grange Copeland, *Meridian* expands her mind with action. But in pursuit of spiritual health, *Meridian* goes through a period of 'madness' paralysis of the body, then self-abnegation - Celie completes the cycle of Walker's women.

To conclude, it may be said that survival whole the value of life - the right to happiness - these are increments in an ever expanding philosophy of Walker's fiction. ■

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# Use of Parables in the New Testament : A Note in Theme and Style

N. Kaushi Reddy

This paper aims to project **The Bible** as one of the greatest books of Literature and Jesus not merely as a religious leader but also as a great social reformer and a powerful orator using parables for teaching his messages to the humanity and how many of the parables of Jesus Christ speak about soul, its redemption and the kingdom of Heaven.

**Keywords:** Heaven, Jesus, social reformers, parable, redemption, soul, kingdom, orator.

**The Bible** is one of the greatest books of literature. **The New Testament** contains basically the teachings of Jesus Christ and the early apostles. Jesus Christ was not merely a religious leader but also a great social reformer. One special aspect of Jesus which many critics have failed to note is that he is a powerful orator. The special stamp of his rhetoric is that he has used many parables to make his arguments convincing to the common men around him. Jesus is said to have spoken to the public in his mother tongue Aramaic. The kind James version of **The New Testament** was translated into English from the Hebrew version of the Bible. Though many British and American versions of the Bible have been brought out in English the excellence of king James version is proved by.

A parable at the superficial level is comparison of two objects for the purpose of studying. This word appears sixty one times in the Bible, of which forty six times are in **The New Testament**. Though there are different definitions to a parable, the popular definition given by Trench is accepted in the religious circle. Trench summarises thus:

“The parable differs from the Bible, moving as it does in a spiritual world, and never transgressing the actual order of things natural - from the myths, there being in the latter an unconscious blending of the deeper meaning with the outward symbols, the two remaining separate and separable in the parable - from the proverb, in as much as

it is longer carried out and not merely accidentally and occasionally, but necessarily figurative - from the allegory comparing as does one thing with another, at the same time preserving them apart as an inner and outer, not transferring as does the allegory, the properties and qualities and relations of one to the other” (The Compact Bible Dictionary 431)

Parable as a literary technique is defined by M.H. Abrams:

“A parable is a short narrative presented so as to stress the implicit but detailed analogy between its component parts and a thesis or lesson that the narrator is trying to bring home to use” (P 6)

Jesus is the only person who has used parables in **The New Testament**. At a particular stage in his ministry it was his only method of speaking to the people (St. Mathew 13:1-34). When his disciples asked him why he used parables, he said that it was an effective method of revealing truth. Many scholars especially theologians have given a serious thought to the parables. From the point of view of religion, the parables are classified as didactic parables, evangelic parables prophetic and judicial parables. They were found to be powerful instruments in the hands of Jesus Christ when he discussed matters of various themes with social, political, cultural, religious, economics and psychological connotations.

Many of the parables of Jesus speak about soul, its redemption and the kingdom of heaven. The salvation that Jesus was speaking about was a too difficult - to - comprehend concept for the Jews. Hence this new concept had to be put across to the multitude using the known and the familiar objects in parables. Most of the parables used by Jesus Christ have religious theme. Jesus projected himself as the good shepherd. To people who knew shepherds and sheep rearing this parable was very effective:

“verily, verily I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth and the sheep hear his voice and he calleth his own sheep

by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow but will the voice of strangers. This parable spoke Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spoke unto them.

..... Then said Jesus unto them Again, verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that Ever came before me are thieves and robbers but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door.....

..... I am the good shepherd; the sheep.... I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the father knoweth me, even so know I the father and I lay down my life for The sheep.....” (St. John 10: 1-16)

Jesus, used to parable of the sheep in a different way to show the concern God has for men:

“Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad” (St. Mathew, 26:31).

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing, and when Cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost” (St. Luke 15:47)

The sheepfold was often no more than an enclosure of piled up rocks, topped with brambles or thistles to keep out predatory animals. During the night, the mixed flocks of sheep would be run into the fold by means of the one door. Another shepherd or hired man would watch these mixed flocks while their masters slept. Any man seen climbing into the sheepfold was automatically suspected of being a thief, for he

would have been granted admission by the keeper of the gate if he were a lawful shepherd. In the morning, each shepherd would claim his own animals to take them to pasture. The masters knew their own sheep, and the sheep themselves responded to their master's calls, even the individual pet names they had been given. They would not, however, follow the voice of a stranger. Since his disciples did not understand the application, Jesus himself explained it. In the first lableau,<sup>1</sup> he is the door of the sheepfold; only through him will the true pastures of eternal life be reached. The thieves and robbers who came before him are probably the false teachers.

Realising the power of parables Jesus spoke to the Jewish multitude using parables.

“The kingdom of heaven is like  
unto a certain king, which made a  
marriage for his son, and sent forth  
his servants to call them that were  
bidden to the wedding; and they would not come.  
Again, he sent forth other servants,  
Saying, Tell them which are bidden,  
Behold, I have prepared my dinner;  
my oxen and my fat lings are killed  
and all things are ready; come unto  
the marriage.....  
But they made light of it, and  
Went their ways..... those  
servants went out into the highways,  
and gathered together all as many as they  
found, both bad and good; and the wedding  
was furnished with guest” (St. Mathew, 22:2-10)

Jesus compares the kingdom to a banquet. A king send his servants to notify previously invited that the wedding feast of his son is ready. To types of reactions occur one group of would be guests is completely indifferent to the reminder, going off to their forms and to their business. The others maltreat and murder the king's servants. Enraged, the king sends his troops to destroy the murderers and bur their city. A second time he dispatches the servants: this time to bring in all they can find to fill the hall for the wedding feast. In this parable, God has the role of the king and Jesus, the Messiah is the son. The servants are the prophets, whose message was received by Israel sometimes with contempt; sometimes with indifference, sometimes with hostility ending in murder. Those who willfully reject and obstruct a kingdom of God on earth will be rejected and punished for their obstinacy. The second group of servants, succeeding the murdered prophets, are the apostles of Jesus, who will now

take the message of salvation to the gentiles because it has been refused by those for whom it was first destined. The guests of the street are both good and bad. This parable has the second part which speaks about the guest without the ceremonial garment.

“And when the king came into to see the guest, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith unto him, friend, how comest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants. Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; for many are called, but few are chosen” (St. Mathew 22:11-14)

The king came in to look at the guests. According to the dignity of his position, the king would not himself eat with the diners at the banquet. He would, however, condescend to walk through the friendly gathering. The king notices a serious breach of good manners; the veritable insult on the part of the guest wearing ordinary clothes and not the ceremonial robe that should have been donned on such an occasion. The king asks gently, how he got in there without a wedding robe. The man was speechless. If there was any good reason; it should have been voiced at this time. The point of this parable is that a gross - insult was done to the king. The punishment meted out to him is severe. Bound hand and foot the guest is flung outside the lighted banquet chamber into the darkness outside. Of all the members of the banquet only one was without wedding garment and was ejected. The parable teaches in its own way that all members of human race are called by God. Those who are not chosen are rejected because of their bad will. By some means or other Jesus can bring them to his kingdom and to his banquet clothed in the wedding garment of their love of God. ■

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# Bharathi Mukherjee's Picturization of the Conflict between 'the Native & the Alien' and 'the Self & the Other': A Brief Analysis

M. Parvatha Varthini  
C. Ramya

This paper attempts to picture how fiction by women writers constitutes a major segment of the contemporary writing in English, thereby providing insights, wealth of understanding, and reservoir of meanings and how Bharati Mukherjee's fiction reflects the temperament and mood of the present American society as experienced by immigrants in America. It also examines the thematic structure of Mukherjee's fiction as fighting two simultaneous battles against marginalization with a focus on the conflict between "the native and the alien", "the self and the other" with diverse perspectives - Indian, Feminine and immigrant.

**Keywords:** Marginalization, immigrant, expatriate, identity, perspective, roots.

Fiction by women writers constitutes a major segment of the contemporary writing in English. It provides insights, a wealth of understanding a reservoir of meanings and a basis of discussion. Through women writer's eyes, one can see a different world. With their assistance we can seek to realize the potential of human achievement. In any or appraisal of the Indian English literature, an appreciation of the writing of its women is essential. One of the reasons that women, in such large number, have taken up their pen is because it has allowed them to create their own world. It has allowed them to set the conditions of existence, free from the direct interference of men. Similarly, so many women have taken to reading women's writings because it allows them a "a safe place" from which they can explore a wide range of experience of the world, from which they can identity with a rage of characters and a variety of existences. That is why women's writings has occupied such a range of significant and central place in women's lives.

The relation between literature and society is reciprocal, both serve as cause and effect to each other. A literary creation does not come into existence by itself; its

emergence is determined by social situations. Literature is indeed the most explicit record of the human spirit. It is a medium through which the essence of our living is made paramount by linking it to imaginative experience. A creative writer has a perception and analytic mind of a sociologist who provides an exact record of human life, society and social system. While explaining the relationship between literature and society, Milton Albert rightly says: "Literature reflects accepted patterns of thought, feeling and action, including society's unconscious assumptions" (P 78). **The Illia, the Odyssey the Ramayana, the Mahabharatha, Chilappatikaram and Manimekalai** are precious treasures that great accuracy. They are all Dravidian past with documents that reveal significantly about human relationship.

Life has become more mobile and so the continuity of the cultural and natural environment has been broken. This results in superficial relationships. The immigrant experiences a sense of unreality and strangeness. He experiences a sense of non-acceptance and he becomes an outsider in his own land. Consequently, he starts the disorder and chaos in an alien land to the patterned life in the native land. Immigration is considered as a stage in human evolution. An immigrant's sensibility is affected by the pattern of culture and many other things. In the process of breaking the barriers of culture, the strong minds succeed in absorbing the best of both the native and alien culture and grow into "International Citizens" but the weaker ones succumb to be psychic illness. "The different stages of attraction, adoption, acceptance, repulsion, rejection and fusion can be noticed in the immigrant psyche" (Dhawan 18)

Bharati Mukherjee's fiction truly reflects the temperament and mood of the present American society, as experienced by immigrants in America. One of the significant themes of modern literature is the depiction of identification a subject which has assumed a great significant in the present world of globalization. Bharati Mukherjee is one of the best example of this kind of writing and she occupies a significant place in modern Indian English fiction. Born in 1940, she went to the USA in 1961. Even though she left India for the American continent, familial ties continue to bind her to the country of her birth for she has got greatly attached to Calcutta. Since he was born and brought up there, she says, "the city will remain a habit with me, but as a writer, I have developed entirely in the United States" (P 21)

Bharati Mukherjee is very much an expatriate whose writing career began in 1971. Born in Calcutta in West Bengal on 27th July 1940, she finished her graduation from the University of Calcutta and Post-Graduation from the University of Baroda. Then she went to the University of Baroda. Then she went to the University of Iowa in the United States of America to do her MFA and Ph.D. degrees in 1969. On 19th September 1968, she got married to Clark Blaise, a Canadian Writer and became an American citizen in 1988. She authored six books of fiction like *The Tiger's Daughter*, *Wife*, *Darkness*, *Jasmine*, *Desirable Daughter's* and *The Holder of the World*. She has also written two books of non-fiction along with her husband namely *Days and*

*Nights in Calcutta and The Sorrow and the Terror*. Her earlier novels *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Wife* deal with the conditions of being an Indian expatriate and an American immigrant through the character of Tara in *The Tiger's Daughter* depicted as the one who has travelled far from the being an expatriate and through the portrayal of Dimple in *Wife*, she becomes an American immigrant. In her novel *Darkness*, she becomes completely an immigrant. By the time Mukherjee wrote *Darkness*, she has adopted American English as her language. In *Jasmine*, Mukherjee gives us a story of an immigrant from the third world to the U.S. In *The Holder of the World*, Mukherjee has made a bold attempt to reunite the origins of American history. In a nutshell, it may be said that Bharati Mukherjee is primarily an Indian woman who explores through her fiction the meaning of life in a way the Indian woman writer continues to do, in English or in her mother tongue.

An important concern the post-colonial literature is related to place and displacement. The concern with identifying a relationship between self and place leads to a crisis of identity. Ethnic women in America are clearly twice-marginalized: by virtue of their ethnicity and their gender. The central figures in Mukherjee's novels *The Tiger's Daughter*, *Wife* and *Jasmine* - Tara, Dimple, Jasmine - are pictured as fighting two simultaneous battles against marginalization during their early expatriate experiences in America; coming as they are from (an) other world, their very identities are in question, calling out for a re-visioning and a re-defining at the start. The moment of changes / transformation / reincarnation are crucial because, though the exercise is assertive / powerful / celebratory in its mainstream movement, the echoes at the margins valorize the anxieties of expatriation. The identities that Mukherjee's women eventually emerge with exemplify the characteristics of a whole new breed in this country, the "ethnic" who is also "American". The process of finding their identities must be a matter of intense struggle: with the self, with tradition, with the wonders and horrors of a new culture, with growing aspirations, hopes and desires.

Mukherjee's women do eventually find their distinctive voices but not before they have battled violently with the images of their own selves as representations, of "otherness" - exotic yet silent, capable yet suppressed. More often than not, these women have grown up in Indian families whose cultural roots retain their hold in insidious ways; though in times of fear and women return to seek the comfort of traditional faiths, they increasingly discover it to be cold- and so the quest for a new identity continues. Apparently, Mukherjee's growing concern is that these new born identities should not suffer from the terror of marginalization a concern that is probably legitimate to immigrants everywhere tracing a development through Bharati Mukherjee's work from early novel *The Tiger's Daughter* to *Jasmine*, one finds that this community is, ever increasingly a celebration of what the author obviously considers the spirit of America, a spirit that defines homesickness and nostalgia in order that one may favour the "exuberance of immigration". Certainly, more and

more is left out as Mukherjee's women evolve from the homesick Tara who returns home to find herself peculiarly alienated, through Dimple whose confusion turns violent, to the liberated Jyoti - Jasmine - Jase - Jane who makes a lifetime for every name look like a possibility for any exuberant immigrant. According to Spivak's reworked theory of margination, "we need to pay attention to the shadows of anxiety that hand over even the most joyous moments; I would like reinvent (marginality) as simply a critical moment, the place of interests for assertions rather than a shifting of the center.... (Spivak 58).

Duality and conflict are not merely a feature of immigrant life in America; Mukherjee's women are brought up in a culture that presents them with such ambiguities from childhood. The breaking of identities and the discarding of languages of actually begin early, their lives being shaped by the confluence of rich cultural and religious status, on the one hand and the "new learning" imposed by British colonialism in India, on the other. These different influences involve them in tortured process of self-recognition and self-assimilation right from the start; the confusion is doubled upon coming to America. Though *The Tiger's Daughter* is not autobiographical, as Mukherjee has stated, some of Tara's experiences on her return to India are the reflections of the author's reactions upon returning home:

"There were just so many aspects of India that I disliked by then. So a lot of my stories since are really about transformation - psychological transformation - especially among women" (P 78).

The concept of transformation itself changes to incarnation as one moves from Tara to Dimple and Jasmine; it seems as if Mukherjee concludes that a gradual and gentle transformation is not spirited enough for the sweeping adaptations that are required of the immigrant who wishes to belong to the world she has chosen to be in violence is a key word a 'leitmotif' in Mukherjee's fiction and the "psych violence" that she thinks is necessary for the transformation of character often emphasized by an accompanying physical conflict of some sort. The level of violence escalates as one moves from Tara's horrors as she is, in two climatic scenes seduced by a middle aged politician and standard in the midst of a bloody political riot, to Dimple's frenzied killing of her husband, and finally to Jasmine's incarnation as an avenging Kali in her desperate bid to find a foothold in the American way of life. Since Jasmine and Dimple belong to the middle class, they do not have the privilege to change their female gender whereas Tara has the liberty to change her female gender as she belongs to the upper class. With the exhilaration, fears, trepidations, doubts, mistakes - and violence, both psychological and physical. More and more through Mukherjee's novels, as the trepidations and doubts get overtaken in the flurries of action and activity, what is glossed over in terms of psychological torment is compressed into desperate violent acts.

Hailed in USA, as “The Supreme Lyricist of the Treat American Mix” for her daring, innate perfectly ventriloquised narratives of the immigrant experience” (Padma 1). Bharati Mukherjee has received sparse and mostly adverse critical response in India. An imagined affront to the image of Indian women as portrayed in her fiction has been responsible for this. It is time and imperative that attention is drawn to the most prominent aspect of Bharati’s literary handling of diaspora, i.e., use of woman as hero in the only way modern life and that is why modern literature allows anyone to be a hero, not as a conqueror of fate but as a contender for full rights over achieving a self-forged fulfilling identity. To conclude, the usual thematic core of expatriate writing, the conflict between the native and the alien, “that self” and “the other” seems to have acquired a new richness and complexity in the novelistic vision of Bharati Mukherjee owing to her singular dovetailing of the narrative line with diverse perspectives - Indian feminine and immigrant and the characters in Mukherjee’s fiction are like her inheritors of the Indian -American hyphenated identity coming to terms with “the strange phenomenon of having too many roots, too many locations both to belong to and unbelong in” ( Hatrak 649). The ambivalence tone of her fiction alternately wistful, ironic, humorous and indignant is due to the curious ambivalence in her literary endeavor to project her protagonists as “semi assimilated Indians with sentimental attachment to a distant home land, but no real desire for a permanent return” (Mukherjee 3). ■

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# Philip Roth's Fiction as Reflecting the Dilemma of the Jews in America with a Focus on the Anxieties, Tension and Problems of the Jewish American Life: A Note

C. Ramya

This paper is an attempt to picturize the emergence of 'minority writers' as one of the most significant features of contemporary American Literature especially in the field of fiction in general and Philip Roth as a highly controversial writer being at once as well as outside, of both the American and the Jewish traditions, as a unique voice creative out of the experience of a modern American Jew not only a portrayal of the American experience but also a picture of universal human condition and also as the one universal voice reflecting the dilemma of the Jews in America with a focus on the anxieties, tensions and problems of the Jewish American Life.

**Keywords:** Dilemma, anxiety, tension, problem, minority, Jewish, American Life, Universal, voice

The emergence of 'minority writer's is one of the most significance features of contemporary American Literature, especially in the field of fiction. Two such groups of writers who Ihab Hassan considers as the spokesmen of mid-century America are "the Southern novelists and the Jewish Writers' (P 161). In the words of Irving Malin, "the Jewish Movement is the only movement in twentieth century American literature as important as the 'Southern Renaissance' (Malin 3). As far as fiction is concerned by the late sixties, the Southern novelists seem to have stepped aside in favour of the Jewish novelists. Tracing the social history of Modern American Literature, Wlater Allen observes:

"..... in the United States, it now seems as through the dominance of the South in the novel has largely passed to Jewish writers, through the best of whose work, the novels of Saul Bellow and Bernard Malamud in particular, a recognizably new note has come into American fiction, not the less American for being unmistakably Jewishy".

With the winning of the 1976 Noble prize for literature by Saul Bellow, the ascending of the Jewish group over the Southern group was found to be complete. In spite of there being Jewish - American novelists of great distinction in the first two decades of the 20th century, they did not gain as much importance or prominence as the novelists of the thirties. But even these novelists of the thirties could never have imagined the success and immense popularity enjoyed by the novelists, the Jewish - American novelists continued to flourish. Among the present day Jewish writers in America, we have major American novelists like Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Norman Mailer, J.D. Salinger etc. Besides them, other important American novelists among the Jews are Philip Roth, Herbert Gold, Bruce Jay Freedman, Leslie Fielder etc. out of whom Philip Roth occupied a novelist of distinction in the field of fiction in American Literature. All the above novelists are said to have created “an important body of work, a good deal of it a high critical as well as of popular acclaim” (Angoff 7)

A significant aspect of the Jewish - American life is that even the most thoroughly acculturated of Jews in America suffers from the dilemma of being a Jew on the one hand and an American on the other. The reasons is quite simple: the Jewish and American values clash with each other in the same person. As Malin has stated, “the Jew and the American confront each other often in the same person” (Malin 4). The resultant strained condition in which the American Jew finds himself is very correctly described by Robbi Eamnuel Feldman:

“One of the paradoxes of the American Jew is the fact that despite his freedoms and his over-widening vistas of opportunity, he lives under a nameless tension. In a country which offers him freedom to live as he desires, he is basically ill at ease. In an environment which permits him to live, act and think as his non-Jewish neihgbour does, the Jew beneath the façade of apparent conformity, is not completely comfortable. Even as he confronts to the patterns of American life, he feels himself the perpetual outsider” (P 138).

The fundamental reason for this paradoxical position of the American Jew according to Feldman “is the divergence between what is characteristically Jewish and that which is characteristically American, a polarity of views which cannot quite be reconciled” (Feldmen 139). Unlike the American, Jew is a patient being. The notion of achieving anything through short cuts is totally alien to him. The Americans are always obsessed with newness and experiment. In the words of Harold Laski, “the

characteristic American is always on the move. He is always willing to try something new. He is skeptical of anything that expresses itself as permanent and absolute” (P 142). One notable difference between the American and the Jew is of the differing sets of values and contrary approaches to the realm of thought. There is little of mystery symbolism in American life as a result of its clear, factual and documented history. “The American spirit is the song of the open road: the past is known, the future charted” (Malin 59). This cannot be said of the Jew for he is “rooted in something less open and tangible. His beginning and his destiny are shrouded in the unknown, and Jewish life is replete with symbol, with ritual and with mystery” (P 144). Because of the unambiguous nature of its tradition and history, Feldman feels that American thought is concrete and pragmatic. A typical American, therefore, is a doer rather than a thinker, conversely, Jewish thought is abstract and unutilitarian.

Closely linked with the concept of time are the concepts of exile and family life for Jews. The past reminds the Jew of the holy land which traditionally is the promised land for them. Since the majority of the Jews believe in the promise given to them by God, they consider themselves alien in America, even if they have been born and brought up in that country. Thus, they are faced with the baffling questions what they should consider America as their house or Diaspora. The more they think in terms of Israel, the more they suffer from tension between homeland and exile. It is natural for the Jewish writer in America to reflect the tensions, dilemmas and problems of his people in his writings. Writing about the Jewish - American novelists Ihab Hassan observes:

“Anxious and ambivalent, he often expresses  
the tensions of skepticism and belief,  
assimilation and identity, new mixed  
marriages and old family manners, in  
complex forms. An ancient equilibrist  
of pain and humour, scapegoat and  
paraiah, he sees in his condition  
a symbol not retrograde, but prophetic  
of the human condition” (P 71)

The Jewish - American novelists. Consciously or unconsciously, deal with the Jewish experience in America. However, it is true that they are not always exclusively concerned with the Jewish experience. America gives freedom to these writers to deal with any subject they like. They Jewish - American writer like the typical American Jew experiences “the tension between the old and new generation, between Ghetto and suburb, bar mitzvah and little league baseball, synagogue and College, gabardine and Ivy - league suit”. This tension spurs “the Jewish writer to an evaluation of his heritage as Jew, American and Modern men” (Schulz 6). This is to say, he creates out of the experience of a Modern American Jew not only portrait of the

American experience but also a picture of universal human condition. The Jewish writer in America enjoys a special advantage over the rest of the Modern American writers because of his marginal status. He is neither completely integrated in the society nor wholly alien to it. He is at once inside as well as outside, of both the American and the Jewish traditions.

Philip Roth has certainly taken great advantage of this paradoxical situation to produce some highly popular and meritorious fiction. Writing about Roth, Guttman asserts:

“Of Jewish writers a generation younger than Saul Bellow and Norman Mailer, he is the most talented, the most controversial and the most sensitive to the complexities of assimilation and the question of identity” (P 64).

That he is a highly controversial writer became clear immediately after the publication of his first book *Goodbye, Coloumbus* (1959) consisting of the title novels and five stories. While the literary critics showered generous praise over him, the theologians bitterly frowned on him. Saul Bellow writing in *Commentary* declared “at twenty - six he is skilful, witty, and energetic and performs like a virtuoso” (P 77). What many writer spend a life time searching for “wrote Irving How” - a unique voice a secure rhythm, a distinctive subject - seem to have come to Philip Roth totally and immediately” (17). Alfred Kazin praising him for his “toughness” said “one catches the lampoonings of our swollen and unreal American prosperity that are as observant and charming as Fitzgerald’s description of a Long Island Party in 1925” (261). If on the one hand, Roth received such excessive praise from the literary critics, on the other, he invited the wrath of the rabbis and the Jewish leaders. Ironically it was the subject of Jewishness which landed Roth in the middle of a bitter controversy.

Quite undaunted by the criticism against his earlier work, Roth went ahead to write in *Letting Go* (1962), again with Jewish protagonists. Of course, Jewishness was not the only theme of this book. However, in this novel, Roth made certain valid comments on the Jewish family life in America, though not as satirical as his remarks in the stories of *Goodbye, Coloumbus*. *Letting Go* failed to receive as much popular response and criticism acclaim as received by *Goodbye, Coloumbus*. After a gap of five years, Roth wrote *When She Was Good* (1967), a novel purely about *Gentiles*, perhaps to prove that he could write as well about Non-Jews or perhaps prompted by a desire to be considered as an American writer, writing, for Americans. “Roth’s natural subjects, “according to Kazin, is “the self-conscious Jew, nearly middle class, the Jew whose ‘identity’ though never in doubt is a problem to himself” (P 144). All the leading characters of Roth’s Jewish fiction. *Goodbye, Colombus, Letting Go and*

*Portnoy's Complaint* belong to the middle and upper-middle class Jews of the suburbs. With the "finest eye for the details of American life" (Hymen 534), Roth describes every minute details of the life of the suburban Jews.

Roth's Jewish fiction gives the readers an insider's view of the anxieties, tensions and problems of the Jewish American life. While writing about his fellow Jews, Roth does not adhere to the diction that a writer must owe a certain allegiance to his tribe. Believing in the artistic integrity of a writer, he "casts a cold eye on Jews as a group" (Kazin 145). In his stories and novels, he satirises the suburban Jews for their obsession with material wealth, and the consequent corruption of values. No doubt, Roth's fiction reflects the dilemma of the Jew in America. The conflict between the Jew and the American figures very prominently in his fiction. He tried his best to present the specific tensions and dilemmas in Jewish suburban life arising out of the dual heritage of the American Jews.

Philip Roth's long story "Goodbye, Colombus has often been read as a satirical social commentary. On the life of suburban Jews. However, a close reading of the story suggests that Roth in writing this story is concerned not so much with satirising the vulgar ways of the suburban Jews, as with presenting the paradoxical life of the Jew in post-war America. As in the other stories of the collection, Roth is seized of the problem of identity here also. Neil Klugman, the youthful hero, dangles between two groups of Jews in search of his identity. He is neither here nor there, unable to conform to either of the groups. This constitutes his dilemma.

Neil works in a public library in Newark and lives with his Aunt Gladys since his parents have gone to Arizona for reasons of health. During the summer, he meets Brenda Patimkin of Short Hills and a romance develops between them. The two worlds between which Neil hangs are those of Aunt Gladys and the Patimkins. Newark and Short Hills represent two opposite positions on the integration - survival scale. Malin says that they conveniently stand for past and present. The Patimkins have travelled the path of riches from Newark to Short Hills because of the phenomenal rise in the scale of their lives during the war years when "no new barrack was complete until it had a squad of Patimkin boys lined up in its latrine" (*Goodbye* 30). Through this extraordinary sale, the Patimkins grow wealthy enough to move to the suburban heights of Short Hills. Roth exposes the vulgar materialism of the suburban Jews through the Patimkins and their ways of life. They have in their house everything that is needed for a comfortable living. Their refrigerator bursts "with fruit, shelves swelled with it, every colour, every texture, and hiddle within, every kind of pit" (*Goodbye* 30). The members of the Patimkin household are a far cry from the vanquished world of the East European *Shtetl*. For instance, Brenda's brother Ronald Patimkin has nothing in common "the pale scholar of the *Shtetl* and the exploited needle - trades worker of the ghetto" (Guttman 68). Comparing him to Robert Cohen, Hemingway's Jewish athlete of the twenties, Harway Swados describes

him as one “who hangs his jockstrap from the shower faucet while he sings the latest pop tunes and is so completely the self-satisfied muscle - bound numb - skull that notions of Jewish alienation are entirely ‘foreign’ to him” (Swados 174) Kazin calls him “the thickest dumbest, solidest, most amiable American foot-ball hero yet” (P 260). The perversion of traditional Judaic value in American Suburbia is fully exposed through Bruda’s mother. She is an alive lady who participates regularly in all the functions of the temple and is interested in Jewish and Hadassah, she betrays, to an astonishing degree, her ignorance of the philosophical, moral and theological foundations of Jewish religion.

Roth leaves one in no doubt that the Patimkin are a highly assimilated group of Jews who in their attempt to join the mainstream of the American life have lost touch with their past. ■

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# Bertrand Russell as a Great Champion of Human Individuality, a Fighter against Social Evils through his Profound Philosophical Thought

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This paper attempts to describe Bertrand Russell as one of the most powerful thinkers of our times, who has, no doubt, left a profound impact on the attitudes and values of the age and as a social thinker being provocative stressing the importance of the creative activity of man and also as a born fighter and a leading nationalist and also as a staunch pacifist and a moral philosopher who is to stand at the rim of the universe, peering into the darkness beyond.

**Keywords:** Provocative, thoughtful, rationalist, creative, universe, impact, thinker, philosopher.

Bertrand Russell is regarded as one of the most powerful thinkers of our times, who has, no doubt, left a profound impact on the attitudes and values of the age. As a social thinker, he is said to have been very often provocative stressing the importance of the creative activity of man, which he used to call ‘the principle of growth’. As a born fighter and a leading rationalist, he is found to be the one fighting lonely battles, swimming against the currents of convention and courting notoriety and arrest. All through his life, he is said to have remained a staunch pacifist and as a philosopher in his own words, he was to stand at the rim of the universe, peering into the darkness beyond.

Russell as a great man whose works and ideas stir us with something of the quality of a wireless message reverberating around the world. He really has a message for the world today. In a productive career spanning more than seventy years, Russell has written scores of books on everything from Mathematics to politics. He is also the best possible example of the modern positivist philosopher who rejects absolutism in ethics. As Warranagar puts it, “ Russell has dispensed formulas for education, government and world peace; and he has also helped lead the way to the modern

sexual revolution with his still widely read book *Marriage and Morals* first published in 1929 (P 98). He is the best example of a mathematician-cum-philosopher. He is unquestionably one of the greatest mathematicians of all time. He has used his mathematical acumen to analyse the thoughts and systems of great philosophy.

Russell did more than any other thinker to bring philosophy out of the ivory tower. He campaigned for what he thought to be true and right. No doubt, philosophy keeps alive our sense of wonder by showing familiar things in an unfamiliar aspect and philosophical contemplation develops liberal outlook and selfless love of truth. The study of philosophy broadens horizon and his writings do contain some of the most important pieces of philosophical writings of our country. His clarity, incisiveness and brilliance of exposition in the examination of ethical subjects and the nature of truth also mark an important stage in the evolution of his thought. Naresh Chandra states:

“The long line of writers from Plato to Russell, from Dante to Eliot and E.M. Forster, from St. Augustine to Dean Inge, who hold between them the treasures of western culture, also have the key to culture that is more potent in humanising man than any other agency, Religion and philosophy not excepted” (P 37)

His views on religion, morals and politics are of great interest. Russell’s first interest in philosophy sprang from thwarted religious impulse. He himself stated:

“I hoped to find religion satisfaction in philosophy..... I came to philosophy through mathematics, or rather through the wish to find some reasons to believe in the truth of Mathematics” (P.263)

Despite all the apparently conflicting statements to be found in the total Russell’s philosophical writings, in spite of the number of cases where the champions of different opinions at different times, there is throughout a consistency of purpose and directions and a consistency of method.

Russell dreamt of a society where individuals grow freely and where hate and greed and envy die because there is nothing to nourish them. The world that we must seek is a world in which the creative spirit is alive, in which life is an adventure full of joy and hope, based rather upon the impulse to construct than upon the desire to retain what we possess or to seize what is possessed by others. It must be a world in which affection has free play, in which love is purged of the instinct for domination, in which cruelty and envy have been dispelled by happiness and the unfettered

development of all the instincts that build up life and build it with mental delights. Such a world is possible, if it waits for men to wish to create it. Being happy in himself, a person will be a pleasant companion and this in turn will increase his happiness. But all this must be genuine, it must not spring from an idea of sacrifice inspired by a sense of duty. A sense of duty is useful in works, but offensive in personal relation. People wish to be liked, not to be endured with patient resignation. To like many people the greatest of all sources of personal happiness. "The secret of happiness is this; let your interests be as wide as possible, and let your reactions to the things and persons that interest you be as far as possible friendly rather than hostile" (Russell 157).

There has been a phenomenal growth of scientific and philosophic literature during the 20th century. Many scientists of our times can favourably be compared with such Victorian giants as Huxley, Darwin and Tyndall. The impact of modern science has been palpably felt in all branches of life and learning. The impact of the new science fell particularly on religion and ethics, but its effects extended to every sphere, especially in the rapidly developing study of sociology and the practical bearing of the new science upon society demanded consideration. Among the modern scientists, A.N. Whitehead (1861-1947) occupies a distinctive place. He was a mathematician and a leading exponent of the philosophic approach through his works like the *The Concept of Nature* (1920), *The Principle of Reality* (1922), *Science and the Modern World* (1926), *Process and Reality* (1929). J.B.S. Haldane (1892) made notable contribution to the world of scientific literature by writing *Possible Worlds* (1927), *Science and Ethics* (1928) and *Science in Everyday Life* (1939).

Among the philosophical and scientific writers of the 20th century, Bertrand Russell (1872-1920) occupies a very high place. He is a scientist, mathematician, philosopher and political thinker of the highest order. He is the author of a number of valuable works, the chief of them being: 1. *Philosophical Essays* (1910), 2. *Problems of Philosophy* (1911), 3. *Principles of Social Reconstruction* (1917), 4. *Roads to Freedom* (1918), 5. *On Education* (1926), 6. *An Outline of Philosophy* 7. *Marriage and Moral* (1929), 8. *Education and the Social Order* (1932) 9. *A History of Western Philosophy* (1934) and 10. *Unpopular Essays* (1950). In certain quarters, his books have been hailed as a valuable contribution to the solution of the world's complex problems.

Russell has been deeply afflicted to note the hypocrisy, falsehood and injustice prevailing in our society. The system of modern education with numerous defects in our University life has equally stirred the thoughts of Russell. He has given considerate thought to the solution of these various maladies of our social and economic life. He is primarily concerned with the destruction and elimination of these evils. Russell equally advocates socialism as the panacea of all our economic

and political maladies and he is against communist with its plan and programme of wholesale change in society.

Russell started a career of research into Mathematical analysis and the result of his speculations was the important work *The Principles of Mathematics* published in 1903. It was an original work and formed the basis of the monumental volume *Principia Mathematica* (1910). It was an epoch-making work and it placed Russell among the foremost mathematicians and philosophers of the world. He has been hailed as a lover of freedom and justice, as a master of king's English, as a man with passion for the truth and no doubt he was the inimitable master of lucid and effective expression and as such one of the great makers of the modern English prose style. Edmund Wilson called him "ready a type of the eighteenth century philosopher ironic, elegant, dry, humanitarian and antimystic" (Russell 9). In a nutshell, Russell has been one of our greatest champions of human individuality a jealous guardian of the freedom of conscience even against a civilization and society reared against him. ■

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# Projection of Themes, Characters and Incidents in Barbara Kingsolver's *The Lacuna* : An Appraisal

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Barbara Kingsolver, an internationally acclaimed American writer, poet, essayist and political activist, was born on 8 April 1955 in Annapolis, Maryland. She grew up in Eastern Kentucky. Her father was a doctor who did his practice in the rural area. She did her graduation in Biology from DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana and the University of Arizona. She worked as a freelancer before writing her novels. Later she devoted herself for creative writing. Her published fictions are *The Bean Trees* (1988), *Homeland and Other Stories* (1989), *Animal Dreams* (1990), *Pigs in Heaven* (1993), *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998), *Prodigal Summer* (2000), *The Lacuna* (2009), *Flight Behavior* (2012), *Unsheltered* (2018) and *Demon Copperhead* (2022). *The Lacuna* was published in 2009 and it is the sixth novel by her. It narrates the journey of Harrison William Shepherd from Mexico City, Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera to America, the Cold War, and the Red Scare. The novel is a narrative of a man Harrison who is caught between two worlds. His identity crisis and struggle of life remain the main emphasis of this novel. He becomes a plaster mixer, a cook and secretary. His struggle during the Second World War becomes more difficult because the Red Scare was attacking the artists and was incriminating them for their work.

**Keywords:** Barbara Kingsolver, *The Lacuna*, World War II, Harrison William Shepherd, Turmoil, Artists, Extra-Marital Relationships, Identity, Homosexuality, Self-Obsession.

Barabara Kingsolver's works deal with the some recurring issues. Some of her novels are set in American southwest and have the legacy of this region. Being a science student, her novels deal with eco-criticism, ecofeminism, nature, Biblical illustrations, self and feminine aspects. She tells in an interview about her characters,

“I invent characters who will do what I need them to do” (qtd. in Fernando 224). Her identity as a writer stems from her advocacy of environmental and social justice with a historical essence of political issues. It is generally seen that her characters are empathetic, skeptical and intelligent. In some novels, her women characters are weak and frail. Ceri Gorton remarks about Kingsolver’s fiction that it reconnoitres “native American adoption, fast food culture, political refugees, colonialism, injustice on a global and local scale, alternative agriculture, poverty, images of beauty, climate change, and environmentalism, among a variety of contemporary concerns” (Gorton 13-14) Her novel *The Lacuna* (2009) has been written in five parts and it is a lengthy novel. The first part of the novel is set in Ila Pixol, Mexico City and the setting of the novel is from 1929 to 1931. The novel begins with the following words:

In the beginning were the howlers. They always commenced their bellowing in the first hour of dawn, just as the hem of the sky began to whiten. It would start with just one: his forced rhythmic groaning, like a saw blade. That aroused others near him, nudging them to bawl along with his monstrous tune. (Kingsolver 2)

This novel has been written on some interesting themes. The novel describes the morbid tales of the post-modern world how modern couple are having a dissatisfactory life. Kingsolver writes about it, “What a strange couple. Why would a man and a wife live in separate houses?” (Kingsolver 119). Harrison William Shepherd is the main protagonist of the novel. He was born on 6 July 1916 in Lychgate in Virginia. His father was from America and his mother hailed from Mexico. As a young man, Harrison has been described as a well-groomed person with black hair, blue eyes and having roman features. He is a tall man of six feet and five inches. Harrison has to strive for his conflicting role and identity throughout his life. He can be compared with Gogol of Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* (2003) or Willie Chandran of V. S. Naipaul’s *Half a Life* (2001) due to his split personally. As his parents belong to two different countries, there is always confusion about his identity whether he is an American or a Mexican. He has to work from one place to another. He has to change his name. His mother calls him by the name “Will” when he was a child but later he is called by Harry (Harrison) when he becomes an adult. He does not hanker after fame in his life. He prefers to read books and remains quiet tracing from the society. He remains holing up in his house with his company secretary Violet Brown. He is a peace-loving person and he cares other people who are in his contacts. He is sometimes susceptible to depression when he notices corruption, inequality and injustice in the world and finds that the world is not suitable for him.

It has been generally seen that those people who are introvert prefer to live alone because they become morose and sad to see the malpractices in the world. To remain happy in their personal life, they try to find a separate corner for them and the same happens with Harrison also. His mother Salomé Huerta hails from a well-

to-do family of Spanish decent. She comes to America at the age of sixteen. She tells her name “Sally” and her age twenty to other people in order to hide her real identity. She falls in love with an accountant who worked in her father’s company. Eventually, she does not remain satisfied in her life in America and starts having her affair. Consequently, she has to move back to Mexico with her son Will. At that time, Will was merely twelve years old. She had green eyes and had a dashing personality. She is an impulsive woman who is wealthy and fashionable. She sometimes neglects her son also for her whim. Unfortunately, she dies in a car accident when she was watching an air show.

In the first part of the novel, Salomé leaves her American husband who is an accountant in Washington D. C. for her Mexican lover Enrique whom she met through her husband’s government work. But after coming to Mexico, Salomé comes to understand that Enrique is not a man she had thought about him. Kingsolver writes about it, “The first year after moving to Mexico to stay at Enrique’s house, they woke up terrified at every day’s dawn to the howling” (Kingsolver 3). Enrique starts losing interest in her and he seems to be hesitant to marry her. Salomé does not like when her son is growing day by day, “Salomé hated that her son was now taller than she was: the first time she noticed, she was furious, then morose. In her formula of life, this meant she was two-thirds dead” (Kingsolver 10).

Salomé again decides to elope with a new wealthy lover in Mexico City. Will lives with her in the small apartment and Salomé is not happy with her life as she thinks himself as someone’s mistress. Will is studying in a low-level school and after his schooling, he becomes a plaster mixer for an artist named Diego Rivera who is painting a mural at the Palacio Nacional. When Will is fifteen years old, he is sent back to his father. His father sends him to a boarding school, a military academy called Potomac Academy. This was the first time when Harrison is called by his real name. Harrison develops friendships with a boy named Billy with whom he develops homosexual relationships. An archivist, Violet Brown compiles Harrison’s notebooks.

In the third part of the novel, Harrison comes to meet his mother in Mexico. He was expelled from his academy during his graduation in 1934 and the reason for this is a secret. There are inklings in the novel that he might have been expelled due to his homosexual relationships with Billy. Diego Rivera and his wife, Frida give him work of a plaster-mixer. Frida is a modern artist who is very sensitive towards her costume. Though she is not much older than Harrison but she always acts as his senior. Harrison gets enamored by her looks and costumes and he compares her with a princess in her Mexican costumes.

So far as Diego Rivera is concerned, he is a plaster-mixer, a cook and later a secretary. Pamela Pierce writes about him, “His life takes a crucial turn when Harrison

encounters the legendary muralist Diego Rivera and starts to mix plaster and paint for his murals” (Pierce 105).

He is much older than Frida. He is very ugly, large and frog-like creature. He and Frida have few things in common also as they like to help the Mexican people and support communalism. He is quite famous among women for his magnetic and passionate personality.

Harrison gets attracted towards Trotsky’s official secretary Van also. Harrison becomes sometimes depressed and at times he is seen happy. Frida has affair with Trotsky and it causes a rift in her marriage and a tension is created in the house. Eventually, Trotsky is assassinated in his office by a driver, Jacson. The Mexican police confiscate Harrison’s diaries, his incomplete novel and the household items. Frida sends him to New York in order to deliver some pieces of art for a museum. Frida gives him his diaries and the manuscript of the novel as a farewell gift which she had somehow recovered from the Mexican police.

The fourth part of the novel is set in Asheville, North Carolina. Violet Brown identifies herself an archivist and she tells that Harrison did not keep diaries after coming to the U.S. Harrison delivers the painting in New York and he starts living in North Carolina where he starts teaching Spanish at a college. He is employed by the U. S. government to move artworks from museums and galleries to safe locations. Harrison becomes happy and he starts writing again and publishes his novel *Vassals of Majesty*. He becomes a reputed writer and people read his novels happily. He hires Violet Brown in order to handle his fans. When he brings Violet with him in order to assist him in the story of his next novel, the newspaper spread rumours about him that he has kept Violet as his mistress. Both Violet and Harrison dislike these gossips.

The fifth and last part of the novel is set in 1948 to 1950. America decides to weed out the communist influence in the country. There was a time when Harrison was also closely connected with the communists, the Riveras, that’s why he is investigated by the FBI. He instructs Violet to burn all his journals because he thinks that FBI may take false evidence from them. She pretends to do so but instead of burning these journals, she hides these at her house. Unfortunately, Harrison’s third novel is not liked by the readers and the critics and American boycott this novel. Harrison does not know much about the accusations. He becomes gloomy when he comes to know that the criminal charges may be put on him. Violet suggests him to go to Mexico where he visits his childhood home in Isla Pixol and fakes his death by swimming through the lacuna. When he was a child, he had discovered this lacuna. People presume that he has been drowned and is dead.

Florida also dies and Violet gets a letter from her estate in which Harrison’s journal narrates the lacunae. Violet decides to keep his journals safe and she decides to

publish journals in fifty years so the people also know the truth regarding Harrison that he was not a communist.

Violet Brown is Harrison's trustworthy secretary and they have unflinching faith on each other. She had been working for Harrison for many years. She works as a defending wall for Harrison and shields him from the negative news and his prying fans. She is one of those rare persons who know Harrison closely. She also knows that Harrison is a homosexual. She meets him for the first time after Trotsky's death. They both live in the same boarding house and fortunately, Harrison becomes a celebrated writer and he hires her as a secretary. Violet is older than him. She was married with Freddy Brown in her teens in 1916. She becomes a widow the same year because Freddy dies in the flood. She prefers to live as a widow throughout her life.

The novel deals with extra-marital relationships. Lust and romance are the dominating themes of this novel. Harrison's parents are divorced and his mother has relationships with various men. She and Harrison live at a married man's home where Harrison's mother also feels herself a mistress of that man. Harrison has affair with Frida also.

The novel deals with the obsession of some characters in the novel. Harrison's mother leaves her husband simply because she is highly obsessed with her lover. Harrison has also obsession for different women and including a boy Billy also due to which he is branded as gay. Harrison has obsession for his diaries and journals also.

The novel deals with the theme of devotion and loyalty. Harrison's secretary is quite loyal to him. She is absolutely devoted for her husband due to which she has to face the rumours of the society but despite everything else, she helps Harrison.

Barbara Kingsolver's novels imbibe the unification of local, self, gender, nature, and memory. Her novels are a combination of past, present and future. Wagner-Martin admires Kingsolver for her beautiful writing style and themes in her novel. He writes that Kingsolver shows quietly exuberant exercise in her novels, "Perhaps less flashy than *The Poisonwood Bible*, or less apparently erudite than *The Lacuna*, this tripartite evocation of learning to live well in a world that benefits from our unlocking its beauties may remain one of Kingsolver's bestloved books" (Martin 7). ■

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# Feminist with a Commitment as the Unique Quality of Meridian: An Appraisal

Joshiha Bell J.B.

This research article aims at projecting Alice Walker as a committed artist-cum-writer who writes with a sharp critical sense in American and black experience, in violence and non-violence, holiness and self-hatred, thereby probing the meaning of social reality reminding all that those who consider conflict and killing in order to effect change must prepare themselves to go through their own personal revolution. Setting an example in form of Meridian who is propelled on a search for spiritual and political health and having sinned against biological motherhood, Meridian becomes a mother by expanding her mind with action which is directed towards the preservation of all life situation through a feminist approach in perspective and insightful consciousness. It shows how the life of Meridian is a lesson in perspective to any oppressed individual in the race conscious of ruling class in socio-political order.

**Keywords:** Commitment, social reality, self-hatred, sharp, critical, revolution, motherhood, spiritual health

*Meridian*, one of Alice Walker's most celebrated novels, does beautifully reflect her strong belief in the black womanist tenets. It deals with the ordeals of black women's lives. By tracing the history of black people in terms of the lives of mothers, Walker shows how motherhood is an angle of seeing life, of making all life. It is not merely a biological state but an attitude towards life. Even as she probes the meaning of motherhood, Walker's use of history allows her to highlight the insidious ways in which both black and white society restrict, punish individual members even as they canonize motherhood. By expanding the meaning of biological motherhood, she extends the true meaning of mother to that of a revolutionary.

In terms of politics, meridian relates spiritual and political principles of the Civil Rights Movement, a social movement to violence, destruction of life, even as it had violence inflicted upon its members by the ruling class. Meridian poses as

major political question: “How does the acceptance of the culture of violence effect those who struggle for positive social transformation?” It is a question crucial to our world. Walker probes its meaning reminding us that those who consider killing in order to effect change must prepare themselves to go through their own personal revolution” (Puri 44). The social change is impossible without personal change. The flamed Meridian pursues the question of revolutionary violence in the novel an issue she can perceive, because from her point of view, she has violated life at its deepest level. Because she feels guilt about her second pregnancy, *Meridian* is propelled on a search for spiritual and political health. Having sinned against biological motherhood, she becomes a mother by expanding her mind with action which is directed towards the preservation of life.

The Meridian like movement of the novel indicates a process of coming to consciousness for meridian. The writer is able to show the interrelationship of sexism, racism and economic deprivation on individuals and their families but also on the political movements they create. These areas of oppression must be struggled through, rather than ignored or talked out of existence. The forms that Walker creates have political content. According to Percy, “Walker writes with a sharp critical sense as she deals with the issues of tactics and strategy in the civil rights movement, with the entire nature of commitment, the possibility of interracial love and communication, the vital and lengthily strands in American and black experience, the violence and the non-violence, holiness and self-hatred” (The New York Times 113).

Meridian, the protagonist is an interesting character. It is an attempt to reveal in contemporary terms the nation of holiness and commitment, with great skill and core to make Meridian believable at every stage of her development. For every act of bravery for the black community, she says an immediate price in her body, Walker rejects death. “Political commitment should not end in death” is her belief. Some bold act is required on the part of every individual in any society to bring out certain dramatic changes in the social structure. Initial failure should not deter any person from facing the situation boldly. In a way Meridian is a measured and deliberate drama.

In **Meridian**, Walker deals with a heroine who has not fully broken the gravitational field by the 60's if she keeps the faith, as most do not, she also feels the fetters of the disbanded revolutionary movement, as most do not. Meridian's home echoes ritually in those of other female characters, Anne and Anne Marian. It echoes even more tellingly in the high noon quality of the situations in which the other characters find themselves stark, boundary marking situations concerning the very choice of life they must make. According to Michael G. Cooke, “more than ordinary action, violence is transitory and exhausts its resources and goals. What Walker slowly appreciates through **Meridian** is the enormous energies composed in true, choice inaction, the great questions resolved in the endless debt of silence. The fruitfulness of Meridian's choice of inaction and silence may be revealed in the

growing back of her hair, in her rejuvenation and feminization. It is a choice less synecdoche than paradisiacal” (**The Yale Review** 87).

In **Meridian**, child beating is linked to images of murders and suicide. In this, the figure of wild child is and much a paradigm for the novel’s main characters, Meridian and Lyme, as it is for another minor example figure, Fast Mary. As the students of the Saxon College tell it, Fast Mary secretly gave birth in a tower room, chopped her new born babe to bits and wasted it down the toilet. When her attempts to hide the birth fails, her parents lock her up in a room without windows where Fast Mary later on hangs herself. In posing the contradictory social problems that demand that a woman should be a virgin until she gets married. She must be a socially well-recognized individual and it is possible if only she remains a ‘Good Virgin’. The tales of ‘Wile Chile’ and Fast Mary pose the problem of the individual’s relationship to the group. Fast Mary’s inability to call on her sister students and her final isolation at the hands of her parents raise questions. Meridian will also encounter at one stage the problem of communication, the question of language, is at the least of another of Meridian’s example characters; Louvain a slave woman from West Africa whose parents excelled in a particular form of storytelling. Louvain’s duties as a slave are to cook and take care of the master’s children. The story of Louvain speaks of the function of language; in its structure, it reproduces the features associated with motherhood. Louvain who does not have children of her own functions as a mother to the master’s children. In other hands, Louvain provides a model closer to the way Meridian will resolve her life.

From slavery to the present, the black women have spoken against their ordeals at the hands of males within their own class as well as the aliens. A testament to the very long struggle for recognition waged by black women and deep oppression out of which their struggles have begun, all speak a great deal of black literature itself. In spite of mutilations, Meridian defines a form of oneness with herself that will allow her to same time will prevent from becoming submerged by it. “Walker’s heroines share certain basic features, present in different forms in all the anecdotal incidents that make up the novel and through which Meridian herself must struggle in the process of herself - affirmation” (Susan 110).

The unique quality of **Meridian** is its feminist approach with a commitment. The conflicts, the simultaneous breaking down and restructuring and reconstruction take place in the body of Meridian. An Rosalind observes:

“To that extent the female body is seen  
as a direct source of female writing,  
a powerful alternative discourse seems  
possible: to write from the body is to  
recreate the world” (**Meridian** 252)

Meridian's sexual relationship with men does necessitates a recognition of antagonism. Like her relationship with her men, Meridian's political consciousness is described in terms of her mind and body involvement only after freeing herself from her body. She realizes that the demands of the political world require that she rejects her mother's role:

“She attempted to meditation on her condition, unconscious at first, of what she did. At first it was falling back into a time that never was a time of complete rest, like a faint. Her senses were stopped. While her body rested, only in her head did she feel something and it has a sensation of lightness - a lightness like the inside of a drum. The air is inside her head was pure of thought, at first” (**Meridian** 74)

As Meridian's meditation develops, she focuses on the bodies of young and teenage girls, as they grow from shame to “beginning of pride in their bodies” (75). Meditation free of her body, with a greater political consciousness, Meridian thinks for all their bodies' assertion, their problems get multiplied and result in mutilation. Her body reflects the conflict between her roles as a motherhood in Meridian and reflects the abnegation of personal freedom for the roles defined by men in a male -dominated society. Meridian is a lesson in perspective to any oppressed individual in the race of conscious of ruling class in socio-political order. ■

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# Bertolt Brecht : A Dramatist of Remarkable Accomplishment and Human Predicament in *Mother Courage and Her Children*: A Note

S. Sujitha

This paper aims at describing the dramatic art and vision of Bertolt Brecht who was a German poet, theorist, stage director and playwright whose writings show a profound influence from many diverse sources focusing heavily on Shakespeare and other Elizabethans and who is said to have found inspiration in other German playwrights notably. Bucher and Wedekind and also enjoyed the Bavarian folk play. It neatly projects Bertolt Brecht as a dramatist of remarkable accomplishment deeply concerned with the human predicament in his plays with special reference to *Mother Courage and Her Children*.

**Keywords:** Dramatist, accomplishment, sources, predicament, human condition, remarkable, deep concern.

Bertolt Brecht, a German poet, theorist, stage director and playwright was born on February 10, 1898, as the son of a Catholic father, Bertolt Brecht and a Protestant mother (Nee Sophie Briezing), in Augsburg, a provincial Bavarian town in Germany. That his parents had a mixed Catholic-Protestant marriage accounts for the influence of Luther's Bible on Brecht's writings. He was educated like most middle class German boys, at primary and secondary school and studied medical science for less than a year at Munich University. Even while he was studying medical science at Munich University, he also got interested in attending drama seminars conducted by Arthur Kitcher - as his real interests lay in the study of drama and dramatic techniques.

In 1913, he became a writer of remarkable accomplishment as both prose and verse got printed in the school paper *Dic Emte (The Harvest)*. His very first play *The Bible* appeared in January 1914. He has to his credit publication of such plays as *St. Joan of the Slaughter house*, *The Exception and the Rule*, *The Good Woman of Sezuan*, *Mother courage* and *The Resistible Rise of Arturovi*. Brecht's writings show a profound influence from many diverse sources and he studied Chinese, Japanese and Indian Theatre and focused heavily on Shakespeare and other Elizabethans and adopted elements of Greek tragedy. He is said to have found inspiration in other German playwrights notably Buchner and Wedekind, and also enjoyed the Bavarian

folk play. Brecht had a phenomenal ability to take elements from these seemingly incompatible sources, combine them and convert them into his own works.

Drama, truly speaking, means action. Drama is defined as “a composite art, in which the author, the actor and the stage manager all combine to produce the total effect” (Prasad 106). Dryden defined a play as a “just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject for the delight and instruction of mankind” (109). Drama is a representation of life to human nature. Drama, not only gives pleasure to the people but it also teaches mankind. Drama is “a play for theatre, radio or television a gritty urban drama about growing up in Harlem”. In other words, it is “an exciting, emotional or unexpected series of events or set circumstances” (The New Oxford Dictionary 559). In the words of G.B.Tennyson, “Drama is a story that people act out on a stage before spectators” (P 1). In a word, Drama is a form of art in which the artist imagines a story concerning persons and incidents a play is one which must deliver its whole message within a few hours exercising a great economy in the handling of the plot and delineation of character. Critics have stressed the primary importance of action in drama. Drama deals with what people do to others and to themselves.

Epic Theatre is a term closely associated with the work of Bertolt Brecht. Epic theatre, is not to be equated with the ‘heroic’. Brecht’s theatre is an anti-heroic in the attitudes it takes to its heroes. In his notes to **Rise and Fall of the city of Mhagonny**. Brecht defined his epic theatre in a series of antithesis. Epic, he says, focuses on narrative rather than plot forcing a spectator to confront a world and take decisions about the world.

Brecht’s epic theatre, like Shakespeare’s mingles a variety of forms. Its originality lies in the nature of the mix. It also lies in Brecht’s stress on the relation between form and ideology. It is not correct to say, that epic theatre is ‘rational’ and ‘cold’. The visual presentation of the ageing Galileo or the decay of mother courage encourages sympathy. Brecht’s alienation effects have much to do with well - established comic devices, but in his theatre, they are related to a deep human concern. Like Shakespeare, Brecht was a man of theatre from the beginning of his career. He was a dramatic adviser to a leading Munich theatre in 1920. In 1922, his play **Drums in the Night** opened in Munich at the Kammer spiele and later at the Deutsches Theatre in Berlin; he received the prestigious Kliest prize for young dramatists. Brecht received the National Prize, 1951 and in 1954, he won the International Lenin Peace Prize.

Brecht experimented with dada and expressionism in his early plays but soon developed a unique style, that suited his own vision. He detested the Aristotoleian” drama and the manner in which it made the audience identify with the hero to the point of self-oblivion. The resulting feelings of terror and pity he felt led to an emotional Catharsis that prevented the audience from thinking. Determined to destroy

the theatrical illusion, Brecht was able to make his dreams a reality when he took over the Berliner Ensemble. Brecht, like Shakespeare, has chosen a historical event as a background for the play but he writes about the public while Shakespeare wrote about kings and other royal people.

The purpose of Brecht's writing as to present a picture of the public themselves to urge them to change themselves. The background for Brecht's **Mother Courage** is the thirty years wars. After the death of Adolphus, there was temporary peace. Until the Swedish army was completely defeated the war went on. Brecht narrates not the causes of the war but its consequences. He picks the general public who are left to think that 'war is all take and no give'. He narrates the story of courage who wants to make profits from the war, though the means are immoral. He attempts to say that happened as a narrator would do. By narrating what happened he indirectly instructs the people that war is not 'all take and no give'. He instructs all the other characters, Katrin is the only moral being. Thus, this character leaves the readers to ponder over it and become moral beings themselves. This basic principle of instruction was avoided by the dramatic theatre in Brecht's view.

One of the most important aspects of epic theatre was the flexibility or the characteristic of altering. Here in this play, we have mother courage altering, in the written sense of term, crisis - crossing Europe twice during the war. As an epic play, the play is flexible enough with its scene divisions and gets accustomed to any kind of audience. The main purpose was to impose a change in the spectator. Brecht has achieved this purpose by describing in an indirect manner the absurdity of people who try to gain through immoral means. He thereby forces people to change their lifestyle and live a meaningful life which is just. An epic playwright is objective. Brecht stands out from the sense of subjectivity. He views the term 'war' through other's vision also. He does not venture into any autobiographical functions. He stays away from the play, because he only attempts to present to the people the picture of the world the devastated the picture of the well-created world. The people are made to see the events that happen in the play, anticipate the consequences and take decisions to live a better life. Brecht uses courage to represent all who live immoral lives.

*Mother Courage* was meant as a cautionary tale about the inevitable consequences of battenning or war. Anna Fierling, called 'Mother courage' is a camp follower who in her small way helps the prosecution of the Thirty years war by providing shoes, ale and comforts for the soldiers. She is indefatigable, hardworking, unflappable and has the strength to carry on where others would have given up long ago. In short, she is the domineering figure in the play and the center of her world:

“*Mother Courage* was first performed at the  
Zurich Schauspielhaus with Therese

Giese, an actress of great power, in the title role, the public response was quite different: they were moved to tears by the sufferings of a poor woman heroically continued her brave struggle and refused to give in, an embodiment of the eternal virtues of common people” (Esslin 211-212).

Brecht wanted this last scene to arouse the spectator’s indignation that such blindness and stupidity were possible. The public was to leave the theatre determined that something positive must be done to stop wars. Brecht which uses a ‘narrative’ or ‘chronicle’ structure, in which we see the action as a continuing person. Brecht was deeply concerned with the predicament of man and the irony of human conditions as James Joyce, Kafka or the French Existentialists. The stone and the sword of the primitive man have today evolved into nuclear bombs and inter-continued missiles. As C.E.M. Joad says, “A still greater danger comes from war.... There are today man more trained soldiers in the world than there were before....and the nations are still spending more money on war preparation” (Bentley 74). Mother courage is a character in Grimmshansen’s seventh century picturesque writings, but Brecht has used only the name. Brecht insisted that Mother courage was a profiteer who sacrifices her children to her commercial instinct. Mother courage lives by the war, so she must pay the war its due.

Within the perspective of a war in which victories and defeats matter only so far as they affect the daily struggle for survival of ‘little people’, the focus is on the fortunes of a family; on Mother Courage and her three children. The separate nationalities of the three children, who have each been begotten in different theatres of the war, suggest both the sweeping dimensions of conflict in time and space, and their symbolic value as representatives of humanity in general. In keeping with his ideology, Brecht also connects war and business by making his protagonist a canteen-woman who sells provisions to the armies. For **Mother Courage** and her family the wagon is both their home and their means of livelihood. ■

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# Delayed Love Caused by Circumstances as Reflected in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

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This article reflected the concept of delayed love caused by circumstances in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Jane Austen was a realist who collected her material from actual life and her extremely limited range, comprised of the life around her enables her to observe everything sharply. She has created her bets admirable characters but within a limited range. Her heroines are self-portrait but inwardly, they are full of force and passion. She deals with a narrow mode of existence and shows no interest in the external atmosphere. Her dramatic methods and her love for complex characters achieves the effect of realism.

**Keywords:** Realism, Psychological realist, Imaginative, Self-portrait, Endurance.

Jane Austen is regarded as one of the three greatest of the English women novelists of the 19th century - Jane Austen, George Eliot and Charlotte Bronte. She has combined the task of her two predecessors, Richardson and Fielding by writing a kind of fiction which is psychologically realist. Truly speaking, Jane Austen was a realist who collected her material from actual life as she saw it. The subject matter dealt in her stories and novels is credible for whatever she had dealt with is neither imaginative nor fanciful. She had depicted the social life of her time, thereby producing domestic novels or novels of manner. Her tastes and temperament which have been greatly rooted in eighteenth century - the age of reason and also of Realism, aroused her fondness for realism. Her realism is not necessarily and exclusively and necessarily concerned with the stubborn presentation of the banal and clandestine, but she sees life in a wider perspective.

Matrimony is the principal theme of Jane Austen's novels. She is found really better in match-matching in her novels for her heroes and heroines. *Pride and Prejudice* is a fine example of this element. The important ingredient of her novels

is dance parties, dinner parties and wedding etc. She has created her best admirable characters but within a limited range. Her heroines are self-portrait but inwardly, they are full of force and passion. Her extremely limited range, comprised of the life around her enables her to observe everything sharply. She had only three or four families which she x-rayed in her writings. She deals with a narrow mode of existence and shows no interest in the external atmosphere. She presents her characters not from without but from within. Her imagination and sensibilities are to enable her to present exact and romantic details as she herself sees them. The ball dance, the life at Bath, the marriage proposal, the tug of war of the emotions action and mode of behavior has been treated but her both psychologically and realistically.

No doubt, the novels of Jane Austen are the novels of manners and characters. She always sees good things of life in all her life. She does not study sorrow but happiness. Her dramatic methods and her love for complex characters achieve the effect of realism. She loves intricacy because she knows that people in life cannot be measured by a formula or a yardstick. Like George Eliot, she loves intricacy but unlike her, she does not show the reverse side of a character and never suggests the "soul of goodness in things evil". Literature teaches us to enjoy life or to endure it. It may be that the moments of joy are a good preparation for the hours of endurance. In this sense, Jane Austen may certainly be said to be a cultivator of both joy and endurance. Jane Austen wrote six novels, out of which *Pride and Prejudice* gained a great popularity.

The theme of *Pride and Prejudice* is love and marriage and it has a great appeal about it. Love and marriage are the essential factors of domestic life and everyman wants to make love and marry. The interest of the theme is enhanced because the novelist has provided several situations. The main plot and all the three sub-plots deal with the same theme - love and marriage. The first marriage that takes place by the intervention of Darcy because of Lydia and Wickham's elopement. Here in this case only the woman is in love and not man. The man wants to attain his selfish ends. He wants to seduce the girl and then forsake her. The marriage of Collins and Charlotte is the result of convenience and need. There is no love in it. The marriage of Darcy and Elizabeth is a long waited affair of gradual development that these two persons come closer and led themselves in the wedlock of the marriage after shedding their Pride and Prejudices. The second marriage is of Bingley and Jane which comes about after an interruption and break in their love affair. Their love revives towards the end of the novel. The development of love and ripening into marriage has made the novel gripping.

The novel begins with introduction of Mr. Bennet's family with five daughters of marriageable age. Mrs. Bennet is anxiously waiting for the arrival of Bingley, a young man of good fortune. At Netherfield, young men and ladies gather together. They begin to dance. For want of a partner, Elizabeth stands alone. When Bingley asks Darcy to dance with Elizabeth, he comments, "She is tolerable; but not handsome

enough to tempt me” (*Pride and Prejudice*, 17). On having this remark, Elizabeth becomes prejudiced against him. Darcy must have been so proud to pass a comment like this. Later when Lucas tries to introduce her to Darcy, Elizabeth withdraws herself with displeasure. Mr. Collins, the heir to Mr. Bennet’s property, comes to Longbourn to propose to one of Bennet’s daughters. But nobody is willing to marry this foolishman. Jane goes to Bingley’s house but she falls. Elizabeth also goes there to see her sister. At that time, Darcy admires her but she does not take care of him. At Philip’s house, Wickham poisons the mind of Elizabeth by telling how he was betrayed by Darcy. Later she comes to know that Darcy is responsible for the separation of Bingley from Jane. These too add to her prejudice.

Elizabeth complains to Darcy that he was cruel to Wickham. She blames Darcy for the delay of her sister Jane’s marriage to Bingley. Darcy answers these tow charges in his letter addressed to her. On reading the letter, Elizabeth is moved. In the meantime, Lydia has eloped with Wickham. Darcy plays a major role in bringing about their marriage. Later he is instrumental in bringing about Bingley’s marriage to Jane. Atlast, Elizabeth admits her fault. Darcy does the same. Both Darcy and Elizabeth agree to unite in wedlock. In this novel, Darcy and Elizabeth are the lovers. But their love does not lead to marriage without any hindrance as it is delayed owing to the pride of Darcy first and the prejudice of Elizabeth later. It is found that love is not denied but delayed.

Man cannot live alone. He has to live among the people. Every one acts and reacts with others. Due to this, sometimes, man is compelled to behave in ways he does not anticipate or even remotely think of. We call it circumstance. More often than not, man is controlled, guided and even misguided by the force of circumstances.

In Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* also, we find circumstances play a key role in delaying the love of Elizabeth and Darcy. At Netherfield, young man and woman gather to dance. It is expected that Bingley will bring twelve ladies and seven gentleman to dance. But Bingley brings his five sisters and a cousin only. So there is a shortage of men to dance with. Bingley dances with Lucas and then twice with Jane. Elizabeth stands apart without any male companion to dance with. At that time, Bingley tries to introduce Elizabeth to Darcy. But Darcy comments rather proudly, “I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other man” (P 9). Elizabeth is so near that she is able to hear the words. She forms a prejudiced view about him. It Bingley had brought enough gentlemen, Elizabeth could have danced with them. Darcy would not have commented on her as a woman “slighted by other men”. If Elizabeth had been far away from Bingley and Darcy while they were talking, she would not have formed such a bad opinion about Darcy. One sees the force of circumstances here. Neither Elizabeth nor Darcy has anything to do with them. In Fact, they are just play things in the hands of circumstance. Being a normal middle class young

woman Elizabeth behaves as she does. Any woman in such a context of events would not have acted in a different way. Edwin Muir also has the same opinion:

“The First aversion of Elizabeth for Darcy was inevitable because of circumstances in which they met; because Darcy was proud of his social position and Elizabeth encumbered by her unpresentable family and because they were people of such decided character that they were certain to dislike each other at beginning. Elizabeth is true to candour of her mind in believing Darcy to be cold and haughty and indictive” (PP 29-30).

Again we find how circumstances help Elizabeth to understand Dracy and his family and how it delays the onset of love. Collins along with Bennets attends a party given by Mr. Philips. Mr. Wickham also comes to the party and draws to himself the attention of Elizabeth. She is struck by his graceful deportment. He attracts the attention of the ladies present there. As the party proceeds, Elizabeth finds herself sitting by him. He is a charming talker. His engaging presence throws other men into the shade. Collins, Lydia and others are engaged in playing Whist. Wickham has a chance to speak about the injustice done to him by Darcy. He explains how he is not given the post of the clerk after the death of Darcy’s father. He says:

“Had the late Darcy liked me less, his son might have borne with me better; but his father’s uncommon attachment to me, irritated him, I believe very early in life” (P 77).

A critic comments:

Elizabeth prides herself on her individuals and trusts her perceptions never recognizing that her judgements are really grounded in her feelings” (P 209).

In the party, there are many men and women. While others are engaged in Whist, Elizabeth has a chance to know the real nature of Darcy through Wickham. If others had also been engaged in conversation with Wickham and Elizabeth, she might not have had the chance to learn about Darcy secretly. If others had the chance to hear what Wickham was saying, they would have objected to it. The truth would have been found out. Luckily for Wickham, it does not happen. So this particular circumstance does not provide Elizabeth with an opportunity to know the reality. Thus, a bad impression is created in Elizabeth’s mind about Dracy and this turn of an event results in further delaying her love for him.

The arrival of Collins at Longbourn also leads to the deby. Collins is the heir to Mr. Bennet as he has no male child. He comes, to Longbourn to propose to one of Mr. Bennet’s daughters. He gets the permission from her parents to meet Elizabeth. When Elizabeth refuses, he misconstrues it. He says,

“I am not now to learn that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man who they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour; and that sometimes the refusal in repeated a second or even a third time. I am therefore by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the alter ere long”. (P 105)

He therefore persists in his attempts to win her over. He tells her that he has visited the place only to select a wife for himself particularly as he has been asked to do so by Lady Catherine de Bourgh. He praises Elizabeth for her wit and vivacity. The question of Longbourn estate which is entitled upon him is also broached by him. If she marries him, it will alter the awkward situation which will otherwise arise after the death of Mr. Bennet. Collins is still a bachelor. If he had been married, he would not have proposed to Elizabeth. Lady Catherine de Bourgh is a relative of Collins. As she is in a good position, he cannot reject her proposal of his marrying one of Mr. Bennet's daughters. If he marries somebody, Longbourn estate will go away from Mr. Bennet's family. All these circumstances have brought Collins to Longbourn and to propose to Elizabeth. Her parents also support him. On the one hand, her hatred for Darcy deepens further and on the other, Collins entreaties to her to accept him further delay her love for Darcy.

On hearing Wickham's story, Elizabeth not only takes pity on him but is also attracted towards him. Mr. Gardiner notices this and warns her to be careful in moving with Wickham;

“I would have you be on your guard.

Do not involve yourself or endeavour to involve him in an affection which the want of fortune would make so much imprudent” (P 140).

Caroline Bingley, the sister of Bingley invites Jane to dine with her. Mrs. Bennet also likes this invitation hoping that Jane may get an opportunity to meet Bingley often. Fortunately for Mrs. Bennet, Jane falls ill and she has to stay there. Most of Mr. Bennet's family members visit Jane at Bingley's house. Being a close friend of Bingley, Darcy has got an opportunity to move with Mr. Bennet's family and he develops a dislike for the family. This also leads to the delay of marriage between Darcy and Elizabeth, one can see the role of circumstances here. If Caroline Bingley had not invited Jane, Darcy would not have got an opportunity to know the real nature of Mrs. Bennet and her could have returned to her parents. Darcy might not have got an opportunity to study Mrs. Bennet's family, from which he is going to select his bride. Thus, it is found that circumstances had given Darcy an opportunity to know Elizabeth's family and driven him away from her. Besides this, Darcy has gone to the extent of dissuading his friend Bingley from marrying Jane. Darcy is

very proud in saying that he has saved a friend from falling into a bad alliance.

Mrs. Bennet often invites Wickham to their house. This gives them an opportunity to meet. Once when Mrs. Bennet forgets to invite him, Elizabeth reminds her to invite him. If Mrs. Bennet had not invited Wickham whole-heartedly, he could not have got an opportunity to meet Elizabeth. He could not have poisoned her mind. All these lead to further delay in the blossoming of love between Elizabeth and Darcy. In the development of the plot, it is the circumstances which play a key role. The might of the circumstances being what it is, the characters are perennially at their mercy. The delayed love, therefore, is, to some extent, attributable to circumstances.

To conclude, Jane Austen is compared to Shakespeare for her multitude of characters. They are, however, perfectly discriminated from each other. She sometimes poses as a historian. Sometimes Jane Austen intrudes directly or indirectly and comments on the characters. One can also find her objective account in most of her novels. The novel *Pride and Prejudice* can thus be studied in terms of delayed love caused by circumstances. ■

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# Robert Frost's Poetry : A Study

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Robert Frost has been a famous American nature poet. We shall study him with Edgar Allen Poe, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ezra Pound, Robert Lowell and Allen Ginsberg as quint-essential American poet. Critics think that Frost was America's greatest poet from 1914 to his death in 1963. President John Kennedy invited him to read a poem "The Gift Outright" — at the inauguration in 1961. The present research article interprets Frost's most representative poems "Mending Wall," "After Apple-Picking," "The Road Not Taken," "Birches," and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."

Robert Frost was born in California and grew up there. After his father's death the family shifted to New England. His mother taught in school. He did his high school at Lawrence, and graduated from Harvard. Elinor White whom he married was his classmate. He did farming too at Derry in New Hampshire. He had four children and poverty. He shifted to England in 1912.

Frost was not a modernist poet during Modernism. T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, were all modernists, but not Frost. This is strange. He was a traditional poet though he writes of 'a road not taken.' This is contradiction. Frost is a Nature poet, again different from Wordsworth, Bryant and Emerson. Frost is a New England poet; and that is fundamental in his poetry.

Frost stayed with his family in a village near London. He befriended expatriate American writers and published the book of poems *A Boy's Will* (1913). Ezra Pound called it "Vurry Amur'k'n talent". He recommended the American publishers to publish his second book *North of Boston* in 1914. Norton Anthology adds:

The clarity of Frost's diction, the colloquial rhythms, the simplicity of his images, and above all the folksy speaker – these are intended to make the poems they can be seen as a thoughtful reply to modernism's fondness for obscurity and was writing the kind of traditional poetry that modernists thought could no longer be written. In addition, by investing in the New

England terrain, he rejected modernist internationalism and revitalized the tradition of New England regionalism. Readers who accepted Frost's persona and his setting as typically American accepted the powerful myth that rural New England was the heart of America. Because Frost was originally from California—where there are no snowfields and trees do not shed their leaves in autumn—he was evidently choosing to align him-self with, and so to affirm, that myth.(Norton Anthology 1762)

Frost achieved an internal rhythm in his poetry by using folklore, rural speech and rhythm; and he used traditional forms, even prosody. This was poetic format. Frost says, "Poetry was one step backward taken resisting time – a momentary stay against confusion." (Cox vi)

Throughout the 1920s Frost's poetic practice changed very little; later books—including *MountainInterval* (1916), *NewHampshire* (1923), and *West-Running Brook* (1928)—affirmed the essential impression he had established in *North of Boston*. Most of his poems fall into a few types Nature lyrics describing and commenting on a scene or event—like *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, *Birches*, and *After Apple-Picking*,—are probably the best known and the most popular. There are also dramatic narrative poems about the lives of country people like *The Death of the Hired Man*, and poems of commentary or generalization like *The Gift Outright*. He could be humorous or sardonic, as in *Fire and Ice*. In the nature lyrics, a comparison often emerges between the outer scene and the psyche, a comparison of what Frost in one poem called "outer and inner weather."

Because he worked so much with nature, and because he presented himself as a New Englander, Frost is often interpreted as an ideological descendant of the nineteenth-century American Transcendentalists but he is far less affirmative about the universe than they; for where they, looking at nature, discerned a benign creator, he saw "no expression, nothing to express." Frost did share with Emerson and Thoreau, however, the belief that everybody was a separate individuality and that collective enterprises could do nothing but weaken the self. Politically conservative, therefore, he avoided movements of the left and the right precisely because they were movements, or group undertakings. In the 1930s when writers tended to be political activists, he was seen as one whose old-fashioned values were inappropriate, even dangerous, in modern times. Frost deeply resented this criticism, and responded to it with a newly hortatory, didactic kind of poetry. In the last twenty years of his life, Frost made a second reputation as a teacher and lecturer—at Amherst, at Dartmouth, at Harvard and in poetry readings and talks around the country.

The present research article interprets Frost's most representative poems "Mending Wall," "After Apple-Picking," "The Road Not Taken," "Birches," and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."

## 1. Mending Wall

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it.  
And spills the upper boulders in the sun.  
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.  
The work of hunters is another thing:  
I have come after them and made repair  
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,  
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,  
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,  
No one has seen them made or heard them made,  
But at spring mending-time we find them there.  
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;  
And on a day we meet to walk the line  
And set the wall between us once again.  
We keep the wall between us as we go. (Poems are taken from *Norton Anthology*)

The neighbor states, "Good fences make good neighbors." This is often quoted line from the poem.

## 2. After Apple-Picking

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree -  
Toward heaven still,  
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill  
Beside it. and there may be two or three  
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.  
But I am done with apple-picking now.

Wikipedia adds, "The poem seems to describe a tired apple-picker still unable to escape the mental act of apple-picking." (Wikipedia Robert Frost accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> Jan 2023)

## 3. The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;  
Then took the other, as just as fair.

## 4. Birches:

When I see birches bend to left and right

Across the lines of straighter darker trees,  
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.  
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay a  
As ice storms do. Often you must have seen them  
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning  
After a ruin.

## 5. Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village, though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.  
My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.  
He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.  
The woods are lovely, dark, and deep.  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.  
And miles to go before I sleep.

K. VanSpanckeren writes, "Robert Frost's work is often deceptively simple. Many poems suggest a deeper meaning. (*American Lit* 63) this is true. ■

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# Depiction of Priestess in *Tombs of Atuan* : A Critical Study

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P. Kannan

Gender discrimination is a longstanding issue of the women. Earlier the women were not allowed to hold any position of authority in the spheres of politics, society and religion. After long years of struggle and agitation women got the right to vote, education, property employment. In past, women were denied of becoming the head of the religious organisation. There was a monopoly of men being made the Pope, Archbishops, Bishops in Christianity. Women were admitted only as nuns who are subordinate to the male religious head. The same stigma has been continuing till date. The triumph of women is being treated equivalent to men in all spheres except in the sphere of religion. The author wishes that this gender gap should also be abolished by promoting women to the position of religious head which she demonstrated through the fictional creation of a unique spiritual tradition in which the priesthood is held only by a woman. The convention of the selection of the female for priesthood after the demise of the existing priestess, their responsibilities and privileges are presented through fantasy in Tomb of Atuan.

**Keywords:** Gender Equality, Priestess, Fantasy, Tombs, Undertomb, Rituals, priestess

Ursula K Le Guin is a renowned American woman fantasy novelist. She has produced a Fantasy series called *The Earthsea Cycle* which contains five novels and a series of short stories namely *A Wizard of Earthsea*, *The Tombs of Atuan*, *The Farthest Shore*, *Tehanu*, *Tales from Earthsea*, and *The Other Wind*. *Tombs of Atuan* is the second novel in this series which is also major read fantasy novel series like *The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* series. *Tombs of Atuan* was awarded Newbery Honor Book in the year 1972, which is awarded to the author for the most distinguished contributions to American literature for children.

In the novel, the author has created a tradition of priestess or female priests fictionally in order to suggest that the women should be also made the heads of spiritualism as the spiritualism was originally and continuously patriarchal. So, the study of the novel with reference to the depiction of priestess is pivotal and relevant. Thus, an attempt is made to examine the treatment of priestess with reference to: 1. The tradition of choosing priestess 2. Who is chosen as priestess and how she is chosen? 3. Why the author has dealt with the theme of creation of priestess. However, this examination is preceded by a plot of the novel and followed by the conclusion.

The novel begins with the description of the heroine, Tenar and her family. Tenar was decided child to the Throne of Nameless Ones. In the Tombs, there was a ritual of serving the Nameless Ones. Nameless Ones are the dark powers which were believed to be very strong and could punish those who fail to follow them, do not follow them. Tenar was believed to be the reincarnation of One Priestess and she was taken to Atuan at the age of five and given the name as Arha after performing all the rituals. She was trained by Thar and Kossil. She was ascended to the throne at the age of fourteen and took the power. She learns the Undertomb on her own, but her insecurity increases when Thar dies.

One day Arha found a man (Sparrowhawk) in the Undertomb which was forbidden to common man but later she realises that he was a wizard who is also forbidden to enter the Undertomb. She goes to see him with Manan and found the wizard unconscious and rescues him by giving him food. She asks questions about sorcery and Erreth-Akbe and the man tells her what all he knows. As she asked him to show his power of magic, he creates shows it by creating an illusion which she likes.

One morning, she realises through her dream found that she is not Arha but Tenar. Under the influence of the man Sparrowhawk, she decides to leave the Tombs of Atuan. She was in guilt that she left Manan in the pit to die because he was the one who took care of her in Atuan. They reach Havnar and Arha (Tenar) did not like to stay there as she felt she does not belong there. So as per Sparrowhawk's suggestion, she agreed to stay in Ogions place, who is Sparrowhawk's Master. The novel ends with Sparrowhawk welcoming Tenar to Havnor.

Depiction of Priestess in *The Tombs of Atuan*— A Critical Study: As stated earlier, *Tombs of Atuan* is Ursula K. Le Guin's second novel. In the Afterword of this novel, the author has explained how she could happen to produce this novel, although she did not plan to write a second novel of *Earthsea* series. She states that she could find a link in *A Wizard of Earthsea* to write the next novel. She explains this process as follows:

People often don't believe me when I say that when I wrote *A Wizard of Earthsea* I had no plans beyond this book. But it's true. I know – it says on the first page of the first book that Ged is going to be a famous mage with songs and epics about him, a dragon lord, Archmage of Earthsea, which all seems to promise sequels; but I just put that there so the reader would know this was a world where mage was powerful, where there were dragons, the world of fantasy. ... So when I wrote the last words of the book — "... before ever he sailed the Dragon's Run unscathed, or brought back the Ring of Erreth-Akbe from the Tombs of Atuan to Havnor, or came at last to Roke once more, as Archmage of all the islands of the world" – what was in my mind was not a teaser for a sequel, but only a resounding, echoing closure to a story told. ... Now came the great, improbable impetus to the book: a road trip to southeastern Oregon, our first visit to Harney County, a high and lonesome land of distances, and silence. Coming back from there, after a two-day, weary, dusty, drive with our three kids, I knew my novel would be set in desert. In the car, when we weren't playing Signs Alphabet or singing "Forty-Nine Bottles," I began to dream my story. That land had given it to me. I am forever grateful. [TA, 181-83].

The author has created a new tale in *The Tombs of Atuan* which narrates the capture of a girl as priestess and her escape from at the end. In order to tell this fantastic tale, the author creates a new land with wonders and fantasy. Earthsea is retained as the background in the novel. There is an empire called Kargish in Tomb of Atuan. There is an age-old tradition of woman as being the chief priestess of Tomb. All the previous priestesses are called Ones Priestess. The tradition of selecting the chief priestess is mythical and of fantasy. The one who is selected for the position of chief priestess must fulfil some of the preordained conditions. The first of which is that the girl child should have been born on the same day of the demise of existing priestess. The second condition is that she should not have been affected by or infected by any contagious disease like smallpox. The third condition is that her parents should not refuse to offer the girl to the tradition on her attaining the age six. With fulfilling these conditions, the child is taken from her house and conducted to the Hall of the Throne where she is given the throne as the Priestess by following some conventions.

This sort of tradition has prevailed in the Earthsea regions from the time immemorial. The present chief priestess passes away one day and the search for the successor is started at once. The girl child born on the same day is called Tenar. She has four other siblings. When she was born, the messengers visited her parents and informed them that she would be taken away from there to the Tombs of Atuan. This is narrated by Tenar's father in Prologue of the novel. When Tenar's mother calls her to come home, her father's interaction with her mother shows it thus:

By the corner of the hut, scraping clean an earth-clotted hoe, the father said, “Why do you let your heart hand on the child? They’re coming to take her away next month. For good. Might as well bury her and be done with it. What’s good of clinging to one you’re bound to lose? She’s no good to us. If they would pay for her, when they took her, which would be something, but they won’t. They’ll take her and that’s an end of it. [TA, xiii].

The mother seems to be disturbed hearing her husband’s words. She keeps watching her daughter who has stopped to look up through the trees. Tenar appears to be playing around the high hills above the orchards. Her husband continues to remind her with bitters that she should stop her sentimental intimacy with Tenar and devote her affection towards the other four children as Tenar has been already chosen to become the Priestess at the Tombs. The motherly love is so deep that she avoids such thoughts and states that she would let her go when the time comes.

One can interpret the tradition of the selection of the Priestess from points of view. Firstly, this selection is divinely predestined and thus the parents do not have any right to object to the selection. Secondly, the child is removed from her mother forcefully causing despair and unhappiness to mother.

Subsequent to the interaction between Tenar’s parents, a period of fifteen days passes. Then the chorus of the Tombs of Atuan arrives at the residence of Tenar and conducts her to the palace by following the rituals. According to the rituals, the other priestesses form two rows of columns with four by four in each row go to the house of Tenar at the time of sun rise and bring Tenar to the Hall of the Throne which is portrayed in the novel like this:

It was the hour after sunrise. The air was still and cold. Dead leaves of weeds that had forced up between marble pavement-tiles were outlined with frost, crackled, catching on the long black robes of the priestesses. They came, four by four, down the vast hall between double rows of columns. The drum beat dully. No voice spoke, no eye watched. Torches carried by black-clad girls burned reddish in the shafts of sunlight, brighter in the dusk between. Outside, on the steps of the Hall of the Throne, the men stood, guards, trumpeters, drummers; within the great doors only women had come, dark-robed and hooded, walking slowly four by four toward the empty throne. [TA, 1]

The other rituals are also conducted before Tenar is seated on the throne. The first ritual is placing the sword by a man on the neck of Tenar. It is a five-foot polished sword. A figure appears from the shadows and swings the sword held by both of his hands. When the sword is placed on the neck of the small girl, another figure comes

from the opposite direction and stops the movement of the sword. Then they remain in balance and dance above the unmoved child. At this juncture, two tall priestesses advance towards the child and clad the child with a black robe, hood and mantle. It is a ceremony in which the child is symbolically considered to be eaten so that the child becomes number one Priestess. The child is no longer Tenar now. She has been completely disconnected from her family and become one Priestesses who is in for the service of Nameless Ones. This interesting portrayal is cited as an illustration below:

The child got up and descended the four stairs laboriously. When she stood at the bottom, the two tall priestesses put on her and a black robe and mantle ... "O let the Nameless Ones behold the girl given to them, who is verily the one born ever nameless. Let them accept her life and years of her life until her death, which is also theirs. Let them find her acceptable. Let her be eaten!" Other voices, shrill and harsh as trumpets, replied: "She is eaten! She is eaten!" [TA, 3]

Tenar becomes an eaten one by losing her original name and identity and she becomes *Arha*. Again, she becomes a nameless one like her god Nameless Ones and thus becomes One Priestess. She is taken from room to room and from temple to temple in the process of which there are some more rituals. In one place salt is placed upon her tongue and in the next place her hair is cut short and washed with oil and scented vinegar. In the next place she is made to lay face down on a slab of black marble behind an altar accompanied by shrill voices songs. During the whole process none of them ate food and drank water. Then a voice keeps asking her whether she is Tenar but Tenar refuses that she is not Tenar. Thus, the ritual of initiating Tenar into the priestess hood is completed. From now onwards, she is regarded as One Priestess.

*Arha* becomes an authorised chief priestess that is One Priestess. She begins to exercise her power and authority over the people in the palace of Tombs. She visits the palace, prisons and other places around. There are some more priestesses in addition to *Arha*. They are Kossil, Thar and Panthe. They were in the group of priestesses during the process of selecting Tenar. Thus, it is evident in the narrative that there are only priestesses in the place of Tombs.

There is a turning point in the narrative with the appearance of Ged who is the protagonist in *A Wizard of Earthsea*. In that novel, he got a magic ring called Erreth-Akbe which was broken into two. One half is with him and the other half is in Undertomb which is in the jurisdiction of *Arha* now. So, he enters the Undertomb in order to recover the half ring but gets caught. *Arha* who is the authority of the Undertomb discovers that it is Ged on the revelation of his true name and rescues

him from the danger. It is at this juncture; Ged briefs her that her present position is not honourable and dignified. Ged's persuading *Arha* is narrated thus:

“Listen, Tenar. Heed me. You were the vessel of evil. The evil is poured out. It is done. It is buried in its own tomb. You were never made for cruelty and darkness; you were made to hold light, as a lamp burning holds and gives its light. I found the lamp unlit; I won't leave it on some desert island like a thing found and cast away. I'll take you to Havnor and say to the princess of Earthsea,... I will not,” Tenar said in agony. “I cannot. It's not true!” After that,” he went on quietly, “I'll take you away from the princes and the rich lords; for it is true that you have no place there. You are too young, too wise. ... I will,” she said with a long sigh. And after a long time, “Oh, I wish it were sooner ... that we could go there now. [TA, 177-78]

There are two reasons with which author has created a fictional spiritual world filled with only women as priestesses. Firstly, women were denied any authority and powerful position in the history of spiritualism anywhere in the world. Any such authoritative positions were imaginable only in the folklore or in the imaginary tales. This shows the gender discrimination in the world of spiritualism. It is observed in the history of Christianity that the women were sent to the nunneries out of poverty rather than that of the spiritual inclination. Yet the women in the Convent were used to serve and assist the male heads in the Parish or churches. The nuns had to fight for a long time to get the right to deliver sermons only outside the premise of the churches

Secondly, the opportunity for women to become the priestess is not an advantage for them. It is slavery in disguise. Tenar loses her family, identity, freedom and self in being chosen for the position of priestess. This does not happen to men in the tradition of spiritualism. This notion is endorsed in Introduction to feminism as: Some of the first European women to speak out for themselves, and for their sex, did so within a religious framework, and in religious terms. It is perhaps not always easy, in our secular society, to bring them back to life: to recognize fully their courage or to understand the implications, or the extent, of their challenge to the status quo. [IF,]

### **Conclusion:**

It is true that Ursula K. Le Guin has written a fantasy novel in *The Tombs of Atuan*. The plot of the novel dwells upon two remoted possibilities. The first is concerning the consideration of women to be heads or authorities in spiritualism. The other is the entanglement of women in the male chauvinistic and patriarchal web or bindings. Yet the author has attempted to show them as being possible which a sign of her wishfulness is. Thus, the paper is concluded with an inference that the depiction of priestess in *The Tombs of Atuan* reflects the author's wishfulness. ■

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# Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: A Champion of Human Rights

Saroj Kumar Sarkar

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Chief Architect of Indian Constitution was a scholar par excellence, a philosopher, a visionary, and a true champion of human rights. He led a number of social movements to secure human rights for the oppressed sections of Indian society. He stands as a symbol of struggle for social justice even today.

Hinduism is divided into four Varna and so many castes and sub-castes. Casteism, for hundreds of years has been a crucial problem in Indian society. It not only creates social discrimination, but brings social and economic injustice among the citizens as well. Though the very notion of *ChaturVarna* has been referred in the Rigveda but afterwards more than three thousand castes and sub-castes have come into existence after the Later Vedic Period. The Brahmin community who were educationally and economically superior to the other communities took the advantage to exploit and oppress the lower communities in course of time. The notion of Varna and caste gave birth to untouchability which is a great damnation to humanity. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar being a Dalit was victimized throughout his life by the upper caste Hindus in several times. So he fought against caste-system and Untouchability. He wanted abolition of social discrimination, torture and disgrace of Dalit. He also wanted to bring social justice in our society. His main aim was to establish equality, liberty and fraternity among the citizens of our country. He was a real humanist and social reformer, a champion of human rights.

**Keywords:** Human rights, Social justice, Casteism, Untouchables, Humanist

Introduction:

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born in a Mahar family on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1891. His father served in the British Indian Army at the Mhow cantonment in Central Province. Unlike most of the children of his caste, young Bhim used to go to school

every day. But he and other children belonging to Dalit communities were not allowed to sit with upper caste students in the class but had to sit outside the classroom. Even the teachers who belonged to the upper caste did not touch their notebooks. While at school, when they wanted to drink water, the school peon (who belonged to the upper caste) poured water from a height for them to drink. And on the days when the peon was unavailable, young Bhim and his friends had to spend the day without water.

Due to his deep interest in learning, Bhim went on to become the first Dalit to be enrolled in the prestigious Elphinstone High School in Bombay. He later won the Baroda State Scholarship for three years and finished his postgraduate education from Columbia University in New York. He passed his M.A. examination in June 1915 and continued his research. In 1916 Ambedkar enrolled in the London School of Economics where he started working on a doctoral thesis. He stayed in London for the next four years and finished two doctorates. In 1920, he received the DSc by the London University and PhD in Economics in 1927.

He wrote many books such as *The Annihilation of Caste*, *The Untouchables*, *Castes in India*, *The Problem of the Rupee*, *Pakistan or Partition of India*, *Who were the Shudras?*, *Manu and the Sudras*, *The Buddha and his Dharma* etc. His awareness of political, economic and social problems of untouchable community is depicted in his scholarly writings.

**Anti-Caste and Anti-Untouchability:** In 19<sup>th</sup> century, some great personalities of higher caste in India fought against caste system and untouchability. Raja Rammohan Roy, Mahadeva Govinda Ranade, Kesob Chandra Sen, Shree Ramkrishana, Swami Vivekananda, Balgangadhar Tilok and Mahatma Gandhi fought against casteism. Raja Rammohan Roy was a truly great man, a man who did truly some great work. His works include abolishing of Sati, opposed to child marriage and polygamy, remarriage of widows, women education and women right on parental properties and opposition to Casteism and untouchability. He established Brahmo Samaj to reform our society and wanted to establish Monotheism. Shree Ramakrishna another great saint in India was a Hindu revivalist. He was a preacher of love, liberty and humanity. He did not support casteism in the society. His chief disciple Swami Vivekananda propagated humanism all over the world. He opposed the casteism in Hindu religion. He wanted to abolish untouchability among Hindu society and tried to spread fraternity among Indian. In his famous book *Caste, Culture and socialism*- he said 'Brahmins began to arrogate powers and privileges to themselves. If Brahmins killed man they would not be, punished. The Brahmin, by his very birth, is the lord of the universe. Even the wicked Brahmin must be worshipped as priests who are always against progress.... Brahmins suck of these poor people without even the least effort for their amelioration. Is this a country or a hell? Is that a religion or the devil's dance?'<sup>1</sup>

Bal Gangadhar Tilak was an antagonist of casteism and untouchability. He wanted coordination and integration among Hindu people. He also tried to remove caste based discrimination from Indian society. He said 'If a God were to tolerate untouchability, I would not recognize him as God at all.'<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji cordially opposed the untouchability and considered it as a scar of Hinduism. He used to address them as harijan instead of untouchable. He tried their well being and to abolish the untouchability.

Another stream of movement on anti-caste and anti-Untouchability was by the low caste Hindus led by Jyotirao Gobinrao phule, Bireshlingam Pantalu, Narayan Guru, Ram Swami Naikar, Ram Swami Mudaliya, Bhaskar Rao Yadav, Guruchand Harichand Thakur, Jogendranath Mondal, and Dr. B.R Ambedkar who fought against caste discrimination, untouchability and exploitations.

Jyotirao Gobinrao phule was a famous social reformer and defender of Dalit Rights. He had strongly protested against untouchability and social discrimination on the basis of caste system. He wanted to uplift the depressed classes from their miserable condition. They had no social, educational, political and economic rights and liberties. He established Schools for Dalit Women and widows. He wanted to spread education among Dalits. He opposed the doctrine of Manu which was the root of casteism in Hindu religion in India. In 1873, he established 'Satya Sodhok Samaj'. His aim was to bring consciousness among untouchable communities about exploitation and discrimination. Ambedkar was greatly influenced by Phule.

**Ambedkar's Movement for Human Rights:** Dr. Ambedkar was a social prophet of the untouchables. He denounced the monstrous iniquities and outrageous calumnies which Brahmanical Hinduism has heaped upon the untouchables and the bitterness of his fury against Hinduism is apparent in his works. Following events in the life of Dr. Ambedkar bears testimony to his humanitarian concerns and convictions. After returning to India in 1924, Dr Ambedkar decided to launch an active movement against untouchability. In 1924, he founded the Bahishkrit Hitkaraini Sabha, aimed at uprooting caste system in India. He established schools and libraries for all age groups. Dr Ambedkar took the grievances of the Dalits to court, and brought them justice.

The animals were allowed to use the water of the chawdar tank in the Mahad town of Maharashtra but low caste men did not drink water of that tank. Untouchables were barred from using it. This glaring manifestation of inhuman attitude of the society was challenged by Dr Ambedkar to usher a new era of the social revolution. On 20<sup>th</sup> March 1927, ten thousand satygrahis were assembled at Mahad under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar and marched to Chawdar tank to assert their human right to drink the water from the public place. The procession was attacked by caste

Hindus and many satyagrahis were injured by them. But Dr. Ambedkar did not support to counter attack on them. He appealed to his followers not to indulge in violence. Only a person who is the humanist to his innermost core can show such steadfast faith in non-violence in such situation. He also conducted Kalaram Temple Satyagraha in 1930. Dr. Ambedkar organized a conference of satyagrahis at Mahad town on the 25<sup>th</sup> December 1927 in which the Manusmriti was burned. It was a revolutionary step which sought to denounce the inhuman laws of scriptures and proclamation of right to equality and justice.

Dr Ambedkar continued to protest against caste system ferociously. In 1935, at a conference at Nasik, he asked Dalits to convert to a religion where there is no hierarchy. In his undelivered speech titled Annihilation of Caste (1936), Dr Ambedkar claimed that political reform without social reform is a farce. He sought social equality and believed that political freedom from the British will automatically follow. He also claimed that caste is not a division of labour, but a division of labourers. He called the idea of racial purity absurd, and argued that inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriages are not sufficient to annihilate the caste system. "The real method of breaking up the Caste System was not to bring about inter-caste dinners and inter-caste marriages but to destroy the religious notions on which Caste was founded," he wrote.<sup>3</sup> Mahatma Gandhi, unlike Dr Ambedkar, was a believer of the Varna System. He accepted untouchability as a serious problem, and advocated for Dalits to gain acceptance as the fifth caste. In a newspaper article titled Dr Ambedkar and Caste (1933), Gandhi wrote –"The present joint fight is restricted to the removal of untouchability, and I would invite Dr Ambedkar and those who think with him to throw themselves, heart and soul, into the campaign against the monster of untouchability. It is highly likely that at the end of it we shall all find that there is nothing to fight against in Varnashram. If, however, Varnashram even then looks an ugly thing, the whole of Hindu Society will fight it."<sup>4</sup>

In 1936, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar formed Independent Labour Party against the Brahmanical and Capitalist structures in the Society. In 1937, when the British government agreed to hold elections on the provincial level, Dr Ambedkar's Independent Labor Party won in the Bombay province with a thumping majority. Dr Ambedkar led many social, labour, and agricultural reforms in the region in the years that followed.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was the first law minister of independent India. He was appointed as the chairman of the drafting committee of our national constitution. The text prepared by Ambedkar provided constitutional protection for a wide range of civil liberties for each people, citizens including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and outlawing all forms of discrimination. He had a real vision towards the basic and fundamental rights of Indian citizens and upliftment of

scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and backward caste. He made several provisions in the form of articles in Indian constitution for development and upliftment of depressed caste.

### **Poona Pact and Dalits' Rights.**

In 1932, British Govt. announced the formation of a separate electorate for “Depressed Classes” in the Communal Award. Gandhi fiercely opposed a separate electorate for untouchables, saying he feared that such an arrangement would divide the Hindu community. Gandhi protested by fasting while imprisoned in the Yerwada Central Jail of Poona. Following the fast, Congress politicians and activists such as Madan Mohan Malaviya and Palwankar Baloo organized joint meetings with Ambedkar and his supporters at Yerwada. On 25 September 1932, the agreement known as Poona Pact was signed between Ambedkar (on behalf of the depressed classes among Hindus) and Madan Mohan Malaviya (on behalf of the other Hindus). The agreement gave reserved seats for the depressed classes in the Provisional legislatures, within the general electorate. Due to the pact, the depressed class received 148 seats in the legislature, instead of the 71 as allocated in the Communal Award earlier proposed by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. The text uses the term “Depressed Classes” to denote Untouchables among Hindus who were later called Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under India Act 1935, and the later Indian Constitution of 1950. In the Poona Pact, a unified electorate was formed in principle, but primary and secondary elections allowed Untouchables to choose their own candidates.<sup>6</sup>

### **Theory of Social justice and B.R. Ambedkar**

Social justice means equal social opportunities available to everyone to develop their personalities associated with equality and social rights. According to Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics, Social Justice is an emphasis on the foundational character of justice of social life. According to Ambedkar the root cause of social injustice to the Scheduled caste and scheduled tribes is the caste system in Hindu society. He did not propound any specific definition or theory of ‘Social Justice’. His thoughts are expressed through writings and speeches published posthumously. We can extract basic principles of writings and speeches of Ambedkar, through which justice can be dispensed in the society. These are:

1. Establishing a society where individual becomes the means of all social purposes
2. Establishing a society, based on equality, liberty, and fraternity
3. Establishing political, economic, and social democracy
4. Establishing democracy through constitutional measures and
5. Establishing democracy by breaking monopoly of upper strata on political power.<sup>7</sup>

He emphasized on social reformation instead of political reformation. Indian society was full of prejudices, unethical customs and conventions which were the cause of social discrimination and disparity. If social rights and opportunities are established in the society then Political rights will be established automatically. He wanted to abolish caste system and untouchability in our society. He fought against discrimination, exploitation, violence and intolerance in our society. Dr B.R. Ambedkar was the champion of women rights and empowerment. He said, 'I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved.'<sup>8</sup> He strived through efforts, including his proposed Hindu Code Bill, to secure rights for women in India in areas such as inheritance and divorce. Importantly, he was of course referring to all women, not just the progress of elite women.

### **Indian Constitution and Dalit's Rights:**

Dr B.R. Ambedkar is the father of Indian Constitution. He included many Rights and provisions for the SCs, STs and other backward classes. The provision made in Articles 15, 16, 17, 330, 335, 338, 341 and 342 of the constitution relate to reservation, protection and safeguard, in public employment.<sup>9</sup> Fundamental rights assured to all citizens of our country is a great leap towards establishing the basic human values in the society that was based on graded inequality. As the chairman of the drafting committee Dr B.R. Ambedkar was instrumental in the incorporation of fundamental rights in the constitution.

Dr Corinne Lennox **said** "Dr. Ambedkar is one of the world's greatest defender and philosopher of human rights. He was a true visionary, contributing to a global evolution of this idea, to the legal enshrinement of rights, and to this day, he continues to inspire human rights defenders."<sup>10</sup> She explained very clearly, Some might see him narrowly as a defender of the rights of Dalits but not of human rights more broadly. His lifelong efforts to eradicate caste-based discrimination arguably count as his greatest achievement. Moreover, the language of 'human rights' was still in its infancy during his lifetime, even if the standards had earlier roots. A proper examination of his writings and his actions show, however, that he was very much cosmopolitan in his philosophy of justice and in his legal and political work, which demonstrate his support to norms embodied in universal human rights as we have since come to know them.

Dr. Ambedkar emphasised on "liberty, equality and fraternity". He was influenced by the French Revolution and American declarations. He tried to establish liberty, equality and fraternity in our society which was full of caste division, discrimination, strife and religious intolerance. Liberty and equality are the complementary to human rights. Equality and non-discrimination are clearly at the core of Ambedkar's conceptual framework of human rights. Liberty is needed for the development of personality and entails equality. If men are free, then they are

evidently equal because they are free. Dr. Ambedkar placed social and economic equality alongside political and civic equality.

Observing the role of religion in shaping the life of individual, he announced to renounce the Hinduism and explored various religious scriptures of the world before deciding to accept the Buddhism; that profess reasoning, morality and equality as its principle. Goutam Buddha proclaimed Speech of love, non-violence and equality. Dr. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism with his five lakh followers on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1956 at Deekshabhoomi at Nagpur. He noticed humanism, equality, casteless norm, human dignity and morality in Buddhism. He highlighted Buddha's humanist philosophy in the country and abroad. So, we could call him a philosopher of human rights.

According to Ambedkar the depressed and disadvantaged classes were not only the untouchables but also the women, minority groups and tribals who had been stoically suffering due to religious and customary practices in Indian society. His proposition of labour right, minimum working hours, Maternity leave for working women, women safety at work places, Scheduled Tribes Commission under article 342 of the constitution are few illustrious examples of his comprehensive view on depressed and disadvantaged classes.

The global Dalit movement continues to strive towards these aims in their struggle to eliminate caste-based discrimination, to achieve fulfillment of their human rights and for the restoration of dignity and justice. Leaders of this movement look at Dr Ambedkar for his inspiration, putting into practice his famous mantra: 'My final words of advice to you are to educate, agitate and organize, and have a faith in yourself'. It is a battle for the reclamation of human personality. Indeed, his words could be a rallying cry for the defenders of human rights everywhere.

**Conclusion:** Actually, Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a champion of human rights. He was a fighter for human rights not only for the most oppressed section of Dalit's but also all the Indian caste opposed groups for workers and farmers and women. Dr. Ambedkar is India's foremost human rights activist in 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is an emancipator and an extraordinary social reformer. Dr. Ambedkar provides equal rights for all citizens in Indian constitution. But the caste dissemination and untouchability somehow remained and some others are still playing negative roles from different parts of the society. Untouchability is a crime against humanity. The constitution of India is designed in such a way that all citizens are equal before it. Our nation is facing different sorts of socio economic, educational and political evils in the society and only the effective implementation of the constitution in its real spirit can overcome them. The Dalits also will have to come forward and to labour hard in all social, economical, educational, political area to compete with the other members of the society. And for his contribution for the cause of humanity Ambedkar must be considered the greatest Indian of the millennium. ■

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# An Analytical Study of *Life Almost Still* as a Campus Novel

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Campus novel is one of the famous genres of fiction. The Campus novel first came into being in European Countries. David Lodge is one of the most popular contemporary writers of this genre in Britain. In his own words ‘Campus novel’ is “a term used to designate a work of fiction whose action takes place mainly in a college or university and is mainly concerned with the lives of University professors and junior teachers-faculty...and to a lesser extent with their students both undergraduate and postgraduate”.

This research paper aims to present a brief introduction to “campus novel” and its reflections in Carme Riera’s novel *Life Almost Still*. This paper tries to analyze the novel as a campus novel by using the analytical method. It analyzes the major characters of the campus novel by giving the instances and actions of the story. The whole story is constructed in the university campus and the act of crime creates bleak and negative impact on the university.

**Keywords:** *campus novel, contemporary, analytical method, instances, bleak*

## **Introduction:**

The campus novel, also known as the academic novel, is a story or narration set around a university or college campus. Etymologically the Latin word ‘Campus’ means ‘field’ in English, the physical space occupied by the college or universities, originally used in American usage which entered in British English around 1950s. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*: “Campus novel is a novel, usually comic or satirical, in which the action is set within enclosed world of university (or similar set of learning) and highlights the follies of academic life”. Many campus novels use satire or comic elements. They are likely to point out human weaknesses

and spend time on group dynamics. Most of these novels are told from the point of view of a faculty member or a student and focus on the life and actions of the faculty and students. The characters of the Campus novels are academics and its students, faculty members, administrators. These novels are basically humorous, though sometimes it explores serious themes, including power, politics, sex, class and exile. The narrator is basically the academic staff and students are the objects perceived by the narrator.

The earliest examples date back to the 1950's, and they are still written today. *The Groves of Academy* by Mary McCarthy, published in 1952, is often considered as the earliest example of campus novel. Many well-known novels campus novels, such as Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim*, J.M Coetzee's *Disgrace*, and Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* are satirical and counterpointing intellectual pretensions and human weaknesses.

The present paper is trying to analyze *Life Almost Still* as a campus novel, although it narrates the story like a thriller and detective fiction. *Life Almost Still* is written by Carme Riera in Catalan language in 2011 and has been translated into English by Joseph Miquel Sobrer in 2016. The novel is fictional one, but is slightly influenced by the real missing incident of an Erasmus student Romain Lannuze in 2007, between Barcelona and Sabadell. The novel is less reviewed by the research scholars due to the marginalized status of the Catalan Literature. So, the paper aims to study this Catalan novel as a major campus novel of Carme Riera.

The story of *Life Almost Still* set in the Autonomy University of Barcelona revolves around the life and actions of the students and the faculty of the university. The novel narrates the murder of three students namely Laura Cremona, Domenica Arrigo, Marcel Bru and professor Bellpuig by a schizophrenic Research assistant Pocovi in the campus. The novel showcases the psycho-sexual harassment at one side and the murder of some people on the other side, which are based on the interpersonal relationship and contempt.

As a campus novel, the story of *Life Almost Still* sets in the campus of the Autonomia University of Barcelona and every action such as missing of a Romanian student, murder of the students and the professor, the investigation activities and the banned status of the university classes are all taken within the campus of the Autonomia University of Barcelona.

Secondly, *Life Almost Still* has the character of an anti-hero, named Jaume Pocovi, who is incompetent, unlucky, and tactless. Jaume Pocovi is a Research assistant of the Professor Bellpuig in the present action, but he was an intelligent degree student of the same university before his joining as a Research assistant to professor Bellpuig. Pocovi was mentally harassed by Bellpuig and Bellpuig made him restless by having an affair with the girlfriend of Pocovi intentionally. Pocovi

lost his family accidentally in the gas bursting but he believed that Professor Bellpuig was the reason to lose his family as he did not allow him to go to his native palace by ordering Pocovi to work at the department. Finally, all the incidents made him to suffer under schizophrenia and thought to kill the professor and in order to escape from his nuisance activity he killed the other three students without having any reason. Pocovi himself admits murdering of four persons. He has explained that his killing of other three students is an act of escape from the arrest by putting the case on Iliescu. In the interrogation Pocovi proved himself as a murderer and he said:

“The newspapers carried the news. You might have read it. The day I killed Bellpuig was exactly three years after the death of my folks. If I had been with them, if Bellpuig had not prevented me, I am sure they’d still be alive. I wouldn’t have let them go to sleep with windows closed and the heaters on. It was he, the bastard, who was responsible!” (239, *Life Almost Still*)

He is influenced by Iliescu’s essay on Flaguel’s ‘Life Almost Still’ which is associated with the concept of death and life. He accepts the truth in front of the court-appointed lawyer named Merce Frontera. Pocovi does not repentant at killing of three students and the professor and he supports his murdering act for their sexual promiscuity. Finally, he was arrested by the police.

Analyzing the next point, the story unveils the exploitation and manipulation in the university. The novel shows the extra-marital relationships, adultery nature of the authorities and the students. The adultery nature of Laura Cremona, love between Marcel Bru and Domenica, Bellpuig’s seducing nature and his affairs with students. Bellpuig is a professor at the department of Arts, fifty-five years old. He is a divorcee and a womanizer by nature. He has a relationship with a single child mother and has an affair with Domenica. Gloria, one of the students of Bellpuig has become victim of his seduction and who commits suicide. Pocovi also has an affair with a single child mother and wanted to marry her. But this relationship has broken by an interference of Bellpuig and he seduced the lover of Pocovi and asked her to leave Pocovi as he is suffering from schizophrenia. The novel clarifies that the womanizing character of Bellpuig, the adulteress nature of young girls and the schizophrenic trauma of Pocovi are the main reasons for his killing of three students and the professor of the Autonomia University of Barcelona. In the novel, the murdering actions take place because of the personal antipathy and incompatibility.

The novel shows the effects of the murders on the reputation of the university and minds of the students within the setting of the campus. The university classes have been banned and students begin to return to their homes. The university is locked for some days.

“On Wednesday, 10th December, almost all new programs opened with same tragic announcements which was also summarized in newspaper headlines.

Some emphasized the feelings of sadness for the loss: “Consternation in Catalan University Circle”; “Dismay in Catalonia”; “Deep Sorrow” or “Desolation in the classrooms”; others stressed such things as “Murderous Brutality”. There had been three deaths until that moment, and with the murderer still at large, who knew if there wouldn’t be more?” (169, *Life Almost Still*)

The story begins with the search for one missing student of the Autònoma University of Barcelona, named Constantine Iliescu and it continues with the serial murders of the students and the professor and ends with the arrest of the killer. It picturizes the fear of death and the shadow of darkness on the university.

### **Conclusion:**

Thus, the novel *Life Almost Still* has all the features of a campus novel that revolves round murder mystery that took place in a campus. Here, the novelist shows how the academic institutions have been becoming insecure and unsafe to the weaker section of the society and the suppression of the people of lower working strata under the higher authority in a satirical manner. Through her writing, Carme Riera speaks about the mentoring relationships, the condition of immigrant students and the need of psycho-social competencies along with emotional sustenance in academic zone. ■

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# Woman Invincible : A Reading of Nandini Satapathy

**Tulasi Sahoo**

Nandini Satapathy, a voice of women in Indian Literature. She is the daughter of Legendary Odia Padma Bhushan Kalindi Charan Panigrahi and mother Ratnamani and Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi was Nandini's uncle. Nandini was born on 9th June 1931 in Puri and brought up in Pithpur, Cuttack. She was fascinated by literature and politics being influenced by her family members. She obtained her Master of Arts (MA) degree in Odia literature from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. She was a part of the "Union Jack Removal" movement at Ravenshaw Campus which made her famous as a Students' leader of Odisha. She completed her Primary education from Ravenshaw Girls School, Cuttack.

In Class Seven, she had written a Story "Aanatha" and then after she has never looked back. Nandini was a storyteller & translator with humane heart. Her personal traits perhaps helped her to become a successful Politician, a chief minister. But her literary contributions can never be ignored.

The ideology of Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi impacted Nandini's political career. She entered politics in 1960 and became Odisha Pradesh Mahila Congress President by the then Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) President, Biju Patnaik. In 1962 Nandini became a Member of Parliament (MP) Rajya Sabha from Odisha. Nandini's speech in Parliament drew the attention of the then Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Nandini became a popular leader during Indira Gandhi's prime ministerial tenure in India. Then Nandini became the President of Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) in 1966. Nandini took oath as a Union Minister of State in PM Indira Gandhi's Government. In 1968 Nandini got elected as the second time MP (Rajya Sabha) from Odisha with a portfolio, attached to Prime Minister's Office (PMO) during PM Indira Gandhi's Government. In 1972, Nandini got elected as an MLA from Cuttack assembly seat in a by election defeating Biren Mitra and then became the Chief Minister of Odisha. In 1972-74 and 1974-76, Nandini became two

times Chief Minister of Odisha & only women Chief Minister of Odisha till then. During her tenure as Chief Minister, many developmental works were done for Odisha like - Odisha Land Reform Act that created history in Odisha Administration.

Despite her political engagement she could manage to read and write literature. She was not only a creative writer but also a famous translator. Her contribution to Odia Literature such as - “Ketoti Katha” & “Sapta Darshi” (collection of stories)”, Uttar Purusha” anthology of Odia poem earned her name and fame. Her translations such as -”Gandhi Kathamurta” by Krishna Kripalini, “Selected Stories” by Mahasweta Devi, “Lazza “by Taslima Nasreen, “Revune Tiket “by Amrita Pritam established her as a translator. The Poem’s of Nandini reflected the then society. Her famous Stories - ‘Sita Nani ra Pua’, ‘ Bisha ra Balaya ‘, ‘Birasha Bhoi’ & her Poems - ‘Thikana Hajigala ‘ reflect her life.

[2]

Nandini visited all the corners of Odisha as Chief Minister. She has depicted the poor people & women in her poems, Nari Nuh tu Narayani ‘. Her story, ‘Gayatri’, highlights the plights and predicaments of poor people. Another story ‘Abhiman’ reflects the life of an old woman. The stories such as ‘Dastbin’ and ‘Jitapat ‘, ‘Samudra ‘ truly depict the literary sensibility of Nandini.

Nandini as a translator was no less renowned. ‘Gandhi Kathamrta ‘by Krishna Kripalini was awarded with Kendra Sahitya Akademi award in 1970. ‘Gandhi Kathamurta’ illustrates the life of Mahatma Gandhi and his preaching on religion, truth, Sadhana & sadhya, non violence, international peace, man & machine, class discrimination, democracy & public, education, women etc.

Nandini’s Second translation book ‘Revune Tiket ‘ by Amrita Pritam is the autobiography of Pritam, a famous Panjabi Poet. Her life was dedicated to social service and justice for human being. Amrita Pritam reflected her personal life in this work and created example for others to follow. The book ‘Lazza’ by Taslima Nasreen, a famous Bangladeshi author was translated into Odia language by Nandini. This book was named as bestselling book and made her famous as a translator. Saheba Sainik Parishad of Bangladesh, a mouilbad organization served a notice to Taslima for the book ‘Lazza’ banned in Bangladesh.

The fourth & last Odia translation book of Nandini was a ‘Selected Stories’ by Mahasweta Devi. However, Nandini visited different parts of Odisha and interacted with the destitute millions and reflected their life and living in her works of arts. Nandini translated twenty stories in Odia language out of which fifty stories of Mahasweta Devi, such stories are- Jagannath Car festival, Sishu, Churi, Kabi patni, Arjun, Gandha, Choli ke Pichea, Bhata, Jalachatra, Bishma nk Pipasha, Urbashi & Jani, Janmadina, Sanja o Sakal ra Maa, Sindhubala, Bhati, Bharat Barsha, SunyaStan

Purankar, Jannavi Maa, Bannya, Nishant Majhi ra Bhutan Zatra got readers approbation.

Nandini's social life was a smooth sailing. She married her Ravenshaw College friend Debendra Satapathy of Dhalpur, Dhenkanal. Sri Satapathy elected two times as Member of Parliament (MP) from Dhenkanal Lok Sabha constituency, Odisha. She had two sons, one Nachiketa and the other Tathagata who are well established in the society.

[3]

Tathagata Satapathy, the elder son of Nandini too has created a niche for himself as a successful publisher and politician. Nandini received Kendra Sahitya Akademi Translation award, felicitated by Odisha Sahitya Akademi, Sahitya Bharati award, Prajatantra Sanman, felicitated on Golden jubilee celebration of India's independence.

The Biography of Nandini Satapathy, "Matir Nandini" by Sri Ashis Ranjan Mahapatra, "Odia Sahitya Ku Nandini Satapathy nka Abadan" (a research thesis) by Dr. Subash Nayak, "Saraswata Sadhika Nandini Satapathy" by Dr. Subash Nayak(e-book) will certainly make memories of Nandini afresh in the minds of the Odias. A woman invincible, a dashing leader, a literary artist breathed her last on 4th August 2006 leaving behind an imprint to be followed. ■

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## *Impulse from Woods*

Author: **Saroj K. Padhi**

Reviewed by Dr. Chittaranjan Bhoi

Associate Prof. of English, KISS University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Poetry is an art form in which human language is articulated. It is the emotional response expressed through language. It evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience. Poetry when becomes musical- heals heart refreshes mind and provides energy to move on.

Nevertheless, poetry is not a divine voice. It is the human voice expressed to reassure life beyond ordinary living. Poetry is not an adolescent passion stymied by age and elements. Poetry is an endless quest for the unknown verities, often imperceptible and impalpable.

The poems of the anthology *Impulse From Woods* of Saroj K. Padhi are truly the condensed essence of the poet's personality, couched in simple diction coupled with an admirable quality.

The anthology consists of fifty six poems which draw our attention to varied themes of interest like nature, love, passion, hope and life. The poems of this collection bear the testimony of delight, joy and above all the poetic excellence. While some of the poems follow lyrical pattern with regular form, the others follow irregular verse forms. However, all the poems in this anthology are worth enjoying. Indeed, the poetic sensibility of the poet is titanic.

The signature poem "Impulse from the Woods" is an impetuous illustration of Nature. The poet's expedition into the woods at dawn enthral his being. His description of miniature objects of nature really exhibits the beauty of the poem.

The poem "A Woman's Love" highlights the physical longing of a woman. But her desired man expresses his physical inability to fulfil her unquenchable thirst and considers him to be a dying Sun. The nostalgia of the poetic persona takes us to the days gone by when he was in love with his sweet heart. But he tries to forget those days of piping shepherds for he is no more able-bodied. He further compares himself with 'dull summer wind' in "Love at Twilight". The passive reciprocation of the poet's love for his counterpart stands ineffective. Even though the heart and

mind tempt the poet to be romantically betrothed yet, aging body does not permit him to be enticed any more.

The poet's interpretation of life in his "Life is a Kite" reminds me of Shakespeare's line 'But thought's the slave of life and life time's fool'. He metaphorically compares life with kite that experiences ups and downs, plights and predicaments and sufferings and humiliations through the pages of time. The cruelty of life has also been penned down by Padhi in his "Life's Cruelty". He is bled with the sting of solitude, impotence, cruelty and uncertainty. But being optimistic the poet says in another poem that despite all such trepidations life moves on intermittently to get divine grace. The same idea has been supplemented in the poem "Life During Pandemic" in which the poet reiterates the same resilience in more modest way.

"Spring Has Sneaked In!", "Spring Touched Me This Evening", "Night", "The River" are some of the nature poems in which the poet glorifies the beauty of nature that soothes the inner being of the poet.

The optimistic thought of the poet is evident in the poet's "Life Goes On" where he says

Life has to go on  
Despite setbacks and confusion  
Remorse, regrets, reverse gears  
Faulty footsteps and wrong calculation,  
Despite climate change and distortion  
And all that we have to do  
Is to look on...

The poet urges the readers to move on and on without being marooned by the huddles of life. He is of the opinion that every individual has to go forward, keeping aside the plights and predicaments to lead a fulfilling life.

Indeed, the poetic sensibility, lucidity of language, free flow, musicality of tone, choice of words, use of poetic devices determine the maturity of Padhi as a poet.

The poems of this collection will certainly get readers admiration and approbation. ■

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## Peer-reviewed Journals are at par with UGC Approved Journals

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

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

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