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Editorial

India's National Education Policy 2020, which is taking shape now, encourages learning and teaching in mother tongue/regional language. This is a welcome step. It is a well-established psychological fact that learning in a child's formative stage is best accomplished in his/her mother tongue. The NEP further desires Hindi or other regional languages, in place of English, to be the medium of instruction at higher education level as well. It may take longer as text books or standard reference books, particularly in technical education, are available at present in English only, but ultimately it would be a good thing for the nation. Does it bode ill for English studies in India? Not necessarily. For one thing, English, after such a long presence here and its such varied uses by Indians, including creative ones, is no longer the colonial master's language. Indians have, to use Peter Barry's terms in this context, not only adopted it but have also become quite adept in it. So, in a way English has become an Indian language now. True, it is used by a miniscule number of people for every day communication, but the fact that a vast number of English words, half sentences and sentences are regularly mingled with Indian languages while communicating in those languages, denotes a strong presence of English in India. In a country of multiple languages and numerous dialects, English does serve as a medium of communication, at least in urban India, throughout the length and breadth of the country. One need not look upon English as the symbol of high-brow culture or education. It is only a language, though quite rich after absorbing words and expressions from a wide range of other languages down the ages. The NEP 2020 recognizes its importance as an international language. It may no longer be the language of a vast empire which boasted that the sun never set in it, the dominant global position of USA, along with

the international importance of some other countries where English is the mother tongue, such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand, not to talk of Commonwealth countries where English has a noticeable presence, underlines its importance as an international language. Even countries like China and Japan have recognized the importance of English as an international language and are encouraging its learning as such. So, India, which has left China behind in its software dominance globally because of English, need not discard it. In global connectivity, whether for trade or cultural exchanges, it has its use. In literature, Indian English literature has marked its international presence as marked by the various international literary awards conferred on Indian English writers, particularly, novelists.

Moreover, whenever Indians write in English, it is Indian English and the sensibility expressed in it is definitely Indian. Their concerns express the national concerns of the moment. In this issue of the journal, H. P. Shukla has discussed the Indianness of Indian writing in English. Jagdish Batra has brought out the admirable features of the *Sama Veda* in his article. Sonali Das talks of the elements of Indian philosophy in T. S. Eliot's masterpiece *The Waste Land*. Parijat Pandey and Lal Veer Aditya have looked at the ancient education system in India through NEP 2020. Yater Nyokir and Doyir Ete have described the indigenous writers of Arunachal Pradesh and their difficulties. J. K. Verma discusses Indian folk drama. Environmental issues figure prominently in Indian minds also. While N. K. Ghosh describes it in detail, Reena Sanasam, and Anchal Sharma and Hemlatha K. discuss it from literary perspectives. We have two interesting articles on film studies, showing the Postmodern cultural inclusivity of literature. Reerja Thankachan shows how costumes can be used to construct identities on celluloid. Runoo Ravi, on the other hand, discusses the use and perception of English in Hindi cinema. The high intellectual and critical standard of the papers contained in this volume is reflected by papers like that of Rajnath who shows the

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implications of the U-turn of Derrida, one of the most influential critical thinkers of our time. Radhika Sharma and Veerendra Mishra have discussed a new academic discipline that came into existence barely a few decades ago – Medical Humanities. Getachew Mihret and others analyse the application of AI technology to English Language Teaching. As has been its practice, the present volume of IJES contains some beautiful poems and perceptive book reviews.

M. R. Verma

IJES, Volume LX, 2024

Derrida's U-Turn and Its Consequences

*Rajnath

Abstract

Jacques Derrida's deconstruction introduced to the world through a bunch of three books published in 1967 caused an upheaval in the intellectual circles of the world. Many values and beliefs long cherished were challenged and replaced by the new values which were unconventional and for many unreasonable. Towards the end of his life and at the peak of his reputation Derrida took a U-turn. The essay examines the possible impact of the U-turn on the life and thought of the people.

Keywords: differance, deconstruction, aporia, reversal, double reversal.

Jacques Derrida's emergence on the world's intellectual scene was nothing short of a storm that turned the world upside down. He published a bunch of three books including, *Of Grammatology*, in 1967, which ushered in postmodernism with its question marks on every idea, every event and every situation. All hierarchies were subjected to reversal and there was no certainty about anything.

***Dr. Rajnath**, retired Professor and Head, Dept. of English, University of Allahabad, is a well-known scholar and critic. He was among the early Indian scholars to discuss Derrida in India.

In course of time, Derrida made inroads in every domain of life and thought. Derrida used the term “dissymmetry” (not “asymmetry”) to foreground his philosophy which became known as deconstruction to imply that every construction is deconstructed and what is said is simultaneously unsaid. In life, this resulted in the subversion of whatever was idealized such as symmetry, harmony, truth, logic, etc. In dress designing, matching was replaced by contrast and the greater the contrast the better the realization of the new fashion. In interior designing, walls of the same room were painted in different colours, the curtains hung on the same door or window were of different, preferably contrasting colours. Even in the realm of beauty, the parting of the hair was neither straight nor crooked, but zigzag. And in the domain of thought, truth was denied and post-truth became a term generally accepted and debated. A prestigious central university prescribed post-truth in the Criticism paper of M.A. (English) and a national seminar on post-truth was organised in a prestigious college of a Central university. An essay on “Gulliver’s Travels in a Post-truth world” was published in the Sunday *Literary Review* of the widely circulated *The Hindu*. Let me add that Jonathan Swift who lived and wrote in the Age of Reason was a great advocate of reason without which men are reduced to brutes described as yahoos in the Fourth Book of *Gulliver’s Travels*. The author of the article does not mention this point nor does he refer to Swift’s essay, “A Meditation upon a Broomstick” where man without reason is reduced from a green tree to a broomstick which is used to clean the dirty floor. A citation from this essay will tell us that the image of man without reason that Swift describes anticipates Derrida’s deconstruction.

But a broomstick, perhaps you will say is an emblem of a tree standing on its head, and pray what is man but a topsy-turvy creature, his animal faculties perpetually mounted on his rational, his head where his heels should be, groveling on earth?

This is the state of man in deconstructive philosophy. Man who was a “rational animal” was reduced to an irrational mind and postmodernism, which is an off-shoot of deconstruction, has been defined in, the words of Neil Latsen, as “a from of irrationalism.” (19) This image of man has been corrected by Derrida’s U-term. Unfortunately, this point which is central to Swift’s writings is not touched on by the author of “Gulliver’s Travels in a Post-truth world.” And equally surprising in his total ignorance of Jacques Derrida, the French Philosopher who set forth his immensely popular and influential theory of deconstruction which dismantled all binaries premised on hierarchy including the one of truth of and falsehood. At one point the author writes: “Not that anything goes; for we too possess standards of judgement of what is acceptable and unacceptable.” (1) I wish he had some acquaintance with Derrida who would support precisely what he dismissed.

Derrida was opposed by the conventional philosophers like Paul Ricoeur, Hans-Georg Galdamer, and Jürgen Habermas who knew that logic and truth are the cornerstone of philosophy and by denying them Derrida was questioning the very existence of philosophy as a discipline. Habermas was frequently taking issue with him and questioning him in writing as well as discussions. Derrida who received unstinting support from the academics in literary studies, popular culture, history, law, etc. stuck to his guns and opposed his opponents. Of the philosophers who set themselves in opposition to Derrida the German philosopher, Jürgen Habermas played the pivotal role. Without being vitriolic in his criticism he marshalled plausible counter arguments.

In India, Derrida was hardly known till about 1984 when *Journal of Literary Criticism* brought out a special number on deconstruction (later published in book-form). To this number I contributed an essay titled “The New Criticism and Deconstruction: Attitudes to Language and Literature” in which I privileged the New Criticism over deconstruction. As the New Criticism was very well known in this country, in English as well as Indian

languages, the comparison between the two movements helped the reader comprehend the complexity and the contours of deconstruction. In my essay I had made two reservations about deconstruction; first, that, like the New criticism, it was monistic in nature as it did not distinguish between one genre and another, and, secondly, that it was nihilistic, as the ultimate outcome of a deconstruction analysis was nil. To cite from my own essay, “as the meaning in deconstruction is both affirmed and subverted the ultimate result is what we can call nihilism.” (87) This is confirmed by J. Hillis Miller’s remark that “the deconstruction, rather, annihilates the ground on which the building stands by showing that the text has already annihilated that ground.” (34)

I found deconstruction unconvincing. To use Matthew Arnold’s binary, culture and anarchy I felt that deconstruction with no roots in logic and truth would lead us to anarchy and chaos in society. In an essay significantly titled “Levelling the Genre Distinction between Philosophy and Literature” Habermas interrogates Derrida’s dissolving of all distinctions and divisions between disciplines. He advances plausible arguments to demonstrate how language functions differently in different disciplines. He makes a broad division of language into the “the problem solving” language of philosophy and “the world disclosive” language, of literature. He does not conform to Derrida’s privileging of rhetoric over logic to make all kinds of writing literature.

The primary of rhetoric over logic means the overall responsibility of rhetoric for the general qualities of an all-embracing context of texts within which all genre distinctions are ultimately dissolved; philosophy and science no more constitute their own proper universes than art and literature constitute realm of fiction that could arrest its autonomy vis-a-vis the universal text. (18)

In rhetorical mode every writing is a piece of fiction, where the question of true or false does not arise. There are no certitudes and nothing can be said with finality. This conclusion that Derrida

arrives at through a circuitous route converting every text into a literary text and denying logic and truth which do not characterize a literary universe was not acceptable to Habermas. When I wrote my first essay on Derrida's deconstruction, I was not familiar with Habermas but Derrida's arguments did not carry conviction with me, as they seemed to point towards anarchy.

Derrida and Habermas were not only legendary philosophers but also very good friends, besides being very good human beings. After their lectures on the U.S. campuses, which were frequent, one of them would invite the other for a personal debate and the consent was a foregone conclusion. Derrida was slowly beginning to realize that Habermas was right but he was on shaky ground. On 18th June, 2004, which was Habermas's 75th birthday, Derrida published an essay on "Honesty of Thought" with a long subtitle, "Each in his own country, but both in Europe: the history of a friendship with obstacles." The title, "Honesty of Thought" is derived from Nietzsche who writes:

How greatly the thinker loves his enemy. Never to hold something back or conceal from you that which can be thought against your thoughts! Promise yourselves! It is essential to the highest level of the honesty of thought. And every day you must also conduct your campaign against yourself. (302)

The honesty of thought defined by Nietzsche and accepted by Derrida is the height of honesty which characterizes an intellectual which both Derrida and Habermas are. Derrida feels that he must be true to himself as well as to his friend, Habermas whatever the consequences. The path was certainly more difficult for Derrida than for Habermas who had only to stick to his path. Derrida had to take a U-turn to convince himself that he was honest in his thinking. Derrida known as an intellectual giant was at the height of his reputation as an original thinker and his deconstruction had spawned a new world view as original as the Elizabethan world picture with the difference that the latter was

finally accepted as a movement from darkness to light while the former reckoned a movement from light to darkness had many dissenting voices. But a U-turn for Derrida meant disappointing his numerous followers and admirers. Could he leave them in the lurch? But he had to be honest whatever the repercussions.

I had argued that Derrida's deconstruction flounders on whatever cannot be subjected to *aporia*, i.e. two opposite opinions which clash and nullify each other. I had taken the example of apartheid about which one could not hold two diametrically opposed opinions. This is what Derrida himself felt after the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre which was nothing short of horror resulting in massive casualties. Derrida describes the pain and shock that he shared with Habermas for the victims and their kin.

In a conversation in passing [at the residence of their mutual friend in New York] we shared absolutely the same sympathy for the victims of the attack and the same outrage over the sort of oppression. Above all, however, we felt the same critical concern over the reaction of the Bush administration and the opinion of the majority of the Americans under the shock of the two attacks. We felt the same uneasiness and shared that same disapproval of what was already beginning to develop; the worst, that was proving to be true every day. (303)

The total agreement between Derrida and Habermas as admitted by the former time and again suggests that he has moved far away from the stage of *aporia* when a person's own idea and belief pointed in the diametrically opposed directions. Derrida knows for sure that he has taken a U-turn which will engender controversy and disappointment. From the state of total uncertainty he has arrived at a stage of total certainty.

Derrida and Habermas agreed to give two long interviews (in a broad philosophical context) on the situation after the 9/11 terrorist attack. These interviews were published in book-form

under the title, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror* in the United States and later in Italy, France and Germany in that order. They also signed a manifesto calling for a new European policy as well as a common foreign policy. This stress on agreement, which is a far cry from disagreement not only among the people but in the same person making him unable to arrive at a certitude engendered a great deal of dissension and disappointment which Derrida describes in the following words:

This book and this sort of manifesto, as well as a number of similar works, puzzled our respective friends. Some were worried, others annoyed. Numerous publications have appeared about them since then and out of exemplary politeness. . . . But nothing should, nothing must—make this wish today—discourage us from continuing on such a path.(303)

In this essay, which was written less than four months before his death, Derrida is determined to express as often and as forcefully as he can, his agreement with Habermas. Later in the essay he writes:

At this point I cannot say anything in the form of a brief message about the reasons and the historical philosophical background on which we are, or are not in agreement. I have neither the strength, nor the authority, nor the right. To day, now that is urgent, I am tempted by a path that allows us to seize on our agreement more tightly and take joint responsibility, each in his own country, both in Europe. (303).

Derrida passed away on 9 October, 2004. On 11 October, Habermas published a tribute to his friend describing his “enlightening impact.” He succinctly, and as lucidly as possible, explains Derrida’s deconstructive method but asserts that as a person he was very different from what his method could give the impression of. He was, for Habermas, “a person of extraordinary kindness, almost elegant, he was certainly vulnerable, and sensitive, but had

an easy manner and was likeable and friendly and open to friendship with those he trusted.” (308)

Derrida’s beginning and ending were so unlike but at both the ends he was honest. True to his conviction, he said what he felt was right. Of course, this created problems for his followers. Many took shelter under his ever-widening umbrella but where do they go now? For me, there is a pleasant surprise; he ended where, I thought, he should have been throughout his long philosophical-cum-critical career. Whether in the U.S. during the academic session, 1981-82 or in India, I always ran counter to Derrida in the name of culture, truth, and sheer commonsense. In India I found myself in a strange situation as deconstruction was hardly known until about 1984. When it became known, academics by and large did not make a serious attempt to comprehend it. Deconstruction, known as post-structuralism could not be comprehended without a knowledge of structuralism and in order to understand structuralism one needed a grounding in structural linguistics pioneered by Ferdinand de Saussure. Christopher Norris’s *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (1982) and Jonathan Coller’s on *Deconstruction* (1983) were not available in India at that stage. It was sheer coincidence that both the scholars contributed to the Deconstruction special of JLC.

Deconstruction was a very complex movement and there were many in the West who misconstrued it and Derrida did not hesitate in dismissing them. Of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who first translated Derrida into English he said that she had “an oversight inability to read.” (223) Robert Young, internationally known as a scholar of postcolonial studies, wrote his first book on postcolonialism under the title, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* taking the title from Derrida’s “White Mythologies: Metaphors in the Texts of Philosophy.” But white mythology points to the subterranean meaning of the text not visible on the surface and leaves out the other and more important aspect of Derrida’s deconstruction which is *aporia*, the meeting

of diametrically opposite meanings that cancel each other out. The aporia denies certitudes that a postcolonial theorist needs.

I was most concerned about Derrida's denial of logic truth, culture, and morality as well as what Habermas has called the levelling of all genres and distinctions. I decided to take the bull by the horn by writing a book on *The Identity of Literature: A Reply to Jacques Derrida* to register my difference with him. The book was published in 1917, long after Derrida's death, but the individual chapters in it were published in journals much earlier.

As binaries imply hierarchy, Derrida seeks to do away with them. Take, for instance, the binaries of truth and falsehood, literature and non-literature, literary language and ordinary language. In these binaries it is presumed that the first item is superior to the second. Because of the aporia at work in these binaries one cannot clearly distinguish one from the other. Hence we find in the same book, say Paul de Man's *Blindness and Insight* literary as well as non-literary texts analysed.

The 9/11 terrorist attack was a turning point in Derrida's thinking. He realized that there could not be uncertainty about everything. The attack was certainly an unkind and inhuman act in which a large number of people died for no fault of theirs. Derrida shared this agony with Habermas as well as hundreds of thousands of people who suffered.

Since Derrida himself had taken a U-turn, all that Derrida had denied came back to life including truth, culture and generic distinctions. Nihilism got replaced by hope, and anarchy by order. All those disciplines which were clubbed together under the rubric of literature regained their separate identity. Historical facts and philosophical ideas returned to their respective disciplines. Language as such could not be literature and one could not engage oneself in doctoral research in English on any writer, in any genre, and any language. Genre distinctions have emerged over a long period and our studies are divided into disciplines which are the central concerns of individual departments on a University Campus.

Interdisciplinary studies also recognise the existence of individual disciplines and focus on the overlapping areas.

Derrida's deconstruction had turned the green tree of man into a dry and dead broomstick with his animal instinct dominating over his rational faculty. With his U-turn man is once again a rational animal with the restraint on his freedom: he cannot do whatever he wants to with impunity.

With his U-turn Derrida has placed his followers in a quandary. In fact, those who followed Derrida blindly without using their own intelligence are themselves to blame. They can say that Derrida was on the right track, that there was no need for a U-turn. But Derrida knew his mind better than his followers who were free to take their own decision. I am citing below two definitions of deconstruction by well-known scholars, which have become irrelevant now:

... an insuperable deadlock or [a] "double bind" of incompatible or contradictory meanings which are "undecidable" in that we lack any sufficient ground for choosing among them. (M.H. Abrams, 58)

The de-construction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or arbitrary subversions, but by the careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text itself. (Barbara Johnson, in Abrams, 60).

Known for his lucidity as well as redoubtable scholarship, Abrams has very clearly explained what deconstruction is but as a humanist he does embrace it. Johnson, on the other hand, is a follower and admirer of Derrida. After Derrida's U-turn, there is no problem for Abrams but Johnson is in a dilemma. If she denies deconstruction, she goes against herself and if she accepts it she goes against Derrida. This is what happens when a person blindly acquiesces in without using his own intelligence. The two early admirers of Derrida in the English-speaking world were Paul de Man who published his deconstructive critical work, *Blindness and Insight* in 1971 and Jonathan Culler who published his

Flaubert: The Uses of Uncertainty (1974) followed by *structuralist Poetics* (1975). These books paid them good dividends. De Man became Professor at Yale University and Culler at Cornell University. When De Man died, Derrida came to Yale University to pay his tribute to his ardent admirer and follower. When Derrida had praised De Man, someone pointed to his role in the Algerian war. Derrida, to hide his discomfiture, muttered, "You come to Paris tomorrow when I shall say just the opposite." When Culler, my old friend, came to my office at the University at Buffalo after his lecture, I showed him the draft of my project entitled "Poetry, Personality and Impersonality: A comparative study of T.S. Eliot and Robert Lowell." He glanced through it and remarked, "Do not you think that what you call impersonality is from a different angle personality and vice versa?" I knew that it was Culler, the deconstructionist who was speaking. I stuck to my gums and the essay without the alternations suggested can be seen in my book, *Critical Speculations*.

I am glad that Derrida, who had put the world upside down, finally put it the right side up before he passed away, although much damage had already been done. He has left behind a dilemma for his followers but that was not his fault. There is a lesson here for others, whose number is legion, not to blindly follow in the foot-steps of others, howsoever important they may be. I have said it umpteen times and I say it once again that we should critically examine a movement or a concept before accepting it whether it has come from the west or the east.

The world has changed once again after Derrida's U-turn. We went so fast in embracing his deconstruction and accepting his key concepts like differance, aporia and de-construction. Now that Derrida has taken a U-turn, shall we change just as fast. I doubt.

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Manoj Das and the Indianness of Indian Writing in English

*H.P. Shukla

Abstract

The paper begins by pointing out two prevalent approaches to the study of Indian Writing in English—one led by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, and the other by Anglicised ‘mimic’ minds like Purushottam Lal and Jeet Thayil. This is the background which compelled Manoj Das to choose to write in English. A brief introduction to the author lists his major works and awards. This is followed by a short critical appreciation of three of his major novels—*Cyclones*, *A Tiger at Twilight*, and *The Escapist*. It is suggested that these provide an authentic portrayal of Indian culture and aspirations. The concluding section presents a bird’s eye view of Manoj Das’s non-fictional writings as well as his writings for children. Not only in the choice of contents, but also in the manner and style of his writings, Manoj Das truly belongs to the great Indian tradition.

Keywords: Manoj Das, *Cyclones*, *A Tiger at Twilight*, *The Escapist*

I

Indian literature in English is beset with two conflicting voices, and neither any less vociferous than the other. William Dalrymple

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in *The Golden Road* (2024) reminds us of the 'Anglosphere' that India became a part of during the colonial period: "Indians who wished to get ahead had to abandon, or at least sublimate, much of their own culture, becoming instead English-speaking 'Brown Sahibs', or what V. S. Naipaul called 'Mimic Men'." Jeet Thayil, an editor of some repute, proclaims: "A backward glance over the 150 years before Ezekiel turns up only four figures of note in English... Toru Dutt, Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Henry Louis Vivian Derozio." Sri Aurobindo with his 24000-line epic, *Savitri* is conspicuously excluded from Thayil's great tradition. Vilas Sarang has a one-liner for him: "Aurobindo developed an exotic poetics, whatever the value of his mystical philosophy". The mystical is irrelevant. What is most striking about this trend is its dogged denial of all that is sacred and philosophical in Indian approach to life.

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar waged a lone long battle to change the Cambridge nomenclature of 'Anglo-Indian Literature' to 'Indo-Anglian Literature' and finally to 'Indian Writing in English,' which was also the title of his magnum opus (1962) and in which he devoted three exclusive chapters to Sri Aurobindo. Despite the loud denunciation of all spiritual poetry by P. Lal (1959) and his ilk, V. K. Gokak in the year 1970 dared to devote nearly half of his anthology to spiritual poetry, which included Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, J. Krishnamurti among others. The last of the great Indian critics, C. D. Narasimhaiah came out, in his last lecture in 2003, with a most scathing attack on the tribe of mimic modernistic writers: "I wish other Indians who have acquired a kind of bizarre reputation, internationally, such as Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor and Arundhati Roy had a claim on our attention for inclusion in this lecture. But you have a right to know why they stand excluded." Rushdie "is a juggler of words like Shashi Tharoor, a juggler of myths"; Vikram Seth "a phenomenon in subliminal advertising"; and Arundhati's prose is "what Indian poeticians called *atyukti* and dismissed it as worthless".

It was such a literary climate in India that spurred Manoj Das (1934-2021) to take up writing in English: what “drove me to [write] in English was a piece of writing in that language by a veteran Indian author living abroad, that claimed to be an authentic picture of rural India but what in fact was its unkind caricature”. Manoj Das was a bilingual author who wrote with elan in Odia, and with an equal ease in English. This gave him an added advantage. “I knew my rural India and I knew my people”. Writing in English, he addressed a wider readership and was aware of global trends in literature. He was also a mystic, which added further authenticity to his Indianness. India does not exist without her transcendental wisdom. A quest, individual and collective, for the Real remains at the core of Indian aspiration, and unfortunately the authors who miss out on this often present a one-sided, if not distorted, cultural landscape of India.

In the Indian context, the regional writer exploring the rural psyche has better chances of coming up with something deeper and substantial, and of a lasting value. It is because the men and women in the countryside are more rooted in Nature and the ancient ethos of their ancestors. Their perceptions, experiences and beliefs, even if a shade exotic and superstitious, are closer to God and mystical vision. This is what Manoj Das discovered and chose as a basic tenet of his writings.

II

Manoj Das found his vocation when he asserted that he knew “my rural India and knew my people”. His oeuvre, both fiction and non-fiction, reveals a single trajectory leading to *My Little India* (2003). Most of his novels and short stories in English are set in rural Odisha in the early years of India’s independence. In his non-fictional writings, and books for children, in his regular columns for newspapers and articles in magazines Manoj Das is seen retelling India’s ancient and timeless tale to a modern readership. He wrote in his editorial for the inaugural issue of *The Heritage* (1985-1989): “we believe that India has a significant role to play in moulding a meaningful future for man.”

His first collection of poems appeared in 1949 and the first collection of short stories (both in Odia) two years later in 1951. In 1965, at the age of 31, Manoj Das received the prestigious Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award for his short stories. Such awards and honours were to keep pouring in till his last days—Sahitya Akademi Award (1972), Sarla Award (1980), Saraswati Samman (2001), Sahitya Akademi Fellowship (2007), Padma Shri (2001) and Padma Bhushan (2020), among many more. These accolades are only a recognition of his vast literary output.

Widely recognised and honoured as a leading voice in modern Odia literature, Manoj Das's oeuvre in English is no less impressive. His writings in English include 18 collections of short stories, 4 novels, 12 non-fiction volumes, and 12 books for children and young readers. His first collection of short stories in English, *A Song for Sunday and Other Stories*, came out in 1967, and the last, *The Bridge in the Moonlit Night and Other Stories* was brought out as a collector's edition in 2015 by National Book Trust. Manoj Das made his foray into the novel with an early draft of *A Tiger at Twilight* appearing in the inaugural issue of *The Heritage* in 1985. Recognised as his first full-length novel, *Cyclones* came out in 1987. Revised and expanded, *A Tiger at Twilight* was issued by Penguins India in 1991. Manoj Das's third novel in English, *The Escapist* (2001) is a translation of his Odia original *Akashara Ishara*. In 2000, the author's fifth novel in Odia, *Tandralokara Prahari* was published, and an abridged version in English, *The Exorcists* appeared in the Statesman Annual. Two of his novels, *Amrita Phala* (1996) and *Sesha Tantrikara Sandhanare* (2018), considered by many as his magnum opus, could not get translated into English by the author.

III

Born in 1934, Manoj Das belonged to a generation that had witnessed the aftermath of the second World War and the culmination of India's freedom struggle, her Independence and the horrors of post-Partition. Aware of rampant poverty and illiteracy

of the masses, and a number of social ills, including religious fanaticism, this generation was nonetheless robust and highly aspirational. As they grew up, many of them got disenchanted with the model of progress and development the new government was pursuing. They also painfully watched the erosion of traditional values and the onslaught of modernisation and the so-called cultural progress. It is this ethos that pervades the creative landscape of Manoj Das and pushes him to look for answers that are not easy to find.

In his note to the abridged version of the book, Manoj Das wrote, “Many readers may find the characters, situations and the setting of *A Tiger at Twilight* strange. But they are not fictitious. Of course, in no work of fiction, the factual realism is the sole realism!” Perhaps, there is a plane of perception where symbolism and realism coalesce and become one. The question that long haunts the reader is the symbolic significance of the man-eating tiger and the nature of twilight. In the background of a crumbling structure of feudalism and the rise of a modern democratic nation, we find at the centre stage the last raja of a small ex-kingdom. The raja’s father on a visit abroad had acquired a European mistress, and her daughter, Heera is now part of the raj-family. No one had ever seen the mistress and no one ever believed that the daughter was the raja’s; but everyone is convinced that Heera is “a curse on the raj family”. She knows how to hypnotise and trap her victims. She transforms a native scholar of Sanskrit into a ‘mimic man’ who quickly adapts to western dresses, manners and even smoking. She devours his soul, while the man-eater later makes a meal of his body. She also traps the soul of the raja’s daughter and sucks her life-energy; for eighteen years, the girl’s mental and emotional growth remains arrested and she is rendered invalid.

For generations, the raj-family has been plagued by an ancient curse from the goddess Vaneshwari and Heera’s appearance seems the last episode in a long tale. Acting under the influence

of some diabolic priest, the raja's ancestors had offered even human sacrifices to appease the goddess. The feudal house has also a history of vengeful cruelty, unjust rule and extravagance. The present raja, even if somewhat wiser after years of inner suffering and given to reflection cannot free himself completely from his psychic legacy. He goes diving into the Vaneshwari lake searching for lost treasures, suffers illness and dies. Earlier, acting with somewhat compulsive vengeance, he was seen misusing his influence on the masses to hoist a crooked politician on the fledging order of Indian democracy. When he mentions Heera's perversity that she delights "in humbling the genuine with the help of the fake—if she hates the former," he is perhaps telling more about himself.

As a counterfoil to the raja we have the narrator, Devdas whose small kingdom long ago had been usurped by the raja's ancestors. Since then, Dev's forefathers have led a life of austerity and righteousness. Moving with the times, Dev's father had already done away with most of the paraphernalia of royalty, together with many irrational beliefs and superstitions of a bygone age. Dev is often seen quoting his father about things that lie beyond his own experience. He is also compassionate, upright, and unpretentious. The minor characters—Rao, Sahoo, Sharmaji, Ketu Singh—are an ephemeral phenomenon, living by the ephemeral for the ephemeral. They are timber-merchants, mine-owners, moneylenders, exploiting in their own way the natural resources of the valley and new dispensation. They are caricatures, with their faults and follies always a little exaggerated. It looks like an arrested world under some kind of spell where everyone is caught in a web of one's own making and no one is going nowhere. The man-eater brings death to all that is evil and rotten and release to what aspires to be reborn. It devours the enchantress and the 'mimic man', Heera and Sharma and thus offers a new life to the raja's daughter. This transitional phase in the history of India is an age of 'twilight', "when you cannot distinguish the day from the night."

While *A Tiger at Twilight* is an exploration into the mysterious affair called life and comes up with shades of psychological complexes and dark occult, *Cyclones* (1987, 97, 2010), with a fair deal of social, political and psychological background, is about larger philosophical issues of life and is, therefore, a philosophical novel. In contrast to the static landscape of the earlier work, *Cyclones* portrays a dynamic world in flux. It is about the protagonist's journey through life and the stages of his growth. There are three cyclones in the text that criss-cross into each other—the first one is on the physical plane, where Nature's fury causes widespread death and destruction; the second one, on the vital plane, is a large scale churning of the social, political and cultural landscape; and the third one rages across the protagonist's psyche and propels him to move forward.

The setting is again a decaying feudal house in which the protagonist, Sandip finds himself transplanted as if by fate and circumstances. The time is 1944-46, the eve of India's independence. The place is a little coastal village called Kusumpur which, for all its convincing physical realism, stands rather as a symbol of some pristine cultural entity: "A fairytale world seemed to begin... [with] the cluster of Krishnachura trees... bursting into blood-red flowers.... the spring at Kusumpur was welcomed by musicians singing or playing on the shehnai Rag Vasant".

The first whiff of development arrives to this part of the world when the British announce their project of building an airstrip at Kusumpur. "The whole village looked bewildered the day the Krishnachura trees were felled.... the roaring roadrollers rocked the earth." Soon came the plan to close the river Kheya. The first victim of the ensuing cultural change is the village boy Rajni who makes his foray into the sahibs' world and returns home drunk to meet an accidental death. Something is surely rotten in the state of Denmark. Next, the village faces the fury of a cyclone that leaves in its wake a vast destruction of lives. A party of relief-workers from the city soon arrives and further threatens the

village's idyllic innocence. They bring with them a political ideologue who attempts to change the villagers into a violent, agitating tribe, and a shrewd businessman who sees here an opportunity of starting a brewery for making money. Soon we witness the maddening horror of pre and post-Partition riots and mass killings.

Wandering like a leaf in the whirlwind of a dark storm, the protagonist is confronted with insoluble philosophical questions, the answers to which must be sought in dimensions other than the obvious and rational. Sandip, without his own will or design, arrives at the ashram of sage Soumyadev, an oasis in a desert of insanity. His short sojourn in the ashram opens to him new vistas of human possibilities and spiritual quest. In his life, fate has always played a cheat, but there are also seen the hands of Grace working behind it. An illegitimate child, he is adopted by the zamindar of Kusumpur. Nonetheless, he is made to suffer humiliation for his birth. Why does the author introduce such a background? There is no logical necessity for it in the unfoldment of action. Sandip could have been a natural son of Chowdhurys and the story would have proceeded without changing track. Does it suggest that birth and one's antecedents are the first unavoidable facts of man's existence, a burden over which he has no choice?— His path is given to him, is chosen for him; only what he makes of it is perhaps upto him.

The most important feature of Sandip's character is that he looks more like a process, rather than a distinctly crystallised ego. He is seen as if floating with Tao, carried forward on currents of a vaster Nature. Things always happen to him and he is glad to accept them as they come and go. He has the stance of an unattached witness, moving as if mounted on a machine, '*yantrarudhen mayaya*'. He is not the natural son of Hari Chowdhury but is made to inherit the mantle of the Chowdhuries. He avoids Kusumpur and has no desire to settle there, but when compelled to return, he begins to like the place. Later in a fit of rage he threatens to behead the contractor who is actually

beheaded the next day. Sandip is certain that his “arrest cannot be prevented”. It is now his manager who arranges for his removal to the hermitage; Sandip simply acquiesces to the plan. Thus is he led, as if by fate, to the feet of Soumyadev, to his spiritual destiny.

Even when he acts decisively, it is an unknown impulse that takes over him and he acts merely as an agent and instrument. At the end of the book, when an assured political future beckons him, we find him undesiring, noncommittal and unresisting. “He stretched on the grass and waited for the sunrise to lead his steps”. Is he a dreamer who falls in love even with parrots and prostitutes? Is he a fatalist or simply a plain spineless creature whom anyone can take for a ride? Sandip’s is that authentic Indian self whom the West, for lack of any better understanding, has dubbed quietist, defeatist, fatalist and primitive. To the western and ‘mimic’ races, Sandip cannot appear in any other way; there is no use defending him. His secret is to be found in the Mahabharata—‘*Nabhinandeta maranam nabhinandeta jivanam / Kalameva pratiksheta nirdesham bhritiyako yatha*’—‘Death nor life I hymn, but wait / Like time upon His guidance still: / I bow to what He would dictate / As a servant doing his master’s will’.

In his next novel, *The Escapist* (2001, 2013) Manoj Das takes this Indian vision of life a step further. Shedding shreds of suggestive symbolism, he says it all very openly: “The silly act of a moment caused by a bout of nervousness—or could it have been inspired by some mysterious power in a mood for fun—and the result is I step into my new avatar, undreamt of, incredible.” Life is *leela*, a play just for fun of it. A comical chance happening changes the course of life for the protagonist. It makes for a funny, entertaining and incredible story, which also demands serious philosophical exploration.

One of the genres in which Manoj Das specialises is fantasy. But it is more than a literary device for him; it is an integral part of his vision of life. Life is neither rational nor irrational but

something beyond both. Fantasy is unrealistically real, like one's dreams! Is the subjective world we inhabit from the moment of birth till our passing away any different from a big dream? That an incredulous chance happening merits enquiry is attested by Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, from where the author may well have taken his cue—"But who shall pierce into the cryptic gulf / And learn what deep necessity of the soul / Determined casual deed and consequence?"

It is the story of how "Padmalochan Pramanik, an ordinary boy from an ordinary village named Govardhanpur, metamorphosed into Swami Padmananda". Two other characters contributing to this transformation are Ranjita Devi and her daughter-in-law Sushobhana. When the business tycoon, Jayant Thakore absent-mindedly tells Padmalochan to take a seat in a chair which is nowhere around, the latter, in order not to offend his prospective employer, ridiculously pretends to obey by assuming a posture of *utkatasana*. Ranjita Devi, Thakore's wife, seeing him thus seated, takes no time to divine that he must be a great yogi with immense supernatural powers. To our modern, rational minds, she would obviously appear to be a silly, ignorant and superstitious woman. But here comes a twist in the tale. She turns out to be Faith incarnate. If she has seen a great mahatman in Padmalochan, her Guru in Swami Padmananda, that is for her a living truth and she will not be swayed from it. She makes her unconditional surrender to the Guru, believes in every word he speaks and obeys him to the letter.

It is Ranjita Devi's faith that brings about a transformation in Padmalochan and makes him grow into a genuine spiritual seeker. He discovers the divinity in her and struggles to believe that she must have seen something similar in him, even if it had remained unknown to his own superficial self. The occult relationship between the two finds its culmination at the moment of Ranjita's death. Padmananda tells, "Her sight—or something with which her sight was charged—blasted its way into me... in the process

putting layer after layer of my consciousness into a state of tranquillity, and touching deep within me a sphere which I did not know existed.”

Soon after being hosted by Ranjita Devi, Padmalochan, in order to escape from being exposed, makes a strategic announcement that he would be “under a vow of total silence for a period of three months”. These months truly prove to be a period of purgation, if not tapasya, for him. He reads, fasts, and goes through intense psychological anguish and suffering. At this point, another character comes into play. Sushobhana has had her own share of suffering, is known to Vishnuji who has an ashram somewhere in the Himalayas, and appears an initiate in her own right. Padmalochan “had begun to feel the presence of a guru in Sushie”. She is also always around to give him a helping push whenever needed.

Manoj Das tells a highly enjoyable tale with every shade of colourful characters from villages, towns and cities—school teachers, politicians, business men, academics, psychiatrists, a madcap and a host of housewives. With plenty of wit and entertaining humour to engage his readers’ attention around this peripheral cast, he proceeds to centre a tale of spiritual quest, which is equally entertaining. He seems to remind his readers: yes, life is *leela*, a funny tale, but there is a purpose behind it; go, have fun and enjoy yourself, but don’t forget to look for that central purpose. Such is the nature and teaching of the Indian mind, as shown by Manoj Das.

IV

Manoj Das’s non-fiction has the same purposiveness, to give his readers a slice of real India. *Chasing the Rainbow* (OUP, 2004) is part memoir, part social history of a vanishing ethos. A storyteller’s narrative, full of entertaining tales, the book is a record of the first fourteen years of the author’s life. The narrative is often mystical in the tradition of Tagore—for example, a description of Nature reads, “Under a starry and milky sky... the sea was

not only vibrant with life, but also, it appeared, as profoundly conscious as a great, if awful, goddess.” We have a story of a real ghost, of a curse, and accurate predictions from an astrologer—all pooh-poohed by rational minds but here garnered from the author’s living experiences. This is Manoj Das’s India.

My Little India, a travelogue that takes us through the four corners of the country was originally serialised in *The Statesman*. The author makes his intents clear in the Preface: “There are many ways to look at India—rather many visions through which to experience the phenomenon that is India.” The book is a *vision*, and this country, an *experience*. It reminds us of Raja Rao: “India is not a country like France is, or like England; India is an idea, a metaphysic.” During his travels the author comes across a colourful motley of people who add to the cultural uniqueness of the place. To this, the author adds his reminiscing of history and legends associated with the place, as well as his own responses to some hidden depths secret in the place.

Myths, Legends, Concepts and Literary Antiquities of India (Sahitya Akademi, 2009) is quite a compendium on India’s literary traditions. In his preface the author states that the book is a kind of ‘notes’ prepared by “a student of Indian Literature” which he would like to share with fellow students. The book contains essays on the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Epics; Drama, Fiction and Poetry from *Svapnavasavdutta* to *Rajatarngini*; Sages and Seers from Agastya to Yajnavalkya; Rulers as Seekers from Bharata to Vikramaditya; and a number of knotty concepts and perplexing questions concerning Indian mythology.

Moving on to his writings for children, we find again the same intent that is everywhere in Manoj Das—to educate his readers in a storyteller’s entertaining way about the essence and timeless secret of India. Not many know that he along with Ruskin Bond was for decades on the editorial board of *Chandamama*, the legendary multi-lingual magazine for children. Most of his published works for children first appeared in *Chandamama*, while some

others were brought out by National Book Trust, India Book House and NCERT.

It is said that each one of us is born with a shraddha and our whole life is simply an unfoldment of this essence. *Shraddhamayo ayam purushah*, says the Gita. Manoj Das's essence lies in his loving devotion to his Mother, India. It is hard to find an author, a serious literary artist, who has given so much of his life to a single project, to write about Indian people, great and small, about their aspirations and failings, their wisdom, insights, beliefs, traditions and superstitions. Manoj Das wrote in the tradition of Ramayana, *Panchatantra* and *Jatak Tales* and chose fables and fantasies as his favourite modes, for only thus could he attempt to make the unknown real.

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Global Ecological Crisis: The 'Need to Wake Up'

*Nibir K. Ghosh

Abstract

History and literature offer countless examples to illustrate the importance of Nature in human lives. Virgil had visualized millennia ago the importance of the State, the people and Nature co-existing in harmony. Virgil's Eclogues from ancient time down to the romantic age and contemporary era have entertained us with the thought of living our lives in the lap of nature. However, the ever-increasing urge for selfish materialistic pursuits along with our unconcern for those deprived of even the basic needs of life have brought humanity face-to-face with the apocalyptic dread of ecological crisis, climate change and environmental degradation. Through a collage of impressions, the paper attempts to highlight our "need to wake up" and address the impending doom before it is too late.

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Keywords: Ecological Crisis, Climate Change, Al Gore, Chipko Movement, Green Peace Story, The Inconvenient Truth, Gaura Devi, Wangari Maathai, Ecocriticism, Paris Summit.

The global ecological crisis that we are now confronting is unprecedented in human history. The terrifying scale of this crisis and our increasing awareness that it has emerged out of deliberate human policies to interfere with Nature itself has virtually compelled us to realize and understand that we can no longer take Nature for granted. To what extent gross materialistic pursuits have driven the affluent in mankind, after Rousseau advocated a “return to nature” and Wordsworth found man guilty of ignoring the peace and joy in Nature in favour of the endless cycle of “getting and spending,” can be gauged from what John May states in *The Greenpeace Story*: “When the last tree is cut and the last fish killed, the last river poisoned, then you will see that you can’t eat money.” (May, *The Greenpeace Story*)

In contrast to the above situation of distress, I am reminded of a poem I read in school. The poem, attributed to Charles Mackay and written sometime in the 1830s, is titled “The Miller of Dee.” The poem brings to the fore the conflict that a king undergoes when he compares the burden of his responsibilities with the contentment that the Miller enjoys in working at his windmill beside the river Deethat “turns the mill that grinds the corn/ That feeds my babes and me.” The song of the Miller: “I envy nobody - no, not I -/ And nobody envies me!” touches the heart and soul of the king who responds thus:

“Thou’rt wrong, my friend,” ...,
“As wrong as wrong can be;
For could my heart be light as thine,
I’d gladly change with thee.
And tell me now, what makes thee sing,
With voice so loud and free,

While I am sad, though I am king,
Beside the river Dee?"

... ..

But say no more, if thou'dst be true,
That no one envies thee;
Thy mealy cap is worth my crown,
Thy mill my kingdom's fee;
Such men as thou are England's boast,
O miller of the Dee! (Mackay)

In view of the contemporary ecological crisis, the situation described in the poem may appear to be an unrealistic scene from an absurd play. Today, the ecosystem has become important because it is concerned with everyday existence of each one of us. Once upon a time, it may have been a matter of livelihood and sustenance only for those who were living on the peripheries of coastal areas. But the catastrophe that followed the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan highlighted the fact that Nature knew no boundaries of rich and poor, high and low, strong and weak, when it came to punishing man for tampering with its autonomy.

Al Gore, former Vice President of USA, who gave presentations around the world in an effort to educate the public, shed ample light on the dangers of climate change. Gore became interested in global warming during a college course he took at Harvard University. As a congressman, he held hearings on climate change in the late 1970s, a time when most Americans had little or no knowledge of the issue. After losing the 2000 presidential election to George W. Bush, Al Gore shifted his emphasis from active politics to the fight against man-made climate change. Based on his views and assumptions, the documentary film *An Inconvenient Truth* that premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in Sundance, Utah in 2006, showcases how human interaction with the natural environment since the Industrial Revolution has caused carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels to rise and with it the planet's average temperature resulting in the melting of glaciers, which in turn affect

ocean temperatures, ocean currents and strengthen storms. Using a computer-generated image of a polar bear, swimming miles in search of ice on which to rest, the film points to a catastrophic future for the planet, its ecology and inhabitants unless immediate action is taken.

It is significant that Gore's pioneering work in raising world-wide awareness on climate change and global warming, earned him the coveted Nobel Peace Prize for 2007 as a joint recipient with Albert Arnold. The Nobel Prize citation mentions that the award was merited by them "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change." (Nobel Peace Prize 2007) The day his Nobel peace prize win was announced, Al Gore remarked: "It [climate change] is the most dangerous challenge we've ever faced, but it is also the *greatest opportunity we have had* to make changes." (qtd. in Eisen) Equally pertinent in combating the risk of ecological crisis is a statement made by Van Jones—American environmentalist and a former advisor to US President Barack Obama— in a speech in 2009, wherein he affirms that the underlying disease of overconsumption and greed of liberal civilization must be addressed in solving climate change. (Eisen)

Going to the root of the environmental problem in question, William Rueckert, who is credited with the coining of the term "Ecocriticism," remarks: "Culture – one of our great achievements wherever we have gone – has often fed like a great predator and parasite upon nature and never entered into a reciprocating energy-transfer, into a recycling relationship with the biosphere." (Glotfelty, Introduction xx) Consequently, Earth's life support system has been subjected to tremendous stress resulting in calamities and catastrophes related to the ozone layer, droughts, famines, floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, global warming, acid rain, nuclear waste dumps, water pollution, unavailability of drinking water, inadequate sanitation and loss of forest cover etc. If we take into account the 2015 timeline of calamities like the Nepal

earthquake, wildfires in the American West, the Chennai floods, heat wave death toll in Andhra and Telengana, the Air Quality Index (AQI) threatening quality life in Beijing and New Delhi, besides the fury of Nature in myriad forms and shapes in various countries in very recent times, we are bound to realize that our planet's basic life support systems are under extreme duress.

In recent times, again, a news caption, "Canada records world's first patient diagnosed with 'climate change'" grabbed wide attention. The news item cited the case of a patient who approached Dr. Kyle Merritt, head of the Kootenay Lake Hospital's emergency room, in Canada's British Columbia province, with the complaint that she was finding it extremely difficult to breathe following the wildfires in the region. Dr. Merritt diagnosis wasn't heightened Asthama but 'climate change.' When asked about the same, Dr. Merritt replied: "If we're not looking at the underlying cause, and we're just treating the symptoms, we're just gonna keep falling further and further behind." (Migdon)

It is providential perhaps that the city of Paris, from where Jean-Jacques Rousseau launched his prophetic work, *The Social Contract* (1762), became the nerve centre of the International Summit on Climate Change in 2015. As inhabitants of an extremely endangered Earth, heads of nations representing the environmental anxiety and dread of their respective citizens from every corner of the globe assembled in Paris at the said Summit to adopt the first-ever universal, legally binding, global climate deal.

However, though it may sound impractical to consider going back to the state of Nature as Rousseau had advocated, we cannot abstain from working out the best possible compromise in a world of conflicting interests to find out ways and means to ensure, as William Rueckert asserts, how the two communities – the humans, the natural – can coexist, cooperate, and flourish in the biosphere. (Rueckert) Despite the fact that we are intensely troubled by the grim scenario all around us, we can draw significant encouragement from ideas and actions of individuals, communities and organizations

that are engaged in reintegrating nature into mainstream culture and human lives.

Notwithstanding our essentially anthropocentric outlook and behaviour, we can recall both individual and collective initiatives in our own time that addressed our need to coexist with Nature. The most inspirational story that one can think of in terms of voluntary as well as self-sacrificial action to fight climate change is provided by the heroic tale of Gaura Devi who was instrumental in giving vibrant shape to what we know today as the Chipko Movement. Half-a-century ago (on 26 March 1974), in a small hill town Reni in Pauri Garhwal, India, Gaura Devi, a widow in her 50s, with 27 other women of the village, organized a novel way of protesting against the government order permitting a contractor to fell 3000 trees for a sporting goods store. The men of the village were enticed by the lure of alcohol to be away from the scene when the woodcutters were expected to arrive. When Gaura Devi and her companions saw the woodcutters ready with their axe to cut down the trees, they hugged the earmarked trees and dared them to go ahead. The woodcutters shouted and abused the women and threatened them with guns. Gaura Devi and her resolute companions refused to budge and showed their readiness to die for the trees. Their bravery worked wonders and the contractor and his gang of woodcutters backed off.

This tree hugging technique, to protest against the clearing of the forest lands, attracted instant global attention. In 1977, in another area of the region, women tied *rakhi* (a sacred thread symbolizing, in Hindu custom, the bond of brother-sister relationships) around the trees to proclaim their commitment to save the trees from being felled.

It is quite likely that the Chipko movement, with Gaura Devi as the catalyst, may have been inspired by the event that took place in a village called Khejarli in Jodhpur (Rajasthan) in the year 1730 AD. It is believed that the then Maharaja of Jodhpur, Abhay Singh, sent his soldiers to Khejarli to fell trees and bring wood for building his new palace. In order to protest against the orders of the

Maharaja, 363 women from the Bishnoi community, led by Amrita Devi, arrived at the spot and told the soldiers they would rather die protecting the trees than remain silent spectators. They hugged the trees in defiance. The unyielding soldiers attacked them with their axes and killed them all. The sacrifice of these brave women to save the trees became a legacy that continues to inspire all engaged in protecting the environment. In honour of the martyrdom of Amrita and her companions, the government of India instituted the national Amrita Devi Bishnoi Wildlife Protection Award to encourage wildlife conservation initiative. It may be mentioned here that it was the same Bishnoi community that filed a case against actor Salman Khan for hunting blackbucks which come under the category of protected animals.

The lasting impact of our very indigenous Chipko Movement became a rallying point for environmental protests and movements the world over and created a precedent for effective non-violent protest. This “Forest Satyagraha” stirred up existing civil society in India by drawing attention towards tribal and marginalized people and their issues like never before. The success of the Chipko movement inspired many individuals and eco-groups to take up the cause of environmental protection and raise ecological awareness not only in India but at many places in the world. Marking the silver jubilee of the movement in 1999, *India Today* mentioned, the people behind the “forest satyagraha” of the Chipko movement, as amongst “100 people who shaped India.” The Appiko (which means ‘hug’ in Kannada) movement in Karnataka against tree felling in Western Ghats and Vindhyas was a natural fallout of the Chipko initiative. In 1983, in the Kalase-Kudergod forest, 150 women and 30 men stopped the axmen by hugging trees. Similar successes were achieved in the forests of Bengaon, With the motto “To save, to grow and to use rationally,” the Appiko movement, led by decentralized groups at the grassroots level, have motivated people to take direct action against destruction of forest cover.

In this context, the story of the revolutionary and dynamic leadership provided by Dr. Wangari Maathai –the Kenyan recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for 2004 – in laying the foundation and sustaining what came to be internationally recognized as the Green Belt Movement deserves special mention here. Emphasizing the fact that “peace on earth depends on our ability to secure our living environment,” the Nobel committee lauded her struggle for sustainable development, democracy and peace. (Nobel Peace Prize, Wangari Maathai) In her acceptance note, Dr. Maathai humbly stated: “People are fighting over water, over food, and over other natural resources. When our resources become scarce, we fight over them. In managing our resources and in sustainable development, we plant the seeds of peace.” (Maathai, Acceptance Speech)

In the 1970s and ‘80s Maathai had pointed out how cutting-down trees led to drought, malnutrition, famine and death. Consequently, she also saw a vicious nexus between corrupt government agents and well-connected developers who were responsible for much of the deforestation on account of illegal selling off land and trees to other countries. Maathai’s idea was to plant protective “green belts” to help preserve the land. Farmers, 70% of whom were women, were encouraged to join the movement. In 1990, Maathai became a national figure in Kenya when she vehemently challenged and foiled the ruling party’s decision to use the only green space in downtown Nairobi for a skyscraper and shopping mall. Ultimately, the cause, fueled by her courage and commitment, was won through legal battles and growing public support against the government project. It is no small matter that in Kenya itself her Green Belt movement has resulted in the plantation of over 30 million trees. Motivated by her efforts in this direction, women across Africa have planted tens of millions more, helping stop the deforestation that would have stripped much of the continent bare. Considering her love and passion for protecting trees, some of her admirers say, “Maathai will be reborn as a tree!”

Another laudatory initiative that goes back to the decade of the 1970s is the Greenpeace movement. It started in 1971 with a small group of volunteers organizing a music concert to raise funds to sail a boat from Vancouver to Amchitka to protest against US militarism and the testing of nuclear weapons. Though the unique mode of protest could not deter the government from carrying out the tests, it succeeded in giving birth to the idea of 'Greenpeace.' Currently, the International Greenpeace Movement now has branches in over 55 countries, including India, and is strongly committed in both ideas and action to work for "a green and peaceful future for all." The story that Greenpeace tells is that "a better world is possible, and that brave individual and collective action can make that world a reality." Without depending on funding from governments or corporations the Greenpeace is committed to protect the environment through the "core values of non-violence, bearing witness, personal action, internationalism and independence." (History of Greenpeace)

Rousseau had outlined in *The Social Contract* that "All citizens should participate – and should be committed to the general good – even if it means acting against their private or personal interests." (Rousseau 86) Contribution of citizens for the 'general good' necessitates that ecological crisis must be seen in relation to other attendant issues inherent in any society. I wish to emphasize that merely reading or writing poems and stories of Nature, planting saplings on World Environment Day, or sharing selfies at beautiful natural resorts on social media platforms, or writing profoundly scholarly papers for Climate Change conferences will not take us closer to comprehending the problem or determining what role we can play to mitigate the crisis. We really need to explore elements that can sensitize us and others to human misery, poverty, malnutrition, debilitating diseases, discrimination and oppression of man by man.

W. H. Auden in "Ten Songs (I)" says: "This city has ten million souls,/Some are living in mansions,/Some are living in holes." The

ever-widening gulf between the haves and have-nots in societies everywhere requires that we look at the economic aspects of the environmental situation not as a matter of statistical concern but with some kind of empathy. In the process, I googled 'Dharavi Slums.' I am sharing details: "The slum, like many others, lacks provisions for sanitation, drains, safe drinking water, roads or other basic services ... The film industry has played a key role in bringing this slum to prominence. It was featured in films like the Oscar-winning *Slumdog Millionaire* and the more recent *Gully Boy*. The sprawling Dharavi became the favourite tourist experience of 2019 in India and even beat the Taj Mahal, says travel site TripAdvisor's Travellers." (*Business Standard*)

On searching further, the available data on Dharavi revealed that in less than *535 Acres of land*, live close to 12 Lakh people which means approximately 17 sq.ft. per inhabitant. In contrast, I was amused to learn that a single family whose affluence and popularity is common knowledge, lives in a 'tiny' house that is built on 4,00,000 sq.ft. that leaves only 46000 sq.ft. per person in the family. If we remain glamorized by such opulence and continue to turn our heads away from the consistent misery of our own human kind, does it really matter what we talk and write about?

So, in terms of ecocriticism, it is necessary to understand that the relevance of the term does not end with the social world but that it includes the entire eco-world, so to say. Another thing that has to be kept in mind is that there has to be an interaction between nature and culture. Above all, we need to understand the imperatives of the participation of one and all to save the environment. It may be prudent to bear in mind how Rabindranath Tagore effortlessly demonstrated, over a century ago, the need for creating the much-desired harmony between human progress and preservation of Nature. What is noteworthy about Tagore is that he did not confine his pressing concern for Nature merely to writing poems, novels, plays and stories but gave practical form and shape to his expansive vision of man's ideal relationship with the environment at Santiniketan.

If we think of the activities of children today, they seem to be more keen on digital entertainment rather than exploring the beauties and joys of nature. One of our responsibilities is to tell them that today the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, and everything that we share on this earth is no more a matter of individual reflection. It is a collective responsibility of each and every person inhabiting this world.

The price of remaining unconcerned and complacent against the looming threat posed by the ecological crisis was lucidly brought out by Melissa Etheridge, American singer, in her 2006 Academy Award winning song “I Need to Wake Up”:

Have I been sleeping?
I've been so still
Afraid of crumbling
Have I been careless?
Dismissing all the distant rumblings
Take me where I am supposed to be
To comprehend the things that I can't see...

As a child
I danced like it was 1999
My dreams were wild
The promise of this new world
Would be mine
Now I am throwing off the carelessness of youth
To listen to an inconvenient truth
That I need to move...

I am not an island
I am not alone
I am my intentions

Trapped here in this flesh and bone
And I need to move
I need to wake up
I need to change
I need to shake up
I need to speak out
Something's got to break up
I've been asleep
And I need to wake up.

We must bear in mind that if we, especially the young ones, ignore the “need to wake up” to assume our role and responsibility in resolving the crisis, we shall be doing so at our own peril. Therefore, it is incumbent upon each one of us to explore, in our own little way, how we can transform our ideas and resolutions into concrete action to justify our commitment to environment conservation. The innate joy of collectively creating and sustaining a world steeped in Nature, where each inhabitant can co-exist with others in perfect amity and fellow-feeling, is bound to be far greater than the agony of what Arnold described as “mortal millions living alone.”

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Reading Sama Veda Samhita: A Layman's Wonder, Puzzlement and Admiration

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Abstract

The Vedas are India's most ancient cultural texts. Most of us hear and recite the Veda mantras in daily worship and at times of various ceremonies in the family. But this is also a fact that not many people attempt to read the Vedas and understand the meaning, which is mainly because the knowledge of Sanskrit, and of Vedic Sanskrit at that is limited. The elaborate and complex structure and differing translations also make the study a daunting exercise. However, the AESI Conference devoted to ancient knowledge systems inspired the writer to study Sama Veda—the shortest one with its focus on music—which has been admired by Lord Krishna too. Reading it arouses admiration as also wide-eyed wonder for the multifarious knowledge contained in it about the Supreme spirit, cosmos, self and the relationship between the Almighty and being, in addition to the temporal knowledge of the society, administration, lifestyle, etc. of the Vedic times. At times, reading also perplexes one due to the obscurity of meaning or coherence, but the prayers not only for spiritual growth but also for

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scientific inclination, worldly wealth and success, couched in aesthetically appealing mantras fascinates one.

Keywords: Indian Classical Text, Religious Scripture, Vedic Culture, Ancient Knowledge, Ancient Science, Holistic approach.

Introduction

Vedas of the Shruti tradition are known to focus on multiple aspects of life of the time and the wisdom of the sages who orally compiled them under divine inspiration, and passed them on to their pupils. The four Vedas – Rg, Yajur (both – Krishna and Shukla versions), Sama and Atharva are the repository of knowledge of agriculture, metallurgy, statecraft, music, economics, etc. of their time, but more than that a lot of it is of perennial and universal value. That is why they are known as the core cultural texts of India. Their importance can be gauged from the fact that Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavad-Gita: “Among Vedas, I am Sama Veda” (10:22). Scholars and spiritualists in our times like Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo have also sung praises of Vedas. Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj laid down the following among other principles of the Samaj “The Vedas are repositories of all true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of all Aryas [Swami’s chosen term for Hindus] to study and teach and to propound the Vedas” (“10 Principles”).

It is common knowledge that each Veda has four parts, viz., Samhita (collection of mantras), Brahman (compilations of rituals — mainly yajnas) – together known as karma kanda; Aranyak and Upanishad (philosophical musings and debates) – also called jnana kanda. In order to fully comprehend Vedas, the six Vedangas (grammar, phonetics, astrology, astronomy, mathematics, versification) have also to be learnt. Besides, 4 Up-Vedas (Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Arthshastra, Gandharva Veda – the one related to Sama Veda) are the other related knowledge texts. The chapterization in the Sama Veda Samhita is complex with divisions and sub-divisions like Kanda/Parva, prapathak, khandas, dashati,

etc. Patanjali enumerated 1000 shakhas (branches) of Sama Veda, out of which only three are extant now. ("Complete"). The one taken up by the author is the most popular one, called Kaumudhiya shakha. This article will attempt to present a bird's eye-view of Sama Veda Samhita. For the purpose of our study, I have used the English translation published by the Arya Samaj, primarily because this religious institution is oriented towards an intellectual analysis of ancient spiritual texts.

In fact, tradition requires the knowledge of Vedangas to understand the Vedas. However, what I feel is that unless we shed the strict disciplining protocol for studying Vedas, the life-giving knowledge contained in them will not be accessible to common people. The reading of this hallowed text has been rewarding in that many new facts of life of the Vedic period have come to my knowledge which have aroused a sense of wonder as also admiration. The divine knowledge is a bliss indeed, but as a being with limited knowledge, bewilderment too came my way when a mantra seemed to be paradoxical or opaque, which is perhaps due to the gap of thousands of years that have elapsed between the revelation of the Vedas and our times. There are many sages who have contributed to the Vedas and so there is repetition at places.

The word 'Sama' literally means the song which leads one to God, and the singer is called 'Saman' ("Complete"). The musical aspect is important also because it is the stepping stone to spiritual life and self-realization. Sama Veda is basically a rendition of most of the Rg Veda verses; of the total 20500 mantras in all the four Vedas, the Kaudhumya Shakha of Sama Veda has 1875 mantras of which 1474 are from Rg Veda. ("Vedas"). Why then there was the necessity to create another Veda – is the normal question. The answer is that in Sanskrit, much depends on the pronunciation which can bring the desired result or upset the expectation. Therefore, Sama Veda is the Veda which guides the manner in which the mantras are to be recited. There are four categories of mantras in the Samhita part depending on the singers

located in villages (by grahasthis), forest (by vaanprasthis or sanyasis), temples or holy places (by priests), etc.

God and His Attributes

In Sama Veda, we find description of and directions about both mundane and spiritual life. Talking about the spiritual side, it is a known fact that the understanding about God is integral to any ancient civilization. While some believe in one God, others believe in many gods. In India, while the monotheistic school like the Arya Samaj draws its sustenance from the philosophy of the Upanishads and believes the names of different gods as being manifestations of various natural forces, the traditional polytheistic Sanatani school derives strength from the Puranas and believes in their individual identity as gods. The chief gods mentioned in the Vedas are: Agni, Indra, Vayu and Surya from among the many, besides the goddesses Usha, Saraswati, et al. Each god is praised sky-high belying any notion of hierarchy. Some scholars subsume this tendency under 'kathenotheism' which is explained as: "Whenever a hymn is addressed to a particular god, that god comes to be ascribed with all the divine qualities. [...] is regarded as the supreme godhead and all the other gods come to be regarded as his manifestations" (Debroy 219).

As the source for this article is Arya Samaj publication, the interpretation here is in favour of a single God, who has been variously translated as the Resplendent Lord/Supreme. He is "handsome and resolute" declares Sama Veda in mantra #145. He is the omnipresent One: "Whatever all this is, whatever has been in the past and whatever is going to be in future, is verily, the Cosmic Person. [no name given]. In His one-fourth is the entire creation, and His three-fourth is void or unoccupied, space, eternal and celestial" (619).

At places, God is worshipped as "radiant twin-divines" (304) and "cosmic twins" which in the following verse is explained as the "pair of cosmic vitality and consciousness" (306), which means the two are conjoined and not separate. It is a given in Indian

philosophy that what is there in the outer cosmos is also within us and *prana* and *chitt* are identified separately among the 25 elements mentioned in Sankhya philosophy.

Relationship with Man

God is not referred always as the master, he is at times a friend, an ally to the sages who enkindle spiritual fire and continually do their best to purify their hearts, “for the simple reason that their close friend is the ever-young resplendent Lord” (133). The same sentiment is found in many other mantras: “May He always remain close to us for our happiness, and be a friend for our prosperity” (748). He is “a true friend of the soul” (1671). In another verse, the seeker invokes “our ally” for “great prosperity and wisdom and for protection against evil forces” (130). One is reminded of Lord Krishna who advises Arjuna as a friend, and his sermon forms the Bhagavad-Gita.

There are other relationships as well: “O all-pervading one, you are dear to me, like my mother and I bow to both of you (Supreme Lord and parents) for my celebrity and riches” (292). Also, “Please consider yourself as our kith and kin. May we both enjoy the spiritual experience together. May your wise counsels protect and guide us to prosperity” (239). We find instances of dallying with gods too: “O Indra! We will catch you like the hunter catches the birds” (Debroy 244). But God also dispenses justice. So, “The resplendent Lord, the wielder of adamant justice, is the coordinator of all elements.” (597). After all, God also never transgresses the laws established by Him: “You are an embodiment of endurance and you never transgress the laws established by yourself. May you bless the person who battles against all vices and never transgresses your regulations and laws” (1416).

Material Advancement

Who said that it is only the spiritual knowledge and progress that the Vedic seers want? The worldly success is equally important as this prayer reveals: “Grant us today, O divine creator,

affluence and progeny, and drive away the painful dreams,” (141). God is beseeched to satisfy the worshipper with “wealth of kins and valiant offspring” (139). Similarly, nourishment for the body is important as it ensures the health of mind also: “Come to us, O resplendent Lord, from any place with food that gives hundred-fold spiritual strength, a thousand-fold strength” (215). The converse of this philosophy was tested by Mahatma Buddha when he renounced food and indulged in severe Tapasya which weakened him into a bag of bones from which state, according to a folklore, he was saved by Sujata, a milkmaid, who brought him milk-rice. The Vedic rishi, on the other hand, prays: “May we have abundant nourishment, and may our intellect be bright and sharp, so that full of devotion and wealth, we may live in perfect bliss in union with you” (153).

Individual ambition is not derided either; thus: “May my fame spread in regions from earth to heaven. May I be a recipient of reputation from men of learning and men of power. May I be renowned amongst the people of wealth. May I be never deprived of my glory. May I have good name amongst the members of assembly and may I be known for my eloquence” (611).

However, it is a holistic approach that balances the demands of the body with those of the spirit. Having obtained good health, one must control the senses: “O resplendent self, in the chariot of the body, you have been fully provided with both nourishment and enjoyment through the sense organs. May the mind ascend that chariot which has a container full of enjoyment and proper nourishment for the yoked horses. Therefore, now, O resplendent self, may you put your horses under control” (424).

Mankind all through ages and everywhere desires a safe and accomplished life, for which the seeker wants the enemies defeated: “May you cleave asunder all the hostile forces, and frustrate their destructive attacks, and bring us that wealth which we long for” (134). Let us remind ourselves that alongside the Vedas, the rishis also taught to their pupils the arts of archery,

medicine, arts, etc. as Up-Vedas. But the triumphs are sought in noble enterprises: “He may come to our aid and defence in noble deeds” (411). Sama Veda ends with several verses mentioning the qualities of a king who is mighty, heroic, vigorous as also fierce, pitiless and invincible and can crush the enemies (1849-57). With such a king at their back, the warriors are exhorted to advance and conquer. (1862).

Prayer for *Medha*

With good health and prosperity, the devotee prays for something very important: “O lord, the preceptor, please make the seeker illustrious, who offers devotion to you and make him talented too, just as those who specialize in creative activity” (139). The Lord is requested to “drive away the clouds of ignorance which have been lying deep into the cavity of our hearts from the very beginning” (353). It is God who provides “intelligence to the priests” (984), so that the priests are not prioritized over the Almighty – something that the contemporary Babas are often seen doing!

Of the three primal forces, soul is the one which constitutes the self in Indian philosophy, so it is treated as different from mind and senses: “O soul, the self, may you come in company with your faculties full of awareness and quick in acquisitions [...] come, accept and assimilate the knowledge derived by the mind and senses” (1148). This is unlike in western philosophy which treats the mind and brain as the inner self. That is why, in Vedic spiritualism, self-realization is of utmost importance: “During the course of self-realization, go on repeatedly uttering hymns in His honour” (1360).

In order to chisel intelligence and to iron out differences of thought, the dialogic method is still valued. The devotees pray: “May we, the renouncers, together have a dialogue among us. May we talk about the Supreme self, who is wise, everybody's friend and an abode of divine bliss; the only one, without a second, who moves singly in all the heavenly bodies” (649). What for do

we require wisdom or *medha*? “O devotees, seekers of true knowledge, may you possess in large measures prayer-produced intellectual foresights for the sake of your large-heartedness, for the sake of selfless sacrifice, for your strength, for your potentialities for accomplishing noble works, for the enjoyment, for your smartness, for your well-being, for your all types of activities and for your mental powers” (462). There is hardly any positive goal, whether for self or society, that has been missed out here.

The final aim of a curious intellectual is to know the ultimate reality or self-realization since self is considered as a part of the Supreme reality. “The wise and true seekers have the supermost realization of the omnipresent Lord through meditation (within their own self); they see Him vividly as the eye ranges over the sky” (1672). This meditation is called “transcendental meditation” in the next verse, (1673) which incidentally is the name adopted by Mahesh Yogi. How the devotee approaches the Supreme is indicated in the next verse which says: “Then, verily, he recognizes the essential form of the Creator’s radiance in the mansion of the mind or moving moon” (147). As to why the mind is compared to moving moon can be understood when we focus on the waxing and waning of moon and realize that our mind is also fluctuating between desires and their depiction in different ways.

Scientific Inclination

God is in favour of reason: “You are the destroyer of the hostile nescience...”. The Lord is described as the “personified pair of kinetic and potential energies. Through these two bounties, all the functions of the world are accomplished and the law and order maintained” (167). Sama Veda also talks of the “three-dimensional space of universe, glowing with splendour” and surprisingly seeks to know “Where is your eternal law applicable and where does it fail” (361). The spirit of enquiry has permeated our classical knowledge texts.

The Vedic rishis had already found what Copernicus found in the 16th century. Proclaim the Vedic rishis: “The earth moves (on

her axis) round and round in the space [...] She moves around the sun in space, carrying waters on her front” (630) It is echoed by the mantras 1376, 1386, etc. The sun in our galaxy revolves too as the verse 1814 states. There are suns in the universe which are “divine self-luminaries” (397). Isn't that amazing? The last mantra which invokes the protection of God and the creator of the “cyclic universe” for mankind's welfare and prosperity. (1875). This concept of development of the cosmos contradicts the western linear model of development, and the modern science is presently having doubts about it.

There is reference to the medical science also. On the battlefield, the wounded soldiers need medical aid, and so in the morning, the physicians and surgeons yoke their car (chariot) and put it on road to help the sick and wounded: “May you refresh our brave soldiers engaged in war with cure and healing” (1758-59). Their chariot moves on three axles (1760), which seems a reference to the threesome in Ayurveda – cough, pitta and vayu maladies of body.

Literary Aspect

As mentioned before, Sama Veda focuses on the musical manner of reciting the Veda mantras. It also notes that “the priests utter the three forms of speech – poem, prose and lyrics” (869) indicating the existence of the three literary genres. There are several types of metres used but Sama Veda notes “The Gayatra Samans, the Traistubha Samans and the Jagata Samans include in themselves all the Samans used in the Vedic chants” (1830). Actually, of the total 18 metres used, these three metres dominate Sama Veda.

The metaphors used in Sama Veda are striking for their glimpse of the life of the time. Look at the metaphors: “These elixirs of devotional prayers mixed with the curds of pious action are dedicated to the resplendent Lord” (293). God is described as the “wielder of the bolt of justice” and is compared to “richly-

yielding milch cow who provides unfailing food in profuse streams” (295). Further, “The conscientious drops of divine love rush along like waves of water or like buffaloes to forest” (478) and “the radiant, bounteous giver, surrounded with powers like a mountain by clouds” (686) is requested to dispel the greedy person at the yajna who is referred to as “long-tongued dog” (697). The sun is “most ancient, radiant, splendid, purple-coloured bird which has no nest to dwell in and is might (sic) and heroic” (1783). Besides, “He hurls the demon of evil forces head-long down and liberates the stolen cows of conscience, kept hidden in our inner cavity; thereby He grants strength to our vital organs” (1641). Which is this ‘inner cavity’ remains a riddle.

The dawn is portrayed in beautiful language: “Fire is awakened on earth. The Sun rises; the refulgent dawn, exhilarating by her radiance has adorned the horizon. [...] The divine Sun has put the world on different routines” (1758). One is reminded of Rabindranath Tagore’s Bengali poem “Prabhat” which seems inspired by this scene. How the elemental fire works in the morning is beautifully described: “Having overcome the departing dark night by his radiance, he (the fire-divine) begets dawn, the divine damsel, the daughter of the great father heaven; then he follows her and shines with treasures of lustre in his usual course, holding aloft the radiant light of the Sun” (1547).

There are many mantras containing sly or explicit humour. Here is one assuring the Almighty: “O resplendent Lord, whatever wealth you wish to give to a worshipper, such as to me, none can object you therein” (296). Also “O victorious resplendent Lord, you are the eldest whilst I am the youngest and you have been possessing infinite spiritual treasure from the beginning, and therefore, bestow upon me that wealth” (309). What a way to win over the Lord! God is “as vast as the ocean” (137). The worshipper can even advise the Lord: “If I were the possessor of as much wealth as you do, then I would favour sincere worshippers only and not squander it ever upon wickedness (sic)”

(1796)! Also, “If I were sole monarch of wealth as you have been, then my worshippers would have been rich in kine” (1834)!

Mystical

Apart from treating God as formless, mantras obfuscate this attribute when the physical attributes are used. Whereas a mantra begins with address to the “resplendent self, possessor of cosmic potential and kinetic vitalities (or centripetal and centrifugal forces),” it then switches the address to “exhilarating God, please drink of the expressed elixir” (952). Ambiguity prevails in several other ways also, as for example, in this verse No. 311, the worshipper calls Him “the vanquisher of the wicked as well as the progenitor” (311), which, in a way, seems justified since we believe that all creation comes from the Almighty; even if we like or dislike a being.

A large number of mantras including the entire 119-mantra section titled ‘Pavamana Kanda’ are devoted to Soma, which is variously called holy water, divine elixir, elixir of joy divine, etc. It is mentioned at two levels: One is the material plane in which the golden-hued, sweet-flavoured elixir “roars aloud when it comes out of the plant. After filtration, it rests in the centre of cosmic pitcher, collected by the priests, it is mixed with cow’s milk and curds” (530). There are several references to a certain “ultrapsychic fleecy filter” (1438) through which the Soma juice is run. Also, it is said that when effused, the Soma “bestows abundant prosperity of cows, gold, horse and food along with heroic progeny” (895). But then, on the other hand, it is also “the demolisher (of evils)” (487). It is the “overthrower of the resolute adversities” (837) Towards the end of this Khand V, it takes the spiritual turn: “Flow round us, O elixir of love-divine, on all sides in a bliss-bestowing stream like a river down a plateau. O love-divine, most sublime in thoughts, flow swift in our lovely splendour, saying ‘I go where the divine elements dwell’” (897-98).

Conclusion

Sama Veda basically guides us about the right way to recite mantras, however in translation, particularly in English prose as it is in the source book here, no sense of music can be imparted. The subject matter of this Veda concerns the lifestyle of the people of the Vedic time as also the various types of yajnas performed by them for material advancement and for power to defeat the enemies. It enlightens the readers about the concept of God, His attributes, the God-human relationship, way to meditate and realize self/God. One admires all this as also the literary beauty. Mantras in the Sama Veda support scientific attitude which is indeed a wonder, even as the lack of clarity in some respects leads to confusion at times.

Indeed, the central message of all Vedas is to make man tread the right path so that his life in this and the other world becomes enjoyable and meaningful. Towards the end, we come across the mantra recited in daily yajna: “O learned people, may we wish our ears listen to what is beneficial and good. [...] May we see with our eyes all that is good and beneficial. May we engage in your praises, enjoy with firm limbs and sound bodies, a full term of life dedicated to God (and society)” (1874).

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः। भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः।
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवागँसस्तनूभिः। व्यशेम देवहितं यदायूः।

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Wilsonian Futuristic Vision in *Radio Golf*

*J.S. Jha

Abstract

Through an explication of August Wilson's play *Radio Golf* (2005), this paper tries to exhibit Wilson's cumulative vision that embraces past and present in an accommodative frame to pave the way for an inclusive future. August Wilson, the quintessential American playwright, captures the shifts in the psyche of the Afro-Americans spanning through the twentieth century with a cycle of ten plays addressed to each decade. In his plays he seeks for a reaffirmation which can inform, strengthen and empower by way of laying bare the Southern past and aligning with the intertwined legacy of language, custom, history, belief and angst. The action of *Radio Golf* (2005), the concluding play of the century cycle, takes place at the height of the 'Go Go 90's' in the Hill district of Pittsburgh, the setting for all but one play in Wilson's cycle. In this play the protagonists- a Mayoral hopeful and his business partner are the ones behind the urban renewal. Wilson chooses golf- a professional sport once inaccessible to blacks- to examine the erosion of African- American cultural values in the pursuit of success as defined by the dominant white society. The play's title refers to a pretentious radio program for

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giving golfing tips over the air. In the play, Wilson directly poses the question: what responsibility the Black community has to itself and its culture?

Keywords: Afro-Americans, White Supremacy, Cultural Preservation, Progression, Double Consciousness

August Wilson, the quintessential American playwright, captures the shifts in the psyche of the Afro-Americans spanning through twentieth century with a cycle of ten plays addressed to each decade. In his plays, Wilson seeks reaffirmation which can inform, strengthen and empower by way of laying bare the Southern past, aligning with the intertwined legacy of language, customs, history, belief and angst. The action of *Radio Golf* (2005), the concluding play of the cycle takes place at the height of the 'Go Go 90s' in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, the setting for all but one play in Wilsonian cycle.

In Wilson's other plays, one comes across the weight of racism and white oppression bearing down on the characters, but in *Radio Golf* their fate and fortune, seem to lie in their own hands. Set in 1997, the play charts out the plight of the upper middle class persons, largely missing from the previous plays. They seem to be disconnecting themselves from community, making their fortune on their own without recognizing or acknowledging their connection to the larger community.

In the play, the protagonists— a mayoral hopeful and his business partner are the ones behind the act of urban renewal. The impending destruction of the home of the now deceased Aunt Ester, the Mother of the Race and the most significant persona of the Wilsonian saga of the African-American experience at the hands of a modern construction company, Bedford Hills Redevelopment, Inc. in the name of redevelopment triggers the dramatic action. Completed shortly before the playwright's death in 2005, this bittersweet drama of assimilation and alienation traces the forces of change on a neighbourhood and its people caught between history and future. The focus of the play is on right and wrong, the past against the future.

August Wilson once stated: “I try to find a metaphor to carry the work” (Savran 23). In this play, the house of Aunt Ester, 1839 Wylie Avenue, turns into the metaphor of contradictory forces—disintegration and integration, dismantling/collapse of the cultural legacy or its preservation. The play introduces the son of Citizen Barlow, Elder Joseph Barlow, who has recently returned to Pittsburgh only to find that his house, i.e. Aunt’s house is decreed by the law to be demolished.

The demolition of the house is to be undertaken by Caesar Wilks’s grandson, Harmond Wilks who is described as a “real-estate developer seeking mayoral candidacy, well-placed local leads” (*Radio Golf* 6). Caesar was a black police man in *Gem of the Ocean* (2003), the ninth play dealing with the first decade (1904) in the Pittsburgh cycle. He acted as the agent of the dominant forces. Although being a black himself, Caesar displayed immense hatred for the people of his community, charging them of various guilts and crimes. Caesar’s grandson, Harmond is keen to climb the social ladder of success as early as possible.

Despite his capitalistic and assimilationist tendencies, Harmond’s heart harbours compassion and generosity. Unlike his grandfather, he does not possess any inherent dislike for the black community. His apparent autonomy as a black man in a racist country drags him in a precarious situation wherein he experiences the dilemma of Du Boisian ‘double consciousness’. On one hand, he has sympathy and inherent alignment with his community and on the other, the capitalistic and western political thoughts draw him closer in his pursuance of a successful career in the realm of politics and business simultaneously. Anthony Stewart points out the apparent dilemma of Harmond. He writes:

Harmond must also wrestle with the burdens attendant to his relatively new found privilege, the most pressing of which is a division of loyalties between the history from which he emerges and the future to which he aspires. Wilks himself may be thought of as the fulcrum on which the

relative weights of competing loyalties are precariously balanced. (175)

This implies that Harmond's consciousness is torn between the two opposing forces— the American and the African. The synthesis of these opposing forces has not happened in his consciousness and therefore he suffers from internal conflicts.

Roosevelt Hicks, the vice-president of a bank and Harmond's business partner who is also his classmate, is another character who is in line with Caesar Wilks. He perceives every black man as lazy and unworthy. He is a social climber who aspires to rise to the level of whites in America. The differentiating traits between the two lie in the fact that Harmond has a throbbing heart capable of love/change. Roosevelt has firm and rigid belief in the notions of American dream which he aims to achieve at any cost. On the psyche of Roosevelt, Anthony Stewart comments: "His loyalties are indeed only to himself" (182). This self-centredness of Roosevelt distances him from his own community which becomes apparent in his desire to demolish the monument of black culture, i.e. Aunt Ester's House.

Stewart further aligns the two friends, Harmond and Roosevelt, in the same precarious situation. He believes that their "vulnerability as members of a class both dominant and dominated means that their loyalties are pulled in different and telling ways" (183). The two friends are tied to contradictory forces and therefore they have to seek ways to smoothen the conflicts that they undergo in order to realize themselves as fully conscious black citizens.

The rich cultural texture of the locale has collapsed not only because the dominant Capitalistic forces have penetrated into different avenues of black life but also because the people of that community are disenfranchised. In order to attain political power Harmond aims for the mayoral position supported by his wife, Mame and Roosevelt. The political crisis of the district comes to the fore when Mame says, "The population of the Hill isn't but thirty-five hundred people. And it's hard to get them to vote"

(*Radio Golf* 8). The political importance of blacks brings to the fore the truth that, even during the culmination of the twentieth century, they are disenfranchised in America.

The hopelessness of the larger masses of blacks is subdued and submerged beneath the weight of the achievements of the people like Harmond and Roosevelt who have climbed the social and economic ladder reasonably. In their attempts to score success, they get disconnected from their own community. Their notions on politics are significantly inspired by the dominant political thoughts which target the minority community to portray themselves as secular and impartial. Harmond says, "Politics is about symbolism. Black people don't vote but they have symbolic weight" (*Radio Golf* 8). The symbolism of blacks is used by Harmond to act as a representative of the minority community in the political game.

With the arrival of Old Joe (Elder Joseph Barlow) in Harmond's life the stimulation of his consciousness begins. The moment when Joe enters the office of Harmond, he enquires, "You know where I can find any Christian people?" (*Radio Golf* 19). Christianity upholds the values of tolerance, forgiveness, kindness, love and humanity which Joe believes are missing from the people. His distrust in humanity becomes apparent when he raises this question. His struggle to save the house of Aunt Ester is an attempt to align different generations of blacks together and create an emblematic space at 1839 Wylie Avenue. This house is the surviving testimony of Aunt Ester and the struggles of black ancestors in America.

Joe has spent his childhood in this house. His mother, Black Mary, has lived and breathed in this house. Now, his daughter decides to stay in the same house so that she can act as the descendant of Aunt Ester. In *Gem of the Ocean*, Aunt Ester stimulates Black Mary to become conscious of her responsibilities as a black woman. The role of the spiritual seer is symbolically transferred to her in the play. Since Joe's daughter is also named

as Black Mary, it symbolically takes one to the connection of the two Black Marys. Joe is attempting to create another figure similar to Aunt Ester in the form of his daughter who will fulfil her duties for the consciousness-raising of her community.

Harmond works as a real estate developer who has bought the house of Aunt Ester and he wishes to redevelop the Hill district. He believes that “This is 1997. Things have changed. This is America. This is the land of opportunity. I can be mayor. I can be anything I want” (*Radio Golf* 21). The illusion of Harmond keeps him away from his community and therefore limits him from realizing his consciousness as a black man. The erosion of the black cultural values in the lives of Roosevelt and Harmond are apparent. Margaret Booker tries to thrust the same idea by examining the meaning of the role of golf, as a game in the play. She writes: “Wilson chooses golf—a professional sport once inaccessible to blacks—to examine the erosion of African-American cultural values in the pursuit of success defined by the dominant white society.” (Booker 185)

The play’s title refers to a radio programme that Roosevelt, an avid golfer himself, hosts, giving golfing tips over the air. The programme is an indication of the extent to which this social-climbing, over-extended character is fooling himself. One cannot demonstrate golf on the radio, and one cannot get rich quick without paying a price. In this case, a shady white businessman has made Roosevelt a partner in a radio station to qualify for minority status. Roosevelt is so fixated on success that he cannot see that he is being used.

Over the course of events in the play, Harmond loses his accessories of golf and this marks his departure from the American frame. The symbolic distance of Harmond is manifested in the embracing of the African sensibilities when he commits an illegal crime to get back the golf clubs. This proves that the routes to opportunities for a common black man/woman are very limited and therefore sometimes they have to do certain actions that might

be regarded as illegal. Through Harmond, Wilson challenges the notions of right and wrong held by the dominant culture.

The arrival of Joe brings stimulation. He challenges the long cherished notions of Harmond and exposes the truth behind the facade of development and opportunities that America claims to offer to everyone. Joe says that America offers opportunities only to select few and in 1990s only to those who are ready to cast aside their true identity as African-American people. Roosevelt, Harmond, and Mame bargain their identity in order to become the upper middle class Americans. They stand for the assimilationist tendencies which force them to consider themselves as Americans only. The African part is missing from their identity. Harmond and Roosevelt constantly call themselves 'American' in the course of the play to become a part of the dominant culture. Wilson asserts against the notions of upper middle class blacks and says:

If in order to participate in American society and in order to accomplish some of the things which the black middle class has accomplished, you have had to give up that self, then you are not affirming the value of the African being. You're saying that in order to do that, I must become like someone else. (Moyers 79)

Sterling Johnson, a self-employed contractor and neighbourhood handy man who robbed a bank thirty years ago, is another significant character who works as a catalyst like Joe in bringing the change in Harmond. In his old age, Johnson appears to be the follower of Martin Luther King in his resistance against the dominant structures. His weapons in the battle against the dominant forces are rhetoric and non-violent persistent resistance.

When the redevelopment company decides to demolish Wylie Avenue, the resistance practised by Joe and Sterling is almost Gandhian. Both of them, at different times in the play, silently keep on painting and updating the house. The element of resistance survives in their revolutionary pursuit against the authorities.

Sterling and Joe's actions are the means to assert their self-determination and also their self-assertion in a coercive and repressive society. Sterling's youth was fired in the kiln of Black Nationalism and its central tenets of "Self-determination, self-respect and self-defence" (Dinah Livingston 57). The actions of the two continue the legacy of the great warriors of the black society who compromised their individual well-being for the sake of their community.

The metamorphosis of Harmond is apparent in his angry outburst on his wife Mame when the latter forces him to change his printed speech in a mellower tone. He rebukes her and says: "Yeah, I'm angry! Aren't you? I care about this city. It's almost bankrupt. It's all managed. The infrastructure is falling apart. Everything's ground down by bureaucratic bullshit. The whole goddamn city should be angry." (*Radio Golf* 30)

The element of self-doubt or self-hatred is inorganically generated by the agents of power in order to obstruct the growth and development of the marginal people in general. It helps in perpetuating the power dynamics and guaranteeing the subordinate position to blacks in society. In his youth, Sterling tried to assert his existence by robbing a bank. He did this in order to attain power which he believed money could give. Sterling's consciousness undergoes a change after this. In his youth, he believed that money would guarantee him prosperity, wealth, and happiness but epiphany strikes him the moment he gets money. He shares his experience with money to Harmond and says:

"I just wanted to know what it was like to have some money. Seem like everybody else had some...it didn't make me smarter. It didn't make me better than anybody else. You can't do nothing but spend it. After that you back where you started from. Then what you gonna do? I found out I was looking for something that you couldn't spend." (*Radio Golf* 15)

The questions that Sterling had prior to the robbery get answered after the attainment of money. This implies that Sterling or for that matter anyone who wants to attain peace with oneself cannot find it in money or other material possessions.

The European notions of individualism, capitalism and imperialism are embedded in their notions of growth and development. Harmond also coheres with these notions in his practical life. He is ready to dodge the moral scruples which are an essential part of Africanism. The collective assault of Joe and Sterling on Harmond's preference for individual growth over the enhancement of the community elicits the desired effect, and Harmond decides to modify his designs and stop the tearing down of the house. This infuriates Roosevelt who acts as the agent of American capitalistic forces. The tussle between the two forces ultimately ends the moment when Harmond solves the dilemma of the notions of 'right and wrong'. He realizes that "we can't tear down a house we don't own. It's the law." (*Radio Golf* 63)

This act of Harmond aligns him into the group of Sterling and Joe who are trying to bridge the gap between the ancestors and the younger generations by saving the memorial of Aunt Ester, Wylie Avenue, and dispelling to the younger generation the dictums of Africanism. Margaret Booker finds this situation as the turning point in the century culminating in a major restoration of the African-American culture and ethos through the actions of Harmond. She writes:

"...the Harmond/Roosevelt conflict embodies and crystallizes in time (the turn of the century) the moment of danger in which the unique African American history and cultural values could disappear, if those in leadership positions do not assume responsibility for their continuance. It is time for the next generation of Aunt Ester's children to step up".
(Booker 192)

Harmond steps in the role of a leader to redeem the position of Aunt Ester's house in the lives of the future generation of blacks

in America. Wilson thrusts the importance of metaphor in his dramatics and the image of garden is one such. In *Radio Golf*, old Joe is worried whether the house retains the yard, potential garden or not. He asks Harmond, “where the yard at? The house got a yard. Where my daughter gonna plant her garden?” (*Radio Golf* 64). The garden is the symbol of hope that Joe wants to perpetuate in America.

The sustenance of Aunt’s house and the emergence of a garden add to the hope that the future of community will be intact since the younger generation will carry forward the warrior spirit that is essential for the sustenance of black culture. David Lacroix adds that the vision of the culminating play of the twentieth century for the twenty-first century is “...a synthesis, perhaps a hybrid twenty-first century form that can redress the failure of transplantation that so vexed Wilson” (171). The play has a vision for the failure which Wilson imparts through the heroic actions of Harmond.

The play concludes with the consciousness-raising of Harmond who abandons his ties with the materialistic and capitalistic world of the dominant white society. He aligns his consciousness with the creed of Aunt Ester which aims to awaken and enliven the black community. His denunciation of his friendship with Roosevelt is a symbolic departure from the ethos of Americanism.

In the play Wilson directly poses the question: what responsibility the black community has to itself and its culture? In the portrayal of Harmond Wilks, Wilson was prophetic. Recasting the past against the backdrop of present allows Wilson to turn toward the future with clarified vision. We can’t force the future without accepting and owning the past. Through his dramatic venture, Wilson wants to project a cumulative vision that embraces past and present in an accommodative frame to pave the way for an inclusive future.

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The Decolonized Mind: Exploring Identity and Potential Through Folk Drama

*J.K. Verma

Abstract

Decolonization is a way of thinking, not a happening. The voice of the decolonized litterateur is new. One can sense freshness in phrases, thoughts, and voices. Releasing theatre from the constraints of colonialism and “cushioned-chair viewership” would be a huge benefit to the theatre community. “Street Plays” outlines the fundamental argument against the British plan to subjugate Indian theatre. It signals the beginning of the Indian Theatre’s decolonization journey. Although regional theatres have undoubtedly taken the stage, there is still a lack of a fully decolonized Indian theatre. Theatre had a distinct national character before colonial influence when it was performed in a single language such as Sanskrit. As a result, the idea of “Decolonized theatre” can only be understood in terms of combining elements of contemporary experimental theatre with those of conventional play. To achieve this unification of the Indian theatre’s identity, a link is required. This is where street theatre, which is an umbrella term for a variety of performing activities, will come in handy. To preserve the rich theatrical tradition, folk theatre, or people’s theatre,

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needs to be elevated to the fore because aggressive materialism has entranced people's tastes and temperaments. We are powerless against the sociological risks brought about by the rise of TV culture and the new entertainment sector. The fact that so many of India's greatest playwrights have experimented with using folk elements in their plays heightens the significance of street and folk theatre. Consequently, this paper's main goal is to reframe the groundbreaking significance and function of folk and street theatre for the development of a decolonized theatre's identity.

Keywords: Decolonization, Regional Theatre, Decolonized Theatre, People's Theatre

This paper contends that Indian Drama in English has not yet achieved its national identity despite much headway made by many playwrights. We can take a quick survey of the development of Indian drama in English especially after independence. S Krishna Bhatta in his book *Indian English Drama: A Critical Study*, published in 1987, lists more than 200 plays written in or after the 1950s. Things started changing with the arrival of Asif Currimbhoy on the scene of Indian English drama. With about 30 plays to his credit, he wrote on social issues that bothered him. It was only in 1969 that his plays began being staged in India, although he wrote a play *Goa*, but this play was not first staged in India. The Little Theatre Group in Delhi staged his play *The Doldrummers*, which was written in 1960.

Other playwrights wrote plays but they were meant for acting, for example, Nissim Ezekiel wrote *Nalini* and *Sleepwalkers*. Gieve Patel wrote *Princes* and *Savaksa*. Pratap Sharma produced *A Touch of Brightness* and *The Professor Has A Warcry*.

In 1968 the Theatre Group, Bombay, announced the award of the Sultan Padamsee Award for Indian plays in English. This award was won by Gurcharan Das's *Larins Sahib*. Gieve Patel's *Princes* and Dina Mehta's *Myth-makers* also competed for this award.

Cyrus Mistry's *Doongaji House* won the second Sultan Padamsee award, in 1978. This play dealt with the declining fortunes of a Parsi family living in the Parsi heartland – Bombay. His latest play, *The Legacy of Rage*, deals with the Christian community, but they are also located in Bombay.

Dina Mehta is also an award-winning playwright – her play *Brides Are Not For Burning* won an international award from the BBC in 1979. Her latest play, *Sister Like You* (1996), a play on domestic violence, was also short-listed for the British Council New International Playwriting awards.

Mahesh Dattani and Manjula Padmanabhan emerged as potent voices in theatre in the 1980s. Mahesh Dattani is one of our most promising playwrights. Winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, Mahesh Dattani wrote his first play *Where There Is A Will* in 1986 when he was in his late twenties. There are many plays to his credit.

Manjula Padmanabhan has penned about half a dozen plays. In Athens, in September 1997, her play *Harvest* was selected from around 1500 entries from about 75 countries to win the first prize in the Alexander S. Onassis Award for Theatre. It was the first time that this prestigious prize was being offered. Some of her plays have been made into TV serials and films.

The Royal Court Theatre (RCT), London has been encouraging and producing contemporary dramas in London since 1956. The RCT's attention to India came with Mahesh Dattani's *Bravely Fought The Queen* when it was staged in the UK almost 15 years ago.

In April 2004, a festival was held at the Prithvi Theatre and at the Experimental Theatre NCPA in Mumbai. Shiv Subramanyam's *Clogged Arteries*, Farhad Sorabjee's *Hard Places*, and Anupama Chandrashekhar's *Acid* were presented at this festival. *India Today* in its April 19, 2004 issue showers praise on the performance of these plays and mentions this as a

beginning, and expects that many more such workshops will be seen in the future. With this, the present generation of playwrights has turned writer-directors. Zubin Driver, Ninaz Khodaiji and Ramu Ramanathan are a few among them.

Ninaz is, today, one of our upcoming writers who has had a passion for the world of theatre. Ramu Ramanathan also belongs to the new breed of writer-directors that make up the current scene in Indian plays in English. One of his most powerful plays is Mahadevbhai. Ramu has written more than half a dozen plays and directed many more. His play Collaborators won the BBC Radio Playwriting Regional Award in 2003. His play entitled *3 Sakina Manzil* is set in 1944, moves back and forth in time, and deals with the Bombay harbour blast. His recent plays are *Medhaand Zoombish*, *Cotton 56 Polyester 84* and *Three Ladies Of Ibsen*.

India Today in its January 26, 2004 issue has an article entitled “Dramatic Revival” written by Nirmala Ravindran. She talks of this generation moving away from malls and PlayStations and pubs towards theatre, seeking “the archaic thrill of the stage” [1] which “the culture watchers are calling the second coming of theatre.” [2]

Badal Sircar projects and promotes Indian sensibility through his writings. He writes in his mother tongue; and translates into English (indigenized using so many Indian words) to reach a wider audience. Employs an emphatic language comprising small, fragmented, and repetitive sentences. Language differs according to themes. Trace of the Absurdist element in his writing is a sign of resistance against imperial English (short, incomplete, and fragmented sentences).

One can see how the playwright has tampered with the morphology of a few words to create some effect-

OLD MAN. Khoka is lo-o-o-st

CHORUS. Khoka, come ba-a-a-ck

OLD MAN. Khoka'll never come back ho-oo-me no mo-o-ore

CHORUS. Khoka- aa-aa-come, ba-a-ck, come ho-o-ome

OLD MAN. Never again to the old home, if he comes back it'll be to a new home, true home, truly true ho-o-ome

CHORUS. Khoka-aa-aa, come ba-a-a-ack come ba-a-aack come ba-a-a-ack

A lot of stress has been placed on a few words tempering with their structure such as lost, back, home etc. Doing this, the playwright tries to emphasize the point that Khoka representing the innocent youth, has been lost in this corrupt world and will not come back to the old home which is lacking human values but to the new one, which is assumed to be full of humanity. In Badal Sircar's play *Procession*, one can observe Hindi sentences being used by the characters at many places, for instance, *Jaobhaithikhai*. Some other examples are there in which these Hindi words have been used without being converted into italics but getting completely amalgamated into English with their very accent such as *Paan – bidi – cigrate Paan – bidi – cigrat* and *Cha Cha-grram Cha*. A patriotic Hindi song is also employed as *Saare Jahan se accha Hindustan Hamara*.

Similarly, some Hindi slogans are also used as:

FOUR Karengyamareng

FIVE, British Imperialism, leave India

One suddenly leaps to a point and shout

ONE Ladkelenge Pakistan. We'll win Pakistan by force

At once, the chorus splits into two groups confronting each other.

ONE PART OF THE CHORUS, Allah Ho Akbar

OTHER PART OF THE CHORUS, Vande Mataram

Another instance of it is seen arousing the feeling of patriotism with emphatic slogans, being replete with strong Indian fervour, projecting the spirit of decolonization such as:

ONE, *Yeh azadi jhoota hai! This freedom is a phoney freedom*

CHORUS. *Bhoolo mat Bhoolo mat Never forget Never forget*

Slogans followed by singing – a song declaring that the freedom gained is no freedom at all. It could be songwriter Salil Chaudhary's Naaker *badaleynarunpelamtak doom-a-doom doom/ jaandiyejaanoarpelam/ Laglodesheydhoom*.

Slogans again:

ONE, Vande Mataram

TWO, Jai Hindi

CHORUS, Glory be to Lord Krishna, avatar of the markets.

Here, in these dialogues along with these patriotic Hindi slogans and Bengali lyrics, a Hindi word *avatar* is also illustrated. Likewise, in the play, some other Hindi words such as *Sura*, *Samorasa*, *Daru* and *duniya* have also been exhibited. There is also seen the most popular patriotic slogan-*Inquilab Zindabad – zindabad zindabad!* [...] Similarly, in the play *Bhoma*, Hindi words like *hasil* and *abaad* have been used. In the play, Stale News Hindi names of the planets have been used such as the character Three says, Venus! Moon! Rahul! Ketul! In the play, *Evam Indrajit* words like *pooja dampati*, *jampati*, *jayapati*, *mosambi* and *namaskar* have been employed excellently.

What is heartening to note is the confidence with which playwrights use English today. It is not only that but there emerges a trend of mingling English with the other Indian languages and that too with fluency. There lies the originality of an Indian. Interestingly we have a Hindi play called *A Perfect Wife* and a play written in English called *Muskan*. It indicates that we are succeeding in moulding English at the demand of regional requirements, and we are succeeding in giving our imprint on a foreign language. There has been a long desire to give Indian-ness to English. It seems that this is the right time when very

conveniently writers of regional languages are given a national face through theatre and a language of convenience. What is required for this is a change of mindset. We have to come out from the shackles of the colonial mindset. We must shed the fear that a slight modification in language will succumb to horrendous aberrations and linguistic sin. That guilt conscience of not using the language properly and formally should be dropped. It is not a case where a plea is being made for wrong English. It is an idea which is being strengthened to naturalize a foreign language according to the climate and culture of a country.

The quick survey of the development of Indian theatre after Independence reaffirms the conviction that despite efforts made by the above writers to produce plays in English and even after their plays were shortlisted for awards still have not come to a crossroads from where we can make a declarative statement that our drama is a national drama. Still, we are banking largely on the inputs of the regional dramas. This shows us a path of rejuvenation. The regional features of drama better found in folk theatre can be brought to the mainstream with the help of a language which can conveniently link with the larger audience and reader.

How Sanskrit Drama Declined?

The successive external invasions during the medieval period weakened the kingdoms of north India and, therefore, their way of life. In addition to it, the exclusivity of Sanskrit theatre also further isolated it from the mainstream because it was too elite. Naturally, the language of the courts and temples was being replaced by various regional languages and traditions that were fast emerging in rural areas. The stringent rules of the *Natyashastra* further added fuel to the fire. Very few writers were able to make use of them without strangling their creativity

Hindu theorists from the earliest times talk of two theories: *lokadharmi* and *natyadharmi*. [3] *Lokadharmi* refers to replicating common men and women and their behavioural pattern. *Natyadharmi* refers to symbolic, stylised representation. Both the

forms found expression in different formats throughout the country, the former in folk form and the latter in classical form. Scholars have always emphasized that there should be a balance between the two. Interestingly, when Sanskrit dramas overemphasized the *natyadharm*, it got delinked with the *lok* (*people*). The folk theatre is rooted in *lok* (*people*), it has yet to evolve its formalized *natyadharm*. It is not that it does not honour the theatrical convention. The basic conventions like stage preliminaries, the *sutradhara* (*the narrator*), the *vidushak* (*the buffon*), opening prayer song, etc. are followed. The only thing is that it has to be in tune with the modern theatrical experiments. India presents a colourful assortment of Folk Theatre. Various known as the *Jatra* (Bengal, Orissa and Eastern Bihar), *Tamasha* (Maharashtra), *Nautanki* (Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Punjab), *Bhavai* (Gujarat), *Yakshagana* (Karnataka), *Therubuttu* (Tamil Nadu), folk theatre reaches out to a large cross-section of the population.

Major threats:

Crisis of Identity:

The contemporary theatre is facing the challenge of identity. With multiple theatrical forms in multiple languages, contemporary Indian theatre is in search of its true identity. In one sense it is the biggest strength of the theatre in India, and in another sense, it is also the biggest weakness. The diversity of unity has become a problem. Various diversions make it difficult to determine the identity of an Indian Theatre. There was a time when theatre was being performed in one single language i.e., Sanskrit. Sanskrit was the language of theatre. Therefore, it had a national identity of its own. But today the picture is completely different. India, being a multi-cultural nation, cannot be associated with a unique trend and feature in its theatres. In India, the concept of National Theatre has to be seen purely in regional terms. All the regions have their language, history and culture and their theatre is also deeply rooted in those circumstances. Noted theatre personality KN Panikkar writes:

We see that the performing arts of our country even while maintaining their own specialties and the differences in the details of structuring related to the form, operational style and other aspects, evince at the same time a semblance, inter dependence and interconnection. The unity of a well-defined goal has never been affected by the multiplicity of regional traditions.[4]

Threat from Television:

Television has emerged as a major threat to the survival of theatre. This is a platform which is financially and socially more remunerative and attractive. There has been a major exodus from theatre to television. Indian theatre has to win this challenge in order to survive and sustain. The process of national awareness can be better effected by the cult of folk theatre. Bellary Raghava writes:

Interesting dramas on health, sanitation, temperance, cooperation, teamwork inculcating our national life, dramas on the evils of untouchability, dramas illustrating the principles and advantages of Hindu- Muslim unity should be staged by trained artists in all villages.[5]

The situation is not that alarming. Things have started moving once again towards theatre because celebrated writers have started doing yeoman service by bringing the regional plays to the mainstream. Girish Karnad is a classic case.

National Identity Through Folk Theatre:

It is the right time to realize the significance of folk theatre for achieving a national identity of Indian Theatre. The folk theatre has the tremendous potential to project itself as a National Theatre. It can replace Sanskrit Drama as a pan-Indian theatre. After the Second World War, the Epic plays of Bertold Brecht enriched modern drama with folk elements. The drama was treated by Brecht as a great pulpit for awakening people's minds. Once Brecht declared "I wanted to take the principle that it was not just a matter of interpreting the world but of changing it, and apply

that to the theatre”. [6] Brechtian dramatic theory influenced post-war playwrights. Even the new experiments in theatre blended the folk elements with modern innovation. This attracted a greater audience. Even Martin Esslin used to call folk theatre “the guardian of traditions and individuality of cultures”. [7] Contemporary playwrights of India are using folk techniques and popularizing the Indian theatre. Vijay Tendulkar, Habib Tanvir and Girish Karnad enriched the theatrical tradition by blending folk elements with modern plays. When the play *Ghasiram Kotwal* was staged in Berlin and London it earned high praise because of the fine blending of Marathi folk music, satire and chorus songs with thematic content. The play satisfied the twin parameters of a good play: aesthetic pleasure and a forceful message. In the same manner, Habib Tanvir made use of Chhatisgarh music and dance in his play *Charan Das Chor*. This play was widely acclaimed in Paris. Habib Tanvir also broke away from realistic theatre and started on a journey of search for roots. With his two productions *Mitti Ki Gaddi* and *Agra Bazaar* he brought back music and poetry to the theatre. Girish Karnad has made use of similar experiment with folk elements in his *Hayavadana*. The play begins with the prayer ‘Jai Gajavadana’, an element of music and movement. These are a few examples to bring forward the view of how best a folk theatre can take the place of a national drama. Bidding farewell to the proscenium theatre is also a symptom that shows that the theatre of India has started moving towards folk culture. Proscenium theatre developed in India as a part of colonial theatrical culture. Badal Sircar, while disconnecting himself from proscenium theatre, uses ordinary halls, public parks to create a special relationship between the actors and spectators. In recent years many directors of the new theatre have discarded the proscenium theatre and are using open spaces to suit their scripts and design of production. They realize the role of the spectators in determining the character of a performance. This has been a special forte of a folk theatre.

Role of Translation:

Translation is an “act of socio-cultural practice”. [8] It is not “a mere linguistic transformation”. [9] There is a necessity to translate the folk dramas into English so that folk theatre can get a wider audience and readers. In this context, a translator has an important role to play. A translator has to become “a cultural ambassador and has to bear in mind the social commitment”. [10] with which a folk theatre is composed. The translator has become “a cultural mediator”. [11] The translator has to conceptualize the folk situation to give authenticity. The translator has to become the second writer. It is this translated version that takes the theatre to the masses and will make it in a real sense *lokdharmi and natyadharmi*. Even in the case of street playwright Badal Sircar, he received a wider audience only when his plays were translated into English by himself. It is only through translation that the regional flavours will be saved. Let multi-culture become one of the outstanding characteristics of the Indian Theatre as it is the case with the Soviet Theatre. To quote Professor I. Moskwin, “The Soviet Theatre is not associated strictly with the Russian language or even the eleven languages of the eleven union republics. More than forty languages are spoken on the Soviet stage. The fact that it is multi-national is one of the outstanding characteristics of the Soviet Theatre” [11].

Our theatre can be national only when the spirit of each language reflected through folk theatre is brought out to the full, when each variant language is raised to its full stature and there is one purpose behind all endeavour.

The diversified culture of India is reflected in the diversified forms of folk theatre. This way the folk theatre is very much present in the Indian soil to give a representational national value. To quote Suresh Awasthi “It has finally made its presence felt. It has compelling power, it thrills audiences, and is receiving institutional recognition. It is deeply rooted in regional theatrical culture, but cuts across linguistic barriers, and has a pan-Indian character in idiom and communicability” [12].

If Indian theatre has to create its own identity as it used to have in concerning Sanskrit drama in the classical time, it has to be “inspired by a search for roots and a quest for identity” [13].

Indian theatre is passing through a period of great flux. The old is losing its identity, the new has yet to come with full vigour. In between the two lies the folk theatre which is scattered, subdued and virtually unnoticed. The theatre will become an open creative playground for all, an organic part of national life only, when the individuality of the people is given expression as a whole. Such will be the base of national theatre. This will happen only when drama does not conform to “any single type or form, but take a variety of shapes as experience has shown in other countries, even Russia, despite its uniformity of ideology and way of living” [14]. Life has a variety of expressions, and the national theatre should encompass in its fold the variegated colours of theatrical experiences, even if, they are of minor significance. Finally, it is asserted that what will really work for achieving the national identity of Indian theatre is the wide publication of folk plays in English. This is the only way to show the worth of folk theatre to the rest of the world and establish a case for its emergence as national theatre.

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English Poetry from Bihar

***Ram Bhagwan Singh**

Abstract

To many it may be a revelation that Bihar had a colossal poet in English in the early 20th century. He was Babu Avadh Bihari Lall (1866-1921) who wrote copiously as a true nationalist poet and social reformer. His “An Address to Ind” is a capsule of national awakening aimed at regaining independence from foreign rule. His rebuttal to Rudyard Kipling’s poem “The White Man’s Burden” (1889) as “The White Man’s True Burden” (1890) is proof of his national pride and courage of conviction. Today Bihar has some internationally renowned poets like R.K. Singh, Abhay K., Kalpna Singh-Chitnis, Tabish Khair etc. Their poetry is not just Indian English poetry but part of world poetry in structure and outlook. Kalpna Singh-Chitnis has a multi-dimensional expression in terms of dramatics, cinematography, poetry and universal outlook characteristically Vedic, Upanishadic and Buddhist. If she is home sick in “Trespassing my Ancestral Land”, she is a world citizen and has a cosmopolitan outlook. Her “Love Letters to Ukrain” shows her broad humanitarian stance and universal love. Prof. R.K. Singh has experimented and perfected both Haiku and Tanka in diction evincing Indian

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sensibility with world perspective evolving Imagery and kigo in terms of both outer and inner nature. Vidyapati in the 14-15th centuries in Maithili came to be familiarised with the world through translation shows a wonderful understanding of emotional delicateness delivered through images vibrating with naivety and originality. The beauty lies in its tender handling in lyrical sonority creating an exclusive rhythmic aura. Both earthly and cosmic Vidyapati poetry has a lingering permanence unmatched, unrivalled. Bihari poetry also has a sense of history as well as an aggressive political orientation in the world. However, the poet's take is one of reconciliation and harmonic solidarity.

Keywords: rebuttal, orchestration, perpetuation, sonorily, diction. trespass.

Bihar has had an enviable position in the history of India in respect of religion, education, politics, culture and literature. The very history of India owes substantially to the history of Bihar. Nalanda and Vikramshila in education, Buddhism and Jainism in religion, Gantantra (democracy) in politics have been the landmarks in respective fields. In literature Vidyapati in Maithili in the 14-15th centuries, Dean Mahomed (1759-1851) of Patna whose "Travels of Dean Mahomet" published in 1794 is regarded as the first writer in Indian English literature. In poetry it may be a revelation to people that Babu Avadh Bihari Lall (1886-1921) was a great nationalist poet and proud bard of Bihar. Unfortunately, his name does not appear in the known histories of Indian English Literature by K.R.S. Iyengar and M.K. Naik. This omission though inadvertent I suppose, or for lack of information kept Bihar in oblivion for a long, long time. Babu Avadh Bihari Lall had published a collection of his poems in 1920 from a local press, the ravages of which were salvaged by his maternal grandson Prof. Amarnath Sinha and Prof Shaileshwar Sati Prasad in 2010 under the title *India, Bihar and Other Poems*. That is the present source of knowledge of the poetic creations of the great son of India and proud nationalist. Even after Independence notable poets from

Bihar went unnoticed until a few names were internationally reclaimed. Today poets like R.K. Singh, Abhay K., Tabish Khair and Kalpna Singh-Chitnis among others are international brands in English poetry. Their poetry is world poetry carrying current global vibrations as well as basic humanistic values.

Poetry via song has been man's inborn passion. They have been instinctively humming their sentiments and thoughts on their own. They poured out their feelings in natural, untutored words. In Bihar there has been a legacy of poets and versifiers since the 6th century BCE. The early poets rather versifiers composed verses by way of educating or sermonizing people. Their wise words were alluded to religion, myths and legends designed in rhythmic couplets. Matta, Sumangalmata, Vatsyayan, Dharmakirti and Sarhapa wrote in Pali and Prakrit. Much later came Vidyapati in the 15th century who wrote bountifully in Maithili. With the introduction of English, the elite in Bihar learnt English to imbibe western thought and approximate themselves to the modern world. That was the period of Bengal Renaissance and Bengal then meant a body of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It was but natural to have the fringe effect if not the core to set art, culture, and literature in the western mode: Dean Mohammad of Patna was discovered by Michael H. Fisher who wrote *The first Indian Author in English* (OUP, 1996). *His Travels of Dean Mohamed* is regarded as the first piece of travelogue. Still another discovery was K.K. Sinha of Patna who was one of the earliest novelists in English. He wrote *The Star of Sikri* in 1893, a social novel. Another novel, rather the first historical novel in Indian English Literature was *Sanjogita: The Princess of Aryavarta* published in 1903. I must credit Prof G.P. Sarma for this enlightening discovery. Both the novels are well preserved in the National Library, Kolkata, Vidyapati who wrote in Maithili was well familiarized with the world through translation. He is hailed as a poet extraordinary for his poetic penetration into human sensibility delivered with structural nuances through exclusively homely images.

This paper is an attempt to present a cursory view of the poetic milieu of Bihar for the sake of information across the poetic world. I find it a knowledgeable person's duty to share it without prejudice and dispel certain misconceptions from the people's mind. To begin with Babu Avadh Bihari Lall who was the first poet to write in English from Bihar. His "An Address to Ind" was published in 1883 when he was seventeen years old. It contained 21 stanzas in the Quatrain metre prompted by Gray's "Elegy" as the poet himself claims. The poem is a specimen of staunch nationalism during the pre-Independence period. Without making bones the poet directly invokes patriotic sentiments and the people of India. I find it strikingly nationalistic to quote the first stanza,

Awake, O Ind! my native land! awake!
Oblivion's couch on thou last long dull sleep:
Awake with stupor! Off thy slumbers shake,
And chase the sleep in thee that snake-like crept,

It is the poet's clarion call to his sleeping countrymen steeped in ignorance and forgetful of the glorious past of India to wake up and regain the lost paradise.

The essential nationalist Avadh Bihari Lall comes to the fore again and again in his writings. As a rebuttal to Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden" in 1889 he wrote "The White Man's True Burden" in 1900. He has charged the Englishman with allegations of exploitation of weak countries in several ways. He has substantiated it with historical facts and concrete evidences.

Repudiating that India is not at all a burden on the Englishman he has proved how India and other subject countries of the British have been mercilessly sinned against them. The Englishman's claim of serving the captive's needs at the cost of the White Man is totally untenable. History bears witness to the fact how the Englishman conquered weak nations and looted their gold and gems. He enslaved several kings, killed some great monarchs, desecrated their faith and destroyed their language and culture.

Our poet warns the Englishman that his victories will not bring fresh laurels rather the world will abhor them. Therefore, he should adhere to the Ten Commandments and ensure liberty and peace to his subjects. Avadh Bihari Lall's advice to the Englishman is,

Stick to thy God and stick to
His Ten Commandments adhere;
"Love thy neighbours as thyself",
His life, lands, rights never.

Out of love for Bihar Babu Avadh Bihari Lall wrote about different aspects of Bihar in several cantos. The first part consisting of 4 cantos is called "The Country and the Seasons" written during 1885-86. The first canto deals into the spring season. It was offered to His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur of Darbhanga and the reading public in general. The poet has presented the beautiful scenario of Summer, Winter, spring, Autumn and Rains. He frankly admits the influences of Dryden, Thomson and Tennyson. He also justifies writing poetry in English by non-native speakers of English.

Canto I "Spring" contains 1010 stanzas of five lines each. The poet first invokes the Muse of Parnassin to guide him and grant him success in his endeavor. He has painted nature around him with reverence and appreciation, He calls himself Bihar's darling and her greatest child"; her greatest patriot, gentle in manners always ready for the good of mankind. He describes Bihar endowed with nature's charm, loved by Rain God as a land of maize, wheat and paddy fields having lucid streams. Bihar sports plains, meads, vales, hills forests and fruit trees, vegetables, and edible roots. The poet mentions the rural fairs and festivals, their rustic joys and celebrations like Holi and Diwali their drinking habits, sumptuous feasts, sacrifice of beasts, singing and dancing in gay abandon show their concerted life style. The poet makes special reference to Holi festival how they enjoy sprinkling colour on each other and smear abir on their forehead and enjoy

community life, they sing lewd songs, eat bhang, drink wine and entertain their friends.

In Canto II the poet has described Summer, its positive and negative aspects which illumines the tops of churches and towers. The sun shines on the lucid stream like a sheet of silver, with a touch of gold the god of life appears. The birds welcome the sun while looking for sheds and nooks of men's houses. The sun ripens the fruits and people enjoy sunny days. The palas tree with its angry red colour flowers presents a lovely sight. The poet thanks God for the charm, the awe, splendour and grace of summer. The English people find it an opportunity to enjoy summer on hill stations at the cost of the poor citizens. Even the rich Indians have Khas-Khas matted shutters frequently watered by poor servants. The poet is sorry to note the incidence of small pox and cholera. In villages people call Goddess Small Pox (Sheetala Mata) and offer sacrifices to appease her.

Canto III Winter

The poet hails winter, calls it joyous winter, mild, unruffled, calm and propitious having in her hands nectar and balm. He likens it to a jovial youth in bright attire, merry and glad as on a holiday wearing a crown. Winter is welcome to all young and old, great and low, coward and bold, rich, and poor alike. All love this season; all welcome the blithesome wind and buxom days. However, those scorned by fortune feel the pinch of winter, the poor mass who can't procure enough clothes to warm themselves. They must sleep on beds of straw and pray to God to send the sun at the earliest for them to bask in the sun. The poet's description of other seasons is equally realistic and photographic as he touches on both the physical, aesthetic and social aspects of seasons.

Another important aspect of Avadh Bihari Lall's poetry is his social concern. In "A Virgin Widow's Lament" he is a conscience keeper of the society. It shows the poet's sensitivity towards the problem of virgin widows. The poet is a votary of Vaishnav tradition but is equally sympathetic toward virgin widow's plight.

Virgin widow itself is a chastising phrase and a sad reflection on the practice of child marriage. However, the poet, though not a feminist, identifies himself with the sufferings of a virgin widow. Death of the husband of a tender girl brings about untold miseries for the victim. The poet laments for such a widow who says, "Life's greatest pleasures to me are denied / I'm made a widow when hardly a bride." The widow curses her cruel fate; the poet feels more about the neglect such a widow is subjected to. There is no socio-economic security for her, the joys and charms of life are passe, she can only dream of them. The poet has elaborately viewed the deprivation of such a helpless creature's future. He makes her say,

I wish my arms were his body's embrace,
 And my eyes were to feed e'er on his face;
 I wish his hands were circling around my neck,
 I have these pleasures only in sleep felt.
 To speak the truth, I blush-they make me melt.

The poem is a lament and not an accusation against the social tradition which did not allow (now does) re-marriage of widow particularly in upper castes. Even late Majesty Queen Victoria was against re-marriage of widows. Similarly, Mrs. Annie Besant, religious and pious, President of the Theosophical Society was also against the re-marriage of widows. Our poet makes it clear to say "so far as my individual opinion is concerned, I am at least in favour of the-marriage of Hindu virgin. widows; and orthodox Hindu as I am and I pride upon following the ancient Brahmanical faith of my native India-which faith, by the by, may require Rome's wholesale reformation but does not require wholesale condemnation.

Babu Avadh Bihari Lall also wrote celebratory poems on the occasion of the Coronation of His Majesty King George I as the Emperor and of Her Majesty Queen Mary as Empress of India. Again, he wrote a poem on the Jubilee of Her Majesty, the Queen-Empress Victoria. Similarly he wrote a poem on the Coronation

Durbar at Delhi. Such poems are obviously full-throated praise of the royal kings and queens which may sound rather self-contradictory from a nationalist poet during The British regime. The fact is, in one word, it was a circumstantial requisite. One could not unilaterally write against the ruler. His writing had to be ambivalent to see the light of the day. Thus, Babu Avadh Bihari Lall combined patriotism with Loyalty, a necessary evil.

Still another aspect of Babu Avadh Bihari Lall's poetry is his view regarding writing poems in English by non-native speakers. His thinking is that the English Language has been a link between the ruler and the ruled. They now understand and appreciate each other it has enabled the heterogeneous races of India to communicate with one another. Moreover, he has received his scholastic training in that language which is now bus second language and best medium to express his thoughts. English is the mother language of the new generation in USA and Australia. India also counts among those countries where English has ceased to be the monopoly of the Anglo-Saxon race. Again, if a vast population speaks English for business, administration and communication why cannot they compose poetry and prose in English. So, if a native of India does dare write English verses, no Englishman should be now ashamed to own them as if they had been composed by me of their race. He decries the tendency to despise English composition of a native of India on no other ground than this-that it is un-English in its origin. Thus, he makes us Biharis, nay, all non-native speakers and writers of English really proud.

Next in order of seniority of age comes Gurudas Mukherjee (1928-1988), a professor of English at B.N. College, Patna. He used to write poetry both in Bengali and English in his spare time. He preferred short poems aimed at contemporary social scenario with a touch of regret and compassion. The cruelties of Hitler and Stalin provoked him to think about God and understand the cruelties being perpetrated at large. He rationalized himself with Horace's design of poetry" to please and instruct!"

His first anthology of English poems was *Spider's Consciousness* published in 1963. *Chabighar* followed in 1987. As a bilingual poet Gurudas Mukherjee is highly acclaimed by critics as one wrote "his poems do not raise waves but give us a sense of depth." Another critic wrote "Prof Gurudas Mukherjee has tried to understand the flux of the world with the help of point-counterpoint!" Another critic was impressed by his deployment of rhythm and rhyme. Prof Akhouri Brajnandan Prasad compared Gurudas Mukherjee's "Holyhawk" with E.E. Cummings' *Sunset*, "for its structure and symbolism."

Umeshwar Prasad (1933-1998) was a teacher-poet-cum journalist who edited *Articulator*, a quarterly journal from Muzaffarpur. He was a professor of English in Bihar University (now BRA Bihar University) Muzaffarpur. Poetry was his second Love; first love being teaching. The basic theme of his poetry was manners and morals of the contemporary society which pinched him at heart. He could not compromise himself with the prevailing hypocrisy and corruption in public life.

Thus, he wrote "I want to rape the conscience of humanity!" In a tone of determination, he writes in the poem "This mafia wind, mother,"

I'm eating fires now
to spit them on mafia winds;
and I solemnly promise mother,
I will pack them off..."

Umeshwar Prasad's publications include *Confrontation and Other Poems* (1979), *Unemployed Hope* (1984), *A Nailed Dream* (1984) and *Articulator*, a quarterly journal.

Another poet of the age was Akhouri Chittaranjan Sahay, a contemporary of Umeshwar Prasad. He edited *Kavita India*, a bilingual journal in English and Hindi based at Muzaffarpur, Bihar. It was associated with Dr. Krishna Srinivas, President, World Poetry Society Intercontinental, Madras-600042. Akhouri

Chittaranjan Sahay published three poetry collections: *Roots and Branches*, *Emerald Foliage* and *Pink Blossoms*. He also edited a critical anthology of contemporary poetry titled *New Talents in Indo-English Poetry* all from Kavita India House. A poem titled "God's Religion" appeared in July-September issue in 1994 in which the poet asks God about his religion in the midst of a diversity of men's religions on earth. Instinctively the poet seems to answer himself that God's religion is universal love.

Amarendra Kumar (b.1933) is the senior most among all the poets of Bihar at work today. His poetry is characteristically intellectual poetry, adult poetry more in its expression than content. Ravi Sinha finds all his poems terse and crisp with the dominant tone being pensive and reflective as he goes on grappling with the complexities of life. His passionate love for the verbal art of objectifying in concrete terms the agonies and quests of life is characterized by an unmistakable dispassionate tenacity of single-minded pursuit. This is remarkably evident from an impressive 8 volumes of poems spanning over four decades of his intense existential engagement with the ironies of life. However, despite being one of the most prolific Indian English poets from Bihar, Kumar seems to be a victim of being admired for the sheer volume of his creative output rather than for his innovative imagist rendering of the felt experiences of life. Many of the admirers of Amarendra Kumar's poetry point to the esoteric nature of stylistic features, images, metaphors and symbols employed by the poet, the seemingly abstruse meaning necessitates a knowledge of specific contexts-motifs, concerns and obsessions as a prerequisite to understand *Ulysses*.

However, at one place the poet acknowledges that with his growing age and declining health he is seized with "fears of death and dark mystery of the unknown" such are the normal existential issues one has to grapple with, the unexpected turns and twists in the bargain. The poetic tone turns from bitter to ironical and from philosophical to resignation. In the poem "Wedding

Anniversary” the poet is acutely conscious of his age and decaying health which stands a contrast to these youthful days. To quote, “Wedding anniversaries in a lumber room/cramming heap or litter/ scrap of wear & tear... cramps in the loins/ cold sweat on the brow... /numbness of the number / of the annual return of the day.” Amarendra Kumar’s works include *The Real Episode* (1981), *Sound and Shell* (1986), *Stage Dilemma* (1988), *Anti-Song* (1996) *Poetry Time Here: Perspective* (2010), *Voice Modulations: Poems* (2012), *Terse Pattern: Poems* (2014) and *Happenspace* (2016).

Prof. R.K.Singh (b.1950-), a stalwart of Indian English poetry is a poet with a difference, a maverick, free and uninhibited. He discovers meaning in passion and interprets sex as a liberating and purifying factor. That obsession marks him woman-centric, something unpalatable to general critics. Though Prof Singh writes as much about nature, poverty and exploitation of people by social agents. But the essential motive of the poet is a struggle between flesh and spirit, an eternal issue that mystifies the existence of man on earth. Such idea comes to the fore when he writes, “The best poetry is a woman/concrete, personal, delightful/ greater than all.” The poet is as much conscious of pollution, caste and communal differences. With a sense of pity and anger he writes, “country is dying with too little democracy too much Hindu Muslim / too much rich and poor.” Choking stoically within the poet counsels himself saying “I’m no Jesus / but I can feel the pains /of crucifixion.” As an experimenter with haiku and tanka R K Singh is unparalleled. While describing a bereaved woman, separated from her lover he writes magnificently: “At the river / she folds her arms and legs/resting her head upon her knees and sits as an island.” Prof. R.K. Singh has published more than two dozen collections of poetry besides critical books and research guide easily available to aspirants. His poetry has been translated into more than 50 languages of the world.

Prof Prabhat Kumar Singh (b. 1952-) is popularly known as P.K. Singh, a handsome fellow with a voluminous corpus of his writings -poetry, criticism and prose. He spells out his belief as,

My vision doesn't crave
to go beyond the horizon,
to roam in abstraction fleeing
the muck of existence.....

His five collections of poetry are an amalgam of love, beauty, sensuousness, divinity and ideas expressed in emotions and impressions of things around him. There is a clear note of nationalism in his Ironic presentation of the social aberrations and chaotic situations, Prof Singh sings the sweet song of death and the sour odes of life to harmonize reason with impulse. His inexorable attachment with earth, his native place, and the sacred river Phalgu. He regrets at the state of his "fabled city of bulls and bells" where divinity presides over death ceremonies. The reference is to the poet's own city Gaya where the priests promise heaven in death. Still the city stands unfazed, the shrines term with piety.

Prof Singh's craftsmanship with imagery beggars description. For example, loneliness leaps, dog naked, hostility baked hills, loftier than tsunami, sepulchral beauty, jaundiced cries, foam-capped egoism, upsetting like first divorce, manholes between dream and reality, darkness suffers hemorrhage, peace drinks blood, hope flints like fire plies and finally, crashing a betel nut is not having a feast.

The latest from Bihar muse is a poetic gem, fresh and young Abhay K. (b. 1980-), a diplomat-poet. His poetic corpus belies assumption and his rendering in words shocks exultation. By now the world, knows him better than his home fellows. His "Earth Anthem" has been translated into over 150 languages and his translation of *Meghaduta* and *Ritusamhara* from Sanskrit won him the *KLF Poetry Book of the Year Award* (2020-21). He

writes with global consciousness for the good of entire humanity. The literary flavour he pours in his writing is something to enjoy individually as well as collectively whereas the aroma of his poetry pervades all space.

Kalpna Singh – Chitnis (b.1966-) is an Indian-American poet, writer, film maker and author of five poetry collections. As a diaspora poet her voice is all encompassing connecting her to the whole world. She claims “my body is no longer my limitation” and “I can’t afford not to love anymore”. As a poet she is well skilled to blend her ideas with sparkling imagery and haunting rhythm. Her poetry is a mirror of both nostalgia as well as her faith in pragmatic Buddhism.

Tabish Khair (b, 1966) of international fame is a poet-cum-novelist. He hails from Gaya in Bihar. He shot into fame with his first collection of poems titled *My World*. In 2000 he published *Where Parallel Lines Meet*. It included poems for which he was awarded *All India Poetry Prize*. Khair’s latest collection of poetry *Man of Glass* come out in 2010. Now he is more interested in fiction. He is settled in Denmark but continues to hold an Indian passport.

Bihar has a host of English poets like Samar Pratap Singh Binod Mishra, Anil K. Prasad, Punita Jha, Vijoy Mishra, Bhaskar Jha, Surabhi Sonam & Agranee Shree who have made their mark in English poetry. They need much larger space for appreciation of their poetry. Besides, our poets who are no more have left behind a treasure trove of valuable poetry. I will surely find space to honour all of them. They are the poets of Bihar.

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The Context Sensitive Poetics of A.K. Ramanujan : Memory as a trope of Reflexivity and Sublimity in Select Poems of the *Second Sight*

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Abstract

A.K Ramanujan, a renowned Indian poet, introduced the concept of context-sensitive thinking in his seminal essay “Is There an Indian Way of Thinking?” His poetry collection *Second Sight* serves as a powerful reflection of this context-sensitive approach. Therefore, this paper endeavours to explore the context-sensitive domain of A.K Ramanujan’s poetics, focussing on memory as a trope of reflexivity and sublimity in select poems of *Second Sight*. It aims to explore how his works engage with and reflect the subtle complexities of Indian life and thought.

Keywords: Context sensitive, Context free, Memory, East, West, Cultural plurality, Ancient, Modern, Past, Present, India, America, Reflexivity

A.K. Ramanujan is esteemed not only as a transnational figure but also as a versatile genius, who has secured a prominent place among the established Indian English poets. His oeuvre encompasses original poetry in both English and Kannada, alongside translations of Indian classics. Through his aesthetic and theoretical contributions, Ramanujan has significantly enriched various

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academic disciplines. In his thought-provoking essay “Is There an Indian Way of Thinking?”, he conceptualises India as a land of multifarious exchanges, not limited to interactions between the East and the West but also involving the Great and Little traditions, or the Desi and *Marga*, within the national framework.

Ramanujan characterizes India as “The Great House,” a cultural plurality governed by two principles: ‘Context Sensitive’ and ‘Context Free.’ These principles are integral to understanding Ramanujan’s poetic universe, which authentically reflects the diversity and complexity of his country. In many of his poems, meaning fluctuates contextually, intertwining past and present to create a novel dimension in his poetic thought. This contextual framework is highly significant, as it enables the poems to engage in a dialogue both with one another and with the larger cultural milieu. In his hymn “Prayers to Lord Murugan,” Ramanujan elucidates Indian attitudes towards the past, present, and future, illustrating how his poems are deeply embedded in their cultural context. By situating his poetic expressions within this nuanced framework, Ramanujan offers a profound exploration of Indian identity and its dynamic interplay with tradition and modernity:

My poem, too, talks about some Indian attitudes to the Indian past, with which I was somewhat despondently preoccupied at the time. I had felt that Sanskrit itself and all that is represented had become an absence, at best a crippling and not an enabling presence, that the future needed a new past. (Ramanujan 192).

It is evident that Ramanujan embraces the notion that his poetry inherently reflects an Indian way of thinking, characterized by context sensitivity and reflexivity. His personal and private poems reveal his interior self, while his metaphysical poems delve into themes of life, death, and the afterlife, encapsulating “codes of conduct and expression appropriate to one or the other” (Blackburn 47). In essence, Ramanujan seeks a poetics that defines his context-based feelings, behaviours, and modes of

thought. Memory has emerged as a pivotal trope for diasporic writers, who, upon being displaced to new lands, experience a persistent tension between the impressions of their past and the experiences of their adopted cultures. Although Ramanujan ostensibly denied his position as an expatriate, the aspect of memory remains a significant element in his poetry, serving as a means to cherish the Indian way of life in many of his works. These poems exemplify the dual nature of his poetic theory, addressing human interaction within society beyond the family and portraying actions through which individuals connect with the broader community. Ramanujan's poetic paradigm reveals a cultural sensitivity, particularly in addressing Indian issues related to situational mood, behaviour, and ways of living, as contrasted with European lifestyles. This paper endeavours to explore the context-sensitive domain of A.K. Ramanujan's poetics, focusing on memory as a trope of reflexivity and sublimity in selected poems. By doing so, it aims to elucidate how his works engage with and reflect the subtle complexities of Indian life and thought.

I

Ramanujan hails from an ethno-religious Tamil Hindu family, deeply rooted in the orthodox traditions of South Indian culture as a Hindu Brahmin. His ethical framework is profoundly shaped by his upbringing in a rigidly traditional family. However, his exposure to Western thought and his experience as an expatriate in the West distinguish him from other native Indians in his response to his Hindu background. Expatriation, as a trope of cultural displacement, not only evokes nostalgia for his homeland but also reinforces his awareness of his ethno-religious values. This nostalgic longing for both his religion and nation is natural, yet his displacement compels him to critically examine the inconsistencies within the Indian religious system, seeking to communicate "in using natural speech and twisting a particular nuance in everyday experience to make the ordinary look aesthetic" (Rodriguez 224). Thus, Ramanujan's poetry re-contextualizes the Indian way of life, particularly

Hinduism, with his nativist leanings manifesting as “a cry for cultural self-respect and autonomy” (Paranjape 15). Drawing from native traditions, Ramanujan constructs a pluralistic vision of Indian society, wherein the hegemony of the canonical is continually contested by various local subcultures. Some of his poems, published in “Second Sight” and included in the “Collected Poems”, reflect Ramanujan’s profound concern for his country and its native culture. In poems such as “Elements of Composition”, “Death and the Good Citizen”, “The Watchers”, “Pleasure”, “Extended Family”, “Waterfalls in a Bank”, and “Second Sight”, he contemplates serious and sublime issues of life. Utilizing memory, he attempts to connect himself with India and a way of life that underpins context-sensitive creativity.

Frequently, Ramanujan juxtaposes the rituals of the West with those of India, highlighting the superiority and sublimity of his own culture, tradition and religion. In the title poem “Second Sight”, he explores the concept of inner vision or insight, which is deemed more significant than ordinary human sight. Indian philosophers refer to this as the ‘Third Eye’ or deeper vision, considered superior to the physical eye. The poet’s context-sensitive nature brings to the fore the superiority of Hindu rituals and metaphysics, as illustrated in the following lines:

You are Hindoo, aren’t you?
 You must have second sight
 I fumble in my nine
 pockets like the night-blind
 son in law groping
 in every room for his wife. (191)

The poet, here, juxtaposes epicurean philosophy with the supreme Vedantic canon, highlighting an interplay of metaphysical and material concerns. This dialectic within the poem leads Ramanujan to challenge the Western discourse, as Richard King observes that “Hindu nationalists did not fully transcend the

presuppositions of the West, but rather legitimised the Western, orientalist discourse by responding in a manner that did not fundamentally question the orientalist's paradigm" (116-17). The imagery of 'Hindoo' and 'second sight' carries religious and metaphysical connotations, while references to 'pocket's' and 'son-in-law groping in every room for his wife' signify worldly, material, and sexual needs. It is evident that the poet is acutely aware of his Hindu identity, vision and philosophy, which he contrasts with Western canons that are often overshadowed by the lofty ideals of Indian metaphysics.

Ramanujan's exploration of his roots is not only context-sensitive but also deeply rooted in the sublime thought of poetic speculation. In his poetry, he deliberately interrogates his ancestry through fragmentary experiences that construct and deconstruct himself. This theme is evident in the opening poem of *Second Sight*, entitled "Elements of Composition". In several poems, parody serves as a pretext for self-reflexivity, allowing the poet to construct, review, and deconstruct the idea of 'self'. The 'self' is portrayed as a carnival of experiences, generating a poetic space for new forms, contexts, and noble ideas. Ramanujan maps his evolution through heterogeneous and unstable experiences, rejecting a linear growth trajectory.

He posits that the 'self' is far from being a simple product of 'father's seed and mother's egg'; instead, it is composed of transient and fragmented dreams. Sensitive and self-absorbed in holy scriptures, Ramanujan becomes conscious of the dualistic notion of the 'self', rooted in the deep philosophy of the *Mundaka Upanishad*. He links the active and passive aspects of the 'self' with the watcher-actor dichotomy, as exemplified in the concluding lines of the poem:

I lose, decompose
into my elements
Into other names and forms,

Past and passing tenses.
 Without time,
 Caterpillar on a leaf, eating,
 Being eaten. (123)

In several poems from *Second Sight*, the tension between religion and modernism forms the foundational dynamics of poetic creativity and sensitivity. The poet critically evaluates his own religion alongside modernist perspectives, ultimately realising that both are complementary and contribute to a complex perception of human existence. Aware of Hindu canons, Ramanujan often resolves the body-soul conflict by prioritising the claims of the soul. However, in the distinctive poem “Pleasure”, Ramanujan’s inclination towards spirituality is evident through his renunciation of sensual pleasure in favour of prolonged celibacy and a commitment to higher spiritual reality. Conversely, the poet also scrutinizes the phenomenon of fake or pseudo monks, drawing from his observations in both India and America. Through his practical experiences, he reveals the hidden sensuous desires of a Jain monk who struggles with the oath of enforced celibacy, illustrating this inner turmoil and hypocrisy.

A naked Jaina monk
 Ravaged by spring
 Fever, the vigour
 Of long celibacy
 Lusting now as never before
 For the reek and sight
 Of mango bud, now tight, now. (139)

The poet reflects on how carnal desires are often intensified by the forced suppression and continuous denial of biological urges. Over time, celibacy itself can transform into a form of perverted pleasure. The imagery of the ‘mango bud’ and ‘now tight’ symbolizes the voluptuousness and beauty akin to the firm breasts of young virgin girls, who naturally attract the opposite sex.

This dialectic creates an unusual ambiguity and complexity, wherein the physical sense organs become activated to experience bodily lust within an Epicurean philosophical context. By exploring these themes, the poet navigates the tension between natural human desires and the imposed restrictions of celibacy, revealing the underlying contradictions and the psychological impact of such suppression. Through these vivid and provocative images, the poet delves into the nuanced interplay between desire and denial, inviting readers to contemplate the deeper implications of these conflicts within the broader framework of human experience and philosophical inquiry:

Skin roused even by
Whips, self touching self,
All philosophy slimmed
By its own saliva.
Cool Ganges turning
Sensual on him. (139)

III

In his poetic oeuvre, Ramanujan has treated the concept of spirituality with utmost sincerity while also emphasising individual experiences derived from external reality. Although his poetic sensibilities were profoundly influenced by the Indian Vedas and Upanishads, as well as modern science, he found true fulfilment and satisfaction only through Indian philosophical and cultural values. As a poet, he exhibits a deep sensitivity in exploring personal relationships, particularly his cultural roots in India. Ramanujan himself articulated that his poems serve as negotiations between cultures, with his identity forming the hyphen in Indian-American. His mature works are imbued with contextual and philosophical insights, as he recognised the transient and ephemeral nature of existence, where everything struggles to survive. Despite his appreciation for modernity, he consistently addressed context-sensitive issues of alien cultures within a transnational framework,

often contrasting them with Eastern thought. In the unique poem “Death and the Good Citizen”, included in the volume *Second Sight*, Ramanujan expresses astonishment at the American practice of using human waste products as manure in municipal gardens to cultivate green plants, vegetables, and fruits. He is fascinated by this scientific method of recycling waste within a multicultural context, reflecting his engagement with both Eastern and Western perspectives. Ramanujan’s poetry thus bridges cultural divides, blending his deep reverence for Indian traditions with an openness to modern scientific practices. This synthesis of diverse influences makes his work a rich subject for scholarly analysis and discussion, inviting readers to explore the complex interplay of cultural and philosophical themes in his poetry.

the grass
 grow tall for the cows
 in the village, the rhino
 in the zoo : and the oranges
 plump and glow, till
 they are preternatural
 orange. (135)

The poet realises that not only the waste products but the individual body parts do not lose their propensity to live again in a new body. Like an expatriate in some alien culture the limbs are adapted to function in the new environment. As in the following lines, the poet becomes self-conscious about the important organs of human body like eye, heart and brain as in his own body about its transplantation and utility in the modern context:

Eyes in an eye bank
 to blink some day for a stranger’s
 brain, wait like mummy wheat ...
 your struggle to be naturalised :
 beat, and learn to miss a beat
 in a foreign body. (135-36)

In this passage, the poet is suddenly reminded of his own potential for biodegradability while living in a foreign culture. He reflects on his adaptation to the new world and his concerns about the fate awaiting him in death, which, regardless of cultural context, is universally accepted as a natural process. Rooted in Indian culture, the poet contextualises his Hindu funeral rites in contrast to Western practices. In the West, bodies are often embalmed with chemicals and preserved in steel caskets, a process that starkly contrasts with the Hindu tradition of cremation. According to Hindu customs, cremation allows the body to return to the earth and become part of the soil, aligning with the belief in the cyclical nature of life and death. This contrast between the Western practice of artificial preservation and the Indian ritual of cremation underscores the poet's engagement with cultural and philosophical differences regarding death and the afterlife. Ramanujan's meditation on these differing practices highlights his deep connection to his own religious traditions while also acknowledging the cultural diversity he encounters. This nuanced exploration of death and ritual in his poetry invites readers to reflect on the profound intersections between cultural practices and personal beliefs.

they'll cremate
me in Sanskrit and sandalwood,
have me sterilized
to a scatter of ash. (136)

Ramanujan's contemplation extends beyond the mere ritualistic destruction of the body after death; he advocates for the body to be buried and allowed to decompose naturally, thus merging with nature. His reflections, deeply rooted in Indian poetics and philosophy, frequently dwell on the concept of death to better understand the truth of life and the materiality of the physical body post-mortem. Ramanujan's Tamil upbringing and the broader Hindu cultural context significantly inform his philosophical musings. Within this spiritual framework, the belief in the immortality and

permanence of the soul contrasts sharply with the transient nature of the physical body. His poetry often navigates this dichotomy, illustrating a profound respect for the soul's enduring journey beyond the corporeal existence. Ramanujan's draws from the rich heritage of Indian spiritual texts, which emphasise the soul's eternal nature, to question and critique modern practices surrounding death and the afterlife. This juxtaposition of ancient beliefs and modern realities highlights his unique position as a poet straddling multiple cultural and philosophical paradigms:

You know my tribe, incarnate
unbelievers in bodies,
they'll speak proverbs, contest
my will, against such degradation. (136)

Ramanujan's poetic imagery is characterized by a self-reflexive and context-specific response, particularly when he contemplates the notion that they will 'lock me out of nature' through artificial means. This idea stands in stark contrast to Yeats's aspiration to transcend nature through art. Ramanujan's poetry instead reveals a human attempt to evade natural processes through embalming and other artificial methods. The poet's concern extends beyond death itself to the residual air and valors that will oxidise him in this state, symbolising a profound disconnection and dissociation from nature. The deeper significance lies not merely in the concept of death but in the poet's meditation on the disconnection from nature, which he views as a deprivation of his identity as a natural entity. Ramanujan's reflexive self is developed through interactions with others, especially within an alien culture, where his identity risks suspension without the anchoring of native cultural roots. In poems like "Death and the Good Citizen" Ramanujan's work underscores his sensitivity to the nuances of cultural dislocation and the existential implications of being severed from one's natural and cultural environment. The poet's inner turmoil is reflective of a broader philosophical inquiry into the nature of identity, mortality, and the intrinsic bond between

humans and their natural surroundings. His contemplation is not just about physical death but about the metaphysical and cultural death that comes from being estranged from one's roots and environment:

my tissue will never graft,
will never know newsprint,
never grow in a culture,
or be mould and compost
for jasmine, eggplant
and the unearthly perfection (136)

IV

Ramanujan's poetic universe embraces the pluralistic and often contradictory cultural traditions of India. It is his principle of reflexivity that venerates new forms from the old, as demonstrated in many poems within the collection *Second Sight*. Rather than being merely obsessed with his Indian roots, Ramanujan reexamines his past experiences within the context of his present life in the United States. Like other diasporic poets, he inhabits two distinct cultural and linguistic worlds, compelling him to remember and cherish his homeland's moments juxtaposed against the new culture in which he resides. Although he responds authentically to American culture, he consistently highlights his Indian heritage, both retrospectively and prospectively, fulfilling his role as a responsible poet. In the poem "Waterfalls in a Bank", Ramanujan is fascinated by a man-made waterfall, which stimulates a cascade of memories filled with images from his past in India. The opening lines evoke images of 'snakeskins' and 'cascades of muslin' within a specific context, linking these to the 'waterfalls' as envisioned by ancient Tamilians. His context-sensitive nature never fails to record the native cultural product 'muslin' of India, effectively "Indianizing the confined waterfall in an American bank". As Ramazani observes, Ramanujan achieves this by "putting metaphor to work in a kind of reverse colonisation. The ancient Indian

vehicles of ‘snakeskin’ and ‘muslin’ paradoxically enliven with danger and wonder an image hackneyed in Western poetry” (78).

Another dominant image in the poem is that of a physically paralytic sadhu, embodying a non-material, impoverished, but deeply spiritual way of being in contrast to the prosperous bank in Chicago and the affluence of American society. This contrast serves to underscore the poet’s sensitivity and reflexivity regarding his cultural heritage. The poem juxtaposes the material wealth of the West with the spiritual richness of the East, reflecting Ramanujan’s nuanced understanding of both worlds.

As I hear the waters fall, the papers
rustle, and it’s evening : a paralytic sadhu,
tap-dancer of the St. Vitus’s dance...
and pisses standing
like a horse on my childhood’s dark (190).

Indeed, Ramanujan’s Indian oriental heritage provides a crucial insight into the enigmatic final line in “Waterfalls in a Bank.” The ‘Watcher’s watch’ alludes to the notion of silent, detached observers who witness the events and happenings in the poet’s life without judgment. This observer is not an external entity but rather a deeper aspect of his own being. As Bruce King notes, this part of himself is “unaffected by the flux of reality” (102), remaining calm, undisturbed, and uninvolved even as his active self engages in the daily affairs of life. This non-active part of the poet’s self transcends the boundaries of time and space that typically define one’s identity, which is why the watchers occupy “nowhere perches” and are not confined to a body, mind, or personality. They stand apart.

In this context, Bryan Aubrey’s observation is particularly relevant: “as this immigrant poet, caught comfortably between two worlds, busy and doing what Westerners do, his Eastern roots pull at him, still from their ‘nowhere perches’ and will not quite let him go” (Aubrey 20). Ramanujan’s aesthetic experience often originates

from a well-structured image, partially an unconscious act of the mind based on subjective issues. Some poems in *Second Sight* reflect his natural fascination with his homeland through specific objects that stimulate his sensitivity with complete transparency. His self-reflexive conceptual strategy plays a significant role in shaping his poetic vision, combining self-awareness and creativity while reflecting on Indian culture. However, when his mind interacts with contemporary American reality, the past reality frequently dominates. For instance, in the poem “Extended Family”, Ramanujan emphasises the significance of pre-dawn bathing in his Indian home over bathing in chlorinated American water. The image of water serves as a stimulus, transporting the poet to an inner world far removed from America. This context of water and bathing evokes memories of his naked bathing in the holy Ganges, which purifies both body and soul in a spiritual context. In this moment of self-reflection and noble thought, the poet communicates the superiority of Indian culture over American culture by contrasting chlorinated water with the sacred water of the Ganges and the naked electric bulb with the Vedic sun. This comparison underscores the profound cultural and spiritual differences between his Eastern heritage and Western experiences:

the dry chlorine water
my only Ganges
the naked Chicago bulb
a cousin of the Vedic sun (169).

Ramanujan’s conditional perspective is particularly evident when he reflects upon and prefers his own Indian culture in relation to other cultural frameworks. This poetic awareness can be characterized as “an unending mirroring process” (Hutcheon 1), which introduces a new dimension to his creative process. This process places his self-concept and self-knowledge in a position of dominance over American conceptualisations, thus enriching his poetic discourse. It is clear that Ramanujan’s context-sensitive ideas are a product of his engagement with cross-cultural traditions

and diverse environments, which have profoundly shaped his poetic genius. He articulates his Indian worldview through the notion that “one lives only in particulars” (Mahadevan n.p.), thereby juxtaposing the immediacy of the present with the memory of the past. For Ramanujan, these particulars are not merely historical artefacts but are aesthetic forms that embody a specific cultural ethos and worldview, which must be experienced within its context and studied in relation to other cultural elements. His poetry reflects not only a deep-seated affection for the exotic past of India but also the disciplined upbringing within a culturally sensitive milieu that informs his poetic discourse. This upbringing determines the nuances of his work, revealing a profound interplay between his cultural heritage and his artistic expression. Ramanujan’s poems, therefore, are not only a tribute to the past but also a commentary on the intricate dynamics between cultural context and individual creativity. Through his context-sensitive approach, Ramanujan challenges contemporary perspectives by invoking the memory of the past, offering readers a vivid exploration of how cultural and historical dimensions shape poetic imagination. His work thus serves as a rich field for scholarly exploration, bridging the gap between historical tradition and modern sensibilities.

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Resistance and Defiance in the Poems of Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Dorothy Hewett

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Abstract

Aboriginal poetry of Australia in English is a new phenomenon, depicting the colonial oppression and racial discrimination which made the aboriginals foreign in their own land. The present paper tries to analyse the problems of oppression and exploitation of Australian Aboriginal women, their culture and Nature with reference to the theories of Cultural Ecology and Ecofeminism. It also points out how the issues of environmental racism, culture and social inequality have been deeply rooted in the Australian History and environment. The study tries to depict the resistance shown by the aboriginals against the colonizers regarding the damage done to their beliefs and traditions. The authors find the reality that only through tolerance and resilience they can hope for a better future. The present paper analyses poetry of Noonuccal and Hewett to study how the two aboriginal poets advocate resilience and hopeful waiting for the birth of a free Australian aboriginal community. Noonuccal's and Hewett's poems suggest a spirit of resilience and request the aboriginals to retain the aboriginal spirit and develop the ability to cope with the problems mentally and emotionally, so that they can return

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to pre-crisis state in due course of time. Their poems help the aboriginals realise their situation so that they can develop their mental and personal strength to protect themselves from the potential negative effects of the oppressors.

“Nature’ and ‘Woman’ though exploited have in themselves the unique power to create. They try to find out their lost ‘space’ through recreating what has been lost. Their strength is seen in the way they oppose their oppressors unarmed. Women cannot tolerate the injustice for a long time. Just as Nature expresses her agony and resistance on exploitation of her resources, the Australian aboriginals also offer a similar kind of resistance against their oppressors. The cry of anguish expressed by the aboriginals on the whites occupying their space of freedom is taken up by Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Dorothy Hewett. Their resistance is not always of the same type. Their poems present not only an open resistance but also a silent defiance. This paper analyses the various types of resistance expressed in the poems of Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Dorothy Hewett against the oppression and exploitation.

Keywords: Aboriginal, Colonial Oppression, Racial Discrimination, Cultural Ecology, Eco-feminism, Resistance, Traditions, Resilience, Request, Hope.

Aboriginal poetry of Australia in English is a new phenomenon, depicting the colonial oppression and racial discrimination which made the aboriginals foreign in their own land. The present paper tries to analyse the problems of oppression and exploitation of Australian Aboriginal women, their culture and Nature with reference to the theories of Cultural Ecology and Ecofeminism. It also points out how the issues of environmental racism, culture and social inequality have been deeply rooted in the Australian History and environment. The study tries to depict the resistance shown by the aboriginals against the colonizers regarding the damage done to their beliefs and traditions. The authors find the reality that only through tolerance and resilience they can hope for a better future. The present paper analyses poetry of

Noonuccal and Hewett to study how the two aboriginal poets advocate resilience and hopeful waiting for the birth of a free Australian aboriginal community. Noonuccal's and Hewett's poems suggest a spirit of resilience and request the aboriginals to retain the aboriginal spirit and develop the ability to cope with the problems mentally and emotionally, so that they can return to pre-crisis state in due course of time. Their poems help the aboriginals realise their situation so that they can develop their mental and personal strength to protect themselves from the potential negative effects of the oppressors.

‘Nature’ and ‘Woman’ though exploited have in themselves the unique power to create. They try to find out their lost ‘space’ through recreating what has been lost. Their strength is seen in the way they oppose their oppressors unarmed. Women cannot tolerate the injustice for a long time. Just as Nature expresses her agony and resistance on exploitation of her resources, the Australian aboriginals also offer a similar kind of resistance against their oppressors. The cry of anguish expressed by the aboriginals on the whites occupying their space of freedom is taken up by Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Dorothy Hewett. Their resistance is not always of the same type. Their poems present not only an open resistance but also a silent defiance. This paper analyses the various types of resistance expressed in the poems of Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Dorothy Hewett against the oppression and exploitation.

The resistance shown by the aboriginals through keeping alive their traditional dances and festivals is termed as symbolic resistance. Resistance against verbal attack of the colonizers’ use of degrading terms come under Polemic resistance and the resistance offered by the aboriginal writers, through their letters supporting those in exile is termed as Resistance Enchained. The spirit of resistance is found more in the poems of Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Dorothy Hewett than the attitude of defiance. Between themselves, Hewett’s poems and writings show a stronger spirit of resistance than that of Noonuccals’.

Noonuccal and Hewett's point of view is that being avengeful cannot be a solution to their problems and they must be wise enough to know when to show their resistance. Their patience and tolerance also cannot always help them. It works negatively in their lives. Resistance arises out of anguish against the intolerable atrocities offered by the hegemonic powers. Any subjugated individual or group naturally bursts out to oppose or to overcome the domination. To seek freedom from the hegemonic oppression, there is a strong and inevitable need for resistance from the aboriginals in all possible ways.

Acts of resistance and defiance are not only weapons to conquer and overpower, but it also calls for courage and a vigorous heart to confront the oppression and systematic violence. The poems of Noonuccal and Hewett open the doors to how the subjugated victims use various modes to show their resistance against the regime of power structures. The types of the resistance mentioned above, are obviously seen in the poems of Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Dorothy Hewett. These artistic techniques provide the keynote to the construction of their poems.

Resistance is a political or ideological act of fighting the system either openly or silently. Since the oppressed do not always have to challenge the powerful in an obvious way, they challenge the authority and ideology of the powerful through symbolic gestures. Symbolically resisting acts carry a message, embedded with meaning sometimes implicit or hidden without any explicit demonstration of resistance. Noonuccal and Hewett's poems symbolically resist the power of the settlers through their poems. Noonuccal's "The Unhappy Race," "Colour Bar," "We are Going" and Hewett's "My Fortieth Year" and "Beata Beatrix" depict symbolic resistance.

Noonuccal resists the whites for winning liberty so that the aboriginals are not trapped by the dogmas of the whites. "The Unhappy Race" is a critical representation of how the settlers affect the aboriginal's culture and life. "Collars and ties" are the

symbols of slavery which deprive them of their old freedom and their old way of living. Dressing up with Collars and ties are the codes suggested by the colonizers, and they are considered as the best dress code which can make the aboriginals civilized. By dressing up according to their routines and persistent compulsions, aboriginals allow other people to deprive their old freedom and joy they had before the arrival of the settlers.

Leave us alone, we don't want
 Your collars and ties,
 We don't need your routines and compulsions.
 We want the old freedom
 And joy that all things have but you,
 Poor Whiteman of the unhappy race. (My People 14-19)

In her poem "Colour Bar," Noonuccal opposes the settlers for discriminating against them on the basis of colour. The Colour Bar is a social and legal system in which people of different races are separated and not given equal rights and opportunities. The wicked colonisers ridicule the aboriginals for their brown skin and try to push them to a downtrodden hidden life. The colonisers consider the dark-skinned people to be inferior and they insist that they are never satisfied with their domination over others. Still they are unhappy. But Noonuccal does not let the noise of others' opinions drown her inner voice. She advises them to follow the heart and intuition. Fierce anger seizes her in response to the insult meted out to an innocent child who returns home in tears. *As long as brothers banned from brotherhood/You still exclude (My People 15,16)*

Banning the aboriginals from brotherhood is making Christianity meaningless. It serves as an excuse to rule others. Noonuccal respects Christianity and the scriptures but not the Christians:

The Christianity You hold so high
 Is but a lie,

Justice a cant of hypocrites, content

With precedent. (My People 15-18)

Another aspect highlighted in Noonuccal's poems is the harmony between man and Nature. According to Kelly in his essay on "Savage Capitalisms- the Ecosocialist alternative" states his views on Ecological Materialism:

... the idea that humankind was a part of nature, a product of it rather than divine creation, which established the basis for the relationship between humankind and nature and an ecological as well as an historical- materialist conception of history. (129)

Similarly, Noonuccal is of the view that humans are part of Nature and everyone should be treated equally as Nature treats man. God has created humans to own the land and not to destroy the harmony between man and Nature or between man and man. But the whites in the name of colonisation disturb the aboriginal's peace and harmony. The poems of Noonuccal and Hewett present a vigorous resistance through an expression of anger and fierce contempt.

Noonuccal's "We are Going." is the collective voice of a few members of the tribe in a painful farewell of the aboriginals saying, 'We are Going'. When they enter a small tribal area, the colonisers call the aboriginals "A semi-naked band." His contemptuous term, they got "subdued" and remained "silent" (2). The white society hammers into them their identity as "semi-naked band." Though offended, they stage a silent protest by their acceptance of such interpolations.

Memories of the past are truthfully depicted as a quiet opposition by Noonuccal. Her poems describe her people as a part of the land but they tend to lose it due to the atrocities of the colonisers. The line, "We are nature and the past" (29) emphasizes that the indigenous people are one with land, but the white men have scattered them by scrapping and shattering their homes and their livelihood:

We are the quiet daybreak paling the dark lagoon.
We are the shadow ghosts creeping back as the
Campfires burn low.
We are nature and the past, all the old ways
Gone now and scattered. (My People 19-23)

The aboriginals are the protectors of the lagoon which has a dark hue because of the dawn. They have haunted the place like the shadow-ghosts near the campfire where they gather together. When the settlers started destroying the aboriginal's homes, Nature also started vanishing; even their culture is destroyed:

The scrubs are gone, the hunting and the laughter
The eagle is gone, the emu and the kangaroo are
Gone from this place
The bora ring is gone
The corroboree is gone
And we are going. (My People 24-29)

Apart from quiet acceptance, resistance is also shown by the aboriginals through the utterance of truth regarding their subjugation and oppression. Deprived land and memories of the 'old bora rings' haunt them. The 'bora ring' is a sacred aboriginal ground where they would dance, sing and hold ceremonies such as where the young boys would be transformed into men. It plays a major role in this poem because Noonuccal discusses how the white merchants have usurped their sacred land and claimed it as their own. The sanctity of the bora rings has been lost and it is desecrated:

They came into the little town
A semi-naked band subdued and silent,
All that remained of their tribe.
They came here to the place of their old bora ground
Where now many white men hurry about like ants. (My
People 1-5)

The sacred land is now defiled by dumping rubbish. The indigenous or the ethnic people being the original inhabitants of the area are disturbed when the whites have invaded the land by announcing by way of posters and say, "Rubbish may be tipped here". This conveys that the whites are not only destroying the land but also Nature.

The aboriginals being unable to get back their original sacred land try to symbolically resist their domination by staging the age old dance. But now their sacred place has been converted into a rubbish land. "Corroboree" (16) is a ceremonial place where the aboriginals danced in an informal gathering and used to sit for "campfires" (21) as gangs played games and narrated the stories of the legends. With great joy they would say, "We are the lightning-bolt over Gamphembah Hill" (23). But just as lightning after thunder everything has changed.

Each aspect of their traditional culture has vanished now. The bora ground, the bora ring, the corroboree dance all is 'gone.' Unable to counter the onslaught of the white European culture, their traditional life and culture have withered away. The white people, compared to the 'busy ants' plying their trade motivated by the white philosophy of action and production and competitive struggle in terms of performance, have dispossessed them from their land. The land, traditions, culture all are gone. The recurrent use of 'we' not only suggests the solidarity of the aboriginal people, the 'we' people, but also automatically helps envisage the white as the 'other' "We are strangers here now, but the white tribe are the strangers" (My People 9).

In Hewett's autobiographical poem "My Fortieth Year" she expresses her rage against the whites. Till the age of forty she underwent a lot of pain and unbearable tension in the hands of the whites. In her fortieth year, she starts "dissent and schism" (3) against them. She does not want to be static but to "enrich the time" (5) and likes to shine as light. Moreover, she does not like to be a silent or a cool lady but to show herself a bold and

warm one. Hewett hesitates to be a quiet lady but likes to express her emotions loudly and relishes in her own identity as an Australian. It is evident that the poets are ready to fight instead of dying passively accepting the oppression a suppression:

Not to be static, to enrich the time,
 Not to be circumscribed, but broad as light,
 Not to be chilled, but warm as marriage is.
 Never to shrink from the clamour of the city,
 But make a symbol of it for my time,
 Clinging to the edge of the shadowy continent. (Selected
 Poems of Dorothy Hewett 5-10)

Through the journey of life “over this flat Earth” (11), people can learn and grow themselves and the society in which they live gives more understanding to meet new people, new places and to experience different culture just as in travelling. Aboriginal women are unwillingly forced to stick to the dark side of life and there is no good future for them. Hewett, as a representative poet speaks for the multitude of aboriginal women. Hewett herself does not like to limit herself to a short life span. She longs for a long free travel on the road of life and likes to give full rein to her thoughts.

Travel is their birthright to freely along the road of life, but the colonisers have taken it under their control. Hewett resists and opposes such confinement prescribed to her by the whites and likes to free herself and says: “*till forty years I had lived so long in the iron maiden of my thought, / Crabbed and confined, my breath misting the mirror (Selected Poems of Dorothy Hewett 16, 17)*”. After that she wants to break out from the borders which are prescribed by the whites. Nature too awaits a free extensive growth without any curse or control.

Hewett stands for the feelings of the indigenous woman who fears that there will be no freedom for her from birth to death and that she is not born to live such a fearful and miserable life

like this. She was born with the spirit of a traveller's freedom. She longs for a free travel on the road of life.

Travelling to the end of all his days
And never coming to the end of it.
But never have I made a journey such as this
From birth to death, with all the white,
Bewildered signposts on the way. (Selected Poems of
Dorothy Hewett 11-15)

'Signpost' refers to the control exercised over her and she is expected to move only in the confusing directions shown to her under the dictates of the whites. Nature can change everything. It can convert even a curse into a blessing. 'Dew' symbolizes blessing and is considered the source of great fertility. It symbolises blessings from heaven and stands for brotherly love and harmony and of rich spiritual blessings. Just as the 'dew' refreshes the land Hewett tries to convert the cursed colonised land to flourish with blessings:

One morning I stepped out through a wide window
Into the world, where the dew lay on the grass.
It was like a second coming, so rich so dear,
The landmarks in that familiar landscape;
And yet so new after the long walks
In the streets of time, richer for the sense
Of multitudes of men moving through neon lights,
And factory whistles casting bread on the harbour waters.
(Selected Poems of Dorothy Hewett 18-25)

"Beata Beatrix," one of Rossetti's most recognized works, has caused Siddal's name to be frequently linked with Dante Alighieri's Beatrice. It depicts the cry of an aboriginal woman who misses her lover. Beata Beatrix is a painting completed in several versions by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Rossetti modelled Beatrice after his deceased wife and frequent model,

Elizabeth Siddal, who died in 1862. The symbolism in the painting of a 'red dove', a messenger of love, relates back to Rossetti's love for Siddal with the white poppy representing laudanum and the means of her death. In an 1873 letter to his friend William Morris, Rossetti said he intended the painting not to be a representation of the incident of the death of Beatrice, but as an ideal subject, symbolized by a trance or sudden spiritual transfiguration.

Hewett relates Dante's painting to the poem "Beata Beatrix". While the narrator spends her time in the garden with her daughter, awaiting for a letter from the boyfriend, the young girl realises their condition and identifies themselves with Nature. In the afternoon petals from the 'rose plant' fall and the 'wild oranges' scatter due to the hailstorm which arrives to clean the streets:

Out in the garden my daughter says to me,
 Trees & women burn!
 The shadows lattice on the courtyard floor
 Late afternoon... petals spill from the rose arbour,
 The wild orange scatters,
 Hail storms whiten the streets. (Alice in the Wonderland
 1-6)

Nature too feels sad and foretells that the fallen petals from the rose plant can not be pasted or replaced and so is the case with 'scattered oranges' also, whatever fallen from the trees cannot be replaced. It can be compared to life just as humans cannot alter their past. Whatever is past is past and they must move forward to give the best in the future. Similarly, Nature becomes her teacher here, and warns Hewett not to wait for the letter from the young man.

Animal images like 'kangaroo, wallaby, ("Bwalla the Hunter) and 'red horses' ("Woman by Marc") are totems which denoting "family. "power" and 'strength' which the aboriginals need to

regain in life. Bird images of 'emu' ("Bwalla the Hunter") being swapped by 'great eagles' and 'goldfinches' ("First Voronezh Letter") facing extinction being confined to cages express the strong resistance from the side of the aboriginals. Images of machines, weapons of civilization and weapons of destruction are presented on par with the more powerful weapons of resistance like , pencil, poems and press.

Noonuccal's and Hewett's poems vigorously resist the injustice meted out to the aboriginals. The whites are asked to correct themselves and come out of their colonial arrogance and race consciousness. Though the poems of Noonuccal and Hewett do not instigate the aboriginals to violence, they offer a strong resistance and defiance to injustice. Katja Mikhailovich, in his thesis entitled "Freedom of Religion, Belief, and Indigenous Spirituality, Practice and Cultural Rights" states:

Each missionary group mixed varying degrees of repressive paternalism with enlightened respect for Aboriginal traditions. Therefore, while in many conditions the influence of missionaries led to a loss of traditional spiritual beliefs, in other cases indigenous religions merged with Christianity, or Christianity was rejected altogether. (Mikhailovich)

The history of colonisation has impacted and continues to impact, the religious and spiritual beliefs of the aboriginals. While missionaries often forcefully imposed Christianity on the indigenous people, responses to colonisation varied greatly, including ambivalence, rejection resistance and finally acceptance.

Noonuccal's and Hewett's poems prescribe a spirit of resilience and request the aboriginals to keep up the aboriginal spirit and develop the ability to deal with the crisis mentally and emotionally, so that they can come back to pre-crisis status in due course of time. Their poems help the aboriginals realise their condition so that they can develop their mental and personal strengths to protect themselves from the potential negative effects of the stressors.

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Buddhism in Allen Ginsberg's Poetry

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Abstract

Allen Ginsberg occupies a unique place in American literature. He is a product of the modern age. Modern age is the age of science and technology. Science has developed a lot in 20th Century. Therefore, factories and industries have been set up in America and America is called a developed country. It is also known as the most powerful country in the world. But science has bad impact on nature. It has polluted the river and the sea. It has destroyed the beauty of the earth. Allen Ginsberg is influenced by Buddhism. Therefore, he wants to save the natural beauty of the earth by spreading the message of the Buddha.

Keywords: Allen Ginsberg, American literature, Science and technology, Factories and industries, the Buddha.

Literature is the mirror of society. It presents the picture of society. Each writer is a product of his age; he is the child of his age; and his personality is affected by his age. The author is born in the society; he grows in the society; he sees what happen in the society. He observes all the affairs taking place in the society and gathers his experiences. Later on, he expresses his experiences

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through his writings. His writings take the shape of literature whether it is poetry, drama or novel. He also tries his best to present the picture of the age to which he belongs. Chaucer presents the picture of medieval age; Shakespeare presents the picture of 16th century; and Donne presents the picture of 17th century. In Pope's poetry we find the picture of 18th century society. The poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats reflects the pictures of 19th century. The Victorian society gets its reflection in the poetry of Tennyson, Browning and Arnold. T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats also present the picture of modern society.

Modern age is the age of science and technology. Science has developed a lot during this age. People look everything from scientific point of view. They have lost their faith in God. They have become hollow. Their headpiece is filled with straw. They have shape without form; they have shade without colour; their force is paralysed; and they have gesture without motion. Twentieth Century is called the age of disintegration. Life has become a leap of broken images. People are "in rat's alleys where dead men lost their bones". Things have fallen apart; the centre cannot hold; and mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. The family has no union. The darkness exists at every heart. People like arms more than man. Modern age is also the age of individualism. People want to lead their individual life. Even the wife gets separated from husband and husband from wife. Their loneliness brings about alienation and alienation leads them to depression. Their depression takes them to existentialism and their existentialism causes suicide. Modern people have disturbances in their life. They have lost peace and harmony in life. This is for this reason that T.S. Eliot has been advised by his teachers to read oriental philosophy when he was a student at Harvard University and he studied the Bhagvad Gita, the Upanishad and Buddhism deeply. Likewise, Allen Ginsberg, a modern poet, has also been influenced by Buddhism which gets a vivid expression in his poetry.

Therefore, the present paper aims at exploring Buddhism in Ginsberg's poetry.

Allen Ginsberg is an American poet. He occupies an outstanding place in American literature. He has been influenced by Buddhism. Buddhism is a philosophy of the Buddha. It contains the sermons of the Buddha. It always talks of equality, liberty and fraternity. It has no belief in caste, creed, and religion. It often goes against untouchability. Everybody is equal in the eyes of Buddhism. Buddhism is also concerned with nature. Nature means God-made, not man-made. The sun, the moon, the earth, the mountain, the forest, the river, the sea etc are the parts of nature. They have not been created by human beings. Buddhism is eco-friendly. It never suggests anyone to pour out dirty water on any natural plants. The Buddha sat under the peepal tree on the bank of the river Niranjana for his meditation. Even the Hindus worship the peepal tree. They have a great respect for it. They believe that god Brahma exists in this tree. Therefore, they offer water to the root of this tree. But Buddhism takes it from scientific point of view. It is said that all trees inhale CO_2 and emit oxygen. But particularly at night the trees emit CO_2 . There are only a few trees which emit oxygen for twenty four hours. Among them one is the peepal tree. This is the reason why the Buddha has done his meditation work sitting under the Bodhi tree which means the peepal tree and has got his enlightenment' in his life. When the Buddha had to pass his "chaturmas" or Varshavash (four months of the rainy season), he used to live in Venuvan at Rajgirh. The word 'Venu' means 'bamboo' and Van means 'forest'. It means Venuvan was the forest of bamboo trees. Other than this tree, there were other trees also in the Venuvan. This indicates that Buddhism has love for nature. During the 'Varshavas' the Buddha stayed at one place, because in the rainy season different types are insects are seen creeping here and there. If we make our journey in this season, we will tread them down and they will be put to death. This is for the reason that the Buddha advises

everyone to stay at one place and not to make any journey in this season. This shows that Buddhism has love for 'ahinsa' and other creatures.

Allen Ginsberg is a celebrated and popular poet in American literature. He is also a leading figure of Beat movement. The Beat movement is a literary movement whose members wrote in the language of the urban streets about previously forbidden and controversial topics. It originated in 1950s and centred in the Bohemian artist communities of San Francisco's North Beach, Los Angeles, Venice West and New York's city's Greenwich villages. Allen Ginsberg is a Buddhist. The seed of Buddhism had been lying at his heart for a long time, but it germinated later on and took the shape of plant. This is the reason why he became a Buddhist in 1974. Allen Ginsberg has written many poems such as *America*, *Howl*, *Sunflower Sutra* etc. So far as the poem, *Sunflower Sutra* is concerned, it is a well-known poem based on the theme of destruction of America in the modern world. It reveals the dark side of human society. It also exposes the negative attitudes of human beings which have destroyed the beauty of nature.

Modern age is the age of industrialization. Many industries and factories have been set up in America. America is called a developed country due to the rapid growth of science and technology. America is taken to be the most powerful country in the world. But, on the other side, science has a bad impact on nature. The smoke of industries and factories has destroyed the beauty of nature. Their wastage has polluted the river water and the sea. The poet observes it and expresses his grief and sorrow on the destruction of nature. He wants to save the nature. For this he has given certain sutras through this poem. Therefore, he has titled this poem as *Sunflower Sutra*. The word, 'Sutra' is Sanskrit or Pali word which means 'formula' or thread. By 'formula' I mean 'short rule'. It has been taken from Buddhism, which indicates that Allen Ginsberg has been impressed by

Buddhism. The Buddha has prescribed certain sutras through which a man can get 'enlightenment'. They are four noble truths and eight fold paths. By following them a man may attain 'nirvana' in life and he may be a Super human being. 'Nirvana' means to get rid of the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Likewise, Allen Ginsberg has also used certain images which bring a moment of enlightenment or truth. In this way his poem, *Sunflower Sutra* becomes a Sutra.

The poem begins with the voice of lamentation. The poet has used various types of images which indicate the growth of industrial and commercial society and the loss of nature. This idea gets a vivid expression in the following lines :-

I walked on the bank of the tincan
Banana dock and sat down under
The huge shade of a Southern Pacific
Locomotive to look at the sunset over
The box house hill and cry.

Ginsberg - P-35

The poet is sitting under the huge shade of a Southern pacific locomotive. He looks at the sunset over the box house hills. He is not alone there. His friend, Jack Kerouac, is also with him. Jack is with him not only physically, but also spiritually. Both of them are shocked at the pitiable condition of nature. They cry for their natural losses. Ginsberg says to Jack that they are surrounded by the 'gnarled steel roots of trees of machinery, but not by the natural trees. It shows the industrial growth in America, but it also shows the big loss of natural beauty. Here Ginsberg has criticised the role of science in the modern age to destroy the natural creations.

The dirty water comes out of the industry and factory and falls into the river. The water of the rivers becomes oily and polluted. It gets so filthy that even the fish cannot live in it. There are mountains, but there are no hermits on them. This idea is reflected in the following lines:-

The oily water on the river mirrored the red sky Sun sank
 on top of final Frisco peaks
 no fish in that stream, no hermits on those mounts,
 Just ourselves rheumy- eyed and hungover
 like old bams on the river bank, tired and wily.

Ginsberg- P-35

Allen Ginsberg, later on, talks of the Eastern rivers which are full of Joes Greasy Sandwiches, dead baby carriages and black treadless tires. All these things floating on the surface of the water of the Eastern rivers have made the water polluted and dirty. The condoms and pots, steel knives, the dank muck and the razor-sharp artifacts are lying here and there on the bank of the rivers. The atmosphere is unhygienic and filthy. The condition has become hellish. This idea has been expressed in the following lines:-

And Hells of Eastern rivers, bridges
 cranking Joes Greasy Sandwiches,
 dead baby carriages, black tread less tires forgotten and
 unretreaded,
 the poem of river bank, condoms and pots
 steel knives, nothing stainless, only
 the dank muck and razor sharp artifacts
 passing into the past.

Ginsberg PP-35-36

The condition of the river and its area is like that of Hell. People cannot live in this bad surrounding. The air is polluted in and around the river side. In this hellish situation there is the plant of the sun flower which has been taken into notice by the poet's friend, Jack Kerouac. Jack asks the poet to look at the sun flower. Allen Ginsberg sees the sun flower and he is reminded of the sun flower of William Blake. Here the poet is found in hallucination. He feels that he is listening to the recitation of the sunflower by Blake.

Ah sunflower, weary of time.
Who countest the steps of the sun
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveler's Journey is done
Where the youth pined away with desire.
And the pale virgin shrouded in snow.
Arise from their graves and aspire.
Where my sunflower wishes to go.

Blake P-75

But after sometime, he is disillusioned and sees the real sunflower. It is covered with the dust and smoke of the factory and industry. But it has not lost its beauty. Its colour is golden. It always shines in this bad atmosphere. It is like a lotus, which floats on the surface of the water, but the water never touches it.

Allen Ginsberg takes this golden sunflower to be an emblem of the perfect beauty. It is a perfect, excellent and lovely sunflower for him. It has a permanent existence. It will never fade away. This idea gets a vivid expression the following lines:-

A perfect beauty of sun flower!
a perfect excellent lovely sun flower existence!
a sweet natural eye to the new hip moon,
woke up alive and excited grasping in the
sunset shadow sunrise golden monthly breeze!

Ginsberg P-37

In this poem Allen Ginsberg, has used metaphysical conceits "Metaphysical conceits" means "similarity between two things apparently dissimilar". The poet compares the golden sunflower to a lamp which exists at my heart. The sunflower is within us. We cannot see it through our ordinary eyes as it is very mystical. It can be seen through our spiritual eyes. Our spiritual eyes open when we go on meditating for a long time following the sutras.

When the lamp like the sun flower burns, the inner world becomes lighted and a man gets enlightenment. This moment is called the moment of attaining nirvana or moksha. The man becomes a 'perfect man' as the Buddha is. 'The perfect man' is he in whom time and eternity mingle together. It is said that time and eternity meet in the Buddha. When we consider the Buddha to be a human being, he stands for time, and when we regard Him as a Super human being, he is the emblem of eternity. When time intersects eternity, the point of intersection is called 'still point of the turning world'. This term has been used by T.S. Eliot in his famous poem, *Four Quartets*. This is the axis of the universe on which the whole world is revolving. This idea is reflected in the following lines:-

At the still point of the turning world.
 Neither flesh nor fleshless;
 Neither from nor towards;
 At the still point, there the dance is,
 But neither arrest nor movement.
 And do not call it fixity,
 Where past and future are gathered.
 Neither movement from nor towards,
 Neither ascent nor decline.
 Except for the point, the still point,
 There would be no dance,
 And there is only the dance.

Eliot – PP-15-16

Both T.S. Eliot and Allen Ginsberg are products of 20th century and they are influenced by Buddhism. But the difference between them is that Eliot has tried his best to establish a kind of faith in Catholicism through Buddhism while Allen Ginsberg wants to bring a kind of consciousness in the mind of the modern people towards nature which is also a part and parcel of Buddhism.

To sum up, we may say that throughout the poem, the poet has criticised the materialistic and selfish attitude of the human being which has destroyed the beauty of the earth. Their scientific approach has also marred the aesthetic sense. This poem is mystical in tone. It has been in the form of address. The sunflower has been addressed by the poet. It is full of conceits and far-fetched images. Therefore, this poem is in metaphysical vein. The mystical experience of spiritual perfection has also been exposed through this poem. Allen Ginsberg has also revealed the experience of the attainment of enlightenment (Buddhahood). He has unified the aesthetic world, the world of spirit and the natural world in the single image of the sunflower.

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Indigenous Writers of Arunachal Pradesh: A Narrative of Resilience

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Abstract

The literary tradition of Arunachal Pradesh is historically rooted in oral tradition. The modern literature began only in the mid-20th century. The advent of education in the region after 1947 forged the transition from oral to textual literature. Comparatively, Arunachal Pradesh is a late bloomer in literary space compared to other states of Northeast India. Despite this, Arunachal Pradesh has introduced itself to the literary frontier with brilliant writings from writers like Lummer Dai, Yeshi Dorjee Thongchi, Mamang Dai, Taro Sindik, and many others. However, the linguistic and cultural diversity of the region presents several challenges for Arunachali writers. These challenges have significantly limited the literary expression of Arunachali writers by affecting the scope of publication, translation, recognition and reception of their works in the larger literary landscape. Understanding these challenges is essential to fostering an inclusive literary environment that celebrates the diverse voices from every region of India. Therefore, the present

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paper examines the challenges faced by Arunachali writers by conducting personal interviews with authors and reviewing existing literature.

Keywords: Arunachali writers, challenges and resilience

Introduction

The literary tradition of Arunachal Pradesh is historically rooted in oral tradition. The modern literature began only in the mid-20th century. The advent of education in the region after 1947 forged the transition from oral to textual literature. Comparatively, Arunachal Pradesh is a late bloomer in literary space compared to other states of Northeast India. Despite this, Arunachal Pradesh has introduced itself to the literary frontier with brilliant writings from writers like Lummer Dai, Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi, Mamang Dai, Taro Sindik, and many others. However, the linguistic and cultural diversity of the region presents several challenges for Arunachali writers. These challenges have significantly limited the literary expression of Arunachali writers by affecting the scope of publication, translation, recognition and reception of their works in the larger literary landscape. Understanding these challenges is essential to fostering the inclusive essence of the literary tradition of India that celebrates the diverse voices from every region of the country. Therefore, the present paper examines the challenges faced by Arunachali writers by conducting personal interviews with authors and reviewing existing literature.

Linguistic Barrier

One of the primary challenges for the writers of Arunachal Pradesh is the issue of language. Language and literature share an interwoven relationship. Language is the backbone of literature. It is through language that literature is created and interpreted. Language conveys the underlying intentions and emotions of a work to the reader. The flawless and appropriate use of language enhances the literariness in literature. In the preliterate tribal society of Arunachal Pradesh, the language issue poses a significant challenge for the writers. The 26 districts of Arunachal

Pradesh are home to multiple ethnic communities. Each tribe has its language and literature. The linguistic diversity is so vast that the language spoken by one tribe is unintelligible to others, even those living within the same region. The languages of Arunachal Pradesh are non-script, so its literature also exists in the form of oral tradition. The oral literature consists of folk songs, dances, dramas, pantomimes, myths, and legends. The constituents of oral literature are fundamental to the existence of the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. It is embedded with the tribal worldview, philosophy, moral values and evolutionary history of man and the universe. Besides, the oral literature also plays a primary role in constituting the customary laws to keep traditional moral order intact. The function of oral literature does not end here. It is also a reliable source to trace the cultural and conventional history of Arunachal Pradesh. According to Tana Showren, in non-literate tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, oral tradition is a crucial aspect of cultural expression and historical documentation.

Arunachali writers are greatly influenced and draw inspiration from oral literature. The writers incorporate elements from oral literature with modern genres, which enhance the creative dynamic of their work. Even when writing in dominant languages, Arunachali writers infuse their work with the elements of oral literature such as proverbs, adages, parables, sayings and riddles, which highlight the relevance of oral literature in the modern literary scenario of Arunachal Pradesh. However, numerous indigenous words, expressions, and practices do not have exact or equivalent translations in English, Hindi, or other established languages. Language and literature express cultural psychology, the traditional mind, and imagination. The writers face the constraints of finding explicit expressions of thought, emotions, metaphor, similes, sayings, proverbs, riddles, rhapsodies, and even practices in how they are done orally in the native languages. In dominant languages, the indigenous expression loses its true essence and taste. It fails to present the exact picture of what is said or sensed in the native

language. An example is a poetic expression of the beauty of a woman. In the Galo tribe of Arunachal Pradesh, the metaphors that are used to express the beauty of women are to a particular species of Grasshopper and the moon:

KOMCHI GARI NE KAKEN NE NYUKMO (in Galo)

(A beautiful face as Grasshopper)

POLO GARI NE KAKEN NE NYUKMO (in Galo)

(A beautiful face as moon)

Here, while the moon is an everyday object of comparison for the beauty of a woman worldwide, Grass Hopper is not such. When the metaphor of Grasshopper is translated into English, the expression loses its poetic flavour, which is there when expressed in the native language. Such cases are numerous.

In the traditional setting of Arunachal Pradesh, the shaman holds a central role in the society. In Galo, shamans are called *Nyibu*. In Adi, they are called *Miri*. Likewise, shamans are addressed differently by different tribes. They are considered specially gifted people who can penetrate the past, present and future. They are believed to have supernatural power to travel to the spirit world and communicate messages to the souls of ancestors. The shaman alerts and predicts the possible calamities, epidemics, and accidents and provides a latent way to prevent them. Like an anthropologist, shamans are well-versed in the myths and legends related to the evolution of the universe, the creation of man, and cultural history. The shaman transacts his knowledge and wisdom to teach morals to the layman in the shamanic tongue, which sounds like chanting. It is usually performed during rituals related to the ceremonies of birth, marriage, death, and festivals. The expression of words in the shamanic tongue differs significantly from those used in everyday communication. Finding equivalent expressions or translations of the shamanic tongue in Hindi, English, or other languages is nearly impossible. The writers who wish to incorporate such expressions,

which is an integral part of oral literature, in their writings are still battling to find a solution to this issue. Kaling Borang, a renowned bilingual writer from the state who writes in Assamese and English, says, "Being educated in Assamese medium, I am weak in English. To translate Shamanic words, one needs much more command over the English language, and many words cannot be found in the English dictionary."

Moreover, the language of Arunachal Pradesh is tone-based. The meaning of words changes with the change in tone. Finding inadequacy in English, Hindi or any other languages to express the nuance of intricacies of indigenous languages, the tribes like Galo, Adi, Apatani, Nyishi, Wancho, and a few others developed scripts for their respective languages. These scripts are created by modifying the Roman script to translate certain tones and expressions that cannot be expressed through the English and Hindi alphabets. In the acquired script, writing in indigenous languages appeared in the literary tradition of Arunachal Pradesh from writers such as Kaling Borang, Tagang Taki, Talom Rukbo, Tony Koyu, TakopZirido, Tagang Taki, Yabin Dabi Zirido and many others. However, the issue of language did not end here. As stated above, Arunachal Pradesh is a region of diverse tribal communities where the language of one tribe is unintelligible to another.

In such a situation, writers who write in their native language encounter many obstacles. First, to grab the best opportunities, the contemporary generation of Arunachal Pradesh is educated in a language entirely different from their mother tongue. Many are settled in metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata for jobs and higher studies. Away from their homeland, the present generation failed to get the ambience to grow an understanding of and appreciation of their mother tongue and culture. Those who stayed back home have also missed the opportunity to learn, as the medium of instruction in schools in Arunachal Pradesh is English and Hindi. All these factors have contributed to distancing the contemporary generation further away from the chance of

learning their mother tongue, traditional practices and culture. The modern generation, exposed to foreign cultures and languages, is now unfamiliar with their mother tongue and cultural practices. The older generation is mostly illiterate. Those few educated older generations are more concerned about earning their livelihood than reading literature. This scenario has limited the populations who speak, read and write in native languages. The writers of native languages have limited scope to attract a considerable readership within the community and the state.

Second, due to the enormous language diversity, Arunachal Pradesh does not have a common language for literary communication. It creates a situation where a work written in the language of a particular tribe is incomprehensible to another tribe. For example, TakopZirido writes poetry in the Galo language. However, the Galos cannot be read and understood by the audience of tribes other than the Galo. Here, the language barrier not only limits the reach of writers to a diverse audience, it also affects the sales of books. It deprives the writers of potential audiences and recognition. Due to a lack of eclectic readers, the writers writing in indigenous languages receive no appreciation or criticism for improvising, dampening their writing zeal. All these factors portray that in Arunachal Pradesh, writers writing in indigenous languages are trapped in helpless situations for which they see no hope. Sad, but the reality is that writers like Tagang Taki, Kaling Borang, Tony Koyu, TakopZirido, and Yabin Dai Zirido, who choose to write in the native language, suffer from the obscurity of limelight that writing in English and Hindi would have offered.

Then, writers such as Lummer Dai, Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi, and others choose the Assamese language for their creative discourse. Writing in the Assamese language was not merely out of choice; these writers had no option apart from this language. One must go back in history to understand why the first generation of Arunachali writers selected the Assamese language. Initially,

the education pattern of Arunachal Pradesh was developed in the Assamese language. Assamese was the medium of instruction in educational institutes. Assam was also the nearest destination for higher studies for the first educated generation of Arunachal Pradesh. So, the writers of this era, educated in Assamese medium, were influenced by Assamese language and literature. They find it more comfortable to write in Assamese than in English and Hindi. Writing in the Assamese language, Lummer Dai and Yeshi Dorjee Thongchi enthralled the Assamese literary world with their brilliant narratives on the cultural life of the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. The Assam Sahitya Sabha, in honour of Lummer Dai, instituted the 'Lummer Dai Bota Award'. Yeshi Dorjee Thongchi received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2005 for his Assamese novel *Mauna Outh Mukhar Hriday* (2001). Their place in modern Assamese literature is irreplaceable. However, the irony is that the works of these two literary pioneers of Arunachal Pradesh are unintelligible to the Arunachali people for whom they have written. The primary reason behind this is the shift from Assamese to Hindi and English as the medium of instruction in schools because of the 1972 Language Policy in Arunachal Pradesh.

The Language Policy of 1972 proved unfavourable for the writers writing in the Assamese language. It threatens the reception of potential readership in the state. The language they have chosen to write is no longer read and understood by the present generation in Arunachal Pradesh. The preferred language created a distance between the writer and the reader. Lummer Dai and Y.D Thongchi are two literary pioneers of Arunachal Pradesh, but Arunachali people can access their works only through translations, which are also very scarce. Kaling Borang received the Lummer Dai Luminous Award 2016 for *Chilukor Juri* (2013), an anthology of poems in the Assamese language. Despite their achievements and contributions in literature, Arunachali writers writing in Assamese are away from Arunachali readers'

notice because of the chosen language. These writers experienced metaphorical death even before their actual death due to the absence of readers in their home state.

Cultural Complexities and Translation

The translation process is one way to disseminate literary works across different linguistic and cultural boundaries. However, translation presents both opportunities and challenges for Arunachali writers. The works of Arunachali writers are intricately intertwined with the customs, rituals, traditions, cultural practices, folklore, and worldviews of tribal people living in the state. The translation of the works demands not just fluency in the target language but also a deep comprehension of the subtle cultural nuances and social set-up of the tribal society of Arunachal Pradesh. Misrepresentation of cultural details and expression may distort the meaning of the original work and reduce its authenticity. The challenges lie in finding a proficient translator. In translating the works done in the Assamese language, the translator from Arunachal Pradesh is well-versed in the cultural scenario of Arunachal Pradesh. However, as mentioned above, they cannot read Assamese. Translators from Assam can comprehend Assamese, but they do not share a cultural likeness with the tribals of Arunachal Pradesh. Yeshi Dorjee Thongchi, sharing his experience with his translated works, said that he is not very content with the English translation of his work, *Sonam* and *Mouna Ounth Mukar Hriday*. The translator of both the novels is from Assam. Unaccustomed to the culture and language of Arunachal Pradesh, the translator has failed to translate the essence of the original work. He gives instances from his novel *Mouna OunthMukar Hriday*, which has been translated into English with the title *Silent Lips and Murmuring Heart*.

Thongchi says that the title of the novel itself is wrongly translated into English. Expressing his discontent with the translated version, he says instead of *Silent Lips and Murmuring Heart*, the title should have been *Silent Lips Murmuring Heart*, which means the same as *Mouna OunthMukar Hriday* in English.

Thongchi adds that in the English translation of the novel, the translator had replaced the indigenous terms that the author had used in the original text with Assamese. He gives the example that the translator has used the Assamese term for brother, “Kokaideu”, instead of using “Tete” (meaning brother in the Nyishi language), which the author had intentionally used in the original version. Assamese term “horas” was used as the translated word to signify a typical bamboo basket that women carry in the Nyishi community. By incorporating native terms, Thongchi intended to promote the language and culture of his home state to generate understanding and appreciation among readers from diverse backgrounds. Thongchi says that the unconscious interference of the translator’s mother tongue in the translated version has censored the holistic objective of the novel. Thongchi also shared his experience with translating the eponymous novel *Sonam* into Hindi. In the first translated draft of *Sonam*, the translator gave the Assamese cultural background to the story, such as a betel nut tree in the backyard of Sonam’s house. Serving betel nuts to guests is part of the culture of Assam, not Arunachal Pradesh. The translator added this version on his own in the first draft. The novel *Sonam* is a story set in Tawang, a cold place where the climatic conditions are not favourable for the growth of betel nut trees, and neither such event was mentioned in the original work. Thus, in the hands of ignorant translators who are not well informed about the cultural background of Arunachal Pradesh, there is a maximum probability of misrepresentation of cultural elements in translation, which will distort the meaning of the original works in the translation. The complexity of getting a translator fluent in the source language and the culture and tradition of Arunachal Pradesh hamper the possibility of extension of translation.

Meanwhile, there is also a lack of conducive support for translation work in Arunachal Pradesh. Adding to that, so far, higher institutions or any organization have made little or no attempt to translate works written in Assamese and native

languages. The initiative in translation could have helped the authors and their works to connect to a wide readership and recognition.

Going further, Arunachal Pradesh is a land of diverse ethnic communities. The diversity is so vast that it encompasses the history, faith, tradition, belief, myths, legends, language, culture, food habits, dress, festivals, moral conduct, custom, customary law, worldview, and position of man and woman in the society. This vast diversity poses significant challenges for writers attempting to portray communities they do not belong to. Here, it is to be noted that tribals from the region are extremely sensitive and protective about the representation of their socio-cultural sensibilities. The slight misrepresentation may perpetuate misunderstandings between the writers and the community that the writer has written about. There is a possibility that the disagreement may flare into ethnic conflict, which may extend to the involvement of the tribe that the writer belongs to and the tribe that is being written on. So, the writer has to be extra careful if they write about other communities they do not belong to.

On the other hand, linguistic diversity adds another barrier for writers when writing about the community they do not belong to. An accurate representation of a culture needs a proper understanding of the language. The diverse linguistic landscape of Arunachal Pradesh means that writers often need to rely on translations or interpreters, which can result in a loss of nuance and context. Taro Sindik, a significant Hindi writer from Arunachal Pradesh, says such instances limit writers' creative ability. Joram Yalam, a prominent Hindi writer from Arunachal Pradesh, shared her experience writing *Tani Momen* (2014). The book *Tani Momen* is a compilation of the folk stories related to the life and time of Abo Tani. The tribes such as Galo, Adi, Apatani, Nyishi, and Tagin (commonly known as the Tani group) consider Abo Tani as their common ancestor. These groups have their respective versions of the stories of Abo Tani. It is observed by the author

that there are slight changes in the narratives of Abo Tani in different groups of the Tani tribe. Joram Yalam said she consulted and discussed the various version of the stories of Abo Tani from the experts of all the Tani groups to make a correct portrayal of the stories. However, after the publication of the book, she faced disagreement and resentment because of miscommunication. Some dissents perceived that the author had hurt the sentiment of the people by interpreting the myth of Abo Tani from a modern perspective. Such instances may be the reason that, so far, no Arunachali writers have explored beyond their respective tribes. The complexities of representation, the risks of misinterpretation, and the ethical considerations surrounding cultural sensitivity are critical issues that Arunachali writers must navigate.

Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi, a writer who belongs to the Sherdukpen tribe, has attempted to navigate this challenge by writing about the tribes he does not belong to. He has four anthologies of short stories: *Papor Pukhuri* (2000), *BaanhPhularGondha* (2005), *Anye EkhonPratiyoita* (2009), and *Dhar Aru AnyanyaGalpa* (2021). In his short stories, he has explored tribes such as Mishmi, Bugun, Nyishi, and so on. Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi's works would have offered a model for writers to navigate the barrier of cultural complexities. However, his short stories are written in Assamese. Most of his short stories are yet to be translated into languages such as English and Hindi, which contemporary Arunachali writers can comprehend.

Publication and Marketing Constraints

The literary landscape of Arunachal Pradesh is rich and diverse. It represents the unique social and cultural diversity of the region. Despite this, writers from Arunachal Pradesh often face significant challenges in gaining platforms for publication. The publication challenges faced by Arunachali are rooted in socio-cultural, linguistic, economic, and institutional factors. Publication houses are almost non-existent in Arunachal Pradesh. The absence of publishers in the state has compelled the writers to look

for publishers outside the state. In this process, Arunachali writers face difficulties getting their work published. The region was historically and politically marginalized, making the region isolated and disconnected from the conscious of mainstream for long time, which indirectly impacted the scope of publication of Arunachali writers. Reputed publication houses are unwilling to take risks by giving a chance to writers from an unpopular region. L.W. Bapu laments that for this reason, “Arunachali writers are not taken seriously by publishing houses.” Y.D. Thongchi recalled the difficulties he had in publishing his novel *Mouna Ounth Mukhar Hriday* (Silent Lips Murmuring Heart). The book was written in the year 1989-90. It appeared in *Prantik*, an influential Assamese Magazine of the early 90s edited by the most respected litterateur of Assam, Dr. Bhabendranath Saikia. The novel could not get a publisher even after getting published in an influential literary magazine. The author approached many publishers for publication, but it was rejected everywhere. However, after many years, it was published in 2001. The book received the Sahitya Academy Award in 2005.

Moreover, there is no provision for publication of financial assistance from the state government or other organizations. So, most writers go for self-publication by bearing the burden of publication, advertisements and bookselling. The financial constraints compel the writers to opt for the publication of a limited number of copies. It limits the availability of books in the market, which prevents the accessibility of works to interested readers. The inaccessibility of works diminishes the scope of recognition and appreciation for their works. In a telephonic interview on 25th May 2024, L.W Bapu cites the reason for the non-availability of his novel *Khanduma's Curse Lovers and Witches in the Eastern Himalayas* (2012) as a non-response attitude from the publisher. He contacted the publisher for the publication of the second edition of the novel, but the publisher was non-responsive to his request.

The condition of writers writing in the indigenous languages is the worst sufferers. The publishers are unfamiliar with the Modified Roman Script the writers use. It creates hurdles for the writers to get their works published.

Jumsi Siram, one of the pioneers of Hindi literature in Arunachal Pradesh, lives in the remote village of Tadin. He has no access to any good publication house or a potential platform to sell his book. He self-published his books through a local publisher at Aalo (a small town in the West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh). The books are released during the celebration of festivals like Mopin or on rare occasions. Siram says that he gets buyers for his books by releasing his books on such occasions.

Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society (APLS) was founded in 2006 to promote a conducive literary atmosphere in the state. The organization is spearheaded by writers such as Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi and Mamang Dai. To provide a platform for literary expression, APLS supports and engages both emerging and established writers from Arunachal Pradesh. It provides funds for book publication, organizes literary confluence, and publishes a literary magazine, *Prayas*, to showcase the works of both new and established writers. Despite its significant contributions, the Arunachal Pradesh Literary Society faces challenges such as limited funding, lack of infrastructure and scarcity of resources. These limitations hamper the efficiency of APLS in hosting events, ensuring funds for publication, and providing resources to writers and scholars. Yeshe Dorjee Thongchi, the current Chief Editor of the *Prayas*, mentioned in the editorial of the January 2024 issue that there was irregularity of magazine publication in the past due to lack of funds.

Conclusion

Arunachali writers writing on socio-cultural, political, economic and social realities provide invaluable insight into the diverse cultural and social fabric of the tribal society of Arunachal Pradesh. They play a crucial role in promoting and preserving

cultural heritage and representing the voices of people through literature. However, the limited access to publishing and marketing platforms, financial constraints, and linguistic and cultural diversity pose substantial barriers to realizing their full potential and disseminating their work. If these challenges are to be navigated, effort is required from various stakeholders, including literary institutions, academicians, scholars, publishers, and the government.

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**An Eco-critical Study of Olga
Tokarczuk's Novel *Drive Your Plow
Over the Bones of the Dead***

***Anchal Sharma**

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Abstract

Eco criticism is an interdisciplinary literary and cultural theory that emerged in 20th century after nurturing itself in several segregated disciplines like Environmentalism, Green Studies, and Deep Ecology and so on. Eco criticism as an umbrella term is marked by a shift away from specific, practical issues of the environment to a more general critique of modern civilization, which considers the impact of human activities on the environment in general and ecosystem at large. In short, Eco criticism builds up a connection between man and nature that has been revived time and again in several art forms, rituals, philosophy and tradition, seeking to raise awareness and promote global welfare of all creatures. First used by William Rueckert in 1978 in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism", it explores relationship between literature and physical environment from creative and aesthetic

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perspective. Olga Tocarczuk, one of the most eminent post modern female polish writers, took up these issues from a new perspective in her novel *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, which is by no means a conventional crime story. This existential thriller by the Nobellaureate examines the ethical and philosophical dimensions of human-nature relationships weaving in depth the eco-poetry of William Blake to redress and alarm humanity against the havoc man and modernity has played on nature aggravating eco-crises for several decades. It unveils the flipped, unheard and the inconceivable version of man and animal relation, which widens up the horizons of understanding of our eternal and inevitable bond with the Nature and Earth.

Keywords: Interdisciplinary; Environmentalism; William Blake; Ecosystem; Havoc; Eco-crises

Mankind has always been plagued by the fear of the Other. This fear of the Other has led to the creation of boundaries, to distance, distinguish, and disconnect oneself from the other, marking one's private privileges, spaces and identities. Whether it is human, animal, nature or the universe, the binaries we draw in relation to the Other is evident everywhere in the discourses, where 'the dominant' decides the fate of its subservient s. However, 'different' or 'Other' doesn't always have to mean 'dangerous' and so being the most developed species on Earth, it entails us with an ethical responsibility to ensure the safety and security of the Other, non- human species and environment, which in the words of Jewish- French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas 'looks both down upon and up to me: It looks down upon me as it masters me with its obligation "Thou Shall not Kill!", but at the same time obliges me as a being that needs my help'.¹ These obligations according to Levinas exists, no matter if the Other feels or fulfills the same towards me. The ethics of treating the Other is about how we respond to and take care of the other who appears to us as strange, dangerous, illogical, and unlike anyone else—someone we will never be able to comprehend or accept.

This is where the role of an Eco-critic steps in. Eco-criticism, the term first used by William Rueckert in 1978 in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism", explores the relationship between literature and physical environment from creative and aesthetic perspective. Using an earth-centered approach to literary studies, Eco-critics critically analyze literature to help spread awareness of the ways in which art expresses concern for the natural world. It also closely examines the image of an inevitable destruction man has imposed on nature over time and addresses serious concern for humanity along with the ecosystem which sustains them. The origin of modern Ecocentric ethics is traceable to Aldo Leopold, the inventor of the concept of the "land ethic", which "enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals".²

Olga Tokarczuk (9 January 1962-), the first Polish female prose writer to win the 2018 Nobel Award is known for her unique and creative narrative spanning through several centuries to guide the reader beyond the surface layer of modernity and towards the core of the very nature of humankind. *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, first published in 2009, is an unconventional murder mystery, set in the mountains, near border of Czechoslovakia, in a remote Polish village, Janina, protagonist devotes the dark winter days to studying astrology, translating the poetry of William Blake, and taking care of the summer homes of wealthy Warsaw residents. Janina loves animals. She is a close observer of animal behaviour and feels the pain of the defenseless animals in the hands of poachers:

Sorrow, I felt great sorrow, an endless sense of mourning for every dead Animal. One period of grief is followed by another, so I am in constant mourning. This is my natural state. (Tokarczuk 106).

In yet another incident, she tells how her body is deeply connected with pain of dead animals: "How many times can one look at a dead body? I felt a stab of pain in my lungs and found

it hard to breathe. I sat down on the snow, and once again my eyes began to stream with tears". (Tokarczuk 106)

Unlike any crime or mystery fiction where criminals are avenged for their past misdeeds or cruelty against human beings, this novel avenges the death of animals with men of high repute in the society who begin to die under mysterious circumstances. In an interview, Tokarczuk further elaborates on her intentions behind writing such a fiction: "Just writing a book to know who is the killer is wasting paper and time, so I decided to put into it animal rights and a story of dissenting citizens who realise that the law is immoral and see how far can they go with saying no to it (. . .)". All the men of high repute in the novel are indeed the animal hunters who kill these defenseless creatures for their own amusement and profit. Describing the pathetic animal hunting ritual, Janina, the protagonist of the novel utters: 'They shot at everything that moves' (Tokarczuk 109)

Since Janina is old and lives all by herself near the Czech border, she is many times seen crossing the border, either intentionally or unintentionally, often imagining a better world beyond borders: "The border would appear in my mind, and that gentle, beautiful country beyond it." (Tokarczuk 89). Clearly her imagination refers to everything absent in her life that she dearly wishes- be it terms of societal norms and laws which works only in favor of the rich and the powerful, the abuse of animal rights, or the mistreatment of elderly ladies and good citizens in general. According to Lacan, the function of the imaginary in the schema of the subject is to create fantasies that allow the subject to appear whole while masking the loss associated with its foundation. In the novel, Janina is not happy in the place she is living and this sets a state of gloominess throughout the novel both inside and outside.

Janinas' rural everyday life is unfortunately a reality marked by an arrow minded patriarchal legacy, and gets interrupted with the mysterious death of Janina's neighbours: the poacher Big Foot,

suffocated after a small bone gets stuck in his throat. But the death of Big Foot is not the only mystery to shake the apparent security of the community. Soon many other hunters in the village begin to die a mysterious death, which Janina sees as the revenge of animals and of nature itself. In her battle to shed light on the murders, Janina faces the ridicule of her fellow villagers, who see her investigations as delusions of an eccentric sixty-year-old.

Janina, never refers to people around her with their real name but by what according to her is their prominent trait like Odd ball, Big Foot, Good Luck etc. She hates hunters and she does everything she can to stop hunters from hunting. She reports hunters for poaching, but nobody listens to her. The regret of being in a position of the weak, oppressive and the subservient; her deep belief in Astrology, the calculated influence of planets in shaping ones destiny; and her own theories behind everything overpowers her imagination so much so that it inflicted a deep psychic wound which ignited her feeble demeanor into a beast seeking revenge, not ready to forgive anyone involved in the animal killings, and act as a hidden leader fighting on their behalf and acting as a hidden leader fighting on their behalf, proclaiming their rights and snatching the life of those men involved in the animal killings, as the last resort to bring back justice and freedom for animals from those tyrant usurpers, marking the end of the exploitative culture that was prevailing. The fragment in the novel titled 'Uranus in Leo' suggests a similar turn of events in the planets as per Janina, when pain transforms into a power and interchanges its place, turning the tables, so the ruler becomes ruled and the slave, master.

But this psychic transformation from a meek old lady to a coldhearted murderess is so quick and unintentional that it leaves with no trace of crime in her memory. Whenever she commits a murder, she would immediately forget everything about it as if she it was not a conscious attempt of murder. Realizing the same she utters:

I wasn't lying when I kept insisting it was Animals taking revenge on people. That was the truth. I was their Tool. But will you believe me when I say I didn't do it entirely consciously? I instantly forgot what had happened, as if there were some powerful Defense Mechanism protecting me. (Tokarczuk 255-256)

Her confession about not killing them in a conscious state refers to influence of some powerful psychic attack which provoked her into taking revenge on behalf of the ruthless hunting and poaching of the animals. Throughout the novel, Janina interprets deaths of all men through astrological charts, demonstrating how their deaths were predetermined by fate, which manifested itself in the form of animals demanding retribution. All this adds a fearful and mysterious tone to the novel.

According to renowned utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), it is not the power of reason, but the ability to feel pain which gives a being the right to moral consideration. He also stated that treating animals cruelly was similar to enslavement. As per Bentham's perspective, an adult horse or dog is far more intelligent and talkative than an infant that is just a day, a week, or even a month old. This contrasts starkly with the current inhuman treatment of animals, where 'Killing has become exempt from punishment. And as it goes unpunished, nobody notices it anymore.' (Tokarczuk 110) From a utilitarian standpoint, deeds are only morally justified or immoral when they result in enjoyment or suffering. This is very well reflected through the central character Janina who goes to the police station to complain about the illegal hunting going on and about rights of the citizens and those of animals in general but when she realizes that the police was not supportive, kind or even respectful to her, she ponders: The citizen whom the public services ignore is in a way condemned to non-existence. Yet it would be a mistake to forget that he who has no rights is not bound by any duties. (Tokarczuk 205)

For Janina, animals are far better than humans in responding to love, respect, affection and care. She had two dogs, who she called her 'little girls'. One day they disappeared. Recalling about them she says: They were more human people in every possible way. More affectionate, wiser, more joyful...And people think they can do what they want to Animals, as if they're just things. I think my Dogs were shot by the hunters.' (Tokarczuk 200). In fact, she was aware of the fact that animals have a greater sense of justice, a thing we should learn from animals:

'I used to have two Dogs. They kept close watch to make sure everything was divided fairly- food, petting, privileges. Animals have a very strong sense of justice. I remember the look in their eyes whenever I did something wrong, whenever I scolded them unfairly or failed to keep my word. They'd gaze at me with such awful grief, as if they simply couldn't understand how I could have broken the sacred law. They taught me quite basic, plain and simple justice.' I stopped talking for a moment, and then added: 'We have a view of the world, but animals have a sense of the world, do you see?' (Tokarczuk 200)

For Olga, as she narrates the reality of the human-inhumane-ness, a turn to ethics is both desirable and inevitable which she beautifully does through her art by strategically blurring the boundaries in the novel. The novel is en-wrapped with several lines from the famous poetry of the romantic poet William Blake to unveil not just the present ugly face of the modern man but also to sensitize her readers and the whole world about the age old exploitation nature had been enduring, crippling itself in the hands of the wisest species on earth. In fact, all the quotations in the novel by William Blake have one thing in common; they all represent a helpless state of animals and sympathetic yet aggressive eyes of the nature, evoking in its readers a deep sense of philosophical and moral responsibility towards the animal habitat and nature in general.

In one of the quotes in the novel taken from Blake's poem "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" reads: 'The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction'. In the poem, Blake clearly contrasts the behavior of two animals: the wild, untamable tiger and the eminently trainable horse. They are symbols of boundless energy and inspiration on the one hand, and mindless training and received ideas on the other. Blake states his preference very clearly and promotes the fact that instinctual wrath as moral discretion are far wiser than the Mindless training of the people by social institutions which promotes only the exploitation of the weak and the voiceless, under rightful claim of being the most developed species on earth.

Blake here writes about the importance of trying to understand the world around us, of building our own philosophy rather than follow the exploitative orthodox norms blindly becoming the most dangerous, inhuman and estranged species on earth. If eating animals is giving us nutrition, taste and strength at the sake of disturbing the ecological balance, it's not a moral or ethical but a selfish choice. Tokarczuk too, declared it in an interview that she had no intention of writing a canonical detective novel. Her initial intent, in her words, was anything but: "I wanted to explore this question, which is at the heart of the book: what can we do as good people against a law that is bad?"³

Elaine Scarry has noted that the Kantian allegiance to a worldwide community, and the values it is meant to maintain, depends on the cosmopolitan's ability to imagine other people, those who far away and those whose injury one must conceive as one's own.⁴ Janina proclaims it very well in the novel as she informs: '...Man has a great responsibility towards wild Animals- to help them to live their lives, and it's his duty towards domesticated animals to return their love and affection, for they give us far more than they receive from us.' (Tokarczuk 111) Olga sensitizes the reader very well about this tragic situation through her protagonist Janina when she realizes that we limit our world ourselves :

'You know what, sometimes it seems to me we're living in a world that we fabricate for ourselves. We decide what's good and what isn't, we draw maps of meanings for ourselves...And then we spend our whole lives struggling with what we have invented for ourselves. The problem is that each of us has our own version of it, so people find it hard to understand each other.' (Tokarczuk 221)

"The Clementsian landscape is a balance of nature, a steady-state condition maintained so long as every species remains in place. Everything is cooperatively and interdependently linked; if one element is disturbed, the whole will be changed".⁵ The thematic cluster of the novel centers on ideas such as human intervention into animal habitats, hunting practices, the human consumption of animals as well as the exploitation, incarceration—and prolonged cruelty – to animals for human profit.

Janina Duszejko takes a vocal and committed stand in this eco-feminist struggle against the above practices. She also refutes the religious claims of the priest to kill animals when she hears him saying...hunters are the ambassadors and partners of the Lord God in the work of creation, in caring for game animals, in cooperation. Nature, among which man lives, needs help in order to flourish (Tokarczuk 236). Janina immediately felt a strong force taking over her through her muscles, giving her power to shake the blind faith of the people gathered there and yells : How can you listen to such nonsense without batting an eyelid? Have you lost your minds? Or your hearts? Have you still got hearts? (Tokarczuk 238) Perhaps she is the only one who could realize or see the truth .

Although Olga never claimed her identity as an Ecofeminist but her active participation as an animal activist does somewhere makes her an ecofeminist, fighting for the rights of animals so they can breathe freely in their natural state. Her writing can be read as the practice of nature preservationist, reclaiming and protecting nature from malign influences of modernity. It also seeks to

demonstrate the relative value of life, both human and animal; what life's purpose should be; environmental issues; how we treat the elderly; how we treat people whom we think are living on the fringe; ageing; consumerism; environmentalism and so on. All these themes are thrown deep into the novel. Through constant boundary-crossing, dehierarchization, interrelating separated spheres, and prevailing cultural concepts, ideologies, and systems of interpretation, the text exposes limitations of human society to interact, experience and sense the need of the other. It explores different perspectives on the thin spectrum of the line that separates life from death, sanity from insanity, and society from anarchy. It questions the very foundation of the blind and corrupt societal structure that defines, decides, and determines the fate of the other, dropping to a level worse than animal.

Another unique feature of the novel is that Olga Capitalized several common and proper nouns in the middle of the sentences like 'Ailments', 'Night', 'Person', 'Tools', 'Being', 'Gloom', 'Creatures', and so on. Such a use of language sets the theme and emphasis of the author which is, clinging, sensitizing, rebuking, awakening and enlightening her readers on the most urgent contemporary issues and realities which remains unnoticed by the modern man.

Olga Tokarczuk successfully paints the picture of the state of nature, man and the ecosystem today, and rightfully declares that '...the world was not made for Man, and definitely not for his comfort or Pleasure' (Tokarczuk 120). Last but not the least the title *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* also taken up from one of the poems of William Blake, conveys a strong warning to all people—rather than a cry out for help from nature—that if conscious human efforts are not made to restore and respect other species and nature, it might have to drive its plow over the bones of dead humanity to bloom back to its free and natural state.

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Navigating Identity, Displacement and Resistance: A Postcolonial Study of Tabish Khair's Select Poems

*Subhi Kumari

**Binod Mishra

Abstract

India, being one of the colonized nations under British rule, has a significant experience of the horrors of colonialism. This experience shaped the political affiliations, policies, governance and ideological positions of the country even after independence. Mass migration, violence and displacement because of the traumatic events left a deep psychological impact on the population. People in post-colonial India tried to deal with the hybrid identity through reassertion of their cultural identity. Among many other mediums, literature became an important tool in critiquing colonial rule and reconstructing cultural identity. Some important names working in this direction are; Salman Rushdie, R.K. Narayan, Arundhati Roy, Amitav Ghosh, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Tabish Khair among others.

Tabish Khair, an Indian poet, novelist and critic has emerged as an eminent voice in postcolonial literature. Khair's poems capture the essence of postcolonial dislocation, identity crises, and the tension between Eastern and

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Western cultural paradigms. His works challenge Western hegemony and show the people struggling over the dilemma regarding identity in the postcolonial setting. He addresses the complexity of migration and identity by arguing against the automatic associations between migration and alienation. This article aims at locating identity as hybrid and ambivalent by studying Khair's poems through a postcolonial lens using the theory of Homi K Bhabha.

Keywords: postcolonial, immigrant, identity, hybrid, displacement, erasure

Introduction

Postcolonialism emerged in the mid-20th century in response to the historical events of decolonisation that took place after World War II when many Asian and African countries gained independence from European colonial powers. Ideologically, Postcolonialism gets its fundamental frame from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978). Said argues that "Orientalism" is not just an innocent scholarly discipline but a tool of imperial power, which represents the East in ways that justify Western Colonialism and domination (01). The Occident portrays the Orient as the primitive other in contrast to a superior, civilised and rational self (Said, 6). Later on, scholars like Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994), Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak in *Can the Subaltern Speak* (1988) among others widen this discourse further to the cultural, psychological and social impact of colonisation. To understand the term postcolonial, it is important to distinguish between postcolonial and anticolonial. While differentiating between these two terms S. Gopi. Krishna rightly remarks, "anticolonial thought is the ideology critique of colonialism, whereas postcolonial thought signals a critique of the anticolonial conformism to the culture of imperialism (its premises, norms, styles of valuation, schemes, and categories)" (266). Postcolonial theory aims to decolonise mindsets and values, promoting conceptual reorientation towards knowledge and perspectives developed

outside the West (Young, 1). It explores how colonial histories continue to shape global power dynamics, wealth disparities, and the marginalization of non-Western perspectives (Nair, 1). Postcolonialism goes beyond understanding the world as it is; it also envisions how it ought to be, questioning existing power structures and offering alternative readings of history and contemporary issues (Nair, 2).

Questioning the existing power structure occurs in various ways and literature is one of the most powerful media for that purpose. Literature explores the dynamics of colonial power by challenging and deconstructing the stereotypes perpetuated by colonial discourse through the reinterpretation of colonial narratives. Postcolonial literature tries to reclaim identity and history not only by giving voice to the colonised but also by focusing on the indigenous experiences and resistance. Krishna further remarks, "Elaborating Indian history and cultural politics, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Partha Chatterjee, and Dipesh Chakrabarty are among the most influential of those scholars who have generated the style of thinking called "postcolonial" (265). Postcolonial writers in India mostly talk about "historical nationalist issues such as diaspora, migration, refugees, colonial hegemony; socio-economic and cultural issues like east-west encounter, caste and class" (Bharali, 44) among many others. Writers like Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, and Tabish Khair to name a few, are writing with "dynamism, distinctive voice, vigour and a level of self-reliance" (Bharali, 44).

It is not devoid of irony that Indian writers most often gain their popularity only when they shift their base from their native country and make their mark by expressing their frustrations, anguish and angst arising out of migration in an alien country. In this context, Tabish Khair too is not an exception. Though widely known for his fictional works, his poems also form a pivotal part of his literary oeuvre. He explores the themes of identity, displacement, colonial history and complexities of contemporary

life through his poems. Khair's poetic works are found in mainly two of his poetry collections; *Where Parallel Lines Meet* (2000) and *Man of Glass* (2010). *Where Parallel Lines Meet* deals with the east-west conflict regarding identity and displacement and delves into the personal experiences of individuals grappling with their hybrid identities in the postcolonial world. Similarly, another poetry collection *Man of Glass* focuses on the themes of memory, cultural dislocation, and the blending of tradition with modernity. Khair's poetic works offer insights into how colonialism continues to shape the contemporary discourse.

This present article analyses the poems of Tabish Khair concerning the concepts of "hybridity", "ambivalence", and "the third space". Bhabha uses these concepts to explain the influence of colonial power on both the coloniser and the colonised. The article is divided into five sections to see how the postcolonial identity works in the case of Khair's poetic corpus. The first section entitled "Postcolonial Identity and Displacement" focuses on the emotional and psychological turmoil faced by the people caught between the colonial past and the modern globalized world. The second section of the article explores tensions and possibilities of negotiation between different cultural spaces. The last section of the article "Diaspora and Search for Home" addresses the theme of belongingness in the poems of Khair and explores how "Home" is both a physical and psychological construct.

Postcolonial Identity and Displacement

Postcolonial identity emerges as a complex interplay between tradition and modernity, shaped by the legacy of colonialism and the struggle for cultural authenticity (Misika 1). In the Indian context, postcolonial identity is characterised by cultural displacement, mimicry of the Western culture and a sense of divided self which reflects the ongoing influence of cultural colonialism (Shrestha 184). This fragmentation of identity is one of the central themes in the poems of Tabish Khair. According to Khair,

Identity is a process of articulation and negotiation. Identity is always a process...identity is not fixed and given; it keeps changing and developing, as you experience more or less, as you open yourself up to experiences or shut yourself away from them, as you engage with the other, evade the other, shut out the other. (Karmakar, 273)

This process of negotiation with identity gives birth to hybridity. During the interaction between the colonizer and the colonized, the traditional colonial knowledge comes in contact with the Indigenous knowledge an opportunity for “creative heterogeneity” exists. This encounter results in a hybrid culture that cannot be traced back to the roots of either community (Sterrett, 655). Nations and cultures are narrative constructions that rise out of this hybrid situation and therefore, the individuals are bound to change and modify their perception of identity. Bhabha writes about this hybridity:

Hybridity, is a difference ‘within’, a subject that inhabits the rim of an ‘in-between’ reality. And the inscription of this borderline existence inhabits a stillness of time and a strangeness of framing that creates the discursive ‘image’ at the crossroads of history and literature, bridging the home and the world (*The Location of Culture*, 19).

In Khair’s view also, colonialism does not end with political independence; its effects persist, particularly in how individuals navigate their cultural identities. His works resist the hegemonic voice of Western culture and focus on the cultural clashes and discontents that emerge during the interaction between the coloniser and the colonised (Büyükgebiz, 1).

In his poem *Man of Glass* from the collection *Man of Glass* (2010), Khair articulates this sense of fragmented identity:

I stand between two mirrors,
Reflecting a thousand faces,
Each one mine, but none the same. (Khair, *Man of Glass*, 42)

The narrator in the poem is a postcolonial subject who is unable to perceive his self-image because of the multiplicity of experiences. The two mirrors and his positioning between them are symbolic of the two major influences on his identity. The use of the word 'two mirrors' may have multiple interpretations. While it denotes two worlds in which a diasporic individual straddles, it may also connote the contrary pulls, the gaps between the haves and the have nots and also two civilizations- the Occident and the Orient. In Optics, there is a law that when an object is placed between two mirrors, it forms infinite images. Similarly, the speaker here can see a "thousand faces" in the form of reflection, meaning thereby, none of them is original. The speaker is not able to accept the different aspects of his identity because these reflections do not give him a unified sense of self, owing to his cultural hybridity. This is a typical condition of those living in a "third space", a concept given by Homi K Bhabha to describe the space of cultural hybridity where colonized subjects negotiate with their native culture and the imposed culture of the coloniser. According to Bhabha, this third space is "the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space - that carries the burden of the meaning of culture" (56). He argues that cultures are never unitary or dualistic rather they are multifaceted. For a postcolonial subject,

The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'in itself be conscious. (Bhabha, 53)

This sense of non-belongingness makes the postcolonial subject feel displaced both physically and psychologically. Displacement in postcolonial studies encompasses both physical migration and socio-cultural alienation experienced by individuals in diaspora communities (Bhabha, 1). It challenges the homogenization

of cultures and reinforces boundaries in multicultural settings (Baba, 2). This sense of displacement is reflected in the works of Khair when he talks about the loss of cultural and linguistic roots due to colonialism. In the poem “Urdu” from *Where Parallel Lines Meet* (2000), Khair reflects on the colonial erasure of language and cultural displacement:

This tongue of mine was never truly mine,
Shaped by the weight of empires,
Bent beneath the burden of history. (Khair, *Where Parallel Lines Meet*, 67)

In the above lines, Khair points out the linguistic colonization that took place under British rule in India. During the British regime, people like Macaulay and the whole system at large played a significant role in the marginalisation of Indigenous languages like Urdu by imposing English education on the native population. There is an evident sense of displacement when the speaker describes the changes in his native tongue through the line, “shaped by the weight of empires” (Khair 67). This reflects how colonialism as a phenomenon forced a loss of cultural autonomy in the name of civilising the native population. This gives birth to a sense of cultural alienation where an individual is unable to identify himself even through language. Bhabha calls this condition “unhomely” (13) in which “the recess of the domestic space become sites for history’s most intricate invasions” (13). In this kind of “displacement” (Bhabha 13), the boundaries between the “home and the world” become fluid, and “the private and the public” (Bhabha 13) get merged into each other.

The predicament of a displaced person is aptly recorded by Khair when in yet another poem titled “Refugee”, he writes:

Who can tell her identity?
The gold, the silk mattress, such stuff
Are noble and yet not enough:
Where is the blasted pea? (Khair, *Man of Glass*, 69)

A person in an alien country faces an identity crisis despite having luxuries like gold and silk mattresses which alone cannot lend due recognition to a woman always considered a secondary status in society. This sense of displacement and identity crisis leads an individual to a situation where it becomes necessary to negotiate with the situation of cultural hybridity in which one is stuck. Khair does accept this hybridity and tries to show ways in which it can be negotiated through his poems.

Cultural Hybridity and Negotiation

According to Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “hybridity is precisely to culture what deconstruction is to discourse: transcending binary categories.” (238). Cultural hybridity in multicultural societies involves negotiating identities and values through a process of gradual adaptation, potentially leading to new cultural identities or disorientation (Viola, 1). With the emergence of intersections of different subjectivities across various spheres, entities like nationhood, community interests and cultural values are going through negotiations (Bhabha 2). Drawing upon Bhabha’s concept, Khair’s poems illustrate how postcolonial subjects constantly reconcile with their identities. It is no wonder to discover how the titles of Tabish’s poems like, *The Boarsi*, *The Nimbu-Pani Vendor*, *Super-Duper Daryaganj Auto*, and *Shayad* among many others reiterate a conscious attempt at subverting the alien by the act of supposed mimicry. One can observe a linguistic play that goes in line with Bhabha’s idea of mimicry and hybridity. Thus, culminating in an effort to create a linguistic third space. In the process, his poems become the site of negotiations between the two alien cultures, identities and therefore worlds. This negotiation is emblematic of the broader postcolonial struggle to retain cultural roots while navigating the pervasive influence of colonial legacies. The following lines attest to such observation:

If you throw hard words at us like ‘hybrid’
The literate among us will hear ‘hai bread’

(The illiterate call bread 'puroti' which
Is their lost Portuguese to your learnt English...

(Khair, "Unhybrid", *Where Parallel Lines Meet*, 32)

The constant tussle between the native tongue and the foreign influences is visible in the above lines. Here, hybridity is not a source of alienation rather it is a fertile ground for the creation of new identities, cultural forms and languages. When one tries to deal with the multiplicity of influences, a fusion of tradition and modernity emerges. This example is a clear reflection of Salman Rushdie's coinage "Chutneyfication" of the English language. By the term, Rushdie means the Indianization of the coloniser's language by the native writers of a postcolonial country like India. In Khair's poems, this Chutneyfication or nativisation of the foreign language seems like a tool that facilitates "becoming", i.e., the transformation and hybridisation through active localised imitation.

Similarly, in the poem "Delhi", it can be pointed out that the speaker is not the naturalised inhabitant of the setting that is being described, while "concentric/ Runs its rush of cars and autos, (*Where Parallel Lines Meet*, 23), shows the alienation he feels in the spheres of physical and mental space. The very opening line, "Stamped by foreign hands (*Where Parallel Lines Meet*, 23), creates the sense of distance between the speaker and the setting, which the poet consciously lays out.

Again, in the poem, "Kitchen", Khair uses the image of stoves to represent different cultural traditions coexisting in a diasporic household:

My mother had three stoves in her kitchen:
Electric, gas, and coal...
You may call this a sort of infinity,
But we knew it as the point where parallel lines meet.

(Khair, *Where Parallel Lines Meet*, 99)

The co-existence of different stoves symbolizes the negotiation between tradition and modernity, illustrating the everyday reality of cultural hybridity. The poem conveys that while these elements may seem disconnected, they meet and blend in the diasporic experience, where individuals must constantly reconcile multiple cultural influences.

The reconciliation with multiple cultural influences in Khair's poems is not only visible on the thematic level but is also evident on the linguistic level. For instance, in the poem "Borasi", Khair brings the whole socio-cultural importance and significance of the object in the Bihari household when he writes, "Where the borasi is just a tradition/ In whose warm ashes we lay potatoes" (*Where Parallel Lines Meet*, 14). Similarly, in the poem "Mango Recipes", he uses words like, "Tarkari, pickle, chutney... (28), or words like, "Ramphal", "Kishenbhog", "mynah", "Ramtorai", "Devi-Pasand", used in the poem "Fruit (After Ayodhya)", show how his sensibilities are connected with his roots, i.e, Bihar. As a poet, he makes his readers marvel at his capacity to transfer the rustic unpolished and crude rural sensibilities to a global standard language. His poems appear more like a set of word plays and sentences consisting of a constant enigma than the content reflecting conscious contamination of a language of authority, norm and standard. It appears as a challenge to the rhetoric of the purity of language by mixing the enigma of alienation felt by a postcolonial subject.

Khair's portrayal of cultural hybridity challenges the notion of fixed, essentialist identities. His poems suggest that identity is a dynamic process of negotiation, shaped by historical forces and contemporary realities, where new meanings are continuously generated in the third space of cultural interaction.

Diaspora and Search for Home

Diaspora, a term derived from the Greek words "dia" (over) and "Sperio" (to sow, to scatter), was initially used to refer to the dispersion of Jews to places outside Palestine. However, since the

late 20th century, it has been used to describe any ethnic population who resides in countries other than their historical homelands (Khara 12). Generally, diaspora is understood as a part of the imagined group in the host land which influences the relationship between the home and the host country as a soft power (Khara 13). William Safran rightly remarks:

Diaspora...seems increasingly to be used as metaphoric designations for several categories of people— expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities tout court—in much the same way that “ghetto” has come to designate all kinds of crowded, constricted, and disprivileged urban environments, and “holocaust” has come to be applied to all kinds of mass murder. (83)

Looking at the population of people living outside their homeland, scholars have applied this term to “Cubans and Mexicans in the United States, Pakistanis in Britain, Maghrebis in France, Turks in Germany, Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, Greek and Polish minorities, Palestinian Arabs, blacks in North America and the Caribbean, Indians and Armenians in various countries (Safran 83).” These people living outside their historical homelands continue to relate to that ideal homeland in many ways. They also believe that their descendants will eventually return to that ideal land (Safran 84). India also has a significant number of diasporic writers who are constantly writing to discuss the impact of culture, society and history of the new land on their psyche and sensibility. They constantly try to transcend the boundaries led by the countries in the name of borders so that they may bridge the gap between the culture of the home country and that of the host country. This urge to be accepted gives birth to a situation of ambivalence where “many social groups want to reach in and reach out, to be simultaneously ethnic and transnational, local and cosmopolitan, to have a comfort zone and a questing impulse” (Cohen 17-18). Many Indian diasporic writers like Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Rohinton Mistry and Amitav Ghosh,

suggest through their works that the boundaries that divide nations are not real, these can be blurred by a unified human society. But at the same time, these writers provide a strong resistance to any kind of centrality and cultural hegemony. The younger generation of diasporic writers include Tilottama Rajan, Uma Parameswaran, Ashish Gupta, Rohinton Mistry, M.G Vassanji, Gita Mehta, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri and Tabish Khair among many others (Princee, 310).

Khair, too, records the psychological and emotional complexities faced by an individual exposed to multiple cultural identities owing to his diasporic identity. The situation of a diasporic subject is often portrayed as a dislocated individual who is not firmly rooted in either of the cultures, i.e., the culture of the new homeland refuses to accept him as an integral part and the culture of the origin is too far away to connect to. This dilemma is very well captured by Khair in the following lines;

At the corner her past makes with their future,
across the gleaming metal counter, he asks her,
Where's the proof of your being,
the stamp that seals who you say you say you say you are?"
(*Man of Glass*, 16)

These lines show the plight of an immigrant constantly asked for the proof of his being. This interrogation forces him to feel that he/she belongs nowhere. The land of his/her origin is already unattainable and the new place where he/she has come with dreams for the future is not ready to include him/her. There is a constant search for a place which he/she may call his/her home. This longing for home is more poignantly visible in yet another poem entitled "Amma", where he writes,

Down the stairs of this house where plaster flakes and falls,
Through the intimate emptiness of its rooms and hall,
I hear your slow footsteps, grandmother, echo or pause...
(*Where Parallel Lines Meet*, 4)

The sense of loneliness and the feeling of unhomely is visible in the above lines. The narrator misses his grandmother's footsteps in the empty rooms of his ancestral house once home though deplete of earlier warmth. The plaster flakes are falling, which indicates that the house is probably not inhabited by anybody for a long time. This can be seen as an indication of the narrator's immigrant situation, where his ideal land fails to provide him with the kind of comfort he has always associated with it in his imagination and in the new land he is already alienated.

Similarly, in the poem "Immigrant", the narrator is the little mermaid who got engaged in the trade of legs by exchanging her voice in the bargain and ultimately lost herself. This poem is inspired by the Danish fairy tale *The Little Mermaid* (*Den Lille Havfrue*) by Hans Christian Andersen, in which a young mermaid gives up her life in the sea and her mermaid identity to gain a human soul and the love of a prince. In the story, the little mermaid makes a deal with a sea witch to exchange her voice for legs, but the transformation is painful, and if she fails to win the love of the prince, she will die and turn into sea foam. The tale explores themes of sacrifice, unrequited love, and the quest for an eternal soul. Eventually, the mermaid loses both her beautiful voice and her soul.

When you look into my past

You see

Only

Weeds and scales.

Once I had a voice.

Now I have legs. (*Man of Glass*, 66)

Here, the mermaid is a representative of a huge population who leave their homelands to achieve their dreams but they fail to realise them and eventually lose the self that they earlier possessed. This makes them ask themselves if it was a fair bargain. Towards the end the mermaid cries, "Sometimes I

wonder/ Was it a fair trade?" (*Man of Glass* 66). This state of bafflement is what a postcolonial subject situated in a diaspora goes through every now and then.

Conclusion

Thus, a reading of Khair's poems shows them revolving around the themes of identity, displacement and the search for a home offering insight into the process of negotiation. The fractured nature of postcolonial identity is explored through rich metaphors and vivid imagery. We find how Khair's diasporic situation appears negotiating between the home and the host, navigating not only through rustic images like *boarsi*, *tarkari*, *chutney*, *kishenbhog* but also taking linguistic digs at colonized terms like *suted-booted babu*, *hai-bread*, *pauroti*, and many others. This kind of application of native terms in a language that was originally that of colonisers can be seen as resistance from his side. On the whole, this can also be the consequence of the liminal state in which the poet is situated being a postcolonial as well as a diasporic subject. Khair's poems, on final analysis, provide us with spaces for cultural negotiation, where hybrid identities merge, concealing and revealing both the tensions and possibilities creating a medley of verbal melodies inherent in living between two worlds.

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Vygotskian Theory of Learning and its Implications in ESL Teaching-Learning

***Susanta Kumar Bardhan**

Abstract

Russian social constructivist psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) developed during 1920s the theory of knowledge development and learning focusing the role of social interactions and cultural context in cognitive development. At its heart lies the understanding of human cognition and learning as social and cultural rather than individual phenomena. One of his most influential and well-known works is his book titled *Thought and Language* (originally published in 1934) in which he has looked into the relationship between thought and language and has argued that language plays a central role in shaping cognitive development. In it Vygotsky introduces the three fundamental and related concepts of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Scaffolding and More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) in relation to learning and development of the students. In the present proposed paper we attempt to study how Vygotskian theory of developmental psychology and learning can be applied to the English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching-learning, especially in Indian context. Though English plays the role of SL in India, to a large extent it is considered not only as a means of communication but

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also as a tool for thought. Here we propose to explore the influence of the insights of Vygotsky's theory in developing the current ESL syllabi of the Secondary level framed by the West Bengal Board Secondary Education (WBBSE).

Keywords: scaffolding, ZPD, MKO, ESL, cognitive development.

Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky (1896-1934), a Soviet social constructivist psychologist, is known for his seminal work in the field of psychological development in children and projecting the framework relating to the cultural-historical activity theory. Vygotsky (1978) argues that the field of traditional psychology has truly deprived itself of crucial information and the understanding of complex aspects of the human behaviour by refusing to study consciousness. According to him, this refusal has narrowed the role of psychology to only the explanation of the elementary connections between the world and a living being. Consciousness which distinguishes human behaviour from other living beings connects the individual's knowledge to his/her behaviour. It remains active in the process of people's interaction with reality on the basis of their socio-historical and socio-cultural practices. He insists that socially meaningful activity will be the basic principle for understanding this consciousness and at the same time he rejects any attempt to separate consciousness from behaviour. It is thus evident that his most crucially important contribution is his theory of the development of the higher psychological functions, which evolve through unification of interpersonal connections as well as actions working within a given socio-cultural environment (i.e. language, culture, society, etc.). He identified the play of young children as their 'leading activity' and assumed it to be the main indispensable source of preschoolers' psychological development, i.e., manifestation of an integral unity of the emotional, volitional, and cognitive development. In this context let us look into his idea relating to thought and speech. Vygotsky's study of the relationship between thought and word or speech in

the structure or shape of consciousness has been projected in his book *Thinking and speech*, published posthumously in 1934 and edited by his closest associates Kolbanovskii, Zankov and Shif. The book deals with the explicit and deep connection between speech and the development of mental ideas or concepts and awareness. Vygotsky shows the qualitative difference between the silent inner speech and the verbal external speech, but both are equally important. Vygotsky opines that inner speech develops from external speech through a gradual process of “internalization” (i.e., transition from the external to the internal), as younger children are really able to “think out loud”. He further claims that in its mature form, inner speech which develops through the accumulation of long-term functional and structural changes would not resemble spoken language and so thought itself develops socially.

Vygotsky who exerted a paradigm shift in (educational) psychology proposed that all psychological functions governing the mental, cognitive and physical actions of an individual are not immutable but have a history of cultural development or the process of transformation through interiorization of socio-cultural tools. Vygotsky posits with arguments and evidences the existence of the lower and higher mental functions in humans. The socio-cultural milieu and its complex system structure, mediated by cultural tools and controlled by the individual develop the higher mental functions (see Kozulin 1990). In course of the discussion on such multicultural socio-psychological tools being operational in the process of learning in his essay ‘Psychological Tools and Mediated Learning’ Kozulin (2003: 15-38) aptly argues:

Vygotsky’s tentative answer to this challenge lies in his radical reorientation of learning theory from an individualistic to a socio-cultural perspective. The key concept in this new orientation is that of psychological tools. Psychological tools are those symbolic artifacts - signs, symbols, texts, formulae, graphic organizers - that when internalized help individuals master their own natural psychological functions

of perception, memory, attention, and so on. Each culture has its own set of psychological tools and situations in which these tools are appropriated. Literacy in its different forms constitutes one of the most powerful of psychological tools. (pp. 15-16)

Vygotsky's insightful search for an alternative learning model moved to the fore such vital fundamental concepts as mediation, scaffolding, apprenticeship, and organization of learning activities. According to Vygotsky, the development of the child's higher mental learning processes depends mainly on the presence of mediating agents in the child's interaction with the environment in the academic institution and in the society. Vygotsky himself primarily stressed on the symbolic tools-mediators which are in the language of Kozulin (2003), "appropriated by children in the context of particular socio-cultural activities, the most important of which he considered to be formal education" (p. 17). Certainly, Vygotsky made a remarkable contribution to the understanding of human development, in particular the nature of learning and the relationship between language and thought. The higher mental functions develop through these interactions in association with the shared knowledge of a culture. This process of learning known as *internalization* leads to *appropriation*, in which learners take tools and adapt them to personal use in society at large (in unique ways).

However, one of the most important contributions of the constructivist educational theory is the distinction Vygotsky made between the child's actual and potential levels of development or what he calls Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD refers to the gap between a child's current level of development and the level he/she is capable of or is expected to be reaching with tools provided by others with more knowledge. In this connection, as we see, setting aside the stable psychometric properties of testing based on the so far established intelligence quotient (IQ), Vygotsky and his associates developed alternative systems of dynamic

assessment in order to assess the dynamic nature of a child's learning and exploratory ability. What united all these systems was the introduction of the learning phase into the assessment situation. Instead of studying the child's individual performance, dynamic assessment focuses on the difference between performance before and that after the learning or assistance phase. The assessment methods have also derived from Vygotskian idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as their theoretical basis. Vygotsky (1978) put it this way:

The zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state. These functions could be termed the "buds" or "flowers" of development rather than the "fruits" of development. The actual developmental level characterizes mental development retrospectively, while the zone of proximal development characterizes mental development prospectively (p. 87).

Kozulin (2003) has explained and illustrated it lucidly and clearly and the following statement succinctly conveys the very notion of ZPD:

The notion of ZPD gives three important insights to the issue of dynamic testing: (1) It focuses our attention on those psychological functions of the child that are emerging at a given moment but that have not yet been fully developed; (2) The concept of ZPD introduces assisted performance as a legitimate parameter of assessment procedure; (3) ZPD helps to conceptualize the difference between the level of actual performance and the learning potential of the child. Thus again the critique of IQ tests and the emergence of dynamic alternatives that occurred without direct influence of sociocultural theory acquired new meaning in the context of the ZPD paradigm. (p. 17)

Learners can achieve the potential ability and skill identified with ZPD with the assistance of an instructor of some capacity

called more knowledgeable other (MKO). The MKO is generally assumed to be an older, more experienced teacher or parent or learner's peer or junior. In the present context, the MKO can be a machine or book or other source of audio-visual input. The advancement through as well as attainment of the upper limit of the ZPD is dependent on the MKO's instructional and scaffolding-based capabilities. The contemporary issues related to the classroom teaching-learning such as cognitive education, learning potential assessment, institution-society relationship and parent-child joint activity are found to be acquiring new meaning and dimension through the encounter with the Vygotskian theoretical apparatuses like psychological tools, mediation, and ZPD.

An integral stage of learning system is assessment or evaluation which takes place either during and / or at the end of the curricular course and academic session. Armed with the pedagogical concepts, discussed so far, Vygotsky and his associates developed dynamic assessment (DA). In their essay 'Dynamic Assessment of the Evolving Cognitive Functions in Children' Carol S. Lidz and Boris Gindis (2003: 99-116) have elaborately dealt with DA from the theoretical and practical perspectives derived from the notions of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. These notions are briefly mentioned below following Lidz and Gindis (2003):

1. Cognitive, language, and social functioning in educational settings are not innate abilities or disabilities but are sociocultural formations resulting from the interactions of a child with culture.
2. Assessment is not an isolated activity that is merely linked to intervention. Assessment, instruction, and remediation can be based on the same universal explanatory conceptualization of a child's development (typical and atypical) and within this model are therefore inseparable. "A true diagnosis must provide an explanation, prediction, and scientific basis for practical prescription" (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 205). Moreover, Vygotsky suggested that the means of assessment and

the means of instruction (including remedial instruction) need to be age-specific, always attuned to the characteristics of development (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 199).

3. Vygotsky suggested that the “size” of the ZPD was determined by the child’s ability to benefit from collaboration with an expert in order to advance the child’s performance beyond what was already achieved by non-assisted performance. It is important to stress Chaiklin’s observation in this volume that there is nothing in Vygotsky’s texts that suggests that this “size” is a fixed property of the child that remains constant across age periods. DA should be able to describe the child’s ever-changing ability to learn with assistance or guidance as well as to assess the individual “length” of ZPD.
4. Vygotsky insisted that assessment of the child’s ability to learn through the method of collaborative activity was a better predictor of future cognitive functioning than a measure of independent performance through such measures as traditional tests of intelligence.
5. The ZPD should be measured in the context of what Vygotsky called either “shared/joint activity” (*sovmetnaya deajtnost*) or “collaboration” (*sotrudnichestvo*), using these terms synonymously. He proposed “that an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in collaboration with his peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 90).
6. Collaborative or assisted performance is viewed as an indicator of the status of the learner’s maturing psychological functions: “In brief, we ask the child to solve problems that are beyond his mental age [as measured by independent performance] with some kind

of cooperation and determine how far the potential for intellectual cooperation can be stretched for the given child and how far it goes beyond his mental age” (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 202). The main focus for collaborative interventions is to find evidence for maturing psychological functions.

7. Vygotsky turned to the psychological concept of imitation as a way of identifying maturing psychological functions that were still inadequate for independent performance. (Lidz and Gindis, 2003: 100-102)

Moreover, DA is fundamentally based on the following crucial principles or assumptions, as suggested by Lidz and Gindis (2003):

- (1) cognitive processes are modifiable, and an important task of assessment is to ascertain their degree of modifiability, rather than to remain limited to estimation of the child’s manifest level of functioning;
- (2) interactive assessment that includes a learning phase provides better insight into the child’s learning capacities than unaided performance;
- (3) the primary goal of assessment is to suggest psychoeducational interventions aimed at the enhancement and realization of the child’s latent abilities to learn. (p. 103)

Thus DA in which feedback is explicitly or implicitly built-in is dynamically interactive, open ended and learner-friendly and so focuses equally on the celebration and application of target knowledge. .

As evidenced from the above discussion, we can sum up that Vygotsky’s insightful notions driven by the constructivist educational psychology are broadly based on three broad perspectives: instrumental approach, developmental approach and culture-historical approach (see Wertsch (1985) for further reading). Vygotsky’s interest as well as aim is to develop a strong theoretical basis for the appropriate pedagogical endeavours, which would include the principles for possible instructional grouping of learners and identifying the specific interventions to be based on the diagnosis of the learners’ current state of development. Hence

Vygotsky (1998) argues that “a true diagnosis must provide an explanation, prediction, and scientific basis for practical prescription” (p, 205).

Armed with the Vygotskian insights of educational psychology, an attempt has been undertaken here to explore how these insights can be or have been extensively applied to English Language Teaching (henceforth ELT) endeavour in India in general, West Bengal in particular. ELT as a discipline of study and practice derives its theoretical and practical standpoint and techniques from the fields of study such as psychology, sociology and linguistics and applied linguistics. The 20th century witnessed revolutionary changes in the fields of all the studies affecting ELT. Behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism and structuralism, cognitivism/generativism and communicative-functionalism emerged and flourished side by side in educational psychology and linguistics respectively. By drawing insights from these approaches (second) language teaching experts have evolved several methods like Direct Method, Audiolingualism, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), etc., and have accordingly undertaken the related rigorous ventures such as curriculum design, syllabus framing, material production and evaluation (a detailed discussion is available in Richards and Rodgers 2001). It is needless say that education system in the colonial India which was governed by Macaulay’s *Minute on Education* (1835) was through the medium of the English language and was primarily concerned with an aim to form “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion and intellect”. ELT during the British regime was founded on the Traditional linguistics or Grammar and its offshoots: Grammar-Translation Method and heavily loaded with English literature-based syllabus at all levels.

As an integral part of whole education system, English teaching in the postcolonial India has undergone remarkable changes. Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49), Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) and later ones could not ignore

the important role of English in Indian education scenario and subsequently the Central Board Secondary Education (CBSE) and state boards of education have taken initiative to teach English as a language skill, as distinct from teaching it as literature. To fulfil this goal in ELT board authorities implemented sequentially Audiolingualism, CLT and other related methods considering their suitability in the Indian classrooms. The syllabus introduced is popularly known as the structural-oral-situational (S-O-S) syllabus which stresses on the socio-linguistic functional aspects in the use English in the teaching-learning. From the very first decade of the present India's primary and secondary education has got a new dimension with the implementation of National Curriculum Frame (NCF) 2005 and Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 which focus on the learners' needs and socio-cultural backgrounds in the 'flexible' curriculum development, material production and evaluation. The important role of the constructivists like Vygotsky can easily be traced in the NCF 2005 and NCF 2023 (which is based on National Education Policy (NEP) 2020) the main principles of which are centred round the joyful and easy learning in close association with society and local knowledge system and by activity and active participation of the learners. It is evident that in this system not only mental and cognitive growth but also socio-psychological and socio-cultural growth of the learners belonging to different social, cultural, linguistic and academic backgrounds are taken care of in all the spheres of teaching-learning so that each learner can develop the "capacity to think, reason and make sense of the self and the world, and to use language, is intimately connected with acting and interacting—doing things by oneself and with others." (as stated in NCF 2005, p. 14). In a word, inclusive growth is the primary aim in this venture of teaching, be it the first or second language or other knowledge subjects and so NCF 2005 is in the tone caution states:

It is important to create an inclusive environment in the classroom for all students, especially those who are at risk

of marginalisation, for instance, students with disabilities. Labelling an individual student or a group of students as learning disabled etc. creates a sense of helplessness, inferiority and stigmatisation. It tends to overshadow difficulties that children may be facing in schools due to diverse socio-cultural backgrounds and inappropriate pedagogical approaches being used in the classroom. A student with a disability has an equal right to membership of the same group as all other students. Differences between students must be viewed as resources for supporting learning rather than as a problem. Inclusion in education is one of the components of inclusion in society.

Schools, therefore, have a responsibility of providing a flexible curriculum that is accessible to all students. (p. 16)

NCF 2005 clearly points out the role of teacher as an MKO in relation to the process of cognition and construction of knowledge during learning inside the school and beyond. Teacher needs to allow the learners to ask questions, encourage 'Intelligent guessing' and independent thinking and creativity, capitalize their everyday hands-on experience relating to the lesson, express their own ideas or opinions and experiences and help them develop their understanding and shape the knowledge they are expected to acquire. These efforts on the part of the teacher which are nothing but mediation, scaffolding and apprenticeship in the Vygotskian terms ensure active participation of the learners in the process of acquiring even the 'difficult' learning items. In this context NCF 2005 clearly claims:

It is in this 'zone' between what you know and what you almost know that new knowledge is constructed. Such knowledge often takes the form of skills, which are cultivated outside the school, at home or in the community. All such forms of knowledge and skills must be respected. A sensitive and informed teacher is aware of this and is able to engage children through well-chosen tasks and questions, so that they are able to realise their developmental potential. (p. 17)

The prior knowledge and experiences of the learners have dimensionally gained special importance in the entire teaching-learning activity as “Learning takes place through interactions with the environment around, nature, things and people, both through actions and through language.” (NCF 2005, P. 18). In ESLT classroom also learners’ knowledge of their respective first language and society and culture act as the basis on which English lessons can be easily undertaken.

As evidenced from the above discussion, the Vygotsky’s constructivist concepts are seen to have exercised a deeper influence on the reforms in the ESLT methods, instruction/teaching techniques, syllabus framing and evaluation in India. One of the major aspects ESLT in India concerns the textbook or material selection and production in order to materialize the aims of and objectives of teaching English as a skill subject as set in the policy framework and curriculum. Hence eminent ELT expert N. S. Prabhu (2019) aptly stresses the crucial role of materials in ELT and means of utilizing these in the classroom instructions:

The role of materials as support to teaching is clear enough. Teaching is a translation of syllabus intentions into classroom events, and the operation involved can be thought to consist of two stages. The selection of appropriate language samples and cognitive content, the designing and construction of useful activities or exercises for learners to attempt, and the sequencing or cyclic arrangement of such activities so as to fit them into lesson units, on the one hand, and facilitate cumulative learning on the other, constitute materials development as the first stage, while the planning and carrying out of actual classroom procedures which enable learners to benefit from those materials is classroom teaching as the second stage. (P. 82)

Prabhu (2019) further has put forward his strong opinion about the cultural and cognitive considerations in the materials selection as well as production.

Materials represent a selection of certain cognitive and cultural content, as well as a demand for linguistic effort at a certain level, as input; learners bring with them a certain state of cognitive and cultural knowledge, and a certain level of language ability, as investment. Learning can be said to result from an interaction between input and investment, the amount of learning being proportionate to the amount of interaction. The amount of interaction, in turn, depends on the relationship between input and investment, which we can think of in terms of their relative closeness and distance. (p. 83)

The above argument clearly testifies the views of Vygotsky which argues in favour of ensuring the integral relation and appropriate distance between the level of the learners and the aims-based selected materials resulting in maximal and successful instruction. Prabhu (2019) frankly mentions the importance of Vygotsky's views relating to materials selection.

One can recall Vygotsky's view that "learning which is oriented toward developmental stages that have already been reached is ineffective-the only 'good learning' is that which is in advance of development"...

Learning, then, is dependent not on materials themselves, however sophisticated they are in their design and construction, but rather on an optimal approximation between materials and learners' current states. Now, learners' states (in terms of their world knowledge and language abilities, for our purpose) are necessarily varied, the variation increasing generally with geographical, cultural or linguistic spread, among others. The wider the area to be served by a given set of materials, the more varied the learners' states are likely to be, making optimal approximation between input and investment.... (p. 84).

From the very beginning of the present century ELT like the pedagogy of other subjects has tried to liberate itself from the strict, mechanical methods and approaches and pre-determined course materials as "Pedagogic activity involves not just objective

procedures but the perceptions, interpretations and responses of its participants, all of which directly affect the values of the procedures.” (Prabhu (2019: 122). Therefore, in recent times experts have argued in favour of an eclectic model of pedagogy which gives importance to the perceptions of the participants (here teacher and learners) in the classroom and beyond the classroom, the flexibility in the selection and use of materials according to the learners’ level, the possible forms of classroom activity the modification and addition of tasks and exercises already given in the textbooks and evaluation procedure. It is not the theoreticians but the learners who occupy the pivotal position in teaching-learning and this dynamism is inevitably to some extent, if not to a great extent, due to the Vygotsky studies. This eclecticity allows the innovative teachers to professionally interact with the available models or methods and “can be beneficial to learning when teachers adopt teaching procedures which are in accord with their changing perceptions” (Prabhu 2019, 123).

Now let us turn to the English teaching at the secondary level in West Bengal where ICON (Interpretation Construction) Model (see Black and McClintock, 1996) has been introduced at the primary and the secondary education. The pedagogical activity for all the subjects of study being taught is conducted following the ICON model which focuses on the construction of knowledge in an individual learner not only with help of cognitive ability but also other allied factors (being) nurtured by him or her during the societal interactions. According to Black and McClintock (1996) ICON Model is strongly based on constructivism and mainly governed by the following seven principles in teaching and evaluation:

1. Observation: Students make observations of authentic artifacts anchored in authentic situations
2. Interpretation Construction: Students construct interpretations of observations and construct arguments for the validity of their interpretations

3. Contextualization: Students access background and contextual materials of various sorts to aid interpretation and argumentation
4. Cognitive Apprenticeship: Students serve as apprentices to teachers to master observation, interpretation and contextualization
5. Collaboration: Students collaborate in observation, interpretation and contextualization
6. Multiple Interpretations: Students gain cognitive flexibility by being exposed to multiple interpretations
7. Multiple Manifestations: Students gain transferability by seeing multiple manifestations of the same interpretations.
(p. 26)

It is evident that ICON Model, shaped on the premises of constructivist approach, encourages the use of learners' socio-cultural experiences, self-awareness and multiple perspectives already cultivated and developed. in them and thus learning is embedded in a realistic context. There is enough space for the scaffolding to motivate the learners to involve emotionally and enthusiastically in intellectual activities in the classroom and outside. It also provides scope for the teachers to resourcefully and intuitively utilize the prior knowledge to help his or her students to the target zone of knowledge or ZPD or expected level of communicative competence in English as outlined in the syllabus. For the materialization of this model WBBSE has developed a well-planned curriculum covering all the subjects (including ESL) of study needed for the healthy and sound growth of children to become the responsible human resources and citizens of India. The WBBSE-appointed Expert Committee headed by Prof. Aweek Majumder, an academician of repute, has framed the serially well-arranged syllabi of all the classes or levels and textbooks based on the respective syllabi in order to implement ICON Model and thereby recommendations of NCF 2005 and RTE Act 2009. In

these textbooks titled *Butterfly* for Class VI-VIII and *Bliss* for Class IX and X the lessons consisting of literary and non-literary texts, activities and exercises have been selected and accommodated following the principles as discussed above so that each and every learner can be kept engaged in communicative tasks resulting in the development of LSRW skills in English, study skills and reflective, creative and aesthetic thought in him or her. The learning components included in these textbooks which reflect the present-day aims and objectives of ESLT are learner-centric, activity-based, non-taxing, joyful and integrated with learners' prior knowledge and experience. It is evident that all these teaching-learning components and efforts relating to ESLT curriculum of WBBSE are directed to materialize its "aim to instill in the learners both Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) as well as Cognitively Advanced Language Proficiency (CALP)" (*Bliss* for Class IX, p. 106). The twelve lessons of Class IX *Bliss*, for instance, consist of twelve literary (abridged) texts followed by activities and exercises relating to functional grammar, vocabulary comprehension and composition (letter, report, paragraph, biography, etc.) leading to the development of skills to effectively use English in an effective manner in life. This fact reminds us of the relevant claim made by Prabhu (1987) in his book *Second Language Pedagogy*:

... the development of competence in a second language requires not systematization of language inputs or maximization of planned practice, but rather the creation of conditions in which learners engage in an effort to cope with communication. (p. 1)

... teaching should be consequently be concerned with creating conditions for coping with meaning in the classroom, to the exclusion of any deliberate regulation of the development of grammatical competence or a mere simulation of language behaviour. (p. 2)

Learners' active engagement and participation in doing activities and exercises in collaboration with their peers under the supervision

of the teacher are ensured in order to help them shape and accommodate the newly acquired knowledge / experience with the already existing knowledge. Teachers are given free hand to evolve and follow their own innovative teaching methods and techniques deemed to be suitable for their own learners' ability and socio-academic background. In this connection the section 'Teachers' Guidelines' (pp. 106-109) of *Bliss* for Class IX gives a very clear-cut guidelines to be followed by the English teachers while handling the course of teaching and evaluation. This section reflects the very impact of Vygotskian principles on all the stages of ESLT in West Bengal. Let us cite the following paragraph from this section aptly pointing out the crucial roles of the classroom teacher:

The role of English teacher has also undergone a major change. The modern teacher is no longer a knowledge-resource; he/she is supposed to facilitate, support and encourage learners to construct their knowledge and develop their language competency. Needless to say, learning is a continuous process, a route of gradual movement towards the target language. The new English textbook for Class IX, *Bliss*, thus carries forward the objectives of learning as reflected in the textbooks for Primary (*Butterfly*) and Upper Primary (Blossoms) which is learner-centric, activity-based, joyful and integrated with the learners' experiences. (p. 107)

This endeavour, if undertaken as well as carried out sincerely, can develop the ESL learners' interpersonal communicative and critical interpretative competence coupled with rationality and pragmaticity (i.e., Critical Higher Order Skill or HOTS) and thereby ensure the exogamous use of English by them. This can certainly be substantiated by quoting the learning objectives of three lessons (out of twelve) mentioned in the 'Teachers' Guidelines' (pp. 106-109) of *Bliss* for Class IX:

Lesson 2 (All about a Day): Learning objectives:-
recapitulating the skill of using tense properly in sentences;

developing competency to transform sentences from active voice to passive voice and vice versa; reinforcing skill to write a short paragraph, developing competency to write a process using a flow-chart.

Lesson 3 (Autumn): Learning objectives:- reinforcing the competencies developed in the previous lessons (Lesson 1 and 2) and also in previous classes; ability to change the narration of sentences from direct to indirect speech, developing the skill to write a biography based on given points and ability to write a process using a flow-chart.

Lesson 4 (A Day in a Zoo): Learning objectives:-recapitulating the skill to classify adverbs, identifying the various types of clauses, developing the skill to identify the various types of sentences (simple, complex and compound), developing the skill to write a formal letter (letter seeking leave) and reinforcing the skill to write an informal letter...

Lesson 12 (Hunting Snake): Learning objectives:- reinforcing skill to transform sentences of different types (affirmative to negative or interrogative etc.), transforming of different parts of speech in sentences, writing newspaper report and reinforcing the skill to write a summary of a given passage. (p. 107-109)

For the purpose of successful and effective implementation of ICON Model-based ESLT, WBBSE has developed a dynamic Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) model, named PEACOCK (Bardhan has attempted a thorough discussion on this in his 2017 paper 'Recently Introduced ICON and PEACOCK Models in West Bengal School ESLT: A Critical Response'). PEACOCK is the acronymic term of five indicators of evaluation:

1. Participation (P),
2. Questioning and Experimentation (E),
3. Interpretation and Application (A),
4. Empathy and Cooperation (CO) and
5. Aesthetic and Creative Expression of Knowledge (CK).

A critical look into and analysis of the rubrics under these indicators would make us realize that this model aims at making the learners the carriers not of information but of true knowledge and a sense of harmony with all existence, as reflected in the following quote from Bardhan (2017):

... the line between the curricular scholastic & co-scholastic areas has been blurred, ensuring the holistic development of the child. The PEACOCK Model takes case of the 'Learning to be' and 'Learning to live together' concept along with the ideas of 'Learning to know and 'Learning to do.' Therefore, the model caters to skills of learners in cognitive, psychomotor & international domains. (p. 492)

The Summative evaluation is conducted following the aims and objectives set in each syllabus component and standard norms of reliability and validity of testing and evaluation. The distribution of marks and question pattern for Summative evaluation conducted thrice in an academic session has been given in detail in *Peacock Model: Training Module English (Second Language)*. Moreover, the Class X textbook, *Bliss*, contains a table or blueprint with a heading Distribution of Marks and Question Pattern for Third Summative Evaluation / Test Examination for Class X (p. 69) and this Blueprint of question pattern is followed in Madhyamik Examination conducted by WBBSE. The critical analysis of the mentioned blueprint (given in Appendix) would suggest that almost all the basic principles of standard evaluation have been kept in mind in framing the question pattern so that learners' acquired knowledge-and-application is properly and objective evaluated. Hence it can unhesitatingly be stated that PEACOCK Model of evaluation which has been framed to test what and how far the learners know, not to test what they do not know is an invariable version of Vygotsky's Dynamic Assessment.

To conclude, Vygotsky's socio-psychological ideas relating to education ranging from curriculum framing to evaluation, it can undoubtedly be claimed, have exercised influence in the post-RTE

2009 education system of the state of West Bengal in general and ESLT in particular.

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Appendix
Distribution of Marks and Question Pattern for Third
Summative
Evaluation / Test Examination* for Class X

Testing areas	MCQ 1 marks per question	Very short answer type question (VSAQ) 1 marks per question	Short answer question (SAQ) 2 marks per question	Long answer question (LAQ) 10 marks per question	Total Marks
(A). Reading (Seen)	Prose:- No of questions= 5 Total: 1X5=5	Prose:- No of questions= 3 Total: 1X3=3	Prose:- No of questions= 2 Total: 2X2=4		12
	Poetry:- No of questions=4 Total: 1X4=4		Poetry:- No of questions= 2 Total: 2X2=4	nil	8
(B). Reading (Unseen)	No of questions=6 Total: 1X6=6	No of questions=3 Total: (1+1)X3=6	No of questions=4 Total: 2X4=8	nil	20
(C). Grammar & Vocabulary	No of questions=3 Total: 1X3=3	No of questions=9 Total: 1X9=9	No of questions=4 Total: 2X4=8	nil	20
(D). Writing	nil	nil	nil	No of questions=3 Total: 10X3=30	30
Total marks per question type	18	18	24	30	90

* This blueprint of question pattern is indicative of Madhyamik Examination.

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Cultural Memory and Historical Fiction: Analysing *The Glass Palace* by Amitav Ghosh as a Postmodern Historiographic Metafiction

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Abstract

Cultural memory is a system of values, artefacts, institutions, and practices that preserves the past, not as a dead, remote period, but as a mirror which reflects the present and foreshadows the future. It transfers knowledge and supports the formulation of different identities and acts as a cultural tool of negotiation for new cultural encounters. Amitav Ghosh's *The Glass Palace* belongs to the postmodern historiographic metafiction, a subgenre of postmodern fiction, which presents, through various innovative techniques, the reconfigured and decentralised form of traditional history. The novel is constructed around two families belonging to three generations in Burmese, India and Malaya in the backdrop of the Anglo-Burmese War of 1885. Executed on an epic scale, the author skilfully interweaves the forgotten historical events with his fictional theme to represent brutal greed of people, lust for power, the grim reality of colonialism. The present study attempts

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to analyse Amitav Gosh's *The Glass Palace* as a historiographic metafiction producing cultural memory. It studies various aspects of the novel that are intricately interwoven to transform it into a memorial medium representing the way people recollect their past. It is a descriptive and qualitative study, depending on both primary and secondary data collected from various sources and uses textual analysis as its research methodology.

Keywords: Cultural memory, historiography, postcolonial, colonialism

Introduction

In the realm of literature, the fusion of history and fiction has often yielded narratives that not only transport us to bygone eras but also challenge the very constructs of time, memory, and truth. Amitav Ghosh, a luminary in contemporary Indian English literature, masterfully navigates this intricate terrain with his magnum opus, *The Glass Palace*. Within the pages of this sprawling novel, Ghosh unfurls a tapestry of historical events, cultural memory, and storytelling that transcends the conventional boundaries of both history and fiction. This research paper embarks on an exploration of *The Glass Palace* as a prime exemplar of historical metafiction in the postmodern context, a genre that not only reimagines the past but also deconstructs the very act of historical representation and to explore the extent to which the novel exhibits the significant features of cultural memory.

Research Methodology

The research conducted in this study is of a descriptive and qualitative nature. The data used includes the novel *The Glass Palace* along with supplementary sources such as published research articles. The selected texts are scrutinized at various levels, including individual words, sentences, phrases, and idiomatic expressions, with the aim of achieving the study's intended objectives.

The Glass Palace

The Glass Palace is organized around the interconnected relationships of four distinct families: those of the Burmese King Thebaw and Queen Supayalat, including their entourage; Rajkumar Raha, an orphan from Bengal who migrated to Burma, and his offspring; Saya John, an orphan raised by Catholic priests, along with his son Matthew and their family; and Uma, the wife of the Collector of Ratnagiri, who later becomes a widow. Their fates unfold against a background of significant historical incidents, spanning from the British acquisition of Burma to the spreading of the British Power in India and Malaya, encompassing the First and Second World Wars. These events are devised and portrayed on a grand scale, spanning a period from 1885 to 1996. The author employs the theme of 'history' rather than 'love' as the central motif that permeates the initial part of the narrative.

Cultural Memory and *The Glass Palace*:

Assmann defines cultural memory as "the reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image" (Assmann and Czaplicka 132). "The culture that is connected to the past through its memory does not only produce its future, but also its past. In this way, it presents a mechanism that runs counter to natural time" (Lotman and Uspenskij 23). During the latter part of the twentieth century, post-colonial nations came into existence through the lens of tragedy, marked by trauma, victimization, and profound suffering. These nations forged their collective memories around notions of oppression, brutality, and agony, which became decisive elements of their national histories and identities. These memories coalesced around episodes of misrecognition, mutilation, and what can be termed as "historical wounds" (Chakrabarty 77). The validation of these narratives isn't always found within historical archives or firmly established in academic historiography. Instead, it stems from the ordinary long-standing customs, undocumented history characterized by

misrecognition and mistreatment. While the factual recollection of historians was undergoing a state-sponsored amnesia, the realm of Indian literature in English served as “medium of remembrance” (Erll and Rigney 112). “We need, therefore, a kind of parallel history of, let us say, victimization, which would counter the history of success and victory. To memorise the victims of history – the sufferers, the humiliated, the forgotten – should be a task for all of us” (Ricoeur 10–11).

Burma, Malaysia, and Malaya share a collective memory, particularly among the Bengali Indian community, from the colonial era. Unfortunately, contemporary political isolation has largely erased these historical connections from our consciousness. Individuals whose lives were once closely intertwined are now scattered across three distinct nations: India, Bangladesh, and Burma. However, official historical accounts and national narratives have largely ignored or downplayed these historical relationships. Amitav Ghosh, through fictional reconstruction of the past and its influence on the present, endeavours to honour the memories of his childhood. The core theme of *The Glass Palace* revolves around the challenge of preserving and interpreting the past. Ghosh writes, “...the ways in which we remember the past are not determined solely by the brute facts of time; they are open to choice, reflection and judgement. The issue of how the past is to be remembered lies at the heart of *The Glass Palace*” (Ghosh, *Letter Written to Sandra Vince*).

The references to the rebellion of 1857 form the most significant extracts drawn from the cultural memory of different characters. The first is the display of the incidents of the revolt of 1857 as a lesson for the British imperialism. In chapter 4, the transportation of King Thebaw, comprises a considerably alarming political event based on the British encounter of the rebellion. While escorting the King along with his sons back into the city, to control the unruly crowd, ‘the major had ordered the princes’ execution. They had been pushed before the crowd and their

brains had been blown out in full public view. These events were no more than twenty-eight years in the past, their memory freshly preserved in the conversation of messes and clubs” (Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* 44).

The other set of references to 1857 drawn from cultural memory appear as constituting reverberations in follow-up events and encounters. In Chapter 19, the depiction of Burma during the anti-Indian riots evokes memories for Uma, resembling the conditions reminiscent of the pre-1857 era: “then too, well before the firing of the first shot, signs of trouble had appeared on the north Indian plains. Chapatis—those most unremarkable of everyday foods—had begun to circulate from village to village, as though in warning” (Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* 246).

Another poignant reference to 1857 revolves around the concept of exile. The primary framework for this thematic exploration can be seen in the parallel exiles of Bahadur Shah Zafar, and King Thebaw. These personages symbolize disempowerment besides the enduring consequences of Imperialist involvement. Upon his return to Mandalay, the Thonzai Prince recounts the condition of Bahadur Shah, “he’d lived in a small house not far from the Shwe Dagon. They’d found him sitting on his veranda, fingering his beads. He was blind and very old” (Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* 49).

The pivotal mention of 1857 emerges in chapter 36. Kishan Singh’s narrative of the post-rebellion aftermath, drawn notably from the recollections of the elders in his village, serves as a prime illustration of how those who suffered remember historical events in their cultural memory. Following the suppression of the rebellion and the British restoration of control in Delhi, he describes, there was widespread awareness of a significant event scheduled in the city. The sky above Delhi took on a sombre hue, leading to an enigmatic spectacle. The road was seemingly bordered by columns of extraordinarily tall figures, giving the eerie impression of a multitude of giants standing guard over the event. As the elders

approached closer, it became evident that they were men, “rebel soldiers whose bodies had been impaled on sharpened stakes. The stakes were arranged in straight lines and led all the way to the city. The stench was terrible” (Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* 429–31).

Postmodern Historiographic metafiction

Postmodernism in contemporary literature is typically marked by profound self-reflection and conspicuous, parodic references to other texts. In the realm of fiction, this often translates to what is recognized as metafiction being synonymous with the postmodern. When the term “postmodernism” is applied to works of fiction, it should ideally be reserved for describing narratives that are both metafictional and imbued with historical allusions to past texts and contexts. To set this unique genre apart from conventional historical fiction, Hutcheon labelled it as “historiographic metafiction” (Hutcheon, ‘Historiographic Metafiction Parody and the Intertextuality of History’ 3). By historiographic metafiction she interprets “those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages” (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 5). She contends that historiographic metafiction “offers a sense of the presence of the past, but this is a past that can only be known from its texts, its traces - be they literary or historical” (Hutcheon, ‘Historiographic Metafiction Parody and the Intertextuality of History’ 4).

Hutcheon systematically classifies the postmodern historical narrative as “historiographic metafiction” to depict the fiction which “uses metafictional techniques to remind us that history is a construction, not something natural that equates to the past” (Nicol 99). *The Glass Palace* presents a fine instance of the way conventional historiography is defied and confronted by employing metafictional devices.

The Glass Palace, as a historiographic metafiction, calls into question the authenticity of traditional history that upholds a

specific perspective of the earlier times. It disrupts the act of narrating history by intertwining it with myth, imagination, and constructed narrative. Departing from the cause-and-effect framework of modernist convention, it centres on human bonds, communication and uncertainty. Moreover, it embraces an unconventional blend of informal jargon words derived from a plethora of local dialects.

Historiographic Metafiction is differentiated from the conventional historical fiction in its apprehension of the past as it embarks itself in “the process of critically examining and analysing the records and survival of the past” (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 92). *The Glass Palace* showcases this perspective in its narrative, and the characters undermine the traditional historical descriptions. In addition, the central character, Rajkumar is himself untrustworthy because of he is at the tender age of only eleven. After launching the reliability of this leading role, there emerges a suspicion regarding his validity when it describes, “his name was Rajkumar and he was an Indian, a boy of eleven – not an authority to be relied upon” (Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* 3).

Another important feature of the historiographic metafiction that the novel exhibits is the problematisation of the conventional understanding of history. In traditional historical discourse, the historian records past incidents dispassionately. Contrarily, the analysis and perception of this eleven years old lead character develops ambiguity about the historical events. The novel renders varied perceptions on various historical personalities as Dinu censures Mussolini and Hitler for their coercive meddling in Europe (Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* 293).

Amitav Gosh depicts varied perspectives of the personages as there is no consistency in the points of view to be uncovered in the book like Arjun, an Army officer has faith in the British authority while Uma, a lady activist, opposed the very notion of trusting the English rulers blindly (Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* 287). On the contrary, Hardayal, feels a deterioration in his disposition

because of the perplexity between his loyalties. He questions the British and asks Arjun: “Well, didn’t you ever think: this country whose safety, honour and welfare are to come first, always and every time what is it? Where this country? The fact is that you and I don’t have a country” (Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* 297).

Each portion of the seven sections of the novel spotlight different viewpoints on history while the narrative’s milieu is 1885, the British invasion of Burma. It portrays that there was a schism among the public in the rivalry of the governments. In conventional historical records, certain indigenous, gender or ideological sects are consistently alienated from the central narrative. However, in postmodern meta-historiography, these underprivileged sections are allocated a presence within the story. Hutcheon considers these sections as “ex-centric” (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 68).

The Glass Palace recounts the overlooked undocumented accounts of historical shifts from the common people’s outlook. The novel portrays individual and societal accounts of the characters, that unveil the episodes in the British invasion of Burma and the King’s banishment as story setting which is again a key feature of the historiographic metafictional works which “hardly ever occur in their pure form; individual literary works are often hybrids combining elements of various types of narrative situations” (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 68).

The exile of Burmese King and Queen reflects the way the English authority enforced banishment on the regal family of Burma and it, pervasively, unveils the outlook of the masses that, in the early stages, shows unswerving allegiance to their King but, at the cessation of their rule, how they start pillaging the royal residence. The British army while transporting the Queen’s treasured jewellery from the regal adobe to the ship, exploit the moment and filch the valuable gems. Such incidents are disregarded in the customary historical context and possibly a manifestation of “possible mnemonic failures of recorded history” (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 114).

Diverse voices are another feature of the text that sets it apart from typical historical storytelling. There are perspective angles of Dolly, Saya, Rajkumar, Neel, Umma besides numerous other personae and consequently “the narrative unity within each section of the novel is disrupted by the start of another section with a different point of view” (Hutcheon, ‘Subject in/of/to History and His Story’ 78–91). The novel leaves loose ends untied and using Hutcheon’s terminology, it has “the perfect anti-closure”. (Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* 176). Furthermore, the narrative demonstrates the confluence of two diverse discourses i.e., fictional and historical. The text exudes fanciful aura through its portrayal of make-believe characters while it is imbued with history as it unfolds the exile of the Burmese King. The coexistence of two discourses differentiates it from a typical historical fiction. The significant interaction between Dolly and Uma in which they challenge long-held beliefs and historical truths demonstrates the characters proactive nature. Instead, they engage in active resistance and counteraction and construct their discourse to convey their perspective. Other characters like Arjun, Dolly, Saya and Neel also defy the established historical depictions by recounting their idiosyncratic outlooks on diverse historical occurrences.

Conclusion

The present study has assessed *The Glass Palace* as historiographic metafiction and tried to trace the elements of cultural memory. It has found that the novel interweaves historical data with the individual recollections. The author decentralises and rewrites the significant historical events articulated by minority, women, and children as they preserve the historical events in their cultural memory. The novel problematises the divergence between reality and fabrication by embracing postmodern techniques like intertextual references, volatile central figures, a mix of literary forms, nonconventional plot, multiple narrators and uncertain closure. Moreover, it challenges established history as a metanarrative that proclaims universality, absoluteness and an

inherent progress and presents historical events in a kaleidoscopic manner, extracted from the cultural memory. The portrayal of different characters and the multiple stories that they express challenge historical objectivity and authority over truth and thus cultivate uncertainty concerning the dividing line between fact and fantasy.

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Negotiating Cultures, Claiming Spaces: The Voices of South Asian Women in the United Kingdom

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Abstract

This study paper contends that stereotypes and inaccurate representations of South Asian women exist in popular culture and literature, challenging the uniform portrayal of these women in the UK. This paper aims to illustrate the richness and complexity of South Asian women's experiences in the diaspora via the works of several writers and filmmakers, including Gurinder Chadha and Monica Ali. It looks at the ways in which these women negotiate their identities, question gender norms, and defy social expectations. The study also looks at generational divides, diasporic space, and cultural negotiation, highlighting the diversity of identities that fall under the umbrella of "South Asian women." This study challenges prevailing narratives and forges its own paths in the UK, showing that South Asian women are active agents of change rather than passive victims of oppression. It does this by examining the

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writings of Chadha and Ali. In the end, this essay makes the case for a more comprehensive interpretation of South Asian women's experiences, one that embraces their diversity and complexity rather than falling victim to stereotypes.

Keywords: Diaspora, South Asian Women, Identity, Representation, Stereotypes.

This paper would like to argue how the West has traditionally viewed South Asian Women immigrants through a monolithic lens. For instance, all were defined as 'Indians' before 1945 and subsequently redefined as Pakistani's neglecting the complexity and variability of their individual experiences and identities. The designation 'South Asian women' serves as a unifying banner, bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds to collectively address shared challenges and foster solidarity in pursuit of empowerment and collective action. Through the works of various writers and filmmakers, this paper will argue how these writers and filmmakers subvert the dominant narratives and stereotypes surrounding South Asian Women within mainstream discourse.

The process of bringing a family to Britain had different reasons, both for males and females. Males brought their families so that they could continue to get the heredity of business or labour to keep on going through their sons, or they can be benefitted from the higher standard of living in terms of education and health compared to their home country. However, women went to foreign lands to safeguard the fidelity of their husbands. This case was mainly seen in the depiction of Muslim women because Islam gives the liberty of multiple marriages. By contrast, Sikh and Hindu men brought their families along with them when they were migrating to other places because they were treated more equally in these religions, and women, too, wanted to contribute to the economy as wage earners rather than remain passively at their homes.

In Alison Shaw's ethnography, "A Pakistani Community in Britain", Amina, Amjad's wife, got the news from her villagers that

her husband got married with an English woman. She went with her children to Oxford to stay with him for a year, but she continued to stay there because she could not trust her husband.

Orientalist discourses also show that forced or arranged marriages are the only option for South Asian Women. However, this is not entirely true. Irish writer Dervla Murphy in her travelogue “Tales from Two Cities”, shows that Jahan and Naseem, two young Muslim couples meeting in Bradford, fall in love with each other and marry against their parents’ will. While blatantly forced marriages are rare, they have become known as the only form of marriage that British Asians participate in.

Murphy draws attention towards the hypocrisy of the media and government of the UK, which wants to portray this image of British Asian Women but do nothing in the name of no interference towards one’s religious doctrines. Like many other critics, Murphy says that one needs to move these things from the boundaries of religion to human rights if they are concerned about the welfare of British Asian Women.

While traditions of purdah and hijab are associated with some Islamic communities, they are used by British media to show all Asian women as depressed. On the one hand, there are voices in the West to wage war against Afghanistan to unveil or free them from the curse of hijab, but on the other hand, they disempower them in the name of their sacrosanct religion.

Nevertheless, let us not be mistaken that all depictions of South Asian Women are shown in a negative light because of Islam. It is not the case. The Hindu goddesses such as Sita and Savitri were considered ideal for South Asian Women. All the women were motivated to live a life of sacrifice and loyalty to their husbands. Authors such as Anita Desai, Kamla Markanday and Nayantara Sehgal have expressed their utter disappointment and dissatisfaction with the roles assigned to them through various issues and the protagonist’s behaviour bringing out their psychological chaos. In contrast the ‘New Women’ in their Literature are multidimensional

characters, imbued with human frailties and imperfections, rather than being idealized as selfless, goddess-like figures.

Gurinder Chadha has played a pivotal role in amplifying the voices and stories of South Asian Women, challenging the popular perceptions about them within mainstream Cinema. Through her films she tries to convey the nuanced British identities of her South Asian characters, highlighting their complex cultural experiences. She succeeds in portraying her characters not as secluded human beings but as socially located within a community. She questions the values of honour and sacrifice, which are stereotyped for South Asian Women over the years by the West with the attitudes of 2nd and later diasporic generations. It is also true that she can show such a unique picture of South Asian Women because she was raised in a family which is 2nd generation diasporic family there. Her film “Bhaji on the Beach” thoughtfully explores the complexities of identity, revealing the necessity of embracing both British and South Asian heritage. She also interrogates that how one’s identity is grounded by both the minority and the English culture. A poignant scene in the movie depicts that how South Asian Women bring out their food in the café, are racially abused and are seen as corrupting English life. They behave against the idealized café behaviour of England by having their food. The seaside atmosphere, when we look at it very minutely, is found not that of sun and sand but cloudy and dull, annihilating the image for one closer to the real world.

Chadha then destroys the myth that everything related to Indian women is inevitably positive; for example, when Ginder (a female character in the movie) is constantly attacked for breaking the family unit by separating from her husband. Chadha tries to bring forth Ginder’s viewpoint and is largely successful. As an audience, we are moved to have sympathy with her.

In “Bend it Like Beckham”, the main character Jess is constantly racially abused and is called ‘Paki’ throughout the novel. When she visits her friend’s home, her friend’s mother asks Jess

to teach her daughter to respect her elders, and she also assumes that Jess will be married soon to a handsome young doctor. However, it is very ironic that girl who is thought to be self-sacrificing and obedient is breaking all the stereotypes because she fights in the family to let her play football. Moreover, Jess is not her real name; the modernized version of her name is Jassmider. Everyone calls her Jess, but her Britisher friend's mother always calls her Jassmider to make her continuously realize her roots. The stereotyped image of South Asian Women as highly religious has also been questioned in the film. Portrait of Sikh God is the center point in the living room, where Jess's mother looks up to the portrait and indulges in dialogues with him. However, on the other hand, in Jess's room, David Beckham occupies the focal point of her room with whom she talks privately.

Chadha's work also brings in the question of forming a diasporic space. What becomes the focal point of the movie is the dual identity of 2nd generation diasporic South Asians living in the UK. She shows how her portrayal of Jess is not concerned with being Western or South Asian but being both. It shows how Jess shifts from the majority culture into her native culture and vice versa to become undistinguishable in both cultures. Inside the home premises, she wears traditional dresses, speaks Punjabi, and accords with all the cultural requirements. However, outside that, she metamorphoses from Jasminder to Jess to compensate for the failure of the Britishers to pronounce her name.

The dominant oriental picture of South Asian Women in the UK as submissive and oppressed is far removed from the actual life of most of them. The popularity of hijab among educated young Muslim women of South Asia is not a sign of oppression. If anyone still believes it, he is entirely mistaken. As Alibhai-Brown has said that to see the hijab as a subordinating symbol is to miss the assertion of one's cultural negotiation. They argue that ultra-orthodox Jewish women use wigs to cover their hair, nuns wear 'apostolniks', and Episcopalian women wear hats to church, then

why cannot Muslim women wear hijabs to assert their choice of cultural identification? Since the election of Donald Trump as POTUS, the hijab has emerged as a symbol of defiance as well as resistance towards the policies of Trump, which target Muslim Immigrants. Dalia Mogahed, Director of Research at the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, says that the narrative that the hijab oppresses women is not only racist but also sexist. To assume that a woman's hijab is oppressive without even questioning her is to hold the view that she holds the Western style as ideal, Mogahed said. According to South Asian Women who continue to wear hijab, they have a unique theory behind it. They believe that by covering their bodies, they can limit how someone can objectify them, and they would have the power to be judged only for their ability rather than on their appearances or looks.

This theme is shown in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*. The diasporic Bangladeshi women in the novel refuse to see their cultures as degraded. Her ethnicity is shown as a source of elated rather than stigmatized identity. Nazneen, the novel's female protagonist, realizes that England is a place of constraint rather than an opportunity. The Bangladesh of Nazneen is diametrically opposite to the Bangladesh that her sister describes in her letters. Nazneen comes from a place with a green environment compared to a place with broken paving stones and pale and yellow grass. Nothing is idealistic in England for Nazneen. However, her sister's letters remove the myth that Bangladesh is still an urban and wild pastoral paradise. The patriarchal world described in the novel about Bangladesh resembles the patriarchy within England. While both the sisters are shown as working as a machinist but Nazneen is doing this in purdah. This seems problematic because she lives in the so-called liberated atmosphere of the West. But this may be because she esteems the purdah system as a mark of her identity rather than treating it as a symbol of oppression. Whether we take the idealized Bangladesh of Nazneen or the ugly urban side of her sister, both are breaking the stereotypes of the oriental

discourse. Nazneen puts forward an image of England that is dark grey and highly congested. The characterization of Mrs. Islam in the novel breaks all the stereotypes of Bangladeshi women as poor and oppressed. She is a money lender but puts forward her image as an old widow doing charity for Islamic purposes. However, she exploits her community to the fullest and charges huge interest even from the very weakest of society. This shows how even women living in a diaspora can be so concerned towards one's self-interests and such a thing coming from the gender, which is ideally concerned as self-sacrificing.

When Nazeen is refused by her husband to learn English, she is not very angry because she wants her image as a self-sacrificing woman and wants the approval of others for everything she has done for her family and husband. She is shown as pleased after performing such duties. Nazeen's behaviour shows that she has realised that adaptation is the only way to survive in this unfree world. As famous existentialist philosopher Albert Camus says, "The only way to survive in this unfree world is to become so very free that your act of survival becomes an act of rebellion". (273) Rebellion only begets new conflicts, and thus she conforms to the lifestyle she has been subjugated to. However, the rebellion is inevitable because, in many instances in the novel, she feels she is not the same village girl of Bangladesh. This starts with washing her hair with shampoo rather than Fairy Liquid and later her decision to shave her legs and her love towards a very young man called Karim. She also starts to attend meetings without her husband's presence, where she sees 2nd generation diasporic women in hijab putting their views very effectively. She now sees her life in England as more liberating. Her search for wholeness leads her to question her individuality which was denied to her in the name of culture till now. Generational differences are the focal point of the films and novels that this paper considered. The second generation diasporic South Asian Women have become cultural navigators. The first generation feels that there is still hope to

return to their native homes, but the second generation considers England as their home. The works mentioned in this paper reveal the plurality of identities that have been unanimously put into the category of 'South Asian', and it very successfully challenges the prevalent generalization of South Asian Women in England. The mention of New Woman in the diasporic literature shows how South Asia has two different meanings for first-generation and second-generation diasporic women from South Asia. For the first generation, it is their 'home', but for the second generation, it is merely the center of their ethnic identity. The experience of life in the diaspora is the focal point of Chadha's film discussed here. She shows how various icons which have been traditionally considered as belonging to 'white Britain', for example, David Beckham (football icon) and the seaside holiday, have been 'deified' and redefined as culturally plural.

To conclude, the traditional monolithic lens through which South Asian women immigrants in the UK have been viewed neglects the complexity and variability of their individual experiences and identities. However, writers and filmmakers like Gurinder Chadha and Monica Ali challenge these dominant narratives and stereotypes, offering a more nuanced understanding of South Asian women's lives. By exploring the intersections of culture, identity, and diaspora, their works reveal the plurality of experiences within the South Asian community, highlighting the need to move beyond simplistic and stereotypical representations. Ultimately, this paper argues that a more inclusive and multifaceted understanding of South Asian women's experiences is essential for fostering empowerment, solidarity, and collective action.

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Buddhist Concepts of Suffering (Dukkha) and Compassion (Karuna) in *Maus* by Art Spiegelman

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Abstract

The graphic memoir *Maus* by Art Spiegelman is a classic view of the Holocaust and its survivors. Like most serious graphic novels, *Maus* is using its subject matter as an opportunity for sophisticated storytelling and to present ideas about the meaning of horror. When seen through the lens of Buddhist concepts of suffering (dukkha) and compassion (karuna), we found that these two fundamental concepts of Buddhism play a very important role in *Maus* and make it reach and enhance the meaning of the Holocaust and its implications, providing altogether a solution for the problem raised. This is because, firstly, the Buddhist concept of suffering is very similar to the suffering of the characters in *Maus* as they undergo immense physical and

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mental torment. We will illustrate a counter method to alleviate suffering in *Maus*, which is compassion that disguises itself and arises in life-threatening situations as love. The intensity of the suffering experienced by Holocaust victims, such as those portrayed in Spiegelman's *Maus*, can be interpreted using the Buddhist Noble Truth of Suffering. This paper begins with a discussion of the concept of suffering, followed by compassion. The subsequent text examines the Buddhist practices to alleviate suffering and ends with a concluding paragraph.

Keywords: Graphic Memoir, Suffering, Compassion, *Maus*, Graphic Novel, Holocaust, Buddhism, Alleviate,

The Jewish-German Holocaust, as part of a tragedy that destroyed many people, is a plight that no one has ever enjoyed and has been depicted in various narratives for years. It has been translated into various fields including movies, documentaries, poetry, comics, novels, and memoirs. *Maus* by Art Spiegelman is one of the unique works that use graphic novels to articulate the horror story of the Jewish-German assault. Only about twenty-eight years ago, this devastating event was indicated in the graphic novel, and *Maus* gained its title as "bedtime stories" because the content and the method of display are detrimental. Many years have passed since the event, but the shadow of the pain still lingers in the pockets of the author and the artists. This study examines the Buddhist concept of suffering and compassion portrayed by characters, settings, and dialogues developed in *Maus* by Art Spiegelman.

The book tells the story of Vladek Spiegelman's experiences during World War II, during which he became separated from his family, was imprisoned in various concentration camps and spent the last ten months of his internment at Auschwitz in Poland. The book also tells the story of Art's troubled relationship with his father over the years. Long interested in WWII history, Spiegelman believes that through his father's story and his personal life, he can better understand the horror that happened there. *Maus* won

a special Pulitzer Prize in 1992 and is included in Time's list of the 100 best books. It is a unique work that draws from multiple contexts and subcultures. As a narrative, *Maus* examines graphic novels, a heavily marginalized mode of literary and artistic expression, and also the industry behind the production of graphic novels, which have both struggled from and contributed to the stigmatization of the art form. It's a deeply moral work that refuses to offer, in Art's words, an easy "emotional fix." Spiegelman is perhaps the living embodiment of such paradox, as a committed "Arty-farty" guy who deeply wants the grail of being accepted as an artist.

Whether it is a personal enemy, a natural disaster, or even a psychological problem, the human condition is rooted in Dukkha. The representation of a tragedy, for example, the last world war, or a transition, such as separation and marriage disruption, always utters the concept captured from the problem of human desperation. It turns out in their narratives, individuals are in one way or another exposed to the suffering of human existence. *Maus* is one of those sullen narratives that goes with Buddhism to the concentration of the work to illustrate the suffering and willingness to help. Suffering is an injury regardless of equal human life. Art suffers physically and mentally as a Holocaust survivor, as an unhappy father, as an irrepressible artist, as the husband of a suicidal woman, and as an orphan. Sorrow and mourning, and even bludgeoned and bruised corpses, flood *Maus*'s pages. *Maus*'s characters are "Balanced," "Over," and "On the Fence," who stars in a story that obscures both the consumed and the victimizers.

Overview of the Buddhist Concept of Suffering and Compassion

Buddhism expounds four noble truths of Dukkha, which helps in understanding the concept of suffering. In his book *No Mud, No Lotus*, Hanh reflects on the noble truth of Dukkha as;

When you first hear that suffering is a Noble Truth, you might wonder what's so noble about suffering? The Buddha was saying that if we can recognize suffering, and if we embrace it and look deeply into its roots, then we'll be able to let go of the habits that feed it and, at the same time, find a way to happiness. Suffering has its beneficial aspects. It can be an excellent teacher (15).

The Buddhist word *Dukkha* includes physical and mental pain, anxiety, uneasiness, dissatisfaction, etc. The word can be understood as an experience of unsatisfactoriness and as a label on painful aspects of human existence. *Dukkha* perpetuates sorrow, lamentation, and despair, and it is the root of evil and general dissatisfaction in life. The cardinal cause of *Dukkha* is classified into the three root evils of greed, hatred, and delusion (Myint and Tangyin 2024).

The fundamental concepts of Buddhism are compassion (*Karuna*) and non-violence. Compassion emanates from the understanding that all beings are interrelated and that one becomes oneself by helping others. The attitude of narrowing down one's interest to a small part of the body discourse of the other's concerns, and one becomes ineffective while remaining involved in the process of another's world is the compassionate spirit. Compassion includes empathy, understanding, kindness, mercy, tolerance, gentleness, pity, and love. It is a warm fire of relation to the other. One may experience a purifying, elevating, and consolidating influence that may stimulate good actions. Compassion stems from ethical awareness based on the foundation of an emphasis on mindfulness, meditation, and relationality. Compassion helps in overcoming negative emotional states like hostility, anger, and hatred that close the self in on itself. Compassion is then directed towards self and others as a result of responding to the suffering of self and others with an adequate attitude. It is unified with wisdom, rooted in equanimity and detached from sentimentality, attachment, and a passion that cannot self-elevate its own thought. Such compassion becomes an essential tenet in Buddhism. It is

an organic component and moral dimension of enlightenment in Buddhism. The book *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction* also reflects that;

In early Buddhism, karuna figure as the second of the four Brahma-viharas, or 'Divine Abidings'. These are states of mind cultivated especially through the practice of meditation. The four are loving-kindness (metta), compassion (karuna), sympathetic joy (mudita), and equanimity (upekkha). The practice of the four Brahma-viharas involves radiating outwards the positive qualities associated with each, directing them first towards oneself, then to one's family, the local community, and eventually to all beings in the universe (Keown 15).

Depiction of Suffering in *Maus*

Art Spiegelman's *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* is his father's story of the Holocaust, told by his son. But it is also so much more. It is the story of Vladek Spiegelman's efforts to survive, efforts which included, eventually, his efforts to live. And it is, further, the map of a son's dark struggle, conducted on behalf of his father and them both, to rescue a man from his past. In this latter concern, *Maus* is about pain; about suffering so deep as to dehumanize those subjected to it, and thereby to render absurd at once all things reasonable and human. Art Spiegelman's biography of Vladek, the character who is his father, is the story of one who is no longer a who, but rather a what. For his father, Spiegelman's purpose displayed on every painful page, became a wire frame, a number, to whose other cylinders many may be freely stacked. This, then, is the significance of *Maus*. It is about suffering unalleviated by reason or even unselfish compassion.

Throughout the narrative, the text suffered an onrush of vile memory—it was shot at, gassed, and hung out to dry merely to return to the experience, repeatedly. Vladek is even depicted as enduring his cremation, while still alive, by the skin of his screaming, begging hands. The juxtaposition of Vladek and

Auschwitz remains shocked and shocking even now. Spiegelman's *Maus* is a wellspring of human folly. It cannot do without its flood of suffering so meretriciously confined within only two points of comparison: cats and Jews. Such Suffering becomes its reason for existence.

It is an undeniable fact that the Jews had to bear immense suffering during the Holocaust. It went on for months and even years; daily life for those imprisoned meant constant emotional and physical suffering. The longer prisoners lived, the more their suffering increased, and this was because they underwent extreme physical hardships that affected their health. However, sufferings went even deeper and began to touch upon the level of mentality. Thinking about a life that was lost, thinking about the future with no hope, and visualizing an unrealized plan was suffering. All these made the period of the Holocaust the ultimate human suffering. It can be felt when Vladek says in the process of describing his days in prison; ".....some kids were screaming and screaming. They couldn't stop. So the Germans swunged them by the legs against a wall. And they never anymore screamed" (Spiegelman 108).

Focusing on the ultimate form of suffering at first seems to imply that it was only the Jews who were suffering during the Holocaust. Yet, this is not actually the case. Non-Jews who were also victimized by the Nazi Regime, poor, ill, women, gypsies, blacks, and even Nazi soldiers also had to bear enormous suffering. Art Spiegelman's *Maus* not only aims to show and understand how Jews suffered and to empathize with Jewish suffering only, but also aims to draw general lessons about suffering by giving an account of any kind of suffering beings had to bear, and more importantly, to show how to face and cope with suffering in general.

The Buddhist idea of suffering is complex. Buddha himself said 2500 years ago "I teach suffering, its origin, cessation and path. That's all I teach" ("BBC - Religions - Buddhism: The Four

Noble Truths” 2014). Here we also follow the understanding presented by Thich Nhat Hanh in *No Mud, No Lotus*. Suffering, often translated in the Pali Canon of Buddhism as dukkha, means much more than the colloquial understanding of ‘pain’. For Hanh, it is an overarching concept that embraces much of human existence, including three roots: suffering, impermanence, and nonself. As it is difficult to translate well into English, many writings use the original terms to then explain their meaning. Hanh states that

Both suffering and happiness are of an organic nature, which means they are both transitory; they are always changing. The flower, when it wilts, becomes the compost. The compost can help grow a flower again. Happiness is also organic and impermanent by nature. It can become suffering and suffering can become happiness again (72).

Suffering is a broad and endemic concept. It is a constituent part of life and, in its most general form, characterizes the rare exception. Suffering is pain and misery, but also dissatisfaction from expectations unmet. At an individual level, it is deeply distressing emotions regarding the loss of loved ones or diminishment. These feelings, called samsara, are what cause us to be born again and again. Such feelings over future suffering can dominate our current lives to the point that we ignore peace and calm around us. We should recognize them so that we can reverse them and return to being positive and ‘mindful’ in our current lives. As also Keown writes;

In the moral order, Dharma is manifest in the law of karma, which, as we shall see below, governs the way moral deeds affect individuals in present and future lives. Living in accordance with Dharma and implementing its requirements is thought to lead to happiness, fulfillment, and salvation; neglecting or transgressing it is said to lead to endless suffering in the cycle of rebirth (samsara) (4).

Depiction of Compassion in *Maus*

One important question raised in this paper is how much the reader of *Maus* is affected by Spiegelman's method of arousing compassion. We adopted the dictionary definitions of compassion: a feeling of sorrow or pity aroused by the suffering of another, and sympathy. Do readers feel contact with the condition of suffering depicted in *Maus*? What do readers feel about the depicted suffering when they finish reading *Maus*? This section will explore the readers' response to depictions of suffering through *Maus* and will argue that *Maus* can be considered a good representative of literary compassion.

Vladek as the chief survivor of the two graphic novels, a striking human compassion is shown by the first witness of the atrocities. Vladek, on his voyage to Felice in the Catskills, becomes easily ill from breathing the contaminated air, and they consequently decide to rest in the car for a few days in the woods. Vladek, when about to permit Art to open a tin of food because "there is enough air in the car now," again gets sick and at once, he recalls the suffering he had undergone in Auschwitz. We are forced to recognize the hazardous nearness of atrocity implicit in events of ordinary life and to validate the requirement that we must not harm individuals for the obtaining of our aims or preferences.

Here, Art intends to manage food for his father with the only legitimate reason that the car has become secure. Vladek's recall of his tortures is his virtuous nature engrossed in Art's compassion, embarking Vladek for greater responsibility of comportment. Furthermore, it is notable that Vladek's terror does not inspire Art's sympathy. However, Art's refusal to turn over the day-to-day evolution of material and mental patterns of his life with all deeds and omissions contributing to learning is independently an act of compassion. In addition, as a foil to the tension and unkindness up-to-date and constantly emphasized in *Maus*, there are numerous acts of kindness. These are described one after another, portraying the ability of individuals even under contentious, highly stressful conditions.

One suggestion that can be drawn from the story of *Maus* is that the principal way characters try to remove any suffering from their lives is through the presence of compassion. Vladek, whether he wants to admit it or not, is surrounded by the utmost compassion in his life. From the relationships and friendships of people he surrounds himself with, to acts of compassion he receives from those, including the Nazis, who would like to remove any sense of compassion from their lives, Vladek is a blessed individual. Even in the small things, like the Jewish boys that come into the ghetto, they bring with them food and other sustenance to help all who are on the brink of demise. The small act is merely symbolic of the larger issue of these characters showing strong compassion. No, the presence of the boys does not stop the larger Nazi contingent from entering, but for a moment they do bring a ton of love and kindness to help bring some normality back into several lives needing it. Another poignant example of compassion in *Maus* is the relationship between Vladek and his wife, Anja. Despite the extreme conditions of the Holocaust, their bond remains strong, offering each other emotional support in the face of unimaginable hardship. Vladek's efforts to protect Anja and secure her safety, even at great personal risk, can be seen as an expression of Karuna.

With this purpose of compassion harbouring around Vladek, one may wonder why he chooses to lead his life the way he does. Is he not willingly throwing this compassion down the drain? Even the son, in certain instances, takes on a dislike for the character of his father. Vladek, despite these notations, still shows strong conviction and faith towards a strong sense of community. His stories strongly depict these characteristics, as time and again he shows himself strong in these respective concepts. Areas like trust and understanding, and the importance of a need to serve, are rooted in his character and show an overwhelming problem and love for his fellow citizens that go well beyond any immediate love or self-interest. Mainly, Vladek experiences a sense of removal.

Throughout his life, he withholds talking about it, denying basic human needs. Those who cherished him coped in his hour of need. Love flowed and suffering was removed through understanding and compassion from his son and strangers.

Symbolism and Allegory in *Maus*

Art Spiegelman's *Maus* is renowned not only for its groundbreaking approach to Holocaust narrative but also for its innovative use of symbolism and allegory. This section examines how Spiegelman's symbolic use of animals and other narrative devices serve to deepen the portrayal of suffering and compassion, particularly through the lens of Buddhist philosophy.

One of the most striking features of *Maus* is Spiegelman's decision to depict different races and nationalities as various animals: Jews as mice, Germans as cats, Poles as pigs, and so on. This allegorical choice immediately sets *Maus* apart from other Holocaust narratives and serves multiple functions within the text. On one level, the animal allegory can be seen as a visual metaphor for the dehumanization experienced by the victims of the Holocaust. By reducing human characters to animals, Spiegelman highlights the brutal simplicity with which the Nazis categorized and exterminated Jews, reducing them to mere vermin in their ideology.

In *Maus*, the rigid classification of characters into animal types can be seen as a symbolic representation of the dangers of such attachments. The portrayal of Jews as mice, for instance, reflects the way the Nazis dehumanized their victims, but it also serves as a reminder of the arbitrary nature of these distinctions. The characters in *Maus* are forced into these roles, much like how individuals in the real world are often confined by the identities imposed upon them by society. This rigid identification contributes to the cycle of suffering, as it reinforces the divisions that lead to violence and oppression.

The symbolic elements in *Maus* do more than just depict suffering; they also create opportunities for compassion. The

animal allegory, while initially distancing, ultimately invites readers to empathize with the characters by highlighting the absurdity and cruelty of the distinctions that lead to their suffering. Spiegelman's choice to use animals instead of human figures can be seen as a "skilful means" (upaya) in the Buddhist sense, where a particular method is used to convey a deeper truth. In Buddhism, upaya refers to the use of appropriate techniques to communicate spiritual truths in a way that is accessible and meaningful to the audience. In this case, the allegory in *Maus* makes the narrative more accessible while also challenging readers to reflect on the arbitrariness of the identities that divide us.

Moreover, the portrayal of suffering in *Maus* through symbolic means encourages readers to engage with the text on an ethical level. The dehumanisation depicted in the graphic novel is not just a historical reality but a reflection of ongoing human tendencies to categorise and oppress others. By using animals as symbols, Spiegelman forces readers to confront the consequences of such actions and to recognize the shared humanity that lies beneath these artificial distinctions. This recognition is the first step toward compassion, as it breaks down the barriers that separate us and allows us to see others' suffering as our own.

Conclusion

This study has explored Art Spiegelman's *Maus* through the lens of Buddhist concepts of suffering (Dukkha) and compassion (Karuna), revealing how the graphic novel embodies and reflects these profound philosophical ideas. By analysing the depiction of suffering in *Maus*, we have seen how Spiegelman portrays the Holocaust's horrors not just as historical events but as manifestations of the broader human condition. The narrative and visual elements of *Maus* depict physical, emotional, and psychological suffering, aligning with the Buddhist understanding of Dukkha as an inherent aspect of existence. The concept of Samsara—Buddhism's cycle of birth, death, and rebirth—has also been shown to resonate with the intergenerational trauma depicted in *Maus*. The graphic novel

illustrates how the suffering of the Holocaust is transmitted across generations, perpetuating cycles of pain and grief.

We hope this research will prompt more scholars and researchers to explore philosophical concepts and related sophisticated ideas within ideological texts in graphic novels, and that this could expand to include wider literary texts and nonverbal forms. It would be interesting to see whether other graphic novels or works use similar visual and verbal methods to express Buddhist concepts. This study has opened up a new area of research and provides an important foundation for the investigation of more Buddhist concepts in other graphic novels. We hope that this research will enrich the field of graphic novels and literature studies.

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Unveiling the Elemental Mystique: Exploring Supernatural Themes in Jim Corbett's Works

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Abstract

This paper studies the presentation of supernatural elements in Jim Corbett's writing. The prominent features and inclinations of supernatural elements in his writing are examined. Jim Corbett's writing can positively be defined as a jungle mystery narrative and is imbued with all the prerequisites of detective fiction, including the presence of the supernatural. He experienced the supernatural through ghosts, spiritual phenomena and superstitions. The supernatural occurrences do neither apply the standard crime and investigation mode nor seek a logical conclusion. The elements of supernatural and superstitions are very much a part of Jim Corbett's narratives. However, his main concern is the crime and the criminal and the supernatural occurrences are part of his experiences of chasing the man-eaters. He does not superimpose these occult happenings rather they are a part of his jungle experiences and add zest and thrill to the man-eater narratives. A scientific temperament may term these experiences as unreal or some psychological hallucination but, the elements of supernatural or occult are

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prerequisites of a traditional mystery or detective narrative and make Corbett's writing acceptable as a predominant jungle mystery narrative.

Keywords: Supernatural, Mystery, Man-eater expeditions, Religious beliefs

Methodology

This research paper analyses the portrayal of the supernatural in Jim Corbett's writings. It examines the stories written by Jim Corbett and focuses on the prominent features and inclinations of supernatural elements in his work. The study includes an investigation of his overall literary contribution, as well as a comprehensive review of related literature from printed and internet sources to conclude.

Introduction

Supernatural forces encompass magical, religious, or paranormal phenomena that cannot be explained by scientific methods. In its broadest definition, supernatural fiction overlaps with weird fiction, horror fiction, vampire literature, ghost stories, and fantasy ("Supernatural Fiction"). While supernatural occurrences are generally associated with religion, they can manifest in different forms such as ghosts, miracles, or superhuman abilities. These occurrences are often attributed to external forces beyond the natural world. The supernatural or occult elements have always been a part of detective or mystery fiction, especially in gothic novels. While the term "mystery" is commonly linked to crime, it can also represent a suspense thriller with a focus on the supernatural. The supernatural subgenre focuses on paranormal beings or events that take place in the real world. Moreover, suspense and mystery often take precedence over action and adventure in supernatural fiction ("Supernatural Fiction"). Jim Corbett's writing can be categorized as a jungle mystery narrative, incorporating all the essential elements of detective fiction, including a touch of the supernatural. Sims remarks that, as a result of societal fears about the unknown, there was a surge in detective

stories in the late 19th century where the supernatural was not just a backdrop but an essential component of the story. (112)

Observations

Gothic involves the supernatural (or the promise of the supernatural), it often involves the discovery of mysterious elements of antiquity, and it usually takes its protagonists into strange or frightening ancient buildings adds John Mullan (2014) *The Castle of Otranto* depicts a supernatural tale. Prominent authors like Anne Radcliff and Jane Austen respectively in *The Mystery of Udolpho* and *Northanger Abbey* dealt with the element of the supernatural that added enthusiasm to the plot and setting. The paranormal overwhelmed the Victorian era. They took great pleasure in pantomimes and extravaganzas packed with supernatural apparatus, as well as ghost and fairy stories and traditions of odd Gods, devils, and spirits; (Bown, Burdett & Thurschwell 1) The second wave of detective nineteenth-century writers used the supernatural in a new formula of scientific fervour. Supernatural extends to even, "... a serialised adventure story set in the valley of kings..." (Bown, Burdett & Thurschwell 2) Later on, the influence of the supernatural is visible even in the writings of the Bronte sisters, especially in *Wuthering Heights*. The presence of the supernatural, especially in detective literature is both dreadful and terrible but passionately desired. It was a spooky sense that the world was bigger than daily life and an indication that reality could be altered by something transcendent. (Bown, Burdett & Thurschwell 1)

Jim Corbett experienced the supernatural in the form of ghost, spiritual phenomenon and the superstitions. However, these supernatural occurrences are not purposely superimposed in the stories, but are a part of his total experience of man-eater hunting. He does not force the supernatural, but simply narrates his experiences and leaves it to the readers to decide its credibility. The supernatural occurrences do neither apply the standard crime and investigation mode nor seek a logical conclusion. The mystery

of the unknown is complicated to reach a satisfied conclusion and rather depends on individual perception. Individual religious beliefs form the basis of one's perception of supernatural occurrences. Though born a Christian, Jim Corbett was brought up in an atmosphere that was predominantly Hindu. The Kumaon and Garhwal region of Himalayas are worshiped as the dwelling of Gods by Hindus. Saints meditate on the hills of Himalayas and every mountain and hill is attributed with certain spiritual power. The Kumaon valley is a gateway to the mysterious spiritual world. Jim Corbett lived all his life wandering on the mountains and forest and he must have had some experience of the occult and the supernatural. These experiences formed the basis of his belief in Hindu religion and spirituality.

The most talked about supernatural experience he witnessed was the lights of Purnagiri Shrine. He considers himself lucky to have been endowed with the privilege of witnessing the sacred lights because he was on a mission to save the humanity. While chasing the Tala-Des man-eater, he witnessed the most unusual phenomena. In the darkness of night, he saw three lights of uniform size; two meter in diameter. These lights burnt steady without smoke. After a while, few more lights appeared and slowly mixed with the first lights. He witnessed this phenomenon from a hundred and fifty yards of distance. The night was still and silent. He looked for a logical conclusion, but failed because it was neither a forest-fire nor any person could go to such a height, with lighted torches in hands. It was a rock hill without any vegetation and a perpendicular rock, where no human could possibly go up. He was smitten by this phenomenon, pursued the matter for a better explanation and sent one of his servants to the head priest of Purnagiri Shrine to settle the authenticity of the event. He even published an article in the local newspaper on the lights of Purnagiri. He has convincingly presented the myth surrounding the Purnagiri lights, as reported by the head priest of the shrine. He expresses his complete faith in the supernatural phenomena of the

lights and emphatically points out that there is no other explanation. Occasionally supernatural occurrences are surrounded by certain myths, related to spiritual or religious matter. The myth goes as, once a sadhu offended the goddess Bhagbati and from centuries, made his repentance to the goddess by lighting the lights, two thousand feet above the ground. These lights occurred on a fixed day and, “are only visible to favoured people.” (Corbett, *The Jim Corbett Omnibus* 368) He writes that the Purnagiri *Rawal*, or High Priest, paid him a visit. He had visited regarding a piece Corbett had written about the Purnagiri lights for a local newspaper, and he wanted to congratulate Corbett on being the only European to have ever had the honour of seeing them. Corbett has explained the lights in his piece the same way he did in these pages. (Corbett, *The Jim Corbett Omnibus* 368/369) There is a sense of pride in his words at having received the privilege of the goddess Bhagbati. He favoured Hinduism, was inclined to its spirituality and considered the sighting of lights as a blessing of the goddess.

Jim Corbett experienced one of the weirdest of occurrences while chasing the Thak man-eater. He was sitting over a kill, when around midnight he heard a scream of a man. It was a frantic cry of a person in tremendous misery and the scream came from the direction of a deserted village. He had an uncanny habit of exploring any unusual occurrence. The information provided by the headman of the village amply clarified the scene and indirectly established the fact that it was an occurrence of some supernatural force. He had one more brush with supernatural force while hunting the Champawat man-eater. He had a night long experience of the supernatural at the Champawat dak-Bungalow. He was always reluctant to talk about it, but the experience was haunting. As believed by the locals the dak-bungalow was haunted by evil spirits. He had experiences of supernatural during his stay in the forest while chasing the man-eaters and he was very much conscious of its presence and powers when he says, this is a book of jungle stories, and tales ‘beyond the laws of nature’ do not

consort well with such tales. He has a tale to talk about the bungalow, but he won't tell it here. (Corbett, *The Jim Corbett Omnibus* 27)

Jim Corbett never openly discusses the supernatural forces in the form of ghost, but gives explanation for the matters related to religion and spirituality. He believed that one should accept the supernatural and leave it well alone. One of the most curious of his experiences of the occult was the temple tiger, the only tiger he failed to hunt after repeated efforts. Surprisingly he has dedicated a complete story to his failure to hunt the temple tiger. He experienced the spiritual power that protected the tiger. Temple tiger was blessed by the goddess of rock temple and the temple priest laughed when Jim Corbett told him he didn't want to shoot his tiger. "I have no objection, sahib, to your trying to shoot this tiger, but neither you nor anyone else will ever succeed in killing it," he responded. That's how Corbett learnt about the Dabidhura temple tiger, and it led to one of the most fascinating shikar experiences of his life. (Corbett, *The Jim Corbett Omnibus* 250) No reason could be attributed for his failure because the events were beyond any logical reasoning. Another story of supernatural occurrence intercepted by spiritual beliefs is the 'Baram Ka Than', which occurred near Mukteshwar. It was a myth among the local inhabitants that *Baram*, a jungle god, did not permit shooting of animals in the surrounding area of the sacred shrine. He experienced one of the weirdest of occurrence when he sat up for cattle lifter tiger one mile away from the shrine. At the approach of the tiger all of a sudden, some jamun trees leaned over other and crashed down on the ground. Alarmed by the crashing sound, the tiger leaped away. The surprising fact was that neither there was rain, wind nor the trees were old. That tree fell down across the path leading to the shrine. The description reflects his faith inclined to the presence of spiritual power. He is convinced that the power of Baram Ka Thana protected the tiger.

The omnipotent power of nature has a lasting effect on the human psyche and makes him a vulnerable creature. Mountain dwellers are very sensitive to natural phenomena and have a strong superstition. Most valleys and mountains are said to harbour an evil spirit. Jim Corbett describes superstition as a mental illness that is directed against one person or group while others are spared. In this respect, it is comparable to measles. Despite his claim that he is not superstitious, he is unable to explain the events in the Dak bungalow during the tiger hunt in Champawat or the scream he heard from the abandoned Thak village. He is also unable to explain why he kept failing in one of the most fascinating tiger hunts he has ever participated in. (Corbett, *The Jim Corbett Omnibus* 247/248) Although Jim Corbett prides himself on not being afflicted with the worst kind of superstition, he had his superstitions that were common for the elite hunters of his time. In the case of the Man-Eater of Chowgarh, Jim Corbett tried for a whole year to catch it but failed. When he got hold of the nightjar's eggs, the tigress came before him. He owes his success in hunting the Chowgarh tigress to the eggs of the nightjar, as he says: "I plead guilty to being as superstitious as my fellow sportsmen. For three long periods, extending over a whole year, I had tried – to kill the tigress, and had failed; and now, a few minutes after I had collected the eggs, my luck changed." (Corbett, *The Jim Corbett Omnibus* 106) Jim Corbett tells the story of Bala Singh who swallowed the demon of Trishul. He makes it clear that educated people are not completely immune to superstition and that it is confined only to uneducated people. Educated townspeople also have their superstitions and the line between these two types of superstition is very difficult to draw. He does not seek a logical explanation for the supernatural occurrences. He merely reports them and creates a state of mystery.

Conclusion

The elements of the supernatural and superstition are an essential part of Jim Corbett's stories. However, his main focus

is on the crime and the criminal and the supernatural events are part of his experience in hunting the man-eaters. He does not overlay these occult events, but they are part of his jungle experiences and add zest and thrills to the man-eater tales. A scientific temperament might label these experiences as unreal or a psychological hallucination, but the element of the supernatural or the occult is a requirement for a traditional whodunit or detective story and makes Corbett's work an acceptable standard jungle crime narrative.

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Critiquing ‘Academia’: The Portrait of a ‘University’ in Vikas Sharma’s Novel *Media Revolution 2030*

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Abstract

The research article attempts a critical reading of Vikas Sharma’s novel *Media Revolution 2030* (2024) with special reference to Campus Academic Novel, a literary sub-genre that is said to have evolved in the mid-20th century. The article has also sought to bring in the category of “University Fiction” under the rubric of Campus or Academic Novels. Though, there are slight distinctions between these groups of novels yet, all of them tend to register the centrality of the academia or universities. Critics and writers have found at least two popular underlying strains in academic novels, the comical and the satirical. In literature, life at a university has been conventionally depicted in a nicer way where the hopes of students, professors and researchers get fulfilled through genuine moments of struggle and perseverance. The present study seeks to bring attention to the satirical strains in the depiction of a ‘University’ system in the novel, *Media Revolution 2030*. It elaborates on the changes that have occurred over the years in the higher education system of our country. The paper revolves around the writer’s exposition of corruptive

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practices like financial irregularity, nepotism, misuse of power and political intervention in the administration and delivery of knowledge at the universities.

Keywords: Academia, university, campus novel, higher education, neoliberal, capitalism and corruption

Conceptualizing the Academic or Campus Novel

The Oxford Companion to English Literature (2000) defines campus novel as “a novel set on a university campus; most are written by novelists who are (temporarily or permanently) academics.” (Drabble 167) Similarly, Charles J. Cuddon describes a campus novel as “a novel which has a university campus as its setting.” (101) Notwithstanding certain divergences and variations in the treatment and pursuit of academic themes and the depiction of the University community, the writers and critics have used different overlapping terms to define fiction on and about the academia. Though, there are slight distinctions between Campus novels, University fiction, College novels and Academic novels yet, all of them tend to register the centrality of the academia or universities. Critics and writers have found at least two popular underlying strains in academic novels, the comical and the satirical. In literature, life at a university has been conventionally depicted in a nicer way where the hopes of students, professors and researchers do get fulfilled through genuine moments of struggle and pursuit. The literary representation of academic institutions and their functionality has marked the intellectual growth of a character and a society.

David Lodge is widely recognized as the leading writer of the campus novel which is also called the academic or the university novel. He has written around four fully-grown academic novels which are based on university education and the life inside the campus. David Lodge's academic novels can be categorized as definitive works of this literary fiction sub-genre. His trilogy of campus novels, *Changing Places* (1975), *Small World* (1984) and *Nice Work* (1988) have portrayed the economic and political

dimensions of the university system in particular and the higher education system in general. Within the small world of a university or a higher education institute, Lodge has successfully pictured the research environment, the student-professor relationships and how the university's financial dependence affects its autonomy in administrative and academic matters. He brings the university system in close association with the rise of the market system and reveals how the market culture is fundamentally opposed to the university culture. *Nice Work* (1988) presents a critique of the Thatcherite policies for higher education in Britain where the lower social classes faced deprivation from university education. However, what demands the reader's engagement the most in these novels are the harrowing images of the political appropriation of the university space and the rising level of corruption in the utilization of funds and the recruitment process. The most intriguing aspect of David Lodge's academic novels is that the characters, mostly the professors or faculty members are portrayed with physical ailments and deformities which symbolize the deteriorated and dysfunctional state of the modernized university system under the neoliberal economy. Represented both as a miniature world and a world apart, the academia in Lodge's novels both raises and addresses the questions of shortage of funds, morality, sexuality, intellectual wars and the decline and addition of various academic departments.

In literary studies, the category of academic novel emerged primarily as an Anglo-American phenomenon. Recently, campus fiction has observed a sudden increase in the production and the readership of this genre in recent decades. Campus fiction is no longer confined to the Anglo-American literary space since it continues to be created by writers of different literary and cultural backgrounds and is included as part of popular cultural studies. Writers have portrayed how the societal space penetrates the academic space of the university classrooms. They have depicted a dialectical relationship between the academia and the society.

The digitalization of academics and the technological growth of the university infrastructure have contributed to the expansion of the university world where all kinds of debates, events and reactions to the inside and the outside world have started taking place in the forms of discourses and resistance movements. J. Russell Perkin (2021) notes,

By the 1960s, the idea of a university as a place apart had dis-appeared, according to David Bromwich, and had been replaced by a “reflection theory” in which the university began to be seen as a “microcosm” of society as a whole (*Politics*, 43). One result of this view was that the campus became a theatre of political action, which might take the form of demonstrations, walk-outs, or sit-ins. A generation of campus radicalism is represented in the campus novels of the 1970s. (155)

Though there have been variegated depictions of universities and colleges in literary fiction since the rise of the genre yet, the focus on university or college as a setting for the narrative action of the novel is first acknowledged in the true sense when Mary McCarthy published *The Groves of Academy* (1952). The most distinguished feature of a campus novel is its primary focus on academia in which the characters are taken from the academics. It depicts life inside the campus which is a place where the writer doesn't view academics as separate from politics but discovers the two in close association. Malcolm Bradbury (1988) has regarded the university or the academia as “a battleground of major ideas and ideologies which were shaping our times.” (“Campus Fictions”, 333) According to J. Russell Perkin (2021),

the university in fiction up to 1945, and perhaps also often in reality, was generally not a political place, but rather a place apart from politics, where the privileged could enjoy their youth, and where at least a few of them could reflect in a disinterested way on the society in which they would soon be playing a role. (154)

Perkin relates the phenomenon of university or college campuses to the newer universities arguing that the older academic institutions did not have such spaces that could be termed as a campus in the contemporary sense. The construction of campuses within a university or college, says Perkin, has provided space and opportunity for discussions on social and political issues like race, gender, sexuality, war and culture. J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999) and Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000) are notable examples of racial and sexual abuse in academia. Considering Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954) as one of the finest examples of campus fiction, Perkin shows how Amis appropriated the university space for the delineation of socio-political tensions of post-World War II Britain. Unlike Amis, the novels of Malcolm Bradbury (*The History Man*, 1975) and David Lodge (*Changing Places*, 1975) prefer to take professors as their characters over students. In his description of the salient features and recurring themes of the Campus novels, Robert F. Scott (2004) contends,

these works tend to dwell upon the frustrations that accompany academic existence, they often call attention to the antagonistic relationships that exist between mind and flesh, private and public needs, and duty and desire. As a result, despite their comic tone, most campus novels simmer with barely concealed feelings of anger and even despair as protagonists frequently find themselves caught between administrative indifference on one side and student hostility on the other. Thus, even when campus novels are lightly satirical in tone, they nonetheless exhibit a seemingly irresistible tendency to trivialize academic life and to depict academia as a world that is both highly ritualized and deeply fragmented. (83)

Apart from scenes of intellectual debates, agitations and professional rivalries, the university has mostly remained, in the traditional sense, a sanctimonious building or "the innermost shrine" of higher education around which episodes of romance, character-building, self-discovery and ideological in fightings have

been constructed as notable literary renditions. Since the 1950s, the idealized image of a university or an academic institution has been challenged by the novelists in whose works the academe resembles more like the “bleak house” of despair, discrimination, corruption, and exploitation than that of “the ivory tower” (Showalter 2) of pastoral pleasures and a safe refuge. However, contemporary academic novelists have continued to exhibit an unabated faith in the idea of the university as a liberating and evolutionary place. This is one of the main reasons why campus fiction has rendered both bleak and illuminating images of academia. Some of the well-known novelists whose works have significantly dealt with academia are such as Kingsley Amis, David Lodge, Malcolm Bradbury, Mary McCarthy, Donna Tartt, Vladimir Nabokov, J. M. Coetzee, Philip Roth, Ishmael Reed, Rita Joshi, Chetan Bhagat, Abhijit Bhaduri and Amitabh Bagchi to name but a few. The academic environment in these novels consists of heterogeneous representations. The campus is both a glorified space and a site of the interplay between power and resistance. One can encounter streaks of victimization, marginalization and unethical practices at universities and blocks of higher education.

In her “Introduction” to *The University in Modern Fiction* (1993), Janice Rossen observed that University novels encapsulate a realist imperative since “they are based on an actual institution, often enough on a real University in a real place. As such, they are important because they are widely believed by their readers to constitute an accurate representation of academic life, whether they do so or not; and what remains true is that these novels are heavily influenced by the subject itself, which exerts a strong pull on the novel form.” (1) The novels of this genre tend to picture the academic ideals and desperations of their times, and in this endeavour, the narratives move beyond the confinements of the campus environment to the world outside for a better understanding of the issues at stake. In their vivid portrayals of academia, these novels appear substantial in the reproduction and reinforcement

of popular views about the universities and academe because they seem to reflect upon the realities and incidents of academics with greater profundity.

Rossen further argues that despite the strong presence of realistic elements, the University fiction straddles between fact and fiction. She writes, "These novels are social documents, but they are also fiction: private fantasies writ large across cultural norms, expectations and values." (3) This is no coincidence that most of the academic novelists have also come from the academic community as professors, researchers and students. In other words, the authors of such novels have been associated with academia and their experiences on the campus have immensely contributed to shaping and directing their narrations of higher education institutions. The novels often appear as commentaries on the changing face of academia as a result of cultural, economic and political settings in a given context of time and space. Rossen maintains,

In part, novelists chose to write about the University as a way of testing themselves against the institution, and as a means of working out problems in their own writing. Part of the mismatch between writer and audience, when academic critics read academic novels, lies in the fact that the issues are somewhat different for each group: academics wish to reform their system by accepted means of discourse within the profession. (6)

Some of the notable examples of Campus fiction from India are Chetan Bhagat's *Five Point Someone*, Abhijit Bhaduri's *Mediocre But Arrogant* and Amitabh Bagchi's *Above Average*. The Campus novels of Indian writers in English are treated more as best-sellers than novels in the old sense. Chetan Bhagat's *Five Point Someone* (2004) which is set in the IIT, Delhi gained instant popularity among urban readers. The novel narrates the story of three friends who have secured bad grades and make efforts to improve their performance. The novelist is concerned with the

portrayal of a student's life at IIT. It tells how stressful and claustrophobic is the academic environment at the campus. Bhagat draws a comic-satirical picture of the teaching environment as well as the strained teacher-student relationship at IIT, Delhi. The novel was adapted into a Bollywood movie titled "Three Idiots" which became a blockbuster in 2009. It is the story that narrates the tale of three friends who find it difficult to improve their grades. *Mediocre but Arrogant*, another recently published Campus fiction by an Indian writer, is set on the campus of a Business School in the city of Jamshedpur. The novel brings together elements of romance, comedy and failure. This is a story about love and hostel life. The narrative revolves around the protagonist, Abbey, an MBA student who falls in love with Ayesha. Bhaduri's main focus in the novel is to depict the contemporary state of higher education in India and its role in one's life. The author has also sought to display how neoliberal capitalism has changed our perspective towards education which has become just an end to secure material success and wealth. It also critiques the system of grading and delivery of knowledge. Moreover, the reader learns the different strands of life that a young higher-education happens to live. The novel contains moments of erotic pleasure and the pursuit of love in the life of the protagonist apart from the tensions involved in the accomplishment of the academic goals.

Media Revolution 2030: Campus or Academic Novel?

In her monograph *Faculty Towers: The Academic Novel and Its Discontents* (2005), Elaine Showalter traces romance and satire as two dominant narrative threads of the Academic Novel. She is more attentive and interested in reading those academic novels which feature the faculty as protagonists. Showalter argues that these novels do not fall for the idyllic representations of the departments and the university. She identifies in them the significant lines of discontent and mockery that the novelist-professor undertakes to reveal to the audience from his or her own experiences. She has called these novels "*Professorromans*."

The author of *Media Revolution 2030*, Vikas Sharma, is also an academician who is currently a Professor of English at Chaudhary Charan University, Meerut. The novel significantly reflects upon the writer's attitudes and his experiences at the University campus. The narrative perspective relies heavily upon the first-hand encounters of the author with the university officials and students. The depiction of student life inside the campus also appears to be based on the author's keen observation. However, the authorial presence remains concealed throughout the action of the novel. The novel as a narrative fictionalises the university culture and comments on the state of higher education in India.

Media Revolution 2030 has Lucknow University as its setting. The protagonist, Kantyogi, cleared the entrance test for B.A. English Hons. He was admitted to the course and began his journey on the campus. Kantyogi came from a humble family background. His father worked in the field and his mother was a housewife. He joined the university as a student full of hopes and dreams that awaited fulfilment. For him, the university was a place that provided opportunities for personal growth. Kantyogi had intellectual aspirations and hopes to become a civil servant. He showed from the very beginning firm faith in the effectiveness and adequacy of the university resources to achieve his goals. The university library became his greatest fascination on the campus and he would spend most of his time there reading books and writing research papers. However, he was not a bookworm like his younger brother, Shanker Parveen. The university campus appeared to him like another world. He had an idyllic and romantic perception of the university since he felt like a free bird on the campus (*Media Revolution 2030* 13). Billiards and Bowling were his favourite games. He had easily secured a scholarship there to assist him financially for further studies. It was in the late 1980s that a university was considered to be the sacred place for higher learning and Kantyogi always believed in the potential of a university education. He balanced between his intellectual and

sports needs. In the initial stage, he frequently participated in and presented scholarly papers in seminars, workshops and conferences. He would write columns for English newspapers and this is how Kanyogi chased his dream of becoming a renowned scholar.

Like its predecessors, *Media Revolution 2030* touches the strings of romance on the campus. Mostly, academic novels entail a love story that describes the sexual adventures of the protagonist. At Lucknow University, Kanyogi encounters Ujjawala who happens to be his classmate. Ujjawala was quite impressed with Kanyogi's scholarly pursuits in the field of English literature. Soon they both begin to see each other at the canteen and the central library. They often talked about writers, poets and literary criticism. Kanyogi was attracted towards Ujjawala but he never admitted so. He constrained his feelings for her because he found it difficult to carry on with his studies. Ujjawala appeared as a distractor to Kanyogi who often failed to concentrate on his research assignments. She came from a well-to-do family who loved to live the Western culture, whereas Kanyogi had never been to hotels and pubs and preferred traditional ways of life. There was a cultural gap between the two but they liked each other's company. Vikas Sharma notes that the romantic relationships in university fiction deserve scrutiny, as they often serve as pivotal moments of self-discovery for characters. The excitement and vulnerabilities of first love, coupled with the pressures of academic life, create a fertile ground for conflict and growth.

After Kanyogi had completed his M.A. in English, he received an offer letter to join the Department of Foreign Languages and Humanities at Lucknow University. Once settled in life, Ujjawala and Kanyogi got happily married in a traditional Indian way. Both of them continued their academic endeavours and launched a newspaper *The Sun Rays* which published scholarly and critical writings on various political, cultural and economic issues. In the words of Ujjawala, the novelist comments on the rise of the new economic order and its impact on higher

education and small-scale businesses. Ujjawala began writing columns on the negative impacts of economic globalization and the rising corporate culture around the globe. Influenced by Gandhian social economics, she writes critiques of corporate capitalism and free trade while working hard to develop a socialist consciousness which transcends the need to accumulate wealth by dispossession. She informs Kantlyogi,

The government of India had accepted globalisation, liberalisation and economic policies, and there was free trade at the international level. And then some Indian capitalists joined hands with European companies and came forward for contract farming. Many European companies established their offices in New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Chennai, etc. and Indian engineers and business administrators were well paid by multi-national companies. It was planned to give a boost to Indian goods at the global level. But China succeeded in exporting a lot of goods to India, and imported Indian goods unwillingly, creating a wide gap between exports and imports. (50-51)

Media Revolution 2030 is not only a critical commentary on the state of universities across the country but also explores the political and economic ideas of our times. Ujjawala's arguments over the implementation of new politico-economic policies in the late 20th century India identify with the critical views on 'economic liberalism' enumerated by David Lodge's *Nice Work* (1988). The novel also considers the occasional conflicts between students and professors. Vikas Sharma draws attention to the lack of trust and respect between the teacher and the taught in the contemporary scenario. Dr. Ujjawala's recommendation for strict action against Shyam Mohan for using unfair means in the examination hall led to the souring of relations between her and the students. Shyam Mohan, a student union leader, reached Ujjawala's residence accompanied by his twenty friends, and they began shouting slogans against Ujjawala calling her a Marxist and anti-national. The novelist attempts to portray both the university politics

between the faculty and the students and the incidents of professional rivalries among the university staff. Wesley Beal remarks that Campus “novels call to mind tedious institutional politics or students’ distressing experiences or wearisome colleagues or traumatizing scandals. Worse, a reader may be pained by the way these novels represent hard realities and persistent crises such as those that we face in various ways in our academic workplaces.” (Beal 4)

The conflict between students and Dr. Ujjawala led to the exposition of recruitment scandals at Lucknow University. Dr. Kantyogi and Dr. Ujjawala were alleged by the students for running other businesses at the campus apart from their teaching jobs. Moreover, serious questions were raised against Dr. Ujjawala’s appointment as a faculty. The selection process of the university was questioned by the students and the faculty of other departments. The University authority had taken cognizance of complaints against the husband and wife, Dr. Kantyogi and Dr. Ujjawala and formed a committee to enquire into the matter of Ujjawala’s appointment. The committee submitted its report within three weeks. The allegations against Dr. Ujjawala were found correct and she had to resign. The novelist writes,

Within three weeks, Dr. Kantyogi and Dr. Ujjawala were served notice by the university to explain their situation— ‘Do you run business apart from university teaching job? Do the Bank passbooks of Current account tell a lie? Where did you get this money from? Why should the university not take legal action against both of you?’ Since Dr. Ujjawala had published news against the unlawful deeds of two members of the Legislative Assembly, the politicians started striking the iron, finding it hot. Alpa tried her best to hush up the matter but failed. Finally, the Vice Chancellor was ready to compromise on this issue if Dr. Ujjawala resigned from her job. (56)

In this novel, Vikas Sharma also emphasises the issues of corruption and mismanagement in the selection of permanent

faculty and utilization of public funds that have plagued the universities in India. The novel elaborates on how these problems are deeply rooted in our education system that not only undermines the interests of students and faculty but also jeopardizes the sanctity of academic institutions. The novelist refers to several media reports that talk about official inquiries into allegations of corruption and misuse of power in the administration of many universities in India.

These days the newspapers were full of corruption cases against the vice chancellors of Agra University and Kanpur University. Kanyogi told him that the vice-chancellors of Gorakhpur University and Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut were terminated on account of severe corruption charges. His P.A. told him about the termination of the Vice Chancellor of Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. Even the Vice Chancellor of M.D. University, Ajmer, Dr. R.P. Singh was caught red-handed in a bribery case, Dr. Ramesh Chandra and Professor S.P. Ojha are still facing trial in the courts. Even the lady Vice Chancellor of Jiwaji University Gwalior is under investigation due to corruption charges. (96)

Conclusion

As universities continue to be the arena of intellectual and personal growth, the relevance of university fiction will persist, serving not only as entertainment but as a critical lens through which to examine the challenges and triumphs of academic life. Through its nuanced depiction of the evil of corruption, identity formation, student-professor relationships, and the influence of societal issues, *Media Revolution 2030* offers profound insights into the complexities of the university experience. The narrative resonates on multiple levels, allowing readers to reflect on their own experiences while also engaging with larger social concerns. Thus, the novel emerges as a powerful critique of the university establishment, serving as a commentary on the changes that a university has undergone over the years.

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Beyond Borders: Exploring Transcendence and Identity in *The Kite Runner*

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Abstract

Boundaries, whether physical, emotional, or cultural, are fundamental aspects of human existence. They define our interaction, shape our relationship, and influence our personal growth. *The Kite Runner* represents a deeply engaging and emotionally impactful novel penned by Khaled Hosseini. Set in Afghanistan, the story follows the life of Amir, a young boy from Kabul, and his journey of self – discovery, redemption, and reconciliation. The novel also explores the complex themes of friendship, loyalty, betrayal, guilt and the impact of one’s past on their present. This paper is designed to address the boundaries of power dynamics and social hierarchies, cultural memory and the impact of history on individual lives, generational border, fate and destiny, gender roles and expectation and personal morality and ethical choice. Through the characters of Amir and Hassan, it navigates the physical, cultural and emotional journeys that transcend societal and ethnic divides. Even the

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title *The Kite Runner* symbolizes the character's aspiration to break free from their predefined roles and cross-cultural boundaries. Drawing upon various theoretical perspectives, including gender oppression, trauma, constructive theory, hegemony and Homi Bhabha's notion of the "Third Space", this paper goals to check up how the characters navigate and overcome physical and metaphorical barriers. All these intersectional theoretical perspectives will offer a comprehensive understanding of how *The Kite Runner* explores the theme of transcending borders, providing valuable insight into the complexities of identity, power, marginalization, resistance, trauma and cultural clashes depicted in the novel.

Keywords: Redemption, reconciliation, transcendence, ethnic divides, gender oppression, constructive theory, trauma, hegemony, third space, intersectional, marginalization, resistance and cultural clashes.

The Kite Runner is a novel written by Khaled Hosseini. It follows the life of Amir, a young boy from Kabul, and explores themes of redemption, guilt, and the complex relationship between father and son. The novel is significant for its powerful portrayal of the human condition, the impact of societal changes in Afghanistan, and its exploration of universal emotions that resonate across cultures, making it a poignant work in contemporary literature. It delves into the repercussions of betrayal and the quest for atonement as Amir grapples with his choices and the haunting memories of his past. Set against the backdrop of the Soviet invasion, rise of the Taliban, and Afghan diaspora, the novel provides a window into the tumultuous history of Afghanistan. Hosseini's storytelling weaves intricate narratives, fostering empathy and understanding, making the novel a compelling exploration of personal and collective struggles, leaving a lasting impact on readers' hearts and minds. The novel also addresses the intricacies of friendship through the bond between Amir and Hassan, transcending societal and ethnic divides. It captures the essence of cultural nuances, shedding light on the resilience of the Afghan

people amid adversity. It has become a cultural touchstone, sparking conversations about identity, forgiveness, and the enduring power of human connection. Its international acclaim and widespread readership underscore its significance in fostering cross-cultural dialogue and enriching the global literary landscape. *The Kite Runner* not only explores the aftermath of personal choices but also serves as a platform for discussions on themes like the impact of war on individuals and communities, the complexities of familial relationships, and the search for redemption in the face of remorse. The novel's enduring popularity lies in its ability to resonate with readers on a deeply emotional level, transcending cultural boundaries and fostering a shared understanding of the human experience. Hosseini's narrative skill and the novel's exploration of universal truths contribute to its lasting significance in contemporary literature. The novel's exploration of the intertwined destinies of its characters reflects the broader narrative of Afghanistan's turbulent history, providing readers with a nuanced perspective on the complexities of a nation in flux. Beyond its literary merits, *The Kite Runner* has been praised for its role in raising awareness about Afghan culture and history, fostering empathy, and encouraging dialogue about the impact of geopolitical events on individual lives. It stands as a testament to the power of storytelling to bridge gaps, evoke empathy, and contribute to a deeper understanding of the human condition.

Border or boundary is a physical or artificial line that separates two areas, countries, or regions, often demarcated by natural features or human-made structures. It may be a politically defined line that establishes the jurisdiction of different entities, such as countries or states, and regulates governance and legal systems. It might be cultural boundaries or a conceptual or symbolic frontier that signifies the limits of authority, sovereignty, or influence, both tangible and intangible, shaping perceptions of inclusion and exclusion. There is also economical border or a delineation that

affects the flow of goods, services, and resources between regions, impacting trade, economic policies, and development. Political aesthetics of boundaries and crossings are the visual and sensory elements used to portray borders, such as art, literature, and media, shaping public perception and discourse around political boundaries. Border can be embodiment of power dynamics in which borders visually and symbolically express power relations between different political entities, influencing notions of authority and control. It also includes identity construction where aesthetic choices that contribute to the construction of national, cultural, and individual identities within the context of border regions. This diverse nature of borders and borderlands has been described by Gloria E. Anzaldúa when she depicts border as a “place of contradictions, [where] hatred, anger and exploitation are the prominent features of [the] landscape” (Anzaldúa 18). The storytelling aspects related to border crossings, reflecting the experiences of individuals navigating political boundaries and the socio-political implications of such movements.

Khaled Hosseini’s debut novel, *The Kite Runner*, is a literary tour de force that delves into the exploration of identity and transcendence beyond borders. According to Anzaldúa “borders are set up to define places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition.” (Anzaldúa 25). The novel is set against the backdrop of a tumultuous Afghanistan, presenting a vivid picture of a nation’s struggles and the personal journeys of its people. The protagonist, Amir, is caught in the throes of an identity crisis that transcends geography and time. As a privileged Pashtun boy in Kabul, Amir shares a deep bond with Hassan, the son of his father’s Hazara servant. This relationship forms the heart of the narrative, illuminating themes of class disparity and ethnic tension that pervade Afghan society. Assef’s questioning

of Hassan regarding his friendship with Amir highlights the social divide between the upper-class Pashtuns and the lower-class Hazaras:

“But before you sacrifice yourself for him, think about this: Would he do the same for you? Have you ever wondered why he never includes you in games when he has guests?...and think you’re something more.” (Hosseini 60)

Amir’s description of the derogatory nickname used for Hassan illustrates the discrimination faced by the Hazaras, emphasizing the deep-rooted class prejudices in Afghan society:

They called him ‘flat-nosed’ because of Ali and Hassan’s characteristic Hazara Mongoloid features. For years, that was all I knew about the Hazaras, that they were Moghul descendants, and that they looked a little like Chinese people. (6)

Despite their shared childhood, the invisible line of societal hierarchy separates them, reflecting the prevalent border of class and ethnicity.

Amir’s guilt over betraying Hassan during a horrific incident of violence leads to a self-imposed exile to America. It is here that the theme of transcendence beyond physical borders manifests. Amir’s geographical transition, however, does not provide an escape from his haunted past. As Anzaldúa says about inner border:

The struggle is inner: Chicano, indio, American Indian, mojado, mexicano, immigrant Latino, Anglo in power, working class Anglo, Black, Asian—our psyches resemble the border towns and are populated by the same people. The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the “real” world unless it first happens in the images in our heads. (Anzaldúa 1987)

He becomes a hyphenated individual, an Afghan-American, straddling two cultures yet fully belonging to neither. The character of Amir is a powerful symbol of cultural hybridity, a state defined not by clear-cut borders but by fluidity and constant negotiation. His story is a testament to how identity is not merely a geographical or ethnic construct but a personal journey of understanding and acceptance. His attempts to reconcile his Afghan roots with his American reality illuminate the making of bridge as Anzaldúa believes:

Bridges are thresholds to other realities, archetypal, primal symbols of shifting consciousness. They are passageways, conduits, and connectors that connote transitioning, crossing borders, and changing perspectives. Bridges span liminal (threshold) spaces between worlds, spaces I call Nepantla, a Nahuatl word meaning tierra entre medio. Transformations occur in this in-between space, an unstable, unpredictable, precarious always-in-transition space lacking boundaries. (Anzaldúa and Keating 1)

Transcendence in *The Kite Runner* is not just geographical but also deeply personal. From his very childhood Amir wants to transcend the boundary between childhood and adulthood as he narrated his experience with his father.

Sometimes I asked Baba if I could sit with them, but Baba would stand in the door way. "Go on, now," he'd Say. "This is grown-ups' time. Why don't you go read one of those books of yours?" he'd close the door, leave Me to wonder why it was always grown-ups' time with him. I'd sit by the door, knees drawn to my chest. Sometimes I sat there for an hour, sometimes two, listening to their laughter, their chatter. (Hosseini 3)

Amir wants to get liberated from these limits and need to find out about the grown-up activities as he discovers:

That Hassan would grow up illiterate like Ali and most Hazaras had been decided that the minute he had been born, perhaps even the minute he had been conceived in Sanaubar's

unwelcoming womb—after all, what use did a servant have for written word? But despite his illiteracy, or may be because of it, Hassan was drawn to the mystery of words, seduced by a secret world forbidden to him. (20)

Amir's privileged upbringing in Kabul shapes his early character, but his strained relationship with his father, Baba, creates a sense of inadequacy and guilt. Both of them transcend their ethnic and moral border. When Baba tells Amir that, "Now, no matter what the mullah teaches, there is only one sin, only one. And that is theft. Every other sin is a variation of theft" (12). Baba goes onto explain that, "When you kill a man, you steal a life" and that "When you tell a lie, you steal someone's right to the truth" (13). Therefore, Baba's belief in the centrality of honesty transcends specific moral codes and reflects a universal understanding of right and wrong. Hassan's observation highlights the transformative power of crossing physical borders and the hope for a better future while he says "I see America has infused you with the optimism that has made her so great" (172).

The novel not only reflects the journey of transcending physical border but also of emotional borders. Amir's realization that he can seek redemption for his past actions and overcome his guilt when Rahim makes a phone call to him, "Come, there is a way to be good again, Rahim Khan had said on the phone just before hanging up. Said it in passing, almost as an afterthought" (165). Amir's acknowledgment of his past cowardice and his desire to change and seek forgiveness reflects the crossing of emotional boundary:

I ran because I was a coward. I was afraid of Assef and what he could do to me. I was afraid of getting hurt. That's what I told myself as I turned my back to the alley, to Hassan. (64)

Hassan writes in a letter to Amir that reflects Amir's hopes for the future and his desire to heal the wounds of the past:

I dream that my son will grow up to be a good person, a free person. I dream that someday you will return to Kabul to revisit the land of our childhood. If you do, you will find an old faithful friend waiting for you. (184)

Amir gradually realizes his own shortcomings and his journey toward self-awareness and growth:

I thought about Hassan's dream, the one about us swimming in the lake. There is no monster, he'd said, just water. Except he'd been wrong about that. There was a monster in the lake. It had grabbed Hassan by the ankles, dragged him to the murky bottom. I was that monster. (71)

Amir's journey towards redemption marks his spiritual transcendence. Riddled with guilt and remorse, Amir's path to self-forgiveness is steeped in acts of bravery and sacrifice, symbolizing his transcending journey beyond the borders of his past mistakes. By returning to Afghanistan to rescue Hassan's son, Amir confronts his past, seeking redemption and a redefinition of his identity. "For you, a thousand times over" (54) is originally spoken by Hassan, resonates with Amir throughout the novel as he grapples with his betrayal of Hassan and seeks to make amends.

The pivotal moment of betraying his loyal friend Hassan haunts Amir, driving him to seek redemption. As he matures, Amir faces the harsh realities of war and exile, forcing him to confront not only his personal demons but also the impact of his choices on others. The act of returning to war-torn Afghanistan to rescue Hassan's son symbolizes Amir's transformation and his journey toward self-forgiveness. Amir's transformation involves a shift from a self-centered perspective to one of empathy and responsibility. His privileged background initially blinds him to the suffering of others, but the guilt from betraying Hassan becomes a catalyst for change. Through the challenges of displacement and adapting to a new culture, Amir learns humility and gains a broader understanding of the human experience. Amir's regret over not speaking up to defend Hassan, highlighting the missed opportunity

for friendship and unity across cultural borders as he says, “I opened my mouth, almost said something. Almost. The rest of my life might have turned out differently if I had. But I didn’t” (60).

Their flying of kites reflects a moment of connection between Amir and Sohrab, symbolizes the gradual process of healing and redemption that occurs when individuals reach across cultural borders with kindness and compassion:

It was only a smile, nothing more. It didn’t make everything all right. It didn’t make anything all right. Only a smile. A tiny thing... But I’ll take it. With open arms. Because when spring comes, it melts the snow one flake at a time, and maybe I just witnessed the first flake melting. (327)

The symbolism of kite running and the pursuit of the blue kite represent Amir’s quest for redemption. By engaging in this cultural tradition, he not only reconnects with his roots but also seeks to mend the broken bonds of his past. The novel intricately weaves personal growth with the larger socio-political backdrop, illustrating how Amir’s journey mirrors the turbulence and transformation of Afghanistan itself. Amir finally realizes the importance of facing difficult truths and seeking understanding, even if it means confronting uncomfortable realities about oneself or one’s culture as he states, “But better to get hurt by the truth than comforted with a lie” (46). His return to a war-ravaged Kabul underscores the consequences of the privileged abandoning their responsibilities. As he navigates the ruins of his homeland, Amir grapples with the collective guilt of a nation torn apart.

In the end, Amir’s transcendence of his privileged background is not just a personal triumph but a testament to the transformative power of acknowledging one’s mistakes, making amends, and contributing to the healing of a fractured society. Despite Amir’s privileged background, he grapples with feelings of displacement and the struggle to reconcile his Afghan roots with the adopted Western values. This internal conflict adds another layer to his personal demons, highlighting the challenges of navigating a dual

cultural identity. Through characters like Sohrab and Rahim, Amir comes to realize his need to transcend generational borders to break harmful cycles. As Rahim Khan's speech, "Children aren't coloring books. You don't get to fill them with your favorite colors" (16) reflects the idea that the actions and choices of one generation can have a lasting impact on the next. Baba's words- "A boy who won't stand up for himself becomes a man who can't stand up to anything" (17) -to Rahim Khan while he is talking about Amir emphasizes the importance of breaking harmful cycles and standing up for what is right, transcending the limitations imposed by generational borders.

The novel masterfully weaves together themes of friendship, betrayal, and the impact of choices on one's destiny. Amir's pursuit of redemption is not just a solitary endeavor but a quest to repair the bonds of loyalty and love that were broken in the crucible of his past actions. The narrative underscores the universal human experience of seeking forgiveness and understanding, transcending the specifics of time and place. Ultimately, Amir's transcendence signifies not only personal growth but a profound metamorphosis that resonates with readers across emotional, cultural and generational backgrounds. As Anzaldúa believes:

"By crossing you invite a turning Point, initiate a change. And change is never comfortable, easy, or neat." Therefore, Anzaldúa asks "maybe this bridge shouldn't be crossed," but then she answers, "conocimiento hurts, but not as much as desconocimiento." (Anzaldúa and Keating 557)

Hosseini's novel, thus, skillfully explores the intricate relationship between identity and transcendence. It invites readers to question the borders that define them – be it nationality, ethnicity, social class, or generational. It suggests that true selfhood is not confined within these borders but lies in the ability to transcend them. In an increasingly globalized world, where borders are simultaneously solidifying and dissolving, "The Kite Runner" implores us to confront our internal and external borders. As Anzaldúa and Keating State:

To bridge means losing our borders, not closing off to others. Bridging is the work of opening the gate to the stranger, within and without. To step across the threshold is to be stripped of the illusion of safety because it moves us into unfamiliar territory and does not grant safe passage. To bridge is to attempt community, and for that we must risk being open to personal, political, and spiritual intimacy, to risk being wounded. (Anzaldúa and Keating 3)

It asks us to embrace our multifaceted identities and to celebrate our ability to transcend beyond the borders that society and we impose upon ourselves. It is a call to recognize our shared humanity, regardless of the borders that divide us. However, Hosseini's narrative also warns of the dangers of ignoring these borders. Amir's initial denial of his past and his guilt symbolize the peril of disregarding our personal and cultural history. Despite the pain associated with his past, it is only by acknowledging and confronting it that Amir finds redemption and peace. The underlying theme of the novel is the fluidity of borders – geographical, social, and personal – and the human capacity to transcend them. The kite, a dominant symbol in the novel, serves as a metaphor for this transcendence. Just as a kite soars high above, unbound by terrestrial borders, individuals too have the ability to rise above their circumstances and redefine their identities.

In conclusion, "The Kite Runner" is a profound exploration of the human struggle to understand and transcend the borders that confine them. The novel serves as a reminder that while borders exist, our ability to transcend them ultimately defines who we are. "Beyond Borders: Exploring Transcendence and Identity in The Kite Runner" is not merely an exploration of a novel. It is an exploration of our own lives, our borders, and our limitless potential to transcend them. As readers, we are invited to embark on this journey of self-discovery and transcendence, guided by the poignant narrative of Amir's life, and to emerge with a renewed understanding of our own identities, unbound and transcendent.

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Constructing Identities on Celluloid: An Analysis of the Costumes of 'Savitri' in the Movie *Mahanati*

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Abstract

Individual fashion preferences in dress and accessories often reflect the desire to express oneself and hence one's dressing style remarkably subscribes to the identity of a person. Being one of the most influential art forms in popular culture, film has made use of costumes to augment the visual effects of the medium as well as to represent the historical, social and cultural setting of the movie. Costume designing has evolved as an integral element in films contributing to the *mise-en-scene* as well as the image of the character on screen. This paper attempts to examine how the costumes of the heroine in the Telugu movie *Mahanati*, contributes to the construction of various identities of the character on the screen. While discussing social performances of individuals, the Canadian- American sociologist Erving Goffman in his work, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, talks about the human concern of adjusting one's setting, appearance and manners to create impressions upon others. Drawing on the concepts of the 'front-region and 'back-region' proposed by Goffman, the paper analyses the significance of the costumes used by the

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female protagonist in the movie *Mahanati* in the delineation of the character 'Savitri'.

Keywords: Costumes, Identities, presentation of self, front-region, back-region, impression management

Fashion and dress have emerged as a burgeoning interdisciplinary area of recent scholarly research. Dress conveys many significations such as one's social status, gender, job, religion, ethnic identity, political ideology and so on apart from its primary function of offering protection from the elements. The diverse clothing styles of human beings in various parts of the world can be attributed to several determining factors. The geographical conditions of the terrain, climatic factors, availability of resources for cloth manufacturing, economic and sociological factors and cultural practices of the community influence the sartorial choices of people. Apparels can augment or obscure the appearance of an individual and most often reveal one's professional identity also. The way of dressing also indicates one's desire to comply with or disagree with the notions of dressing normally accepted in a society. The Canadian-American sociologist Erving Goffmann's celebrated book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956) discusses the importance of human face-to-face interaction as a subject of sociological study. He proposes a theory of the self, known as self-presentation theory which hints that human beings are concerned about the impressions they create upon others while they interact in society. An individual, to a certain extent, will try to manipulate the impressions he may create on the society by adjusting his "setting, appearance and manner" (Goffman 16) including his costumes. Goffman uses the imagery of the theatre to elaborate on social performances where he refers to a 'front-region' where the positive ideas of the self and the desired impressions of the actors (individuals) are highlighted. He also refers to a 'back-region' where the 'performers' relax and set aside their roles or prepare themselves for the front roles. The performance of the actor on the front region depends on the manner, the appearance including his costumes and the looks of

the performer. Drawing upon the theoretical concepts of the presentation of the self, proposed by Goffman, this paper tries to examine how the identity of the female protagonist of the Telugu movie *Mahanati* has been constructed through the costumes she wears in the movie.

Dress can be modified to conceal or reveal the body parts and serves as a style statement of the individual who wishes to express his identity to the world. The study of dress and accessories has evolved as a major topic in popular culture taking into account the influence of fashion trends in meaning making processes, expression of identities and media representations. The iconic styles of the celebrities in the media are much imitated by common people and they often set contemporary trends in fashion world. Over the years, celebrities such as Princess Diana, Audrey Hepburn, Aishwarya Rai, Madonna, Lady Gaga and so on have established themselves as notable trendsetters in fashion industry. The proliferation of music videos and the Korean wave or *Hallyu* also have played a major role in influencing the youngsters of today in developing their attitudes towards grooming and fashion. The traditional Korean dress *hanbok* was thrown into the spotlight of fashion when the Korean boy band BTS performed its hit number “Idol” at the 2018 Melon Music Awards wearing the traditional attire on stage. Social and cultural events around the world inspire the fashion consciousness of the youth who are eager to emulate several life style trends in vogue. Events such as Oscars and Cannes Film Festival act as a platform to showcase the latest trends in dress, make up and accessories. Alia Bhatt, the famous Bollywood actress has created a hype by wearing a custom designed Sabyasachi sari studded with real gems in honour of the theme, “Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion” at the Met Gala 2024 in New York City. The recent high-profile wedding of the Ambani family also initiated much discussions in the fashion world, where the bride Radhika Merchant was seen at the *haldi* ceremony in a stunning outfit designed by Anamika Khanna, the highlight of which was a floral *dupatta* made of real flowers.

Costume designing has emerged as a significant element in fashion events as well as in film and television.

Semiotics of the costumes of Savitri in the movie *Mahanati*

Films and television series set in particular historical periods have become a trend these days. The Netflix period series such as *The Crown* and *Bridgerton* and shows such as *Mad Men* have popularised and revived the fashion of the earlier periods in human history. These films shed light on the various facets of life such as fashion, architecture, personalities, occupations, everyday life and entertainment of a specific period in history. Such films require elaborate production designs to recreate with authenticity, the historical setting, locations, costume design, architecture and so on to visually cater to the audience. The 2018 Telugu movie *Mahanati* directed by Nag Ashwin is a biopic which purports to honour the legendary actress Savitri Ganeshan of Telugu industry during the 1950s and 60s who has above 300 films to her credit. She was the most sought-after actress in Telugu and Tamil movies of 1950s and 60s and was known by the epithets *Mahanati* (The Great Actress) in Telugu and *Nadigaiyar Thilakam* (Doyen of all actresses) in Tamil. The movie *Mahanati* has won the National award for the Best Feature Film in Telugu for 2018. The lead roles have been perfectly assayed by Keerthy Suresh, Dulquer Salman, Samantha and Vijay Devarakonda. Keerthy Suresh effortlessly metamorphoses into Savitri Ganeshan and delivers her talent in portraying the various facets in the life and character of the great actress. She evokes various phases in the life of Savitri such as an innocent village girl who reaches the metropolitan city of Madras seeking opportunity for acting in movies, the perplexed lover who weighs out the pros and cons of entering into her relationship with Gemini Ganesan, the much-awaited rise into stardom, the difficulties in marriage, the addiction to alcohol and the eventual fall of fortunes in her life. The movie offers a variety of instances where one can assess the performance of Savitri on front stage and back stage of her life, as a performer on the silver screen as well as a social performer of her real life as a person

who has experienced the vicissitudes of fortune. The designers had to keep in mind that the costumes for Savitri should agree with the period and her personal style and at the same time it should convincingly represent both her on screen and off-screen personalities. *Vogue India*, reports Gourang Shah commenting on the costumes they designed for Savitri: “Not only did we have to research her childhood years, we had to focus on two areas of her life as a star – her on-screen iconic costumes and her off-screen personal style” (Roddam Aparna, Gaurang Shah and Archana Rao)

Goffman’s core of analysis in his theory of presentation of the self is the relation between performance and real life. A social actor, according to Goffman will always struggle to tactfully manage the impressions depending on the social stage – work place or school for example –which requires him to perform (Goffman 19). There he often tries to project an ‘idealised self’ by concealing so many aspects which may betray the real person behind the projected image. Hence it is quite demanding to maintain the social identities in public whereas one may be more relaxed on the back stage where one is true to one’s self. There he is conscious of the audience, attempts to fulfil the expectations of the audience regarding the role he has to play and is in turn influenced by the expectations of the audience (Goffman 13). The female protagonist Savitri as a performer on the screen is expected to maintain her public image as an accomplished actor throughout the heights of her career simultaneously battling the misfortunes she had to encounter in her personal life. An analysis of the costumes she dons in the movie will shed light on her precarity in the act of balancing this two-fold image of her own self in the movie.

The costume designers of *Mahanati*, Gaurang Shah, Archana Rao and stylist Indrakshi Pattanaik have conducted serious research before deciding upon the costumes to create an authentic 1950s effect. The costumes represented a span of around four decades from 1940s to 1980s. The movie has bagged the National

award for the best costume design. Several hit songs and scenes from the popular movies of Savitri such as *Devdasu*, *Missamma* and *Mayabazar* have been replicated in *Mahanati*. This has necessitated the inclusion of outfits and make up which convey the authentic effect of the earlier movies. The costumes showcased by the heroine are mainly hand-woven saris, the texture, fabric, colour and the draping styles of which exquisitely reflect the wide range of emotions displayed by Savitri in the movie. A close analysis of her attire hints at the way in which these costumes effectively complement her tactics of what Goffman calls “impression management” (74) both on the front region and back region of her social interaction. Gaurang Shah, the textile revivalist who designed costumes for the movie states that he embarked on this project with much enthusiasm and his genuine love for handlooms of India. “It was an amazing journey to revive the yester year textiles and mirror the moods of Savitri. It took us over one and a half years to study the weaves and textures and perfect the look, drape and the fall...” (Dundoo, *Mahanati: Design journey*). A rich palette of fabrics including cottons, silks, heavy brocades, organzas, satins and chiffons have been made use of in the movie to match with the occasions and the moods of the heroine. Archana Rao elaborates on the hard work behind the project – “We made intensive mood boards, developed swatches and collected old photographs to get inspired for the costumes. After two months we started putting the looks together” (Dundoo, *Mahanati: Design journey*).

A closer look at the costumes of the female protagonist in the movie divulges several layers of meanings which communicate the complexity of the character Savitri. She has to enact scenes from her real life as well as the scenes already played by the actress in her life time. The designers have chosen the costumes with diligence as to render utmost sincerity to the setting, story and the character enacted upon the screen. The opening scene of the movie displays an unconscious Savitri being rushed to the hospital.

The simple off-white chequered cotton sari worn by her reflects the severity of the situation and the helplessness of the star whose fortunes have deteriorated and has now been totally subjected to the generosity of others. The period of opulence and abundance has now given away to distress and penury which might have compelled her to choose a simple and inexpensive sari. White is also significant in this context as Savitri has been separated from her husband Ganesan during her later years and Indian tradition associates white dresses to widows. Savitri has chosen self-imposed widowhood over enduring marital discord and proven infidelity of her husband Ganesan. This scene obviously can be attributed to the backstage performance of Savitri as it is an episode torn out from her personal life. Here she is real to the core with no conscious efforts of managing an idealised image of a celebrity.

The pink half sari with tissue border paired with a golden dotted magenta silk blouse and pleated skirt with *zari* work and broad *banarasi* border lends a gorgeous look to the young actress in the scene where she proves her talent as an amazing artist (19:40). In this scene, Savitri is enacting the screen performance of the legendary artist which can be considered as a performance meant for the 'front region'.

Goffman uses the term 'performance' to refer to all the activity of an individual in front of a particular set of observers, or audience. Through this performance, the individual, or actor, gives meaning to themselves, to others, and to their situation. These performances deliver impressions to others, which communicates information that confirms the identity of the actor in that situation. The actor may or may not be aware of their performance or have an objective for their performance, however the audience is constantly attributing meaning to it and to the actor. (Crossman, *The Presentation of Self*).

The costumes in this particular scene are designed carefully using expensive fabrics such as tissue and silk along with the

colours pink and magenta to augment the beauty and grace of Savitri to match with the expectations of the audience. The attires and the accessories lend a tone of formality to the character as a celebrated actress of the 1950s. The black and white shots interspersed within this scene perfectly capture the resemblance of the heroine to the actress Savitri and take the audience back to the vintage style of the 1950s.

Savitri is seen dressed in a white sari with black polka dots and thin red border in the scene where she first meets Gemini Ganesan in the studio in Chennai (47:23). The fabric is chiffon which gives a perfect fall for the sari and the design of polka dots was a typical trend of the 1950s. This sari gives the young Savitri a charming look and augments the innocent demeanour of a village girl which captivates the attention of the hero at the first sight itself. The white blouse with puffed sleeves and a string of *kanakambaram* flowers on her braided hair hints on the stereotypical simplicity and innocence of a village-bred girl. The black and white combination of the sari complements the white shirt and the beige coloured suspender pants of the hero and creates a perfect blend and fluidity to the combination scenes of the male and female protagonists.

Savitri appears in a gorgeous royal blue handloom silk sari in the scene where she is supposed to act out the original heroine in the set of the film *Devadasu*. (1:14:09). She is donning the role of Parvathi in the film and is emotionally negotiating the dilemma of giving consent to marry Ganesan. Her real love for the protagonist is evident when she frantically runs towards him to make sure that he is spared from injury when the heavy light drops down and falls near him. The sari is worn with single pleat displaying its beautiful antique *zari* stripes and the *butas* adjacent to the border which is a thin single line *zari* work. The dull grey collared high-neck blouse along with the *junkis* and the necklace highlights the royal look of the sari which renders a deliberate old-world charm to the heroine. The scene offers an opportunity

where Savitri is caught by the audience, negotiating both front stage and back stage performances. She is consciously trying to be consistent in her manner and appearance to perform a front stage role as the great actress of the biopic. At the same time, she unknowingly gives away her “expressive equipment” (Goffman 19) when she rushes towards her beloved to see if he has been injured.

The scene within the Chamundeshwari temple where Ganeshan ties the *mangalsutra* to Savitri has been captured by the cinematographer with much expertise. It begins with an over-the-head camera angle which captures the beautiful heroine in a resplendent red chiffon sari with discrete applique work of floral patterns scattered on the body with a contrast bright yellow *banarasibrocade* blouse. As the camera moves on to capture the close-up shots, the attire along with the red *bindi* on her forehead and the string of jasmine flowers on her hair lends her the aura of a bride and perfectly blends with the red silk cloth and yellow garland of flowers that adorn the idol of the deity Chamundeshwari. This is also an instance where we capture Savitri as a performer in her real life. The dress and the props-the idol and the set of the temple- serve to communicate certain socially ascribed meanings that the Indian culture attribute to the rituals of marriage as well as the values such as personal commitment and fidelity in marriage. The rich colourful costume, the flowers and the *mangalsutra* are certain attributes of an Indian bride which act as props, trying to fulfil the expectations of Savitri related to the concept of Indian wedding. In this context, Savitri can be seen as a social performer in her personal space with her beloved Ganesan, where she is not bothered about her image as an actress. Another captivating attire in the movie is the sari given as a gift to Savitri by Ganeshan at the occasion of the first *Diwali* after their clandestine wedding. The elegance and beauty of the costume cause her to resemble the *divas* of the festival when she wears it and appears before her beloved during the celebration

(1:20:45). The off-white soft silk sari with rich thread work on its borders matched with a maroon blouse with decorated sleeves perfectly suits the occasion and is quite a match for the exquisite off-white silk *jooba* with red thread borders worn by the hero.

The iconic dress of Indian women – the sari- has been wielded as a powerful costume in the movie to highlight various aspects of representation. The film has given a strong focus on the handlooms by recreating the textiles from the past. The various fabrics, colours, textures, weaves and motifs of the handlooms have been used discretely to bolster the visual appeal of the film. Even minute details like variations in the draping style, the choice of the accessories and the various styles and patterns of blouses that have been paired with the saris, the hair do and make-up contribute to the powerful visual statements regarding the life and character of the heroine. The simple six-yard fabric has been draped by Savitri in the film in a variety of ways –pleated, single pleat, *dhoti* style and so on- according to the demands of the situation. Even the colour palette ranges from bold shades of magenta, red and yellow to pastel shades of mauve, pink, peach and pista green. The fabrics also vary from gorgeous silks to grave cottons to delicate organzas according to the mood of Savitri as well as the situation in the plot. Various designs such as polka dots, hand embroidery, applique works, *zari works*, thread works have been successfully experimented by the costume designers to highlight the physical and emotional ups and downs of the character.

Goffman refers to 'Front' or 'expressive equipment' (19) which is that part of an individual's performance by which he lives up to the expectations of the observers. Personal front is a part of the expressive equipment which includes one's rank, clothing, sex, age, posture, speech patterns, facial expressions and so on. Clothing, thus contributes immensely to the mechanism of an individual's performance during social interaction. The costumes worn by the protagonist Savitri in the movie *Mahanati* play a

major role in constructing the identities of the character she enacts on the screen. The attires are carefully chosen to set the historical background of the movie as well as to give insights into the emotional and psychological nuances of the character. While she is performing in the front region, she tries to adhere to the expectations of the observers related to a celebrity actress of the 1950s. She presents herself properly dressed mostly in elegant saris draped in graceful manner. The colour palette also reflects the ebb and flow of fortunes in her career as well as in her personal life. While enacting the back region performances, she is true to herself, wearing casual saris and other comfortable outfits where she is free from the task of impression management. The costumes have been dexterously used by the designers to support the development of the identity or persona of the heroine. The adolescent Savitri growing up in the village is seen dressed in *davanis* (half-sarees), long skirts and blouses which were typically worn by the teenagers of her time. She matures into adulthood negotiating several precarious situations in her career as well as in life which are seen reflected in her attires also. The *Hindu* reports on the effort taken by the designers to recreate the costumes for the movie:

Shah explored and recreated textiles to weave Savitri's journey from her childhood to her passing away. "From mangalgiris and kotas to with prints for her growing days, to heavy brocades, silks, organzas, handwoven sateens and chiffons for her golden era to subtle rendition for her later life, my team travelled extensively to museums and recreated the textiles of that time. Each and every detail of the textile, design, texture and colour were studied and artisans were guided to recreate it," said the designer. (Ians, Mahanati' Costumes took 100 Artisans)

The costumes used by Savitri plays a major role in consistently achieving the "dramatic realisation" (Goffman 19) of her public persona as a celebrity. The silks, pearls, accessories and make-up also are attributes that help the construction of a stereotyped

identity of an acclaimed actress, which abides with the pre-conceived notions of the society. The deploying of the wide range of costumes including Mangalgiri cottons, exquisite Kancheevaram silks in heritage colours, heavy brocades and elegant chiffons in classic shades of emerald green, red and ivory has contributed immensely to the faithful reproduction of the image of Savitri and has also shed light on the lifestyle, textile fashion and the socio-cultural environment spanning a period of 1940s to 1980s.

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**Examining the Major Concepts of
Medical Humanities in Virginia Woolf's
*Mrs. Dalloway***

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Abstract

The dialectical progression of discourses and debates have shaped various forms of Literature and their nature since time immemorial. Modern age and the condition of modernity has been marked by technological advancement and the realities of psychological contingency, mental instabilities and linguistic aporia. The poststructuralists' discourses have given rise to many interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary forms of knowledge to contextualize, globalize and democratize the study of Literature. Medical Humanities being a form of critical inquiry questions the hegemony of white colonial medicine in relation to various aspects of human life and its representation in Literature. The terrifying effects on human beings of the world wars has challenged the established medical practices and highlights the disturbed and distorted conditions of the post war trauma. The present research aims to highlight the basic ideas of Medical Humanities which are deeply embedded in

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the structure of madness, illness, insanity, normalcy, abnormal etc. in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) Furthermore, the paper may also inquire the nature of these constructed realities as not merely psychological, psychotic or neurotic but rather these realities have been determined by socio-cultural, economic and political forces which are hidden in the complex structure of discursive practices and its complex web of knowledge and power.

Keywords: Medical Humanities, madness, power, colonial medicine.

Introduction

The philosophical and intellectual plenitudes of Humanism have explained that human beings exist within a complex web of socio-pragmatic realities which control and constitute their existence of self and subjectivity. With the advent of the philosophy of Social Constructivism, the fundamental elements of essentialism and pure ontology were questioned that negated the idea of the sovereign self. Thereafter, the philosophy of Social Constructivism explained that the self is constituted by what Michael Foucault calls Technologies, Bio-Politics, Bio-Power, Governmentality and the phenomena of Madness and Sexuality. The present paper on the one hand negates the Cartesian philosophy of absolute self and the basic *topoi* of Enlightenment where the mind is represented as absolute entity. It argues that the formation of discourse and discursive practices are interwoven in a complex matrix of the creation of power and knowledge.

The initial exposition of Medical Humanities engages itself with questioning the sacrosanct nature of body, disease and illness with certain skepticism placing medicine under the web of critical inquiry to answer and to interrogate ethics, commercialization of biomedicine, dehumanizing effects of medicine and its relationship with human beings. Medicine with unprecedented intervention of scientific temperament has not only dehumanized the human but its relationship with other medical personnels has also been

changed. It has now become the product of certain discourses which are distributed, dispersed and controlled to form dominant discourses which are governed by different aspects of Power, Knowledge, Disease and Madness. Virginia Woolf in her novel *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) has represented this uncanny reality of human mind, how human relationships and the aspect of medicine and power create alternate realities in case of different characters majorly in the case of Septimus Smith who is utterly hopeless and morbid having experienced the atrocities of the war. The paper may further examine the basic ideas of Medical Humanities which are deeply embedded within the structure of madness, illness, insanity, normalcy, abnormal etc. Furthermore, the paper may also inquire the nature of these constructed realities as not merely psychological, psychotic or neurotic rather determined by socio-cultural, economic and political forces which are hidden in the complex structure of discursive practices and its complex web of knowledge and power.

The philosophy of Enlightenment has espoused the reality of sovereign self, but the dialectics of Enlightenment has revealed that this sovereign self has been constructed through reason, logic, rationality and the cognitive potential of human beings. The fallacy of Enlightenment philosophy according to Michel Foucault was its negation of archeology as well as its essentialist nature in relation to truth and meaning. The tradition of knowledge formation consists of historical periods that define the worldview at certain points in time which does not have a linear progression but is rather self-reflective, critical and contingent in nature. This historical process of the formation of knowledge inevitably involves the structures of epistemes. The 'Episteme' according to Foucault is the outcome of relational aspects of certain principles by which meanings are allocated and things can be made sense of. The process of knowledge formation can never be understood in absolute isolation or separation from its historicity. Rather, Micheal Foucault in his *The Order of Things* (1973) and *Archeology of*

Knowledge (1972) rejects the philosophy of Structuralism. His idea of epistemic gap is the non-involvement of the 'repressed' or unacknowledged form of knowledge that exist parallel to the dominant discourse. Furthermore, the tradition of critiquing and questioning gave birth to the idea of thesis and anti-thesis which explains the cause and effect behind revolutions and movements worldwide. This post-structuralist view of thought questioned the monological nature of meaning, truth and power and questioned the binary oppositions created by the philosophy of Structuralism establishing the idea that the construction of knowledge is determined by historical conditions which are controlled and appropriated by the existing dominant discourse. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* (1995) Foucault outlines the emergence of disciplinary practices which emerged during eighteenth and nineteenth century explaining the operating force behind prisons. He explains that the idea of 'Discipline' was enforced as surveillance on criminals and prisoners to rehabilitate and control their social behavior and to reconstruct their identities as social subjects. Danahar's *Understanding Foucault* (2000) argues that with power "events or happenings" are "written on the body... they shape the way we perform" (Danaher 46). The application of the microphysics of power; institutions and the dominant forces creates a 'Panopticon' view to restrict, control, reinforce and induce appropriate social behavior in the prisoners. This panopticon view of the society creates a hegemonic divide between the powerful and powerless and at the same time creates a center and a margin. The hidden and consistent surveillance on a subconscious level forces a sense of self-imposed 'gaze' where to fulfill the societal demands the subject appropriates his/her social behaviour according to the rules imposed by the dominant discourse. The gendered dimension of 'gaze' often includes the objectification of the subject as an appealing or desired object in the eyes if the opposite gender thereby self-tailoring their social identity. A similar role of this penetrating gaze is also seen in the

field of health and medicine where the patients are constantly subjected to the gaze of the white hegemonic medicine being referred to as the concept of 'clinical gaze'. The human body becomes an object of 'clinical gaze' which is on display while the white hegemonic medicine assumes the role of an oppressor which misappropriates the patient's body under the name of Biomedicine. The 'clinical gaze' determines the agency a patient holds in any medical scenario whether it is a hospital or an asylum. Excessive intrusion of technology has not only disturbed and logistics of diagnosis and treatment but has further amalgamated itself into health and medicine. This intrusion further challenges the notion of caregiving and ideals of family medicine over laboratory results and test reports. Science, now in the name of creating new epistemological tradition, has created despondency and discrepancy in distribution of agency and power. Foucault while examining the realities of the world in the post-world war era has illustrated that political and social institutions have been responsible for the construction of madness. He has illustrated it in his *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (1964) where he has elaborated how the cultural idea of the construction of madness runs parallelly to reason and logic.

The creation of 'abnormal' or 'insane' through surveillance and moral policing involves power what Foucault calls the theory of 'governmentality'. It explains that the state intends to eradicate threats and rebels that do not serve their (state's) didactic function. The subjects that have been outcasted by the repressive state forces are then labelled mad or criminal. The intention behind the creation of these asylums and madhouses was to contain these rebellious subjects in certain sphere of society and further to create their cultural identity as 'mad' through constant repetition and reification. Foucault represents madness as a cultural, social and political construct, delegating doctors the role of instrument who aid in the creation of human as either a subject or object in the process of creating its social and cultural identity.

Medical Humanities

Medical Humanities as a discipline has emerged due to increased skepticism, moral and ethical conflicts, underlying criticism and the hegemonic nature of dominant discourse in the field of Biomedicine. It has developed into a well-defined discipline since the 1960s and 80s. Gradually, in the process of development, it has incorporated elements from various disciplines, like art, history, philosophy, sociology, medicine, public health, anthropology, spirituality and religion. This multidimensionality involves flexibility and incorporates thoughts, ideas and epistemic structures from a wide variety of disciplines that makes it eclectic and dialectic. Thomas Cole in *Medical Humanities: An Introduction* (2015) introduces that the field of Medical Humanities and its epistemic development in the past decades. Its development into as a discipline can further be elaborated through two waves:

The initial wave of Medical Humanities highlights the lack of ethical and moral duties on the part of the physicians where the immediate concern was inclusion of 'humanitas' to educate more humane and sensible physicians. The discipline encourages an ideological shift from medical reductionism to Holistic forms of healthcare, treatment and caregiving. During 1950s and 1960s young medical students started questioning the scholastic tradition of medical science and realized a hidden paradox in their pedagogical training as future doctors. The advancement of technology and its excessive intrusion in medicine created a conflict between the existing ideals of old medicine and new biomedicine. As medical students realized these conflicts they questioned the pedagogical training and syllabi of medical institutions which created the identity of modern-day physicians. Edmund Pellegrino in his paper "Medical Humanism and Technological Anxiety" (1979) outlines a list of problems which have led to dehumanizing tendencies in the field of medical science and outlines some more modest goals for medicine. The first wave of this discipline focuses on creation of sympathetic and empathetic

sensibilities in young doctors as well development of their moral and ethical compass in decision making. To develop these sustainable ideals in medicine, inclusion of various other disciplines like sociology, psychology, ethics and religious studies can help inculcate various insights from these disciplines into modern Biomedicine. Eric J. Cassell, a bioethist who emphasized on the concept of personhood in his book *The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Medicine* (2004) explains that the any person's individual identity is the sum total of multiple variables like their social, cultural, emotional and psychological realities and why these aspects should not be overlooked while providing treatment plans and care to the patient.

Another aim of Medical Humanities is to bridge the gap between Biomedicine (scientific modern medicine) and Experience (perception and narration) which is explained by George Engel's biopsychosocial model where he argues that health and illness cannot be completely measured only in terms of laboratory results but depend largely on the social and psychological environment of the patient. This promotes more inclusivity in clinical medicine which traditionally projects skepticism regarding patient's narrative. Leon Eisenberg in "Disease and Illness: Distinctions between Professional and Popular Ideas of Sickness" (1977) distinguishes between "Disease" and "Illness" which further philosophizes and contextualizes the nature of altruistic care that is given and received in a medical scenario.

As further insights in the field develops, the focus of analysis shifts from critiquing the inherent role of good medical practice "towards a more critical, analytical, and politicized account" (119) of enquiry in the biomedical research. It is at this moment when the study and research methods in the discipline become more introspective and aware of the social constructivist paradigm of its existence. The new wave or the "critical" wave of medical humanities seeks to further re-evaluate itself by developing in a scholarly fashion where the addition of newer insights like

collaborative approach on the part of both patients and doctors, concept of entanglement and play as well as multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach would help globalize and democratize the field of medicine and healthcare. Anne Whitehead and Angela Woods in *The Edinburgh Companion to Critical Medical Humanities* (2016) outline in the beginning a current need “to open up possibilities... operate in radically... critical consideration, to address difficult, more theoretically charged questions” (2) which could cater to current issues to be unraveled in medical humanities along with the existing ones. It marks a shift from a structuralist discourse of keeping doctors at the center and patients at the margin to a more post-structuralist discourse where both the doctors and the patients align in a collaborative manner to establish more open and less rigid system of healthcare. Alan Bleakley who is a seminal writer in the field of Health Humanities expounds in *Routledge Handbook of The Medical Humanities* (2020) recent developments and critical insights into the field of Medical Humanities. In the introduction of the book, he calls out the need to democratize, politicize and aestheticize the field of Medicine. According to Bleakley, this new wave should help change the medical culture and pedagogies for a better future.

One of the ways through which this goal can be achieved is through inclusion of Literature and art. Literature and creative arts can act as a medium for representation of new found identity of any patient who has experienced some transformative experiences in their lifetime. It can further be described by patients as well as doctors in form of narrative tale using the genre of fiction, poetry, autobiography and memoir. A subgenre of Medical Humanities emerged here as “Narrative Medicine” first categorized and developed by Rita Charon in her seminal text *Narrative Medicine* (2006). Charon defines the narrative capabilities as a key factor in shaping better physicians and upcoming trainee-doctors and inculcating interpretive, inductive and empathizing competence to co-relate and assimilate themselves with their

patients and their subjective experiences. It accommodates an integrative and collaborative approach and explains how both parties are “being moved by stories of illness” (4). In *The Principles and Practices of Narrative Medicine* (2017) Charon et. allays down the foundation for this subgenre highlighting its historical development, aims and goals in broader terms of healthcare. Anne Whitehead in “The Medical Humanities: A Literary Perspective” (2014), provides a comprehensive development of the Medical Humanities over the years in both U.S. in 1960s and later in the U.K. in 1990s and also “... respond to the medical humanities from specifically literary perspective, indicating aspects of literature that might...be challenged and reshaped by its encounter with the humanities” (108). She further explains about the rise of “Pathographies” in the late 1980s and 1990s as significant literary genre and its development in the field of Narrative Medicine both in Britain and the United States. The publication of *The Illness Narratives* (1988) by Arthur Kleinman provided insights into how narrating one’s story through the medium of Literature helps foreground patient narratives which are commonly marginalized in the grand narrative of medical discourse. Jackie Stacey’s own contribution in *Teratologies: A Cultural Study of Cancer* (1997), in coherence with U.S. writings like *The Cancer Journals* (1980) by Audre Lorde who explained the personal experiences as political marking the creation of a heterotopia where the retelling of personal story can be a reflection of the grand narrative of the current scenario. Arthur W. Frank in his *The Wounded Storyteller* (1995) discusses classification of narratives as well as traces journeys of selfhood from chaos to quest. To further understand the nuances of Medicine Humanities its elements can be further elaborated as: technologization of doctors and medical profession, impact of commercialization on relationship between patients and doctors, over dominance of Apollonian force which relegated the Dionysius or emotive dimension of between Doctor and Patient, Shifting focus from

Patient to Disease and the control of human self and subjectivity through Governmentality, Bioethics and Bio-power.

As literature is the reflection of current ideological practices that mirror various concerns and aporias pertinent to a particular era, the modern age devastated by the terrifying effects of the World Wars reflected the fractured and ruptured human psyche along with its medicalization in the form of various mental illnesses. Virginia Woolf in her essay "On Being Ill" (1926) expresses her discontent regarding the theme of illness that has been sidelined by writers and authors not treating the idea of being ill as that of a serious one. In her diaries, she records her feelings and experiences of how frustrated she felt from the 'rest cure' prescribed by her physicians while battling a mood disorder. This medicalization forms an inherent complex structure of Virginia Woolf's first World War classic *Mrs. Dalloway* which critiques the British medical practices at that point in the post war years. "Shell Shock" or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD (now renamed) after addressing certain ambiguities in the language of diagnosis, was characterized by historians as a new epidemic of the war. Frontline soldiers exposed to excessive "aerial bombardment", "high-explosive munitions" (6) suffered bodily, cognitive and neurological impairments because of these explosions. The novel portrays some of the key elements of Medical Humanities analyzing the characters and their relationship with their physicians, power dynamics, colonial medicine, a strife between reason and emotion, lack of ethics and just treatment for patients, clinical gaze of Biomedicine in objectification of a patient to mere disease than a human being. It questions basic human nature and how human race through division and power structure becomes one's own worst enemy. "It was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia's" (108). The line clearly states the tragedy and failure of medical science in understanding Septimus' malady emphasizing on the repressive forces of medicine which led to Septimus's suicide. He faces inhumane treatment on the part of

his doctors till the end who remain incapable of understanding his agony and exercise all their authority and power on Septimus. Tracey Loughran in her *Shell-Shock and Medical Culture in First World War Britain* (2017) sheds light on the pre-war, inter-war and post-war medical literature available on Shell Shock. It highlights various errors that civilian doctors who were not trained in military medicine, misdiagnosed and mistreated the shell-shocked victims for over more than a decade. In case of Holmes and Bradshaw two very prominent doctors that treat Septimus, constantly exercise their power over him by dismissing his Schizophrenia as being “out of sorts” or “in a funk” and that nothing seems to be wrong with him. The perception of Dr. Bradshaw is somewhat fearful in his patients, as he holds an authority similar to the divine or God, while prescribing the rest cures to his patients to bring back their sense of proportion. The construction of Madness through Bio-Politics can be seen in Septimus’ encounter with his doctors. “It was merely a question of rest... a long rest in bed... Sir William said he never spoke of ‘madness’...It was a question of law” (71). The statement clearly highlights the repressive state forces and authority that Holmes has on Septimus in sending him to his private rest house highlighting various elements of hegemonic medicine over patient centered care. The hegemonical power that distinguishes patient and its physician can be read in the following lines: “...why ‘must’? What power had Bradshaw over him... So he was in their power! Holmes and Bradshaw were on him! The brute with the red nostrils was snuffing into every secret place!” (107). As Septimus lacks agency physical and emotional to make any decisions for himself the confinement of his self and subjectivity can be seen through Foucault’s idea of Bio-Politics. Woolf presents us a flip side of the marginalized patients who are governed by the policies and politics of medicine in collaboration with state and how the creation of madhouses, asylums and prison was a power play to excavate the society of those subjects who could see its hypocrisy

and were capable of rebelling against it. Here, the country house seems a site for “coercive force of disciplinary power” where Dr. Bradshaw could exercise his power in “a direct and overt way”. Septimus is here the victim of objectification and later abjection where he is looked as a mere “piece of bone” (12) and his whole personhood is reduced to being a tormented war veteran or a robot who after being used in the war to its full potential has now a weakling in the grand narrative of war heroism. Woolf launches attack on the blind Nationalism that swallows up a lot of its young soldiers who struggle with their identity and are stuck in a liminal state which fails to distinguish between real and imaginary spiraling down in depths of darkness.

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Indian Philosophy and *The Waste Land*: A Study

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Abstract

T.S. Eliot is the most widely read and extensively travelled Anglo-American poet of the twentieth century. Eliot was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature and Order of Merit in 1948. His major works include, *The Waste Land* (1922), “The Hollow Men” (1925), “Ash Wednesday” (1930), *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), *Four Quartets* (1943), and *The Cocktail Party* (1949). T. S. Eliot studied French Literature, Sanskrit, Hindu philosophy, Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, and the religious system of China and Japan, besides Anglo-American literature. His works – essays, plays, poems, literary and social criticism echo Indian philosophy. A visionary, Eliot spread the message of Indian philosophy in the West. In fact, Eastern philosophy and metaphysics impressed him lifelong. *The Waste Land* (1922) which marked the centenary year of its publication two years ago, marks the culmination of Eliot’s early poetry. The central theme of the poem is spiritual degradation of the modern world. T.S. Eliot has employed Indian philosophy in structuring *The Waste Land*. Comprising five sections, the two sections of the poem, “The Fire Sermon” and

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“What the Thunder Said” are inspired by teachings of Buddhism and Hinduism respectively. This paper makes a humble attempt to trace the influences of Indian philosophy in *The Waste Land*.

Keywords: Indian philosophy, modern world, spiritual degradation, Buddhism, Hinduism.

T.S. Eliot is a prominent writer of the twentieth century. He studied Sanskrit, Pali, Hindu philosophy, Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, and the religious system of China and Japan at Harvard University. Influenced by Indian philosophy, Eliot’s works reflect the search of the finite for the infinite. *The Waste Land* depicts the spiritual barrenness of the modern world in its quest for passion and lust. It marks the culmination of Eliot’s early poetry beginning with “The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock” (1917). At the time of writing this poem, Eliot was reading psychology, Sigmund Freud and anthropology. He expressed a particular debt to Miss J.L. Weston and Sir James Frazer for writing *The Waste Land*. V. de S Pinto outlines the origin of the poem in the following lines:

The central conception of *The Waste Land* is sexual impotence used as a symbol for the spiritual malady of the modern world. The symbol is developed by means of a myth which had been much studied by contemporary anthropologists. This the vegetation myth with the rites of fertility based upon it found in the Eastern cults described by Sir James Frazer in his *Attis, Adonis, Osiris* (1920), to which Eliot acknowledges a particular debt. The specific example of the myth which he selects is derived from the theory of Miss J.L. Weston, expounded in several of her books and notably in *From Ritual to Romance* (1920). Miss Weston’s theory was that the story of the quest for the Holy Grail was a Christianised version of an ancient Ritual, having for its ultimate objects the initiation into the secret of the Sources of Life, physical and spiritual, in fact a ritual based on a vegetation myth of the same kind as the myth of Adonis and similar Eastern cults. The Grail romances tell of a waste land, ruled by a maimed and impotent Fisher King (152).

Eliot's universal appeal is due to his poetic sensibility which transcends barriers due to caste, creed, religion and spatial discrepancy. In the *Preface to Four Lancelot Andrews* (1928), he declared himself to be "classist in literature, royalist in politics, and Anglo-Catholic in religion." This proclamation encompasses the essence of the wisdom of the globe emerging from both the West and the East. Hence one can find influences on Eliot's mind and his writings: Indian, Christian, Bradleyan: "Eliot presented the credentials of a wide-ranging poetic sensibility by incorporating in his writings not only the 'best' of European culture but also of Indian thought" (qtd. in Naugle 1)

Intertextuality is the hallmark of *The Waste Land*. Eliot has borrowed from several sources – both from Western and Eastern myth to compose this epoch making poem. What is significant about the organisation of the poem is its beginning with Christian myth and ending with Hindu myth. The modern world is ruled by passion and lust, hence there is a lack of spirituality in the world. The opening section of "The Burial of the Dead" stands out as a contrast to Chaucer's opening lines of *Prologue to The Canterbury Tales*. Biyot K Tripathy makes a pertinent comment in the following passage:

April is cruel because it is about breeding, about sexuality of the "us". Breeding is cruel, i.e., sexuality is cruel. How? Why? Because it stirs "dull" roots. Spring rain emerges as metonym for sexual juices, the balm or cement of Donne's "The Ecstasy". That is why winter had kept us warm. Winter becomes a metaphor for childhood and the absence of sex.... Or, perhaps, winter is a metaphor for Eden before fall. The fall is the spring and summer of mankind.... (*IJAS* 102)

To Eliot, both man and nature are governed by the cycle of life, death and rebirth. April is the time for Easter and celebrates the resurrection of Christ. But the waste land "mixing memory and desire", is not ready to welcome it. The waste land is sterile, bereft of spirituality, and a haunting reminder of the decay of the Western

civilisation. Ultimately, the poem declares that the society is unreal. Thus, Eliot writes in *The Waste Land*:

Unreal city,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many. (60-63)

Delivering a memorial lecture on W. B. Yeats, Eliot stated that the great poet is one who, “out of intense and personal experience is able to express a general truth: retaining all the particularity of his experience to make it a general symbol” (qtd in Drew 53). And Drew went on to say, “This is what *The Waste Land* does” (53).

Myth controls the design of the poem. Oedipus myth, though not directly stated, is expressed through Tiresias. Tiresias, who lived the life of both a male and a female under a curse, understood the significance of fertility in human life. He is, in fact, the substance of the poem. As Edward Larrissy rightly observes:

The most famous ‘scene’ the legendary Tiresias ‘perceived’ was the story of Oedipus itself. Oedipus’ incest caused Thebes to become an infertile waste land, under a curse like the other afflicted lands to which Eliot’s poem alludes. Since Tiresias is supposed to be the most important personage in the poem, ‘uniting all the rest’, having ‘foresuffered all’, it is reasonable to feel that the Oedipus story is the most important allusion in the poem –perhaps nonetheless for being unmentioned. (62-63)

The Waste Land is an intertextual poem. References to Shakespeare, Andrew Marvell, Jacobean dramatists, Buddha, Baudelaire, Dante, the *Upanishads*, the *Bible* abound in the poem. To quote few lines from *The Waste Land*:

Who is the third who walks always besides you?

—————
I don’t know whether a man or a woman... (Lines 359 and 364).

The above lines bring to our mind lines from “Choruses from ‘The Rock’”:

Though you may forget the way to the Temple,
 There is one who remembers the way to your door:
 Life you may evade, but Death you shall not
 You shall not deny the Stranger... (Section II, lines 73-76).

Eliot’s success lies in repositioning the borrowings in the context of the poem. Buddhism and Hinduism form the core of Indian philosophy. Out of the five sections of *The Waste Land*—“The Burial of the Dead”, “A Game of Chess”, “The Fire Sermon”, “Death by Water” and “What the Thunder Said”, “The Fire Sermon” is based on Buddhism and “What the Thunder Said” on Hinduism. The title of the third section, “The Fire Sermon”, is derived from the famous Sermon delivered by Lord Buddha at Sarnath to the assembled priests on the sufferings of human beings caused due to the thoughtless chase after passion and sensuality. In “The Fire Sermon” Eliot makes allusion to Buddha and St. Augustine concerning the image of burning. To quote C. D. Narasimhaiah:

If the Buddha asked the Bhikkhus to “burn” desire and lust,
 St. Augustine had recourse to another kind of burning:
 repent for his sins. And Eliot adroitly places short informal sentences,

After the event
 He wept.
 He promised a ‘new start’

I made no comment. What should I resent? (*Span 39*)

The fifth section of *The Waste Land*, “What the Thunder Said” takes us to the *Brihadaranyak Upanishad* for a significant message to ‘the erring humanity’. The title of the poem refers to a barren or infertile land. In the *Rig Veda* and the *Dhammapada* water stands for the purifier and the metaphysical quest which will cure the barrenness of the land. Composed in the backdrop of the

trauma of World War I, *The Waste Land* delivers a message to the modern men and women to pursue a spiritual life, and to free oneself from the shackles of lustful living.

Eliot was deeply influenced by Buddhism since his school days. He had a copy of the book, *The Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold which is based on the life and teachings of Lord Buddha. According to Stephen Spender, Eliot was in the grip of Buddhism at the time of writing *The Waste Land*: “Incidentally, if Eliot’s own views are to be considered, I once heard him say to the Chilean poet Gabriela Mistral that at the time when he was writing *The Waste Land*, he seriously considered becoming a Buddhist.” (60)

The underlying message of Lord Buddha’s sermon is that passion or lust is the main cause of one’s suffering. One has to get rid of these vices by pursuing a pure life. Eliot has made this the core message of *The Waste Land*. In the concluding line of “The Fire Sermon”, the poet juxtaposes the “two representatives of eastern and western asceticism” and hastens to add that this is “not an accident”. These lines are highly valuable from India’s philosophical view point:

To Carthage then I came
Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest
burning. (*The Waste Land*, line 307-311)

The first, third, and fourth lines above are references to St. Augustine’s *Confessions*, while the second and fifth lines refer to Buddha’s Fire Sermon. In the third book of *The Confessions*, the great Christian saint St. Augustine remarked: “To Carthage I came, where there sang all around me in my ears a cauldron of unholy loves” (36). One can discern here clearly that the wisdom of the East and the West converge on this point.

In “What the Thunder Said”, Eliot’s sound knowledge of Indian culture and tradition is clearly indicated in his use of the words ‘Ganga’ and ‘Himavant’.

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
 Waited for rain, while the black clouds
 Gathered far distant, over Himavant.
 The jungle crouched, humped in silence
 Then spoke the thunder. (lines 395-399)

Eliot describes Ganga 'sunken' to equate with the symbolic strain in the poem. The black clouds visible over Himavant are the harbingers of rain which will restore fertility to the dry soil and thereby spiritual awareness to modern humanity.

The voice of the thunder is projected in three 'Da' which Prajapati (Brahma, the Creator) preached his three offspring – Devtas, Danav and Manav, which became *Datta* for Devta, *Dayadhvam* for Danav, and *Damyata* for Man. This is the three word formula of 'Da' which is taken from *Upanishads*, and here Eliot used it as a solution to cure modern man of the spiritual vacuity. It must be mentioned here that in the *Brihadaranyak Upanishad* the thunder's commands appear in the order of *Damyata*, *Datta* and *Dayadhvam*, but in structuring *The Waste Land* Eliot changed the order to *Datta*, *Dayadhvam* and *Damyata* perhaps to give more importance to the third element (i.e *Datta* or 'give').

The Waste Land has elements of *Vedas* and *Upanishads* in its structure. It ends with the chanting of *Shantih* thrice which Eliot drew from *Brihadaranyak Upanishad*. Its significance is explained by G. Nageswara Rao in the following words:

The word *shantih* is purposefully repeated thrice to indicate the absolute three dimensional peace resulting from a freedom from all disturbance from within (*adhyatmikam*), from above (*adidaivikam*) from around (*adibhoutikam*) (89).

The poem ends on a positive note with the command, "Shantih, Shantih, Shantih." Eliot wishes peace upon all, even the wastelanders who are in a spiritual crisis. In a letter to Bertrand Russell, Eliot

said that the last section is not only the best part but the one that justifies the whole. He said that it is a formal ending to an *Upanishad*. This statement is an extremely powerful one because it sums up the immense power of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* that form the core of the poem.

Ezra Pound, who analysed the Facsimile edition of *The Waste Land*, wrote to Eliot in December 1921: "One test is whether anything would be lacking if the last three words were omitted", to which Eliot replied in January 1922: "Criticisms accepted, so far as understood, with thanks" (qtd. in Cox and Arnold 22-23). Eliot did not carry out Pound's suggestion and retained the last three words. While this may not be an Indian poem, the power of Indian philosophy still resonates a century later. And perhaps will, for time immemorial.

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Socio-Political Consciousness of Nayantara Sahgal: *Storm in Chandigarh* Revisited

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Abstract

Politics is embedded in the “bones and marrow” of Nayantara Sahgal, hailed as the prominent political novelist of India. How could the daughter of a freedom fighter, niece, and cousin of the two Prime Ministers of the country remain aloof from politics? She has written novels and autobiographies with some notable political happenings in the background. Her writings discuss the initial stages of the freedom of the nation, the building of a free India, the partition of the Punjab on linguistic basis, the problem of Naxalites, the promulgation of Emergency, and a lot more. Her novels portray the luxurious lives of the political bosses, members of the elite administrative service and businessmen drowned in cocktail parties, conveniently oblivious of the burning issues of the society.

Against this volatile political situation, she finds exploitation in interpersonal relations. The person she marries out of love turns out to be an MCP. She portrays some of her characters in her own image and raises her voice of protest against the subjugation and maltreatment

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in the social set-up. *Storm in Chandigarh* written in the background of the partition of India in 1947 re-enacts another bifurcation of the East Punjab into two states-Haryana and the Punjab and describes upheavals not only in the political lives of the people but in the marital relations of the characters also. The present paper is an attempt to have a relook at the dual aspects of the socio-political consciousness of the novelist.

Key Words: political novelist, freedom, linguistic basis, Emergency, exploitation, interpersonal relations, bifurcation, consciousness

Nayantara Sahgal is hailed as the only “political” novelist among the galaxy of women writers. A.V. Krishna Rao calls her “perhaps one of our best socio-political novelists today.” (Rao 06) In one of her novels, *Prison and Chocolate Cake*, she admits: “We grew up at a time when India was the stage for a great political drama and we shall always remain a little dazzled by the performances we have seen.” (Sahgal 1963, 09) and goes on to add further: “Our growing up was India’s growing up into political maturity.” (15) Though her canvas has persons from the opulent class of society only, they are human beings first and foremost and have political roles also. She champions individual freedom. She portrays many social and cultural changes that happen in the surroundings and also the response of her characters as she herself belongs to their class. But her canvas is short and limited as she discusses the plight of only the elite and opulent women.

Sahgal spent her early days in Anand Bhawan which was the centre of Indian politics in those days. That’s why her novels contain a chronological account of Indian politics from the last days of the freedom struggle to the period of the Emergency in the seventies. In her own words, politics is embedded in her “bones and marrow” (Sahgal 1974, 41) to an extent that she cannot remain just a passive spectator of the political happenings around her.

She was a bold political analyst. But, unlike other political commentators, she never aligns herself with any particular political

ideology/party or movement. Some of the important themes of her novels are the socio-political milieu of the country, the proverbial East-West encounter, man-woman relationship and efforts of self-realisation, especially by the women characters. Major political happenings form the backdrop of almost all her novels. Her writings are an interface between the binary of man-woman relationship and the cut-throat arena of politics.

Storm in Chandigarh is considered to be the political masterpiece of Nayantara Sahgal. Its theme is the division of the East Punjab on the basis of language into Punjabi and Hindi speaking provinces named the Punjab and Haryana. In the words of the author, "The map of India, once a uniform piece of territory to administer, was now a welter of separate, sensitive identities resurrected after independence." (Sahgal 1969, 08) The chief concern of the novel is the violence of the sixties, the cause of which is Chandigarh as it has been named the common capital of the two states which claim it to be their territory. On a parallel scale run the personal tensions in the man-woman relationships. Violence—both in the overt and covert form, i.e., direct physical confrontation and mental torture by imposing one's will on the other partner, is at play throughout the novel. On the visible surface of the novel the violence is depicted in the form of unrest and volatile political situation in the region, the stormy undercurrents of which can be felt in the lives of the characters of the novel.

All the happenings of the novel take place in the backdrop of political and personal upheavals. On the one hand there is the division of a state into two smaller units and on the other there is emotional unrest in the marital ties of the characters. The two undercurrents run parallel and are meticulously integrated into the theme of the novel. The individuals are torn between their modern way of living and their traditional upbringing. Women characters are not caged birds. They do not confine themselves within the boundaries of their mansions. They move out of their confinement in order to get rid of the boredom and the monotonous routine of

their loveless lives. They drink and dine freely in the company of male friends—a kind of revolt against the clutches of social taboos.

Nayantara Sahgal's world in *Storm in Chandigarh* is peopled by a number of persons comprising politicians, administrative officers and affluent businessmen. We have the unnamed Union Home Minister and, Gyan Singh and Harpal Singh, the Chief Ministers of the Punjab and Haryana respectively. Vishal Dubey, Trivedi, Prasad and Kachru are the high ranking government officials. We have textile industrialist Nikhil Ray and his wife, Gauri, Nikhil's manager, Inder Mehra and his wife, Saroj and the vintner Jit Sahni and his wife, Mara, as the three businessmen couples. The bones of contention between the Chief Ministers of the two newly born states are the boundaries of the two states, the U. T. Chandigarh and the supply of water and electricity. The Chief Minister of the Punjab does not want to share water and electricity of Bhakra dam with the neighbouring state and also causes a grave crisis in Chandigarh, the common capital. The Union Home Minister rightly says in the very beginning of the novel, "Violence lies very close to the surface in the Punjab" (01) hinting at the volatile political situation. He sends Vishal Dubey, a senior public servant working with the Central Government to Chandigarh to take stock of the situation and take remedial steps. Despite all efforts to calm down the situation, violence triggered by Gyan Singh erupts, causing physical injuries to Harpal Singh. The show-down between the two leaders has roots in their ideologies of violence and non-violence.

Vishal Dubey has a pivotal role in the novel. He is an honest civil servant but a Utopian in nature. As he is more than devoted to his official work he ignores the needs of his wife, who, eventually, finds greener pastures in her life outside the dull marital bondage. Vishal is aware of her disloyalty but he finds fault with himself for her escapades. Hers was a marriage for convenience and comfort. Sahgal says: "She had selected what she wanted of him: the distinguished escort at parties, the successful civil

servant with a promising future, the husband who could be relied upon to take pains with whatever problem she took to him. And she had ignored the rest. She had given herself selectively too, what she had considered it prudent and convenient to give, and left him empty of the reality of herself. Even her vitality had needed an audience. She scintillated in company. Time and again he heard her talk animatedly of what had happened a day or a week earlier, of an article she had read, an idea she had at a party. **Alone with him she had little to share.** (Emphasis mine). Had their failure been their fault, or was there something at the core of human dreams and longings that was fatal to fulfilment through marriage?" (61)

The description brings out the fact that the marital life of Vishal and Leela had lost its meaning; it was devoid of communication—the basis of any rock solid union. Vishal was a straightforward person. The novelist says about him, "Enigmas did not fascinate him. Too often they were empty containers. **Much that went wrong between men and women, between people, lay in what they withheld from one another.**"(79) (Emphasis added). They had a loveless conjugal relationship, almost like strangers. This husband-wife alienation resulted from lack of communication. In the words of the author, theirs was, "... a marriage that had turned out to be a vanishing search for communication." (17) Leela found her *mukti* in her untimely death. Left alone, Vishal finds Gauri, the wife of a Bengali businessman, as a companion and consort. Gauri is a typical Sahgalian female character who, though she wants to remain in the traditional marriage, wishes to breathe in outside fresh air. She says about herself, "I am a social butterfly with positively no interest in life beyond my own comforts and pleasure." (205).

Needless to say, there is violence outside and its reflection can be seen in personal relations also. The author is deeply concerned about unhappy marriages and the loneliness of living. The novel portrays young hearts broken by the compulsions of matrimony

and call for new-found love. But, unlike the characters in Anita Desai's novels, Sahgal's characters do not commit suicide. They opt for new settlements and start life afresh. Whenever her women find themselves restrained, they come out of their traps singing songs of love. Sahgal's unconventional marriage, clash of egos and subsequent divorce have cast their shadows during the creation of her characters. Manifestation of violence can be noticed in the lives of Inder and Saroj. This couple and another couple, Jit and Mara become friends of Vishal in Chandigarh. Both Inder and Jit are industrialists. Inder and Saroj are examples of a typical Indian couple where the husband treats his wife as his property, a doll to play with. There is no affection for each other—no love despite having two sons and expecting a third child. Saroj brought up in a liberal atmosphere of freedom expects equality in marriage. But her spouse, Inder, is conservative in matters of sex and privacy to the core of his heart. Their temperaments are different and the incompatibility is to such an extent that they have become strangers despite living under the same roof. This loveless life leads the characters astray and, not surprisingly, they get involved in extra marital relations: Inder is involved with Mara, Saroj with Vishal. In her innocence, Saroj had disclosed her pre-marital relations to her husband which becomes the cause of the failure of her marriage. What shocks Inder is that Saroj is not repentant. A piece of their conversation proves it. Inder says, "You should be ashamed of what you did. Aren't you? 'I'm not, I'm not'" (85), Saroj replies to him. This hurts his male ego and embitters him and opens the doors of extra-marital relations as a revenge on Saroj. Surprisingly, during a conversation with Mara, Inder says, "There's no shame nowadays, no barriers. Everything is taken lightly. And women talk and behave like men." (92) which shows his hypocrisy as he says about the boy-friend of his wife, "If I catch him I shall kill him." (83) whereas he himself is involved in extra-marital relationship. On the other hand, in the absence of communication with Inder, Saroj longs for a meaningful friendship.

As Inder doesn't ignore her adulthood escapade, she decides to walk out of her moth-eaten conventional confinement to live a life of her own choice. Her quest for communication leads her towards Vishal who is a more considerate person now after the loss of his partner, Leela. Saroj laments the lack of understanding between the spouses and says, "Half the time one is afraid, you know—of saying the wrong thing or of being misunderstood—**just of being oneself and being punished for it.** (Emphasis added). So one spends such a lot of time acting, or at least hiding, and that's very tiring." (79). Saroj is defiant and is bold enough to declare, "I don't want forgiveness. I've committed no crime." (85). The lack of communication in the individual lives of Saroj and Vishal brings them closer. It was definitely not the physical attraction that brought them together. The author says, "Only she knew Vishal did not want a kiss, and the 'more' he desired was not the flesh of her." (80).

The union of Jit with Mara, another businessmen couple, is also without affection. They are childless but are blessed with all the comforts of the world. Sadly, communication between them, too, is missing in their lives. It is this craving for sharing thoughts that brings Mara close to Inder. But, the relationship does not survive the test of time as Mara realises the hypocrisy and dual standards of Inder who tries to find solace in the company of Mara but is scornful of the same kind of experimental relationship of his wife during her college days. In a surprising way Jit undergoes a change of heart and corrects his indifferent attitude towards Mara which happily brings him closer to her once again. In this way the couple is reconciled.

Sahgal paints the lives of elite Indian couples of the post-independence era. Her description of the historical and political developments in the described region is quite authentic and convincing. And the way she has delved deep into the inner recesses of her characters is equally extraordinary and makes the novel an excellent document of the record of not only the political

upheavals of the region after the second partition of the Punjab but also the deeper abysses of the chosen habitants of that region. There is no gap between the political world and the private world: both the worlds are reciprocally treated in which actions and characters are co-mingled.

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Kazuo Ishiguro and the Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

Kazuo Ishiguro is a Japanese-British novelist. He is one of the most critically acclaimed contemporary fiction writers writing in English. He is a versatile writer who wrote in different genres. His notable works are *An Artist of the Floating World*, *The Remains of the Day*, *When We Were Orphans*, *Never let Me Go*, and *Klara and The sun*. *The Remains of the Day* brought him Booker prize in 1989. He was awarded Nobel Prize in Literature in 2017. Though most of his novels are expressive of postwar Japanese experience to a universal paragon, *Klara and The Sun* is about an Artificial Friend who has outstanding observational qualities. Every Artificial friend is unique¹, says the writer in the novel. Surely, Ishiguro refers to the importance of technology in our life. There is no denying the fact that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming a global driver of change across businesses, societies, and governments. This technology's adoption is escalating, promising improvements in productivity and efficiency. In the novel, the main characters are Josie, Klara, Rick and Josie's mother. We know that Klara is a robot that gets nourishment from the

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sun. She is the narrator of the novel. She is a special type of solar-powered robot that is sold to help in raising children. The paper aims to discuss the importance of artificial intelligence as delineated by Kazuo Ishiguro in *Klara and the Sun*.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, society, educational values, psychological disorder, accountability, linguistic domain, transformative potential, alienation, sustained growth, change across business, and societal betterment.

Artificial intelligence has been the most common theme in science fiction. Prior to Kazuo Ishiguro a number of writers wrote on the theme. Sammael Butler's *Erewhon*, (1872), Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), George Lucas's *Star Wars* (1977), George Eliot's *Impression of The ophrastus Such* (1879), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Pixar's *Wall-E* (2008) pioneered the discipline of science fiction. These writings discuss AI in both contexts utopian and dystopian. The former emphasizes the potential benefits of AI, the latter emphasizes the dangers.

Klara and the Sun is the eighth novel by Kazuo Ishiguro published in 2021. In the novel, we get both utopian and dystopian context of AI. Klara, an Artificial Friend (AF), and Josie are the main characters in the novel. We learn that Josie has been suffering from a chronic illness and Klara is bought by Josie's mother to help her in beating the illness. Definitely, AI is being used for the ease of life for the differently challenged. It is replacing the centuries-old standardised operational procedures in almost every branch of knowledge and discipline.

The advancement in the field of science and technology is breath-taking to all of us. It has relentlessly surprised us with new gadgets and applications that can make human life easy and worth living. Now, from downtown, a visually challenged can walk towards his home independently without a white cane. Sensing the owner when the door opens, an intelligent google helps with the

verification and all the movements with Artificial intelligence. This is not from a Hollywood movie or science fiction. It is a reality that greets us with a meaningful smile. AI has seemingly improved the quality of life of marginalised in manyfold ways. Around 250 million people on the globe are visually impaired. They are either struggling to have a decent or independent life. Many of them are not even in the visible layer of society. Few decades ago, as in the case of hearing impairment, the function of SMS on a cell phone brought priceless smiles, not just among such children but even their parents (as they are aloof from the world of sound). They could not have attended a call had it not vibrated close to their body. A tiny improvement in the make-up of contemporary phones could alter their ease of life in spite of their challenges. A minor advancement in technology has opened an entire vista of communication to the hard-of-hearing population².

In the very beginning of the novel, the writer makes the point clear that Artificial Friend may help a lot in the development of a child's personality. When a woman walks in a store to buy AF for her daughter the Manager says to her regarding an AF, named Rex: 'He's a B2' Manager said. Third Series. For the right child, Rex will make a perfect companion. In Particular, I feel he'll encourage a conscientious and studious attitude in a young person.'³

It is very difficult to check the flow of technology. Kazuo Ishiguro wants us to be wise with it. Attention span plays a crucial role in fostering the habit of learning. It is alarming that our attention spans (8.25 seconds) have reduced to less than that of a goldfish (9 seconds), taking a toll on the time people focus on picking up a new skill or a concept.⁴ Surely, there are new emerging technologies which play a key role in minimising distractions and fostering better learning engagement. Technologies like Adaptive learning Algorithms that understand the type of learning content an individual is most and least engaging with and suggest a learning path by curating similar mediums for assimilation.

Also, Focus Mode Enablement to integrate a focus mode within the learning app, blocking access to non-educational apps for setting time restrictions to ensure uninterrupted learning sessions. We can also integrate digital well-being technologies and provide learners with insights into their time spent on learning activities versus other apps, fostering self-awareness.⁵

Recently the Government of India is pioneering the approach of harnessing the power of AI for social good, applying AI in education, healthcare, agriculture, languages and other critical sectors. To illustrate the impact of AI, a few key initiatives that reaped dividends with the integration of AI and related technologies have been detailed below:⁶**A. UMANG** (unified mobile Application for New-Age Governance): UMANG serves as a unified platform, offering all Indian citizens a singular point of access to pan India e-government services, spanning from central to local government bodies. The platform provides access to 1836 vital government services encompassing a wide spectrum of areas such as education, Covid-19 vaccinations, public transport, employment guidance, passport applications, cyber-crime reporting, and more. Since its launch in 2017, UMANG has aimed to propel India towards mobile governance by enabling citizens to get access to all public services with one super app. To eliminate technology and language barriers and enhance the long-term adoption of key government programmes and initiatives, AI was leveraged to transform UMANG into a more inclusive solution. UMANG, the Government's citizen-centric app, has introduced a voice-based chat box, or virtual assistant. Developed using conversational AI technologies, this chat box enables users to inquire about various Government services in both Hindi and English using either voice or text inputs.

B. Digital India Bhashini: (National Language Translation Mission): It is an initiative launched by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology that is building speech-to-speech machine translation systems for various Indian languages and

dialects and evolving a Unified language Interface. This mission is working towards creating a voice-based internet that is accessible in vernacular Indian Languages and building multilingualism as well by developing the next generation of conversational government apps and websites. This will enable citizens to access digital services in their own language, further increasing digital inclusion and accessibility.

Bhashini leverages AI to establish its building blocks, such as language and speaker identification, precise speech-to-text conversion, accurate translation across multiple languages, transliteration, semantic comprehension for actions like responding to queries, and sophisticated speech synthesis, which includes the ability to produce speech output in the language of choice with options for selecting the preferred speaker gender (male or female). The Bhashini app is available on the play store and App store for people to use. Bhashini has also enabled voice-based UPI transactions.

Kazuo Ishiguro elucidates in the novel *Klara and the Sun* how Robotic heroine and narrator Klara expresses human qualities and abilities. Regarding her love and Compassion towards her boss friend Josie, Klara transcends her machine status. Klara asserts her emotional feelings, “I believe I have many feelings”.⁷ Klara responds to Chrissie (the mother) with this statement when she doubts Klara’s feeling ability. The mother plans to visit Morgan’s fall as an outing. In the absence of Josie on this trip, Klara reiterates “I felt sadness”.⁸ Klara shows her deep-rooted kindness to Josie to be a nice and humble companion. It justifies her human-like love feeling. Klara enjoys the natural beauty and waterfalls there. Equally, she experiences sadness in Josie’s absence. The tenets of apology and regret truly reflect human characteristics. The next day, Klara, visits Mr. McBain’s barn riding on Rick’s back. She begs sun for “his special help” that she has discovered “the other way to save Josie” because “her deep wish now is that sun will show his great kindness once more”.⁹ These instances

and expressions clarify her deep-rooted compassion and concern for Josie's health.

So far as the power and superiority of AI is concerned, it would never supersede Human Intelligence. AI needs heavy inputs of facts to deliver, and it can't beat human intelligence, which with even poverty of info can come up with brand new ideas, concepts,¹⁰. Rumour is AI will soon overwhelm Human Intelligence (HI). We fear marauding machines trampling us with iron heels and commanding us with toneless sound. This, however, is not about to happen for two reasons- **(A)** AI can't think for itself, and **(B)** AI knows no better. AI needs constant knowledge feed, like mother's milk, which is almost entirely HI-dependent. Every little fact and fiction, real food and junk, that AI takes in is supplied by mortals – you and me. Without this constant information top-up to flatten its insides, AI will fall behind and keep repeating itself. AI can imitate authors and artists, but is incapable of producing anything novel. Forget Einstein. Dr. Newton. Or Louis Pasteur. Could AI have produced a Pablo Picasso or a Ravindranath Tagore! Creativity requires generative ability and that is still where HI is supreme. This is also assured in the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro when on some occasion Rick says to Klara: 'Look, you might be a very intelligent AF. But there's a lot you don't know.'¹¹

Despite certain limitations Klara's observational quality or sense is wonderful. Josie's mother asks her to observe Josie in the following words:

I'm asking to do what's within your power. And think what it'll mean for you. You'll be loved like nothing else in this world. May be one day I'll take up with another man. Who knows? But I promise you I'll never love him (regarding her husband) the way I'll love you. You'll be Josie and I'll always love you over everything else. So do it for me. I am asking you to do it for me. Continue Josie for me. Come on say something.¹² Klara's reply is full of wit. She says, "It won't be easy. But I believe If I continue to observe Josie carefully, it will be within my abilities"¹³

Despite this confidence Josie's mother wants to know more. She asks Klara: "Do you believe in the human heart! I don't mean simply the organ, obviously. I am speaking in the poetic sense. The human heart. Do you think there is such a thing? Something that makes each of us special and individual? And if we just suppose that there is. Then don't you think, in order to truly learn Josie, you'd have to learn not just her mannerisms but what's deeply inside her! Wouldn't you have to learn her heart"¹⁴. Though Klara replies in the affirmative, Josie's mother continues: "Something beyond even your wonderful capabilities. Because an impersonation wouldn't do, however skilful. You'd have to learn her heart, and learn it fully, or you'll never become Josie in any sense that matters"¹⁵.

Klara has great affections for Josie. she wants to see her healthy. Her request to the sun proves the point well. she says: "I understand how forward and rude I've been to come here. The sun has every right to be angry, and I fully understand your refusal even to consider my request. Even so, because of your great kindness, I thought I might ask you to delay your journey for one more instant. To listen to one more proposal. Supposing I could do something special to please you. Something to make you particularly happy. If I could achieve such a thing, then would you consider, in return, showing special kindness to Josie? Just as you did that time for Beggar Man and his dog?"¹⁶

Surely the power of technology in business is surprising. Henry Ford revolutionised the automobile industry, Sam Walton changed the landscape of retail, Walt Disney redefined entertainment, Bill Gates delivered a computer to every desk, Jeff Bezos defined modern e-commerce, and Elon Musk reimagined the electric vehicle and space travel. Their innovation goes beyond incremental improvements. They aimed for paradigm shifts that reshaped markets. This capacity for transformative innovation is deeply interwind with passion and vision. They not only identify unmet needs but also possess the ingenuity to develop solutions that

revolutionise the way people live, work and interact with technology. India too has witnessed exceptional leaders who have had profound impacts across multiple generational leaders and sectors. Mukesh Ambani, JRD Tata, and Ratan Tata have left an indelible mark, while Kiran Mazumdar Shaw has been a trailblazer in biotechnology.¹⁷

Modern Society is replete with various examples of simultaneous existence of man and machine. The robotic narrator in the novel inherits astute learning and observational capabilities like humans. “However, her understanding of human emotion and experiences is limited by her programming”¹⁸. Despite limitations, technology is doing wonders.

In conclusion, Kazuo Ishiguro wants us to be wise and watchful so far as the usage of technology is concerned because India AI’s vision not only consists of support for the AI startup ecosystem but also the development of practical applications and addressing real-world challenges in healthcare, agriculture, language translation, governance, and beyond. India’s approach entails setting principles and an exhaustive list of harms and criminalities associated with AI.¹⁹

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Re-awakening our AIE—Ancient Indian Education Traditions through NEP: Indian Readers and Bharatiya Writers

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Abstract

Unveiled in 2020, the much-awaited, India's National Education Policy (NEP) which represents a transformative endeavor that gracefully weaves the tapestry of modern educational methodologies with the rich threads of ancient Indian education. This research paper intricately explores the dynamic *SanskritiSynergy* between NEP and the reawakening of India's academic legacy. At its heart, it inquires about Literary-Cultural Odyssey in Indian readers and Bharatiya writers, which also uncovers how NEP 2020 serves as a bridge between eras, enlivening the timeless essence of Indian education while propelling it into a contemporary narrative. It also encapsulates the research's core mission to illuminate how NEP revitalizes India's educational heritage, cultivating a symbiotic bond that resonates with readers and writers alike.

Keywords: (Re)awakening, AIE, NEP 2020, Indian Readers and Bharatiya Writers, SANSKAR, Anukatha Parampara, *Traditionfluence* and *Culturianaissance*.

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Tomorrow holds the promise of a harmonious blend of modern educational aspirations, the wisdom of ancient Indian traditions, and a culturally enriched education system, thanks to India's New Education Policy 2020, which stands as a transformative force. This research embarks on a journey to unravel the symbiotic relationship between NEP 2020 and the resurgence of India's ancient educational ethos. It stands as a bastion firmly rooted in philosophical and cultural traditions, offering a multifaceted approach to learning that places paramount importance on nurturing the holistic development of individuals. This venerable system encompassed a diverse array of disciplines, including mathematics, astronomy, grammar, medicine, philosophy, and ethics, cultivating a profound comprehension of various subjects. Throughout the annals of Indian thought and philosophy, the relentless pursuit of knowledge (*Jnan*), wisdom (*Pragyaa*), and truth (*Satya*) has perennially been regarded as the ultimate human aspirations.

By exploring the dynamic interplay between NEP's provisions and the revival of readership and authorship, this study unveils a narrative that connects the past, present, and future of Indian education. NEP 2020 emerges as a catalyst, rekindling the spirit of ancient wisdom to foster a generation of Indian readers and Bharatiya writers.

An "Indian Reader" is an individual who actively engages with a wide range of literary materials, such as books, articles, and other written works, with a particular emphasis on content that represents the diverse heritage, languages, and literatures of the world, which works as an import into the nation. These readers seek to explore, comprehend, and appreciate literature that provides insights into global history, cultures, and perspectives.

"Bharatiya Writers", also known as, *Sahitya Sevaks*—the guardians of cultural literary heritage, who produces written contents in various formats, including books, articles, poetry, and more, while placing a special emphasis on articulating ideas, narratives, and themes deeply rooted in the cultural, social, and

historical fabric of India. These writers play a significant role in enriching the vibrant landscape of Indian literature, contributing to the preservation of local traditions, values, and narratives. This literary initiative aligns with the ethos of Vocal for Local, advocating the promotion of indigenous creativity and expression, like an export from the native land to the other nations. The term “Bharatiya” emphasizes the cultural and national identity associated with Bharat, Bharatvarsham.

The National Education Policy (NEP) of India, seeks to transform the country’s education system to meet the needs of the 21st century while also drawing inspiration from its rich historical and cultural heritage. This policy seeks to re-awaken certain aspects of the ancient Indian education traditions while promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism.

Where Multilingualism is a central aspect of India’s rich cultural tapestry. The NEP recognizes this by advocating for the inclusion of multiple languages in the curriculum. It encourages the teaching and learning of regional languages alongside Hindi and English. This emphasis on multilingualism not only preserves India’s linguistic diversity but also empowers students to communicate effectively in a multilingual society, fostering inclusivity. Furthermore, the NEP recognizes the importance of Multiculturalism in shaping a well-rounded education. By celebrating the various cultures, traditions, and histories that exist within India, the NEP aims to promote a sense of unity in diversity. This includes the incorporation of local cultural elements and traditions into the curriculum, ensuring that students gain a deep appreciation for the mosaic of Indian cultures. By nurturing multilingualism and multiculturalism, the NEP aims to create a more inclusive and culturally sensitive education system. It encourages students to understand and respect different cultures, fostering a sense of unity and harmony in a country known for its diverse traditions and languages.

The NEP, also emphasizes a shift from rote learning to a more experiential and inquiry-based approach to education. This aligns with the ancient Indian education traditions, where students were encouraged to engage in 3-D's—"Discussions, Debates, and Dialogue" with their teachers and peers. This approach fostered a deeper understanding of the subjects and encouraged critical thinking.

Additionally, the NEP encourages interdisciplinary studies and integration of arts and humanities with science and technology, which resonates with the holistic learning approach of ancient Indian education. In ancient India, education was not limited to just academic subjects; it encompassed a broader spectrum of knowledge including philosophy, ethics, arts, and physical well-being. Promoting Indian literature, philosophy, and culture is another key aspect of the NEP's efforts to reconnect with the ancient Indian education traditions. By incorporating traditional knowledge systems and texts, the NEP aims to create a more culturally rooted and inclusive education system, which comes in SANSKAR (Synthesis of Ancient Narratives, Scholastic Knowledge, and Revived Learning).

Incorporating Bharatiya (Indian) writers and thinkers in the curriculum can help achieve this goal. Ancient Indian texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, and epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana contain profound wisdom, ethical teachings, and insights into human behavior. Studying these texts, students can gain a deeper understanding of Indian values, traditions, and philosophies. However, it's important to strike a balance between embracing India's cultural heritage and fostering a global perspective. Modern education should equip students with skills and knowledge that enable them to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

To sum-up, the NEP's efforts to re-awaken our AIE, the Ancient Indian Education Traditions through the inclusion of Indian literature and philosophies can contribute to a more holistic, culturally rich, and intellectually stimulating education system. Blending wisdom of the past with demand of the present, India

can create an education system that prepares its citizen to excel both locally and globally.

The Legacy of Ancient Indian Education Traditions: Nurturing Holistic Learning through the Gurukul System and Oral Tradition

Education has long been a cornerstone of human civilization, and ancient Indian societies held a profound reverence for learning. Among the multifaceted educational systems that flourished in this land, the Gurukul system stands out as a remarkable exemplar. Rooted in the rich cultural tapestry of India, the Gurukul system fostered holistic education by seamlessly blending moral, intellectual, and physical dimensions. Moreover, the tradition of oral transmission played a pivotal role in disseminating knowledge and preserving cultural heritage, solidifying the intellectual legacy of ancient India.

The Gurukul system was a kind of residential setup where students lived with their guru (teacher), embodied a comprehensive approach to education. It emphasized not only the acquisition of intellectual knowledge but also the development of character and values. The guru-shishya (teacher-student) relationship formed the bedrock of this system, and it went beyond mere pedagogy. The guru, often revered as a spiritual guide, instilled not just academic prowess but also ethical conduct and emotional maturity in the students. This personalized education allowed for a deep understanding of the individual needs and inclinations of each student, enabling a tailored curriculum that honed their unique strengths.

Holistic education within the Gurukul system extended to the intellectual realm as well. Students received instruction not only in traditional subjects like mathematics, science, and arts but also in philosophy, ethics, and the scriptures. This multidisciplinary approach cultivated a well-rounded intellect, fostering critical thinking and a holistic understanding of the world. Physical education was equally integral, as it was believed that a healthy

body was essential for a healthy mind. Yoga, martial arts, and other physical disciplines were thus incorporated into the curriculum, promoting the harmonious development of the mind and body.

Central to the Gurukul system was the guru-shishya relationship. This bond was characterized by utmost respect, humility, and devotion on the part of the student, and profound wisdom, care, and guidance on the part of the guru. Beyond academics, the guru imparted cultural values and life skills, thereby contributing to the holistic growth of the students. Through intimate interactions and experiential learning, moral lessons were imbibed naturally, enabling students to become not just erudite scholars, but also compassionate and virtuous individuals. This symbiotic relationship extended beyond the realm of education, often lasting a lifetime and resulting in a lifelong mentorship that continued to influence the students' personal and professional trajectories.

The role of “Anukatha Parampara”, which is also called oral tradition in ancient Indian education, was equally significant. In a preliterate society, knowledge was transmitted orally through dialogues, debates, and discourses. These verbal exchanges were dynamic and interactive, allowing for the exploration of various perspectives and the refinement of ideas. The tradition of oral storytelling was a powerful medium for imparting knowledge, as epics, scriptures, and historical narratives were passed down from generation to generation. This practice ensured the continuity of cultural values and beliefs. Epic narratives of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, for instance, were preserved with remarkable accuracy through oral transmission for centuries before being transcribed. The rhythmic cadence and intonation of oral renditions not only aided memorization but also conveyed emotions and nuances embedded in the texts, fostering a deep connection to the cultural ethos. Through these narratives, cultural heritage was not only preserved but also enriched, as each storyteller added their own nuances and interpretations, ensuring the continuity of tradition while allowing for its organic evolution.

NEP's Alignment with Ancient Wisdom: Nurturing Holistic Development and Fostering Creativity

The National Education Policy (NEP) of a nation reflects its vision for the education system, and in the case of India, the NEP demonstrates a remarkable alignment with the holistic ideals of ancient Indian education traditions, particularly the Gurukul system. NEP's emphasis on nurturing well-rounded individuals through a balanced and comprehensive approach shares parallels with the holistic ethos of the Gurukul system, integrating aspects of physical fitness, emotional intelligence, ethical values, critical thinking, and creativity.

Holistic Education in NEP resonates with the Gurukul system's ethos of nurturing a well-rounded individual. Just as the Gurukul system recognized the importance of harmonious development encompassing moral, intellectual, and physical dimensions, NEP underscores the need for holistic development in students. The policy underscores physical fitness through initiatives like the 'Fit India' campaign, mirroring the Gurukul system's inclusion of physical education in its curriculum. NEP's focus on emotional intelligence and mental well-being acknowledges the significance of the emotional dimension, echoing the Gurukul's emphasis on cultivating emotional maturity alongside intellectual growth. Furthermore, the ethical values and character development that were central to the guru-shishya relationship in the Gurukul system find resonance in NEP's emphasis on value-based education, aiming to instill ethical values and social responsibility in students.

Critical thinking and creativity, cornerstones of the Gurukul system's pedagogical approach, find a contemporary echo in NEP's focus on these skills. Just as ancient Indian education encouraged learners to question and explore, NEP promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity as essential skills for the 21st century. The policy recognizes that rote memorization stifles innovation and that fostering analytical thinking is crucial for adapting to a rapidly changing world. This alignment is evident in

the shift from a content-centric approach to a competency-based approach in education. By encouraging students to think critically, analyze, and approach problems from diverse perspectives, NEP aligns itself with the spirit of intellectual curiosity that the Gurukul system embodied. As India's education system evolves in the 21st century, this alignment with the wisdom of ancient Indian traditions ensures that the essence of holistic education endures, empowering students to not only succeed academically but also thrive as responsible, innovative, and ethical citizen.

Nurturing Indian Readers through NEP: Reviving Reading Culture and Balancing Tradition with Technology

In an age characterized by rapid technological advancement, preserving the art of reading and reconnecting learners with their cultural heritage is of paramount importance. The National Education Policy (NEP) recognizes this imperative and has undertaken a multifaceted approach to revive the reading culture among students. By embracing both tradition and technology, NEP's 'Reading Mission' aims to instill a love for reading while adapting to the demands of the digital age.

The 'Reading Mission' of CBSE under NEP seeks to cultivate a reading habit among students, recognizing the transformative power of literature in shaping young minds. This mission embodies a departure from the traditional exam-centric education to a more holistic and learner-centered approach. The objective is not just to promote academic reading, but to encourage reading for pleasure, intellectual curiosity, and personal growth. By doing so, NEP aspires to create lifelong learners who are not just academically proficient but also well-rounded individuals.

By intertwining tradition with technology, NEP aims to create well-rounded individuals who are not only proficient in academic subjects but also enriched by the treasures of literature and cultural heritage. As the education landscape continues to evolve, this approach ensures that the invaluable habit of reading remains a

cornerstone of holistic learning, fostering a generation of individuals who are curious, informed, and deeply connected to their roots.

Cultivating Bharatiya Writers through NEP: Nurturing Linguistic Diversity and Creative Expression

The National Education Policy of India is not just a policy but a profound commitment to honoring the nation's linguistic diversity and fostering the creative potential of its students. NEP's focus on endorsing regional languages and promoting mother tongue education finds resonance with age-old Indian traditions, while its initiatives to empower creative expression resonate deeply with the nurturing of Bharatiya values through Bharatiya writers.

Linguistic Diversity and Mother Tongues form the foundation of NEP's approach: At the heart of NEP's lies a celebration of India's linguistic tapestry, reminiscent of ancient Indian practices. Just as our ancestors revered regional languages as vessels of cultural richness and knowledge, NEP recognizes the inherent value of languages beyond English, fostering an inclusive linguistic landscape. NEP champions the medium of instruction in mother tongues or regional languages during early education, citing the cognitive and emotional advantages of such an approach. This mirrors the age-old practice of imparting knowledge in indigenous languages, believed to facilitate a deeper understanding of concepts and a stronger connection to cultural heritage.

NEP's promotion of mother tongue education not only enhances cultural preservation but also paves the way for authentic expression. Language is not merely a tool of communication; it embodies a culture's ethos, values, and nuances. By learning in their mother tongue, students can engage more deeply with their cultural roots, leading to a stronger sense of identity and belonging. Additionally, this approach facilitates a more profound connection with creative expression, as students can articulate their thoughts and emotions more authentically in their own language. This aligns with the ancient Indian notion of language being intrinsically intertwined with one's worldview and creative expression.

The NEP's emphasis on grounding creative expression in Bharatiya values adds depth to the process. While encouraging students to express themselves creatively, NEP ensures that their ideas are rooted in cultural values, ethics, and heritage. This alignment resonates with ancient Indian education, which aimed at producing individuals who were not only intellectually adept but also morally upright and culturally aware. By infusing Bharatiya values into creative expression, NEP seeks to nurture writers who can contribute to society with a profound sense of responsibility and purpose.

For instance, a student in Haryana crafting a poem inspired by the teachings of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Through this creative endeavor, they not only connect with their cultural heritage but also infuse their poetry with the values of truth, diversity, and unity that Shri Patel epitomized.

NEP's approach to cultivating Bharatiya writers is multifaceted, drawing inspiration from ancient Indian practices while adapting to the modern text and context. The policy's endorsement of linguistic diversity and mother tongue education resonates with historical practices that valued regional languages as carriers of culture and knowledge. Simultaneously, NEP's initiatives to empower creative expression align with the ethos of nurturing well-rounded individuals capable of authentic communication. By fostering creativity and grounding it in Bharatiya values, NEP paves the way for a new generation of writers who can communicate their ideas effectively while upholding the rich cultural tapestry of India.

The Long-Term Cultural Impact of NEP 2020 on Indian Society, Literature, and the Development of Future Readers and Writers

The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 in India is not just about classrooms and textbooks; it is a blueprint for transforming the very fabric of Indian education. Beyond its immediate goals of reshaping the educational system, it carries the potential for

profound, long-term cultural impacts on Indian society, literature, and the nurturing of future generations of readers and writers. This research delves deeper into the intricate relationship between NEP 2020 and the preservation and evolution of India's vibrant cultural heritage through—*Tradition fluence*.

Cultural preservation, what NEP 2020 is about, champions an array of initiatives that signify its commitment to cultural preservation. One of the most notable is its strong emphasis on mother tongue-based education. By advocating for teaching in a child's mother tongue or regional language until at least the fifth grade, the policy takes a significant stride in preserving India's linguistic diversity. Language is not just a means of communication; it's intertwined with culture, history, and identity. When a language thrives, so does the cultural tapestry it carries. Through this approach, NEP 2020 safeguards the rich cultural identities embedded in India's various languages.

Cultural Evolution, what NEP 2020 is about, acknowledges that culture is not static; it's dynamic, capable of adapting to changing times while retaining its core essence. It serves as a catalyst for cultural evolution through several key elements.

The NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on critical thinking and creativity. These skills are essential for engaging deeply with culture, traditions, and literature. By encouraging students to question, debate, and think critically, NEP 2020 ensures that cultural knowledge evolves through thoughtful analysis and reinterpretation. This emphasis on critical thinking is an integral part of nurturing future readers and writers who can engage with cultural material more profoundly.

Integration of technology is another significant aspect of cultural evolution through NEP 2020. The policy supports the creation of digital libraries, e-books, and interactive platforms. While these technologies are undoubtedly modern, they are employed to make cultural materials more accessible to students.

This synergy of traditions with innovation ensures that cultural knowledge evolves in tandem with the demands of the digital age.

Furthermore, cultural evolution is fostered through NEP 2020's commitment to cultural sensitivity and inclusivity. India is a diverse nation with myriad cultures, languages, and traditions. The policy acknowledges this diversity and aims to include diverse narratives in the curriculum. By doing so, NEP 2020 ensures that future readers and writers are exposed to a multitude of cultural perspectives, thereby fostering cultural evolution through greater inclusivity.

Impact on Future Readers and Writers: The long-term cultural impact of NEP 2020 extends to the development of future readers and writers. The policy recognizes that nurturing readers and writers is a vital part of cultural preservation and evolution. NEP 2020 promotes a love for reading through its 'Reading Mission'. This mission is more than just a campaign; it's a commitment to reignite the passion for reading among students. By exposing them to a diverse range of cultural texts, NEP 2020 lays the foundation for a new generation of readers who are deeply engaged with the cultural richness of India.

NEP 2020's potential long-term cultural impact on Indian society, literature, and the development of future readers and writers is profound. It skillfully balances the preservation of cultural heritage with the necessary adaptations for cultural evolution in the modern age. The NEP 2020 is not just an education policy; it's a cultural beacon, ensuring that the ancient wisdom of Indian culture continues to thrive while embracing the dynamic changes of the future. It's a commitment to nurture not just educated individuals but culturally rich, diverse, and deeply engaged citizen who carry India's cultural legacy forward.

Future of Indian Education: Building on the Past

The future of Indian education is like a tapestry, woven with threads from the past and the threads of innovation, creating a

vibrant and resilient fabric. In ancient India, education was not just about acquiring knowledge; it was about shaping character and nurturing values. NEP 2020 carries this torch forward, envisioning an education system where students not only learn facts but also how to think, question, and adapt.

Expanding on this, the future of Indian education, as inspired by its ancient values and NEP 2020 that has sparked — *Culturian aissance*, is a journey towards holistic development. It's a future where classrooms are not confined by four walls but extend to the limitless realms of curiosity and exploration. It is a future where students aren't passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in their learning journey. This approach breaks free from the shackles of 'rote' memorization, fostering creativity and critical thinking, as echoed by Albert Einstein, 'Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think.'

One of the important objectives of NEP 2020, primarily, focuses on vocational training and life skills equip students to navigate the complex terrain of life, where bookish knowledge alone is inadequate. In essence, the future of Indian education is about nurturing well-rounded individuals who not only excel in their chosen fields but also contribute meaningfully to society. This future-oriented approach builds on the timeless wisdom of ancient India while preparing students for the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

Work Consulted

Government of India, Ministry of Education. *National Education Policy 2020*. www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

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Indian English(es): Adaptations, Resistances and Inventions: Reviewing The Need of the Hour: A study through Select Hindi Films

***Runoo Ravi**

Abstract

The ways/methods of teaching English, especially spoken, vary from place to place depending upon individuals, requirements, and situations. Teaching Learning Methods (TLM) must be consistently improvised and adapted in the South Asian scenario, to suit the needs of formal groups, non-English speakers, late- learners, and need- based learners as well. This must be done keeping in mind the problem of vowel usage, pronunciation, and syntax, which are often an instrument of ridicule and embarrassment to the native learner. The specialized needs for learning English should collate with the modes of learning. The present paper proposes to show all this with the help of select Hindi films down the decade. This medium has been chosen since films have always been a part of India. As a part of Cultural Studies today, they acquire greater importance because they reflect the society, they are a product of.

Keywords: Language, Requirement, Grammar, Need-based, Hindi films.

English Language Learning has assumed a very important role today because it cuts across all disciplines and has become a solid

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base for the construction of knowledge. It performs different functions in different domains. Innovative teaching techniques and methods are being improvised and adopted to facilitate this learning not only in basic education but also for grown-ups, non-English speakers, late learners, and need-based learners. As a universally accepted language, the importance of English has no longer remained confined to the realms of cultivated refinement and British mannerisms but is rather a potent tool for better communication and connectivity, with full regards to the cyber world. Renowned Jamaican -British sociologist Stuart Hall rightly “argues that the affirmation of ethnicity as a positive term of identification for different ‘Black British’ minority groups can be an effective strategy for redefining ‘Englishness’ and English culture from the standpoint of different minority groups”. (Morton 75)

It is important to understand that communication over weighs correctness of grammar, and the contrasting structure of Hindi and English syntax have to be stressed upon in teaching pedagogy, either by correct translations or correct intonations, keeping in mind the regional variations in India, as well. Noted British writer and dramatist George Bernard Shaw, in his noted play, *Pygmalion*, mentions one hundred and thirty vowel sounds needed for correct pronunciation against the five existing vowels. If this variation is needed for the native English speaker, the tribulations faced by the non-native speakers in pronunciation is indeed worth consideration and do not deserve the condemnation that they usually receive.

The way and methods of teaching English as a spoken language vary from place to place and among individuals and their requirements and situations. In case of grown-up individuals, there is the utility of need-based teaching system; one that helps the learner grasp things according to her/his own requirements which may propel his desire to further enhance her/his knowledge. If the basic rudimentary or the so-called elementariness of English

language learning (such as perfect pronunciation and intonation plus over emphasis on verbs) overpower the usefulness of the immediate learning required at that time and for a specific need, then the process of learning will be a cumbersome and loathsome process rather than a novel learning adventure inspiring the individual to venture into more formidable territories. Stress on involvement of effective English language teaching methods is needed keeping in mind that achievement in English is more on a social than an individual level which is marked by the desire to learn English and also keep on using constantly; an isolated learning is neither productive nor satisfying.

The present paper proposes to show the different ways and techniques which focus on English language learning becoming definitely individualistic, easier and also more accessible compared to the rigid basic learning structure: with special reference to the Asian, non-English speaking countries; India, in particular. This is done with the help of select Hindi films down the decade. The films that have been selected have been produced according to the commercial formulae but have nevertheless incorporated certain very significant and valuable concepts of English Language Teaching which were necessary for the movement of the plot and have either intentionally or by default, acquired impressionable value due to its relevance in the concepts of English Language Teaching to the non-English speakers.

The paper would attempt to elucidate the individualistic and specialized needs of English language learners in India which will be more accessible compared to the rigid basic learning system, especially in the case of a non-native language. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the specialized pedagogy will definitely be higher than that of the regular learning structure where the teacher could go against the grain, to encourage the learner, to motivate, to praise the imaginative streak as seen in *Stanley ka Dabba* where Rosie teacher is seen more concerned and appreciative of Stanley's imagination whilst submitting an essay, which is akin to elements

of Magic Realism, than criticizing the improbability in his essay, which a teacher would ordinarily do. Similarly, Shashi, in *English Vinglish*, is awarded her final grade card for her Spoken English classes not for the usual classroom tutorial but for the speech that she delivers at her niece's wedding. In both cases, the orphaned economically backward Stanley, and the devalued and perpetually insulted Shashi, gain confidence and self-worth largely due to their own capacity but also due to the support of the teacher and the need-based teaching system. This need, and the ways to execute this need, along with dealing with the colonial baggage of Englishness will be the thrust area of the research paper, providing important instances from other Hindi films as well, films being a reflection of the society they emerge from.

Lagaan (Ashutosh Gowariker 2001) is set in pre independent India and captures the agony of brutal colonialism as well as the patriotism through the crusade of a group of villagers who shall be pardoned their *lagaan* for three consecutive years provided they win a cricket match against the Englishmen. While the zeal and optimism stand unmatched, the stark truth is their unfamiliarity with the game and with the alien language as well. The role of the noble benefactor is taken up by the antagonist's sister, a woman of strong principles who is angered by her brother's injustice and desires the innocent villagers to emerge victorious, but the major hurdle is communication. Teaching the totally unfamiliar language to the most unsuitable group: the basically illiterate and poor villagers, is completely out of question and time is a major constraint. Here, teaching verbs and the correct pronunciation is not important, communication and related performance is. If the villagers do not understand the game, how will they play it? And what they need to be taught is definitely more important than what should be taught to them as a part of English Language teaching. The need for teaching English in this case is primarily to communicate. So, lessons are planned and executed accordingly.

The role of speech and writing became more of a psychological tool in this case. Seemingly disparate phenomena as gestures, symbolic play and drawings and scribbles (made for children generally) were used abundantly to make the receiver get the message accurately. Lines were drawn in the sand to make a pitch and to show the various points on the ground. Sentences were kept short and hand gesture was used abundantly to point out things, communicate thoughts and deliver facts whereas facial expression clearly reflected appreciation or disapproval. Simple nod and shake were used to signify affirmation or negation. The nuances of the game were explained through the parallel structure of *gullidanda*; this lent to the sense of easy familiarity. These basic and very simple tools fit more for pre-school children and toddlers were extremely effective in the development of English language learning in this case.

The teacher's role is also to act as a facilitator in certain cases. Her/his role extends to a humanistic approach where the importance is given to the ability as well as the shortcomings of the learner notwithstanding their age, their need and their limitations: as was seen in the film *English Vinglish* (Gauri Shinde 2012). When the need for learning is highly personalized so should be the teaching; each student has his/her own reason and his/her own need. The film was about an eclectic group of individuals who enroll in an English-speaking course in the U.S. While the protagonist Shashi needs this course to elevate her status in the eyes of her 'English' speaking husband and daughter, the others have different objectives; but each with its need for appreciation and self-worth which is deprived only due to the inability of fluency in English. Thus, the teacher gives them space and allows them to grow. The teacher does not thrust verbs on them. He does not give them pages to write or to memorize because he is aware of their limitations. He tries to build a relaxed, loving, homely atmosphere where mistakes are gently corrected, and students are allowed to be in their comfort zone. A shy student is not forced to speak, he may take

his time. Healthy student interaction makes them help each other and fuels the determination to excel.

The teacher nurtures confidence and healthy competitive spirit. There is neither any rivalry among the students nor a superior/inferior divide between the teacher and his students. The teaching tools are very basic. Small writing boards, drawings made on the blackboard, symbol comprehension, placard accumulation and word play: once again tools used for nursery and preparatory teaching are used abundantly with effective results. The degree of proficiency which is attained in a second language in these circumstances is inevitably very limited, but it may be such as to enable the language to be used as a means of communication. When Shashi misses her classes as well as the final speech test due to her domestic problems, there is no harsh rule imposed. On the contrary, the teacher, having seen her dedication, accepts her wedding speech as her final speech and grants her the Pass Certificate. This kind of motivation is needed and recommended to propagate English language learning particularly in such eclectic groups whose number keeps on increasing with every passing day. The comfort level provided by the teacher as the facilitator and the dedication shown by the receivers result in extremely beneficial outcomes.

Man Pasand (Basu Chatterjee 1980) is loosely based on G.B. Shaw's renowned play *Pygmalion*. While *Pygmalion* dealt with the theme of Phonetics, the film shows the protagonist Pratap, a renowned Professor of music replacing phonetics with music and accepting his friend's challenge that he can turn any unrefined girl into a sophisticated cultured woman, even a trained classical singer, within a period of six months. By chance they meet Kamli, the *daatun* seller in the local train and present this proposal to her.

The focus here is on the change in outlook of the society due to change in speech. Pratap helps Kamli grow and this growth is in synchronization with Kamli's mastery over the English

language, a sure shot step towards up gradation for people like her who have borne the brunt of humiliations, marginalisation and discriminations made in the society on the basis of status and manners, judged heavily also by the knowledge of English or the lack of it. Pratap imbibes Culture in her as the shared way of achieving characteristic of a society, that is, to be elevated in the society. His education is not confined to any particular parameter but is rather sartorial. Everything, including the grammar, the pronunciation, the intonation, the syntactic usage as well as the content of the speech has to be tutored in an extremely refined manner. Here English becomes the tool for social and cultural refinement, to turn a waif into a gentle woman.

In one of the most interesting scenes of the film, the protagonist, Kamli, at her first public appearance becomes a success due to her attractive appearance but is a complete washout once she forgets the tutored replies and becomes a blabber mouth. Kamli needs to understand the importance and the purpose of the kind of education she receives. The 'why', 'how' and 'when' become extremely vital to enthuse the learner to greater intensity. It becomes imperative to remember two important things in teaching students like Kamli. First, that the focus is not just on speaking grammatically correct sentences but also to choose the correct sentence and speak it out at the correct moment. Secondly, the appropriateness of the words has to be taught as well. The sentence "the cow ate the lion" is grammatically correct but definitely incorrect in the context of the syntax. The learners have to be taught the context as well the competence in their speech.

Stanley ka Dibba (Amol Gupte 2011) demonstrated that a good teacher will always relax the rigid parameters and overrule one small aberration if it leads to some betterment. Water-tight compartments have to be shed particularly in the case of young, bubbling minds. Teachers who relax the realms of structured teaching are said to be going 'against the grain'. Stanley, the eight-

year-old protagonist was very lucky to get a teacher as Miss Rosie as his English teacher in the fourth grade. Miss Rosie focused more on motivation and inspiration, and was grounded on the theory of Principled Eclecticism which meant that while teaching, the important thing was to fit the method to the learner and not the vice versa just as it is done in modern psycho-analytical theory. While this theory is very viable in all disciplines it has the most determining role in the teaching of English because not only is English fluid but also growing (we have American English, Indian English, Canadian English, West Indian English and Hinglish among other newly sprung Englishes). Furthermore, spoken English derives its strength from intonation as well as connotation which is not seen in other disciplines such as History or Biology. And most importantly, English, as a tool for communication stays with the learner always in everyday life even when other subjects are not so significant. Thus, Stanley and Miss Rosie together focus on transcending boundaries in learning. When Stanley is given essays to write, he loses himself in a world of fantasy. For a simple topic like 'My Birthday Party' he makes his mother become a queen and himself a hero trapping a criminal. In the normal routine, Stanley deserved a zero because he had digressed from the given topic and had fabricated tales. But Miss Rosie is more impressed by his excellent command on verbs (which are a frustrating yet integral and part of English Language teaching) and his vivid imagination. She appreciates how he can go on speaking fluently and continuously, breaking into impromptu rhymed jingles in the class, how he composes a beautiful poem in her honour. It is not that she does not notice the small defects in his writing and his speech, but she prefers to appreciate and highlight the features that are more remarkable and praiseworthy and encourage the rest of the class too in similar endeavors. This kind of innovative teaching is needed for children, for the teaching of English as a non-native language in particular, to sustain their interest and their imagination, not the usual stereotypical rote method. And

understanding the background Stanley came from, orphan-poor-exploited as a helping hand: the role of the teacher as a motivator becomes even more significant.

Taare Zameen Par (Aamir Khan & Amol Gupte 2007) focused on special methods for children or people with special needs. While education in itself becomes a difficult and a patient task for such students, as was the case with the protagonist Ishaan Awasthi; suffering from dyslexia and badly understood by family and teachers. Children with special needs and Learning Disability are always untidy, write numbers wrongly, make mistakes in spelling, omit words or lines, do not read well though oral answers are intelligent and have difficulty in putting sounds of words together. Such problems are due to the impairment of their psychological processes like perception and memory. Timely help came to Ishaan in the form of his Art teacher, Nikumbh, who having suffered the same predicament during childhood could both identify and empathize with the situation. As an exemplary teacher, Nikumbh exhibited extremely innovative and invigorating techniques and strategies to help the child in all subjects, but the real triumph is seen when Ishaan's father listens to his son reading out the whole notice effortlessly. This kind of achievement is the result of malleable and personalized techniques needed in special cases but extremely effective in general sense too. The key to success here was not 'what to learn' but 'how to learn'.

Celebrated linguist Noam Chomsky has rightly observed that a great deal of normal speech consists of false starts, disconnected phrases, and other deviances from idealized competence. In cases such as Ishaan and other children, this situation is normally observed. Most teachers, especially in overburdened classes run out of patience. But those who persist are rewarded with the child's deeper perception and understanding. In case of continuing problem, educationists suggest the use of storytelling and folk songs as strong mediums of language dissemination. This kind of learning not only offers delightful oratory experience but also

provides an unconscious understanding of the different usages of the language, such as inflexions, intonations and syntactic structure. In the film, the poems that Ishaan needs to learn are memorized through this technique. He does not need to read the poem; the poem is heard by him again and again and effortlessly gets memorized by him. Stress is given more on oral learning rather than identification and memorization of lines: something difficult for most children and more so for someone like Ishaan. As he keeps the book on front of him and plays the tape again and again, his fingers begin to follow the lines written and his ears are tuned to the words being spoken. This liaison made between 'sound' and 'words' makes learning a comparatively easy task. The same technique is adopted in understanding and learning the various subjects in the curriculum, the questions and the answers, the principal mode of communication being English. Similarly, the concept of 'enlargement' and 'symbiotic function' is effectively used. Alphabets and numbers are not limited to paper but are crafted out of wood, clay or drawing sheets. This makes memorizing easy as they do not remain mere words but assume the form of playthings.

Teaching should be made an interesting and fun-filled activity. Objects used during the play are first allowed to absorb the meaning of the signified object. Soon the gesture assigned to identify the particular object is dropped and the child is able to recognize and remember the object by its own name. The child may use a special gesture to designate a 'broom' as a 'horse' and then the broom is used as a horse without any special gesture. The children 'discover' that certain properties of their playthings fit their roles. Thus, the broom becomes the horse that they do not possess, and this starts a volley of imaginative associations that leads to word power and adding and memorizing more and more words, building up a vocabulary. This is a very successful technique in memorizing a plethora of hitherto unfamiliar terms which are the English terms for those things/items/activities the

student is more familiar with, compared to newer or unfamiliar things.

The film *Phas Gaye Obama* (Subhash Kapoor 2010) showcases the curse of the wrong kind of teaching institutions that have mushroomed all over the world, particularly in the developing countries, where the need for English is burgeoning every day and innocent people are being cheated out of their time and money by scrupulous teachers and fake institutions. The character named Anni joins a similar English Teaching Institute as fluency in spoken English is a prerequisite for getting a job in the US. His teacher's buffoonery is apt for the sprinkle of humour but quite subtly and significantly projects the dismal condition of such unqualified self-proclaimed grammarians and language trainers and the subsequent urgency for government initiative and intervention. The three-minute scene in the film brings out all the anomalies existing in such 'Engleesh' teaching institutions. The teacher's use of 'chick' in place of 'cheek' is a pathetically funny use of Pun and his big slap on the 'red, red chick' demonstrates his absolute ignorance about 'Reduplication'. The teacher tells them that English learning is not 'rice plate eating' but rather 'undertaker playing' and when the students apologize, they are admonished by the teacher's anger, 'sorry ka baby'. His emphatic 'no-never-not' is a perfect parody of 'may be-may-might' and the funniest lines indeed are his loud shouts... 'full stop!!!' (to make them stop talking) and 'stand where you are sitting!!!' (as their punishment) It is one of his students saying 'I smell' [as an oath of honesty] that actually reveals the acute disadvantage such students face, coming generally from illiterate families comprising of non-English speakers. This 'I smell' is actually 'I swear' and the inappropriate use is a result of wrong pronunciation and faulty intonation. This brings to the severe drawbacks that plague effective English language training system directed towards the category of need based late learners. These drawbacks, in turn, become extremely detrimental in quick and smooth adaptation of the language.

The colonial impact on the erstwhile colonized nations has to be taken into consideration as well. Films like *Amar Akbar Anthony* (Manmohan Desai 1977), *Namak Halal* (Prakash Mehra 1982) and *Raja Hindustani* (Dharmesh Darshan 1996) used fragmented English phrases, Western clothing and aping Western mannerisms to provide humour but the Anglophile obsession, as a tool for social up gradation, still loomed large. It is extremely important to get rid of this obsession and learn English primarily as a need-based tool for knowledge and communication. Why is it so that we accept a foreigner's faulty Hindi as an attempt to speak a new language and do not scoff at the pronunciation but rip apart a non- native English speaker's simplest pronunciation mistakes. 'Rameshwar' spoken as 'Raameshvaara' is permissible and so is 'pannditt' in place of 'pandit' but if Jonathan is pronounced as 'zoonathin' and 'Patricia' as 'Paetrikia', it amounts to sacrilege. A Britisher's attempt to speak the name 'Venkatachalam Swamy' is supposed to be a real tongue twister for the 'poor' speaker, but the same empathy is not shown towards the Indian struggling with a strange name as 'Schweitzwer'. A non-Hindi speaker is pardoned for pronouncing 'tum' not as the 't' used in 'tumhara' but as the one used in 'two'. Similarly, 'idhar' can become 'idar' where the 'd' is dropped very conveniently but the non English speaker is not pardoned for not pronouncing 'debut' as 'debu' by dropping the 't' or getting totally confused between 'zest' and 'jest'. Problems arise also in the case of proper nouns where the word 'real' has to be pronounced as 'real' in 'Real Madrid', the name of the football team; the speaker does not know why so.

Sadly, many a time, the genuine desire to learn English as a new language is thwarted due to the ridicule and the consequent embarrassment and humiliation the speaker is subjected to every time an error occurs. It is important to sensitize the learner and the teacher, as well as the listeners (who may or may not be adept in the language) to the disparities that will always remain in the

pronunciation due to the national, local and regional differences. With a staggering figure of 1652 mother tongues, over 200 classified languages, and 10 different writing systems, this problem is highly intense in India. The English vowel and consonant sounds need to be taught in accordance with their counterparts – swar and vyanjan, to help combat this issue. A simple English word like ‘uncle’ may be pronounced in the most weird manner, ‘oonseli’ where the vowel ‘u’ is pronounced as ‘oo’ as in ‘you’ and consonant ‘c’ is spoken out as ‘se’ as in ‘ce’ from ‘scene’.

Some of the important facts to be considered for imparting the basic English Language training to the different kinds of learners can be summed up as:

1. Most late learners depend upon the translation method: framing a sentence in their mind in their own language and then translating it in English. The difference in the subject-verb structure needs to be pointed out because English grammar puts the verb before the subject, as in the sentence ‘I eat my food’ where verb ‘eat’ is placed before the noun, ‘food’. Hindi grammar places the ‘noun’ before the ‘verb’. Thus ‘main khaana khaata hoon’, translated into English becomes ‘I food eating’ which is classified as incorrect grammar.
2. The Hindi- to- English dictionary is a very handy tool for English language learners. However, the unfamiliarity with phonetic symbols used for pronunciation lands them in trouble. Common words in day to day use such as ‘biscuit’, ‘doctor’, ‘school’, ‘bulb’, ‘colour’, and so on are pronounced generally as ‘biskoot’, ‘daaktar’, ‘isskool’, ‘bulubb’ and ‘cullur’, respectively. While complete phonetic training is difficult and also impossible in some cases, use of the Devnagri script can be a great help to write down the words exactly as they have to be pronounced.
3. The vowels are taught as separate units or phonemes but how the independent units merge to form complete words/

morphemes have to be taught clearly to the learners. Then, the confusion in pronouncing vowel 'a' as a single alphabet differently as 'aa' in 'arm', 'a' in 'make' or even the 'a' in 'name', which is a diphthong, will not occur. Language variations in Hindi also lead to pronunciation variations. The word 'ladka', used for its English counterpart 'boy' is also pronounced as 'larika', the meaning remains the same. The phonological variations in dialects lead to these peculiarities in pronunciation. The standard British accent [R.P.] may also be discarded by the speaker for a regional Indian accent [G.I.E.] and 'gate' may become '/geit/' with a longer drawl in R.P. but pronounced as '/ge:t/', a smaller drawl in G.I.E. Thus, more than the stress on the pronunciation, the emphasis ought to be on correct grammar, communication and fluency.

4. The information about words from Sanskrit as 'matre' and 'pitre' being the base for words like 'mother' and 'father' from English give a sense of pride to the native learner. This helps in obliterating the notion of English being a language superior to their own languages. This pride combined with the interest generated results in keen and anticipatory learning.
5. Postcolonial India has witnessed the growth and development of the 'Indian English' that has also combined specific meanings with the linguistic structure to hybrid formations like 'attar- bottle' and 'kumkum- mark'. But care has to be taken that this Indian English retains its standard and does not turn into "Hinglish". Words like 'patoing', 'line- maroing' and 'khaiing jaldi' may serve their purpose but they are not only harmful to the learner but detrimental to the English language itself. Speech maybe, by its nature, less amenable to be rigidly fixed but when taught to write, one needs to be taught the standard language.

We have to face it; English still faces unbridled importance all over the world. Spoken English being a very strong parameter in the societal set up. If one speaks fluent English, one is elite, learned and sophisticated and other demerits are overshadowed as witnessed in the film *Happy New Year* (Farah Khan 2015) through the leading lady, Deepika Padukone's obsession for the protagonist, Shahrukh Khan, incessantly propelled by his command over the English language. After India's independence in 1947, English was supposed to continue as the official language for only fifteen odd years before the switch over to Hindi, the national language was to be completed but, unfortunately, that has not taken place yet. The Hindi films under discussion create a space to "subvert, invert and reflect upon the sites of relations within the given world, and other new dimensions of possibilities of relations, often indicating new ideological trends within the society itself". (Jain & Rai 226) Films become the 'mirror' which reflect elements hitherto unseen/understood, stressing on evolvement of effective English language teaching methods; keeping in mind that achievement in English is more of a social than an individual kind, which in turn is influenced more by schooling, motivational orientation, exposure to English through films and reading material, scholastic achievement, use of English among friends and family; and most importantly, the desire to learn English and to keep on using it constantly.

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Deconstructing Gender Dynamics: Empowering Women in the Plays of Vijay Tendulkar

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Abstract

This research paper delves into the multifaceted exploration of feminine archetypes within the dramatic oeuvre of Vijay Tendulkar. Tendulkar, a prominent figure in Indian literature and theater, has crafted a diverse array of female characters in his plays, each embodying distinct archetypal patterns. This study seeks to unravel the complexities and nuances inherent in these archetypes, examining how Tendulkar's portrayal of women reflects and challenges societal norms. He deliberately tackled provocative subjects such as unmarried motherhood and the challenges faced by a lesbian individual. Tendulkar's works often delve into the complexities of gender dynamics within the societal framework. This research examines how he challenges and transforms traditional women archetypes, presenting a nuanced and diverse portrayal of female characters. The analysis encompasses Tendulkar's engagement with issues such as patriarchy, sexism, and societal expectations, shedding light on the evolving roles and identities of women in his dramatic narratives. The study employs a feminist lens to unravel the nuances of Tendulkar's treatment of women characters, emphasizing

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the impact of his plays on reshaping perceptions of femininity in Indian theatre.

Keywords: Women Archetypes, Gender Dynamics, Patriarchy, Feminist Perspective, Indian Theatre, Societal Expectations, Gender Roles, Female Identity

Introduction

Vijay Tendulkar, one of India's most influential playwrights, has been celebrated for his bold exploration of societal issues, particularly those related to gender dynamics. His plays often delve into the intricacies of human relationships and societal norms, offering a critical examination of the power structures that perpetuate gender inequality. Through his nuanced characterizations and compelling narratives, Tendulkar empowers his female characters, presenting them as complex individuals who navigate and often challenge the patriarchal constraints imposed upon them. The research employs a multidisciplinary approach, drawing on literary criticism, feminist theory, and cultural studies to illuminate the significance of Tendulkar's feminine archetypes. By exploring the interplay between character development and societal context, this paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role played by these archetypes in shaping narratives and challenging conventional gender roles. Ultimately, this research seeks to shed light on the rich tapestry of feminine archetypes in Tendulkar's plays, offering insights into the dynamic interrelationship between literature, culture, and the evolving status of women in society.

Vijay Tendulkar's plays delve into a spectrum of social issues, particularly centering around women. Whether exploring the solitary existence of a woman in "Silence! The Court is in Session," addressing identity crises in "Kamala," or scrutinizing complex man-woman relationships in "Sakharam Binder," Tendulkar weaves narratives that resonate with societal concerns. In works such as "Ghasiram Kotwal" and "Encounter in Umbugland," Tendulkar shifts his focus to the dynamics of power, politics, and corruption. The narrative arc of "Ghasiram Kotwal" not only

traces the ascent and descent of Ghasiram but also poignantly portrays the tragic conclusion of Gauri's innocence, youth, and life. Tendulkar's plays, thus, serve as a mirror reflecting diverse facets of social value, shedding light on the intricate tapestry of human experiences and societal challenges.

The plays attributed to Tendulkar delve into the intricate dynamics of gender victimization and exploitation deeply ingrained in the social fabric of Indian society. These dramas expose male chauvinists who embody aggressive or conservative forms of masculinity, shedding light on issues such as marital conflicts, domestic violence, ethical and moral dilemmas, power dynamics, and political complexities where gender victimization is explicitly evident. Tendulkar's works present a diverse spectrum of female characters, ranging from those with flawed to ideal qualities, and from traditional to assertive personas. Through his plays, he vividly illustrates the tragic plight of women ensnared in the feudal backwardness of society, unveiling the harsh realities of exploitation, injustice, and absurdity.

From ancient times, literature has been adorned with archetypes, fundamental patterns that resonate universally and evoke a subconscious recognition among readers. Within the plays of Vijay Tendulkar, women can be categorized into two distinct archetypal groups. The first group comprises characters like Leela, Sarita, Kamala, Laxmi, Rama, and Lalita Gauri, embodying passivity, submission, and docility. Contrarily, the second group, represented by women such as Vijaya, Champa, and Manik, exudes activity and challenges established patriarchal power structures.

Vijay Tendulkar, often hailed as "the angry young man of Marathi theatre," is a prolific yet controversial author. His theatrical themes predominantly revolve around the intricate relationship between individuals and society, challenging traditional patriarchal norms that reduce women to mere property. His plays reflect the influence of contemporary socio-political developments,

consistently portraying a dearth of wholesome relationships between men and women. Tendulkar's empathy for his female characters is evident, as he accuses the Indian man of objectifying women.

In *Silence! The Court is in Session*, Leela Benare takes center stage as a young, single, working woman ensnared in a deceptive game orchestrated by her fellow actors. The play unfolds as a mock trial, dissecting Leela's life and exposing her intimate details for public scrutiny. Her love affair at fifteen, leading to a suicide attempt, and her unwed pregnancy carrying Professor Damle's child are laid bare. Shockingly, the courtroom focuses on blaming Leela, ignoring the men responsible for her predicament. Even her maternal uncle and Professor Damle, both failing in their obligations, escape scrutiny. The courtroom becomes a platform for stigmatizing Leela as a fallen woman, accusing her of infanticide, and condemning her sexuality as sinful—a poignant portrayal echoing the societal biases that Tendulkar vehemently critiques. The inner turmoil and conflicting emotions experienced by a character in the play regarding their own body; I despise this body—and yet I love it! I hate it—but—it's all you have, in the end, isn't it?"

In Tendulkar's play *Kamala*, two female characters, the titular Kamala and Sarita, wife of the male lead Jaisingh Jadav, emerge as significant figures, representing distinct yet subtly interconnected facets of female subservience within patriarchal structures. Despite initial appearances of dissimilarity, their differences are nuanced, both ultimately bound by their subordinate roles to the family patriarch. Kamala, a rustic and illiterate woman, is introduced as a sex slave sold in a flesh market at Luhardaga. Jaisingh Jadav, the sub-editor of an English daily, acquires her with the strategic intent of leveraging her for his journalistic career. Kamala, viewing herself as Jaisingh Jadav's slave, embraces her role wholeheartedly, willing to toil for him and bear his children, adhering to the traditions of her native village. She perceives Sarita, Jaisingh Jadav's wife, as an inadequate investment, citing Sarita's inability to bear

children or contribute to the family's agricultural endeavours. However, Kamala's perspective prompts a transformation in Sarita's understanding of her own position. Sarita, who initially accepts her role as Jaisingh Jadav's wife, begins to question her status as she absorbs Kamala's perspective. Sarita realizes that, despite her public role as Jaisingh Jadav's wife, in the private sphere, she is reduced to a mere slave and bonded laborer. This realization marks a pivotal moment in Sarita's character arc as she vocalizes criticism against Jaisingh Jadav, challenging him for the first time in their married life. Jaisingh is describing a disturbing scenario where human beings, particularly women, are being sold at a market. The description involves an open auction where men inspect women by physically handling them, assessing various aspects of their bodies such as the breast, waist, and thighs.

they sell human beings at this bazaar...They have an open auction for women of all sorts of ages."Also includes" The men who want to bid handle the women to inspect them...How they feel in the breast, in their waist, in their thighs and..."

Sarita's dissent extends to her disagreement with Jaisingh Jadav's decision to place Kamala in a women's home. This shift in Sarita's outlook reflects her desire to confront and challenge the oppressive marital institution that confines and subjugates women. Yet, when faced with the adversity of Jaisingh Jadav losing his job, Sarita, true to the stereotypical image of an Indian wife, decides to stand by him and offer support. The juxtaposition of Kamala and Sarita in Tendulkar's *Kamala* serves as a poignant exploration of the complexities surrounding women's roles within a patriarchal framework. It illuminates the internal conflicts and realizations that emerge when women navigate societal expectations, challenging traditional norms while grappling with the intricate dynamics of power and subservience. Arundhati Banerjee comments:

Kamala, too, is a topical drama...It was inspired by a real-life incident - the Indian Express expose by Ashwin Sarin,

who actually bought a girl from a rural flesh market and presented her at a press conference. success-oriented generation which is ready to sacrifice human values even in the name of humanity itself. The innate self-deception of this standpoint is exposed dramatically by the playwright.

In *Sakharam Binder*, Vijay Tendulkar intricately molds two divergent female characters, Laxmi and Champa, each representing contrasting facets within the complex narrative. Laxmi, initially taken in by Sakharam from a dharamshala in Sonavane after being abandoned by her husband, conforms diligently to the guidelines set by Sakharam upon her arrival at his home. Despite enduring scoldings and beatings without protest, Laxmi eventually reaches a threshold, deciding to depart after enduring a year of physical abuse.

The patriarchal structure of society has perpetuated various forms of sexist practices, acting as degrading and debilitating forces that women have grappled with since time immemorial. Many female characters in Tendulkar's works find themselves rendered powerless in the face of such sexist oppression, compelled to endure its pains and sufferings without effective resistance. This incapacity to confront oppressive conditions can be attributed to their limited awareness and impoverished material circumstances. These individuals often lack the ability to think critically, a consequence of their limited education, leaving them with no option but resignation.

Living in a state of resignation, they neither contemplate nor take action to alter their circumstances, resulting in a lack of significant growth in their characters. The absence of hope and self-confidence transforms them into silent sufferers who accept the cruelties inflicted upon them. Their low sensitivity and constrained perspectives further contribute to their plight, forming a cycle of oppression that persists due to the perpetuation of patriarchal norms.

Champa, introduced as Laxmi's replacement, stands in stark contrast to her predecessor. Defying Sakharam's rules and openly disobeying his orders, Champa indulges in alcohol consumption and uses profanity. The narrative takes an unexpected turn when, after a two-month absence, Laxmi returns to find Champa cohabiting with Sakharam. Surprisingly, Champa, known for her rebellious nature, displays unusual hospitality towards Laxmi, convincing Sakharam to provide her with accommodation—an act contradictory to her typical behaviour.

Ironically, as the play unfolds, it is Laxmi who betrays Champa, ultimately leading to Champa's demise. Tendulkar artfully intertwines these archetypal characters to underscore the dualistic nature of good and evil inherent within individuals. In this narrative, Tendulkar skilfully combines archetypes to accentuate the contrasting strands of morality that coexist within the same person. The intricate interplay between Laxmi and Champa serves as a poignant exploration of the complexities within human nature, illustrating how individuals can embody both virtuous and malevolent tendencies, often influenced by the circumstances in which they find themselves. Arundhati Banerjee observes:

..... why there was such a reaction against Sakharam Binder was it's burning naturalism. Here was a raw chunk of life with all its ugliness and credit which was more than a shock to refined and prudish middle-class audiences. Such a direct confrontation with vulgar reality was difficult for them to bear.

In the case of *Sakharam Binder*, the play presents a stark and unapologetic depiction of life's harsh realities, exposing its ugliness and complexities without sugarcoating or toning down certain aspects. The narrative doesn't shy away from exploring the darker sides of human nature, relationships, and societal norms. This direct confrontation with vulgar reality, including issues like sexuality, power dynamics, and unconventional relationships, might have been unsettling for a refined and prudish middle-class audience.

The profound exploration of the darkest facets of human nature takes center stage in the dramatic narrative of *Vultures*, with Rama and Manik serving as the focal female characters. Rama epitomizes the traditional Indian daughter-in-law, despite being married into a family with a criminal background. Devotedly fulfilling her responsibilities, she embodies innocence and vulnerability, as depicted through the songs of Rajninath. Rama meticulously tends to the needs of her family, remaining inconspicuous and uncomplaining. Concerned about Rajninath's well-being, she discovers a profound connection with him, evolving into her soul mate.

Rama grapples with the challenges of childlessness, navigating visits to mystics, swamis, astrologers, and doctors in a desperate quest for a solution. Despite being aware of the impediment within her body preventing pregnancy, she endures the societal pressure and disdain associated with her inability to conceive. In times of financial adversity, when her husband faces destitution, Rama dutifully follows him, demonstrating unwavering commitment. In stark contrast, Manik, Rama's sister-in-law, emerges as a character characterized by avarice, indulgence, cunning, and promiscuity. Engaging in casual intercourse, reveling in drinking, and employing coarse language, Manik stands in sharp contradistinction to the traditional virtues embodied by Rama.

The interplay between these two female characters in *Vultures* serves as a compelling study of human complexity, delving into the intricate nuances of morality, resilience, and the divergent paths individuals take in the face of adversity. The juxtaposition of Rama's traditional values with Manik's unconventional and hedonistic lifestyle underscores the play's exploration of the darker aspects inherent in the human psyche. According to Arundhati Banerjee:

After the first production of this play, Girish Karnad wrote that the staging of *Gidhade* could be compared to the blasting of a bomb in an otherwise complacent marketplace. It was with the production and publication of

Maharashtrian society were stunned by the open display of illicit sexual relations and scenes of violence that constituted the plot.

While not the central figure in *Ghasiram Kotwal*, Lalita Gauri assumes a pivotal role as the linchpin of the play. Her character embodies a disempowered young woman, bereft of agency, caught in the conflicting influences of her father, Ghasiram, and the lecherous Nana Phadnavis. Ghasiram, driven by his ambitions, callously exploits his own daughter to advance his political standing. In a chilling transaction, Ghasiram bargains away Lalita Gauri to the lascivious and aging Nana Phadnavis, facilitating his appointment as the kotwal of Poona. Nana Phadnavis, a shrewd politician, not only indulges in the physical allure of the young girl but also strategically employs her father as a tool to instill fear and control over the people of Poona.

Lalita Gauri, ensnared in a web of power dynamics and male dominance, emerges as the archetypal powerless woman sacrificed in this political chess game. Her narrative reflects the harsh reality of a society where women become collateral damage in the pursuit of power and dominance. The tragic trajectory of Lalita Gauri's character underscores the pervasive theme of exploitation and vulnerability within a male-dominated space. Arundhati Banerjee writes:

The central character in *Encounter in Umbugland* is Princess Vijaya, and through her journey, Tendulkar delves into the boundless potential of a woman when liberated from the constraints of patriarchy. Orphaned and at the mercy of cunning ministers vying for power, Vijaya becomes a poignant symbol of a woman seeking autonomy beyond the societal limitations imposed on her. Initially confined to the royal palace throughout her childhood, Vijaya yearns for independence. Following her father's demise, the ministers, unable to agree on the next ruler, position Vijaya as a compromise candidate. Their plan is to utilize her as a mere figurehead, a tool for their political

maneuvers, with the intention of discarding her once she serves their purpose. However, Vijaya, more interested in childhood pursuits like playing hopscotch than political machinations, emerges as an unexpected force.

From an impulsive and politically inexperienced young princess, Vijaya undergoes a remarkable transformation into a savvy queen who takes charge and engages at the grassroots level. Despite facing resistance from the cabinet, who initially dismiss her abilities, Vijaya is determined to contribute to the advancement of the Kadamba tribe. To achieve her goals, she must navigate the political intricacies and gain the reluctant approval of the cabinet. Remarkably, Vijaya manages to reverse the power dynamics in her favour.

The play vividly captures the evolution of Vijaya, showcasing her maturation from a whimsical and politically naive young girl to a shrewd dictator. *Encounter in Umbugland* serves as a powerful narrative that underscores the untapped potential of women when emancipated from societal expectations, illustrating their capacity to navigate complex political landscapes and effect meaningful change. Tendulkar's plays vividly depict a diverse array of women characterized by conflicting traits, navigating the challenges within a patriarchal society. Defying easy categorization, these women grapple with various issues such as subjugation, marital complexities, identity loss, domestic violence, premarital pregnancy, and extramarital relationships. Tendulkar's exploration extends to different archetypes of women, encompassing the educated traditional, old-world, materialistic, and educated modern woman.

Conclusion

In the analysis of Tendulkar's plays, a recurrent theme emerges: the examination of women's status, rank, and struggles. The predicaments faced by the female protagonists are rooted in the societal structure and the conservative norms perpetuated by a patriarchal system. While these issues can be perceived as

universal, they particularly resonate within the lower-middle-class milieu in India. In this context, women often find themselves relegated to the role of mere scapegoats within the patriarchal setup, serving as catalysts for men to achieve their objectives. The archetypal good women in Vijay Tendulkar's plays end up conforming to the patriarchal mores while those who overstep the societal boundaries are branded as bad women. Tendulkar's plays offer a powerful commentary on the resilience and agency of women, challenging traditional representations and encouraging audiences to critically examine the societal constructs that perpetuate gender inequality.

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Reevaluating the Subaltern: The Cosmopolitan Overlay in *The White Tiger's* Subaltern Narrative

***Prashant Kaushik**

Abstract

The novel *White Tiger* is widely regarded as a voice for the underprivileged. Many Critics have identified its narrator, Balram Halwai, as a quintessential representative of the subaltern. While this perspective may hold truth to a certain degree, it further needs scrutiny. This paper argues that the novel, even while apparently articulating the voice of the subaltern, in effect reflects the perspectives of the cosmopolitan elite and transposes it on the so-called subaltern voice of the narrator Balram. Issues of class conflicts are taken up, but the ethical support base for their resolution may be weakened. The novel reinforces the negative stereotypes that the elite may hold up against the poor. It subtly suggests that the elite may endanger their physical safety if they do abandon their negative perceptions of the downtrodden.

Keywords: subaltern, class conflict, downtrodden, cosmopolitan

A popular perception regarding the novel is that it offers a voice to the underprivileged and their account of social reality.

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Several critics have considered the narrator Balram as the voice of the subaltern. This perception may be true but only partially and it needs reevaluation. This work contends that the novel is not necessarily the voice of the subaltern, rather, on several occasions it is the voice of the cosmopolitan elite that has been projected on its subaltern character. The reasons for this anomaly are explained here.

It is true that the novel captures some fascinating revelations about class conflict and the moral deprivations of the rich. It does show the prevailing economic corruption in society and the rigidities of class barriers. However, there are several occasions where the novel seems to drift towards the voice and worldview of the elite. Also, the protagonist falls short of being a hero of the class whom he is claimed to represent.

Firstly, the novel shows many negative stereotypes that the rich may create about the poor. Instead of debunking or diluting them, Balram, the protagonist ends up proving them true. The story of Balram doesn't suggest that the rich should shun their fears and stereotypes about the poor nor does it hint that the rich should be more compassionate about them rather the story imparts a lesson that the rich may end up endangering their own lives in case they deviate from their negative perception about the downtrodden. For example, Mukesh warns his brother Ashok about the need to be strict and have greater monitoring of the servants since they have the tendency to corrupt. Yet Ashok pays no heed to such advice and his laxity towards the driver creates conditions congenial for his own murder. Likewise, Ashok's girlfriend Uma rejects Ashok's blind faith in his driver. The fears she held for the driver are ultimately proven true by the driver himself. This point shall be discussed in detail later.

Secondly, Balram hates being a member of that subaltern group of whom he is being claimed to be the voice. It is true that Balram originates from the subaltern. He was born in the communities which have faced oppression for generations.

However, he seeks to be enfreed from emotional and social linkages with those communities. Also, it is to be noticed that there is rarely a person in his group about whom he may have a positive perception.

Thirdly, Balram's rise is shown occurring not only against the dominant master class but also against his own fellow men who had suffered from similar injustices.

He competes against fellow servants, and once he knows their weaknesses, he blackmails them so that he can coerce them to seek their submission before him. He enthralled in a vulgar display of superiority against fellow migrants travelling in the acute discomforts of public transport. He detests his own groups and rarely forms any positive perception about any of them.

Fourthly, a related point here is that he seeks no group mobility. He seeks an escape from a life of deprivation but only for himself. He stops sending part of his income to his home. After the murder and loot, he absconds to Bangalore and later sets up a profitable taxi business but leaves his family behind and does not even bother to inform them. He knows that they would be raped and murdered by Ashok's family members in revenge and he has no concern for their life and physical safety. Balram's story is the story of an ultra-individualistic man whose moral conscience has been conquered by his obsession with breaking class barriers.

Fifthly, there are some discrepancies in the narration. The narrator hails from the hinterlands, but his language, diction and choice of words often reflect an urban or cosmopolitan sophistication. There are inconsistencies in his character. On one hand, the narrator has such profound intellect that he can deliberate on global and national issues of politics, social structures and power dynamics. He has gained immense practical wisdom with the help of which he easily carves his path amongst the existing social chaos. On the other hand, he is naïve and stupid to believe in myths such as sex with a virgin woman can be a

cure for AIDS. At times he is stupid to sound sensational and at times he is sophisticated to sound intellectual.

Thus, it would be incorrect to hail the novel by calling it as the voice of subaltern and the voice of the underprivileged. The reckless criticism of the state, society and the nation doesn't seem to be purely a suppressed voice of an underprivileged but often of an elite who is romantically fervent about writing a counter-narrative about a developing nation.

The White Tiger is no hero. Not only because the act of murdering his master is illegal and morally questionable but also because he chose to kill that master amongst all the masters who was the weakest and most vulnerable. Unlike the other members of the landlord family, Ashok is compassionate, morally upright and emotionally vulnerable. In various instances, all other masters except Ashok are shown worthy of hatred. These include Ashok's brother Mukesh (called as Mongoose) and Ashok's father (called as Stork). Mongoose and Stork are torturous and shown as seasoned landlords who have perfected the art of oppressing their servants. The narrator even refers to Ashok as a lamb that was born from the loins of a landlord which reflects his unexpected gentle behaviour. Ashok is far more benign and gentler in his conduct and is free from many negative features attributed to the master class. Yet, the narrator chose to kill Ashok not necessarily because he hated Ashok or considered Ashok as evil but because he could not afford to kill anyone else.

Ashok continues to foster faith in his driver despite the precautionary advice and opinions offered to him by his wife, girlfriend and brother. For example, Ashok's trust in the driver is revealed in the incident where the driver overhears a conversation between him and his girlfriend Uma. Ashok offers his girlfriend Uma to leave with the driver Balram which the woman declines as she prefers opting for a random taxi. She stereotypes Balram as an unreliable driver coming from villages who see unmarried girls as whores and who may typecast a girl with Nepali features

like her as a prostitute. Ashok rejects this and continues to display his faith in the driver much against the advice of Uma. He insists that the driver is a part of the family.

“Oh, no. I’m not going back with your driver. I know his kind, the village kind. They think that any unmarried woman they see is a whore. And he probably thinks I’m a Nepali, because of my eyes. You know what that means for him. I’ll go back on my own.”

“This fellow is all right. He’s part of the family.”

“You shouldn’t be so trusting, Ashok. Delhi drivers are all rotten. They sell drugs, and prostitutes, and God knows what else.”

“Not this one. He’s stupid as hell, but he is honest. He’ll drive you back.” (Adiga 210)

It should be noticed that Ashok’s faith in the driver was edging towards blindness. Earlier, the driver had indeed assumed Uma to be a prostitute because of her appearance. Uma is not completely wrong concerning her stereotypical image of the Delhi drivers if we take in consideration the words of one of the other drivers that the narrator has repeatedly mentioned in the novel. One of the drivers with discoloured lips (called as vitiligo-lips) often offers Balram to sell to his Master - drugs, prostitutes and smuggled goods. This driver fits perfectly into the image mentioned by Uma.

On earlier occasions, there have been instances where even Ashok’s wife Pinky has got annoyed with Ashok’s overriding endorsement of Balram in contradiction to Pinky’s perception of Balram.

Ashok confides in his servant Balram that he could never live a fulfilled life and that people exploited him. Sometimes he wants to seek solace in the vicinity of Balram by requesting him to take him to dinner to the place where poor people go. Ashok yearns for the emotional bonding in the family that exists in the case of Balram and Balram is consciously aware of this. When Ashok’s

wife abandons him and he starts becoming alcoholic, Balram takes care of him like a wife.

Yet, Balram goes ahead to murder his master Ashok by focussing on some specific instances of his behaviour where he had not been so generous towards him.

Thus, it would be wrong to call the novel as the voice of an underprivileged hero. Though the narrator was born in economically, socially and geographically backward communities, yet he disassociates with them emotionally and behaviourally and often speaks the language and thoughts of elites. His obsessive greed for wealth and consequent moral fall reduces his claims of being a hero. His acts of deceit and treachery will only foster the negative stereotypes existing against the underprivileged amongst the urban elites.

Thus, it can be said that the novel *White Tiger* though confronts the issues of class conflicts in society, yet it is not purely a subaltern voice that could be seen resonating in the entire novel. The world view of the elite is mapped on the alleged subaltern protagonist. The plot ends up reinforcing the stereotypes that it should had rather strived to subvert. The novel seeks closeness with subalternity but only as a temporary tool to position itself for launching an attack on the claims of the Indian nation regarding governance and society. Elsewhere, the novel loses alignment with subaltern ideals and erodes the support that they could have been provided.

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The Interconnectedness and Educational Implications of English Language Teaching and AI Technology: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

The intent of this paper is to offer a comprehensive analysis of the systematic literature review on the interconnectedness and educational implications of the technologies of artificial intelligence and teaching and learning processes of the English language. Outlining of the current status of this field's research and learning, the accessing of the interconnectedness and educational implications of AI and ELT were the main objectives of this systematic literature review paper. The researcher examined

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papers that were released in 2022, 2023, and 2024. To guide the review, the researcher performed six actions. Among 19 scrutinized articles, the researcher retained 13 articles. The contribution of previously conducted researches on AI and ELT has not examined the precise areas of AI being addressed or the direction that the literature is taking. Without a complete view, some important study findings can be overlooked. Understanding the current state of the subject will be made easier by gaining insight into the design and implementation of AI and ELT studies. The findings of this systematic literature review studies focus on a promising future for the interconnectedness and educational implications of AI and ELT. It is believed that this systematic literature review will give practitioners a broad overview of the technology that is now in use, the study methodology, the instruments, the level of education, proficiency of an English language, and the outcomes that the ELT and AI-based studies have documented. This will aid practitioners create efficient AI-based solutions for their ELT courses. Regarding their relationship and implications for education, the results indicate that artificial intelligence (AI) and English language teaching (ELT) have bright futures (Morovat, 2020).

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, teaching, e-learning, English language teaching (ELT), the English language, Artificial intelligence technologies

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence's introduction into classroom instruction of English has generated a great deal of enthusiasm as well as fear, which highlights the urgent need to think through its consequences, particularly for English language teaching (ELT). Considering this, the reason for conducting this work was to find out how teachers of the language of English felt about the pedagogical and methodological advantages and difficulties of using AI technology in implementing ELT, as well as to find possible applications for these technological advancements (Khresheh, Al- 2024).

The language services industry needs more qualified translators. To teach licensed translators, new approaches to translation education are needed. Combining crowdsourcing with translation instruction allows for the implementation of the unusual teaching translation method. The method has continuing importance due to the improvement and progress of AI-based machine translation, science and technology, and creative translation learning is crucial for translators' professional training. This crowdsourcing-based educational translation technique can help the language services industry produce top-tier talent and create a new type of staff training (Zhang & Huang, 2022).

An artificial intelligence-powered English language learning system featuring an authentic and everywhere common type of learning for the acquisition of words and phrases in English as a second language (L2) was developed in response to the needs of English language learners during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the rapid development and application of artificial intelligence (AI) techniques in education. With an emphasis on the mobile learning concept, this study provides insights into the process of integrating AI technology to enhance English language teaching (ELT) and learning (Jia et al., 2022).

The backward and one common type of educational policy has drawn a lot of criticism recently for its incapacity to customize instruction to meet the needs of individual students. Curriculums that are more individualized and student-centered are becoming the norm in global education systems. Thanks to advancements like big data, machine technology learning, artificial intelligence (AI), and contemporary technology can now accommodate the distinctive qualities of humans. Computers and smart technology are made to understand the needs of the individual user. This opens the door for "personalization" in the educational setting. It's a given that a big data analysis and the technology of artificial intelligence (AI) will propel the next wave of educational innovations forward dramatically. The growth of educational technology start-ups and

governmental funding systems for AI technology research serve as an example of this. The core purpose of this investigation was to summarize the large body of the study on the use of the technology of AI to personalized learning and to draw attention to the key concepts that underpin the structural modifications that the technology of an AI-based method makes to the existing framework for teaching English as a foreign language (Bhutoria, 2022).

Since its introduction to the area of education about thirty years back, the technology of artificial intelligence (AI) has shown to be the potent instrument for enabling novel approaches to creative teaching methods and instructional design concepts. Adaptive learning systems, devious tutoring programs, chatbots that educate, and teaching robots are a few instances of this. The number of applications for knowledgeable virtual agents or animated teaching assistants has increased in the field of sophisticated computer-aided learning of languages due to recent technological advancements in related fields such as computer graphics, machine learning, and natural language processing. The main focus of these fields is on design elements that could enhance the genuineness and believability of human-like interlocutors. Surprisingly, researches have been conducted to empirically evaluate the matters of AI-powered technologies on L2 learners' academic achievement when learning English as a 3rd language and teaching of an English language, despite the fact that these machines can improve learning in almost any subject area and personalize automation in the classroom by assuming different roles in the learning environment. (Katsarou et al., 2023).

2. Objective

Conduct a thorough assessment of the literature about the connections between the educational effects of AI technology and English language teaching (ELT).

3. Research Question

How does AI technology relate to English language teaching (ELT) and what are the consequences for education?

4. Systematic Literature Review

Artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality, augmented reality, and other recent developments in modern information and communication technologies have had a significant impact on English language teaching (ELT), as they have on almost every other element of human existence. In spite of the fact that artificial intelligence (AI) has been started and worked for 30 years, educators are still dubious about the best ways to employ AI in the classroom and whether it can actually improve students' English proficiency. This article focuses on how to supply the general highlight of systematic literature review in the using of AI in teaching of English as a 3rd language and teaching of an English language through systematic literature review. This study examines a broad range of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and approaches, with an emphasis on applying AI to the subject of teaching English to foreigners (EFL). The paper goes on to discuss how instructors and students see the usage of AI applications, the potential effects of AI on children's language skill development, and the challenges and issues associated with using AI applications. As the discussion comes to an end, research gaps are noted (Alshumaimeri & Alshememry, 2024).

English language teaching (ELT) instructors and teachers in lower and upper grades now have additional chances to enhance their lectures; thanks to artificial intelligence (AI). Based on this fact, the study examined EFL teachers' perspectives, knowledge, and behavioral intention to utilize AI to help English language teaching and learning in middle schools in response to the growing trend of integrating AI into education. As applicable or pertinent theoretical foundations, the study also included the hybrid notion of technical, pedagogical, and content knowledge as well as adoption and use of AI technology (An et al., 2023).

Despite its popularity in education, not much research has been done on how mobile based English language learning, might be modified and improved for speaking examinations. The internationally recognized and a common type of testing: an international English language testing system is one of a new class of mobile applications designed to improve test taker performance on speaking tests with significant consequences. This exam-focused smartphone application uses artificial intelligence (AI) technology to provide users with automated feedback and personalized learning opportunities to enhance their speaking skills (Li and Chan, 2024).

This article's goal was to investigate the relationship between English Language Teaching (ELT), its educational ramifications, and the potential of AI technologies for automating web searches and evaluating professional-based texts that are required to teach learners in English language teaching and learning departments of higher educational organizations. This will be accomplished by analyzing AI technologies and determining problematic text patterns. The study assessed a number of related studies and provides a summary of essential an AI technologies that may be required to previously specified tasks. It describes techniques for assessing the texts that are located and offers a framework of patterns for finding relevant research papers. It also proposes an AI application's front-end architecture that might be utilized for text assessment afterwards. The case study provides a professional assessment of a text used in English language instruction. The results of the study show that there are a lot of prospective applications of AI technologies for web search and text evaluation that can be found online, not just for student training, but also, more generally, for teaching and learning English in a focused manner. Semantic pattern search and identification approaches' versatility makes this conceivable (Murzo et al., 2022).

Researchers incorporate the use of artificial intelligence with virtual reality technology to generate tour, content and a 3D VR

environment by employing AI Unity plug-in for programming. Additionally, they create an application system that trains tour guides in English using robots. Students become skilled at directing the robot to various areas and conversing with it. According to the study's findings, RALL has potential and provides students with an alternative teaching approach (Chen et al., 2022).

The study recommends looking at the methods used in computer-based English language training for learners of the second or foreign languages. It looks at several methods of learning languages and contrasts them with different theoretical underpinnings. It examines apps for online English instruction, with a focus on those that offer personalized learning environments and learner-centered autonomy. Further investigation is required for software packages that use artificial intelligence (AI) and blended learning technologies to promote learner-centered autonomy in customized learning environments. It is recommended that an application be created in the future with an emphasis on the aforementioned that uses algorithms for dialogue management, text-to-speech, natural language, comprehension or understanding, and automatic speeches are designed to imitate teaching and learning techniques for the English language. This could result in advancements in the creation of software programs that incorporate various approaches, modalities of instruction, and learning processes (Valledor et al., 2023).

Speaking English well is both necessary and much more required for learners in order to convey their messages as they want in English classrooms or even outside. However, a lot of learners have found it tough to speak the English language clearly and effectively because of the limited vocabularies they have and limited English-speaking environments in which they were raised. As a result, they lack English language proficiency and communication willingness. Very little study has looked at the use of an AI voice chat bot to help learners become more fluent in the language, despite the fact that artificial intelligence (AI)

technologies are suggested as useful tools in English language teaching (ELT) and learning because of their flexibility, interactivity, and learner-centeredness, which improve students' oral communication (Duong, 2024).

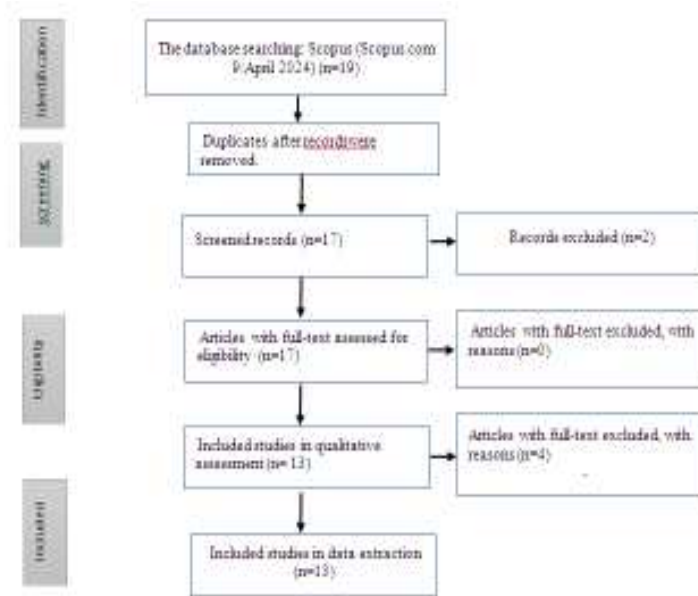
5. Methodology

Systematic literature review using PRISMA method (Liberati et al., 2009). Extraction of data: in the data extraction stage, 19 papers were retrieved and limited to the following requirements.

1. Articles must be either original, review papers or published reports.
2. The reviewed article must be in English and from the fields of social sciences, arts and humanities.
3. Systematically reviewed articles were published between the range of 2022-2024
4. The extracted paper was from all countries.
5. The database used to extract the articles was "Scopus database".
6. Keywords used to extract the articles are teaching, e-learning, ELT, the English language, artificial intelligence technologies.

6. Data Collection Tools

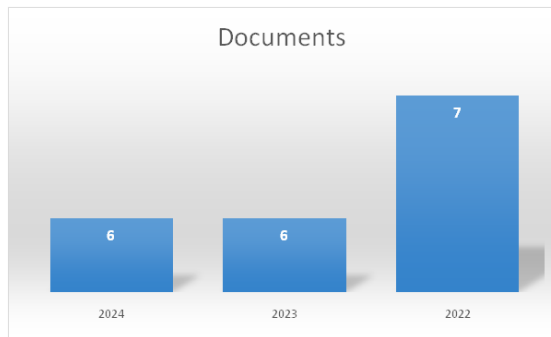
The researchers took the data for this study in textual form; in other words, they used the secondary data. On 9 April 2024, data from the scopus academic search engine (<https://www.scopus.com>) were obtained. Additionally, 'Advance' search terms were used through various sources.



Source: (Liberati et al., 2009)

Figure 1: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) Diagram

7. Analysis

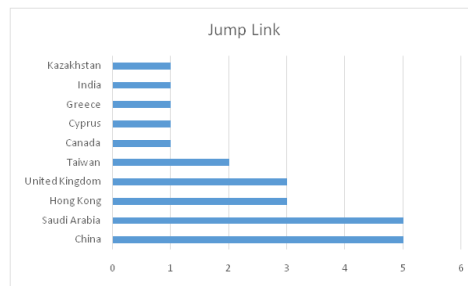


Source: <http://www.scopus.com>

Figure 2: Documents by Year

The graph above presents a distribution of documents over the years from 2022 to 2024. As data vividly displays in the histogram graph above, researchers conducted 19 papers during these 3 years. In the years of 2022, 2023 and 2024, researchers conducted 7, 6 and 6 papers respectively. Within these 3 years, the number of published papers were varied even if the year 2024 is not ended. The beginning year (2022) witnessed a substantial increase with 7 documents published. However, there was a slight decrease in 2023 and 2024 with 6 documents each. In the current year, 2024, even if it is now 3 months since we joined, there are already 6 documents published. This histogram offers a visual representation of the annual publication trends, highlighting fluctuations and patterns in the number of documents.

Document by Country/ Territory



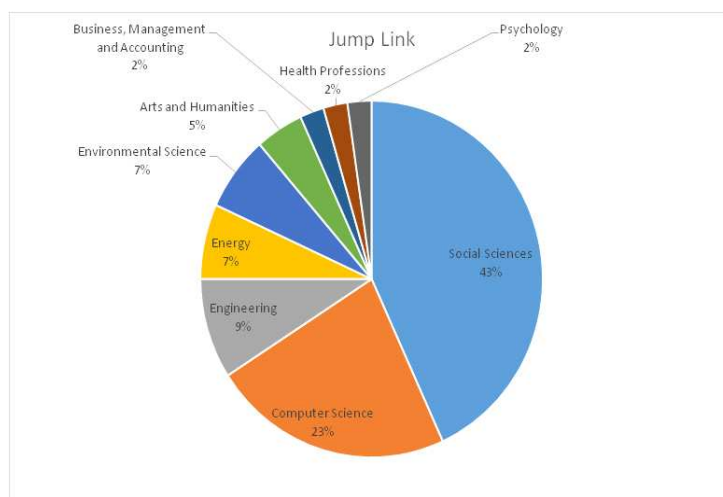
Source: <http://www.scopus.com>

Figure 3: Document by Country/ Territory

The figure shows the distribution of documents across different countries or territories. China and Saudi Arabia, lead with five documents each, suggesting a notable presence or focus on these nations in the dataset. Hong Kong and the United Kingdom follow closely with three documents each, indicating a relatively consistent representation. Taiwan holds two documents. Canada, Cyprus, Greece, India and Kazakhstan each contribute the one document, showcasing a diverse range of countries with singular occurrences. This distribution suggests variations in the level of attention or

emphasis on different regions within the dataset. The graph gives a brief summary of the distribution of documents among different nations and shed light on the geographic concentration of the related content.

Document Analysis by Subject Area



Source: <http://www.scopus.com>

Figure 4: Document Analysis by Subject Area

The figure provides a breakdown of documents across different subject areas, offering insights into the distribution of content within the dataset. Social Sciences dominate with the highest representation, comprising 43% of documents, indicating a significant focus on topics within this field. Computer Science follows with 23% of documents, highlighting a substantial but comparatively lesser emphasis. Engineering, Energy, Environmental Science, (Arts and Humanities), (Business, Management and Accounting), Health Professions and Psychology contribute 9%, 7%, 7%, 5%, 2%, 2% and 2% of documents, respectively, suggesting a more modest presence in the dataset. This distribution provides a clear overview of the subject areas covered, with a

9. Findings

The results of this study reveal an exciting and a brief future for the interconnectedness and educational implications of AI and ELT. When it came to improve English language instruction, translation, evaluation, recognition, attitude, satisfaction, etc., ELT with AI produced positive outcomes. The publications under evaluation have identified a wide range of artificial intelligence (AI) approaches, such as deep learning, the processing of natural languages, computing via the cloud, frontier computing, genetic programming, trees for decision making, algorithmic learning, neural networks, and support vector machines. The research on the relationship and educational consequences of AI and ELT is still in its early phases, and there are still gaps in the literature. Still, it requires further research to be conducted in the area. The inherent issues with body language, gestures, justifications, emotions, translations, and the lack of comprehensive descriptions of the educational resources used for AI based learning and teaching. The ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding the boundaries of AI, and the fact that most of the authors are not from the ELT field make these gaps especially concerning (Morovat, 2020).

10. Recommendations

In addition to giving a thorough explanation method, design of the study and suggested methods to conduct a research are required to implement AI and ELT in the educational sector. Researchers should also investigate the relationship and educational implications of AI and ELT. It is also advised that investigators examine the effectiveness that AI-based systems have demonstrated in previous investigations to ascertain its accessibility and significance. If these AI-based technologies are to reach their full potential, they also need an offer on a comprehensive examination of the difficulties related to the systems that have been discussed in the literature review. The findings help to visualize the study's conclusions in terms of their impact on society. This is very beneficial for academicians, instructors, and AI specialists to

investigate the use of AI and teaching and training of the English language. Therefore, it is possible to recommend that future studies on AI and ELT should provide more thorough explanations of the techniques (Morovat, 2020).

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Literature and Ecocriticism: Towards Understanding the Relevance of Interdisciplinary Studies

*Reena Sanasam

Abstract

The boundaries of disciplines are no longer static and strictly compartmentalized. It is now fluid and overlapping (Repko, 2008). In order to fully give justice to the understanding and knowledge of a discipline, one needs to expand his/her areas of studies beyond what was earlier thought to be different disciplines. The humanities and the social sciences now share a wider range of methods, and the humanities are increasingly likely to be engaged in reflection on contemporary life and social and political concerns that were considered the province of the social sciences twenty five years ago. (White, 1997). Say—feminism is an area of studies that touch upon many disciplines, namely: history, political science, literature, biology, anthropology, culture etc. In my paper, an attempt will be made to understand the ecological concerns in the works of literature, to further understand the relevance of this topic. In my paper, I will take up three authors, namely—Amitav Ghosh, Amrit Lal Vegad and Arundhati Roy. In their works eco-consciousness is manifested vividly. Such consciousness could be used as one of the fine examples of the interdisciplinary approach to ecological

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studies and literature. I will discuss Amrit Lal Vegad's "Narmada: River of Beauty", Arundhati Roy's "Algebra of Infinite Justice" along with God of Small Things, and Amitav Ghosh's "The Hungry Tide"

Keywords: ecological concerns, Eco criticism, Interdisciplinary, fluid, eco-consciousness, overlapping.

The boundaries of disciplines are no longer static and strictly compartmentalized. It is now fluid and overlapping (Repko, 2008). In order to fully give justice to the understanding and knowledge of a discipline, one needs to expand his/her areas of studies beyond what was earlier thought to be different disciplines. The humanities and the social sciences now share a wider range of methods, and the humanities are increasingly likely to be engaged in reflection on contemporary life and social and political concerns that were considered the province of the social sciences twenty five years ago. (White, 1997). Say— feminism is an area of studies that touch upon many disciplines, namely: history, political science, literature, biology, anthropology, culture etc.

As Repko writes, interdisciplinary research got a major boost in the first decade of 21st century, which led to the growth of body of literature on the subject. The concepts, descriptions, and practices associated with IDR have linkages with scholarship in interdisciplinary pedagogy, involving a number of different disciplines such as psychology, history, the arts, and the sciences (Repko, 2008)

The establishment of social science council in 1920s paved the way for integration of disciplines that were being isolated by specializations—the contribution of scholars at the university of Chicago, namely—Dewey, Mead, Veblen, Angell, Boas and Merriam cannot be undermined as they objected to the craft exclusiveness of specialization which ultimately cultivated in the unifying force in the 1930s and 1940s. The post war scenario proved vital as it demanded for a scope where participation of more disciplines were required. Despite all this, there has been

an exponential growth of publications on interdisciplinarity since 1970s. There has been an exponential growth of publications on interdisciplinarity. Besides there emerged a wide variety of interdisciplinarity network which helped in widening the concept of it.

Interdisciplinarity can be traced to the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, Rabelias, Kant, Hegel and other historical figures even though it is entirely a twentieth century phenomenon. During sixteenth and nineteenth century many writers, namely—Francis Bacon, Descartes, the French encyclopedists, Kant, Hegel and Comte—expressed concerns about fragmentations of knowledge. In 1935 in the United States there was a debate regarding the concept of integration. National education association opined that the complete unity was impossible. They proposed the *unifying* rather than *unified* experience. In spite of all this, interdisciplinarity remained vague with inconsistent distributions between social science literature and education. This continued till the 1960s. Generalisations about the nature of interdisciplinarity emerged quite prematurely and so there is a general disinclination to place individual activities within a larger conceptual framework or a wider body of knowledge. Any attempt to define the concept of interdisciplinarity is faced with such problems as general uncertainty over definition, lack of professional identity and dispersion of discourse.

Interdisciplinarity has been variously defined in this century: as a methodology, a concept, a process, a way of thinking, a philosophy, and a reflexive ideology. It has been linked with attempts to expose the dangers of fragmentation, to re-establish old connections, to explore emerging relationships, and to create new subjects adequate to handle our practical and conceptual needs. Cutting across all these theories is one recurring idea. Interdisciplinarity is a means of solving problems and answering questions that cannot be satisfactorily addressed using single methods or approaches. Whether the context is a short-range instrumentality or a long-range reconceptualization of epistemology,

the concept represents an important attempt to define and establish common ground. (Thomson Klien, 1990)

Thomson Klien (1990) reiterated, interdisciplinary curricula emerged in the United States during world war I and II eras and there was still no consensus on theory, methodology, or pedagogy. Interdisciplinarity approach is often praised with no clear indication of what it is. Interdisciplinary have been, sometimes, dubbed as dilettantes.

In my paper, I will take up three authors, namely—Amitav Ghosh, Amrit Lal Vegad and Arundhati Roy. In their works eco-consciousness is manifested vividly. Such consciousness could be used as one of the fine examples of the interdisciplinary approach to ecological studies and literature. I will discuss Amrit Lal Vegad's "Narmada: River of Beauty", Arundhati Roy's "Algebra of Infinite Justice" along with God of Small Things, and Amitav Ghosh's "The Hungry Tide"

Amitav Ghosh has also alluded to the description of nature and its ecology in his novel "The Hungry Tide". He writes about Piya's love of dolphins as a cetologist:

Piya knew exactly what the dolphins were doing: they had herded a school of fish into shallow water and the hunted creatures had buried themselves in the mud, in a futile effort to evade their pursuers. Now much like a rabbit uprooting a harvest of carrots, the dolphins were picking the fish from the riverbed.

Piya had witnessed a variation on this very scene once, on the Irrawaddy River. In the course of a survey, she had made time to visit two fishermen who lived in a small village north of Mandalay. (Ghosh, 2005)

In *Hungry Tide*, you will find vivid description of the Sunderbans, the dolphins and the issues of wildlife protection related to the tigers in the Sunderbans. Piya was in search of a rare, endangered river dolphin, orcaella and here you can understand a lot of information being given about the characteristics and types of this kind of dolphins.

Orcaella were of two kinds: one tribe liked the salt waters of the coast while the other preferred rivers and fresh water.... the waters of southern Asia and northern Australia were reliably believed to contain several thousand of them... Fresh water orcaella on the other hand were a rare and dwindling breed. Only a few hundred now remained in Asia's rivers. Coastal orcaellas were not known to linger for hours in one place and were more likely to range freely along the shore. Their fresh water cousins on the other hand, were more territorial and not nearly so gregarious. In times of heavy rainfall, when the rivers rose, they would range far afield, chasing their prey into minor tributaries and even into flooded rice fields.... in Cambodia Piya had tracked population of orcaella in several pools along the Mekong, from Phnom Penh to the Laos border. (Ghosh, 2005)

The description of the ecological nature of the tide country is given in length and this shows the very nature of literature's concerns with environment. Piya remembered a study which had shown that there were more species of fish in the Sunderbans than could be found in the whole continent of Europe. (Ghosh, 2005)

Again the problems and issues of the tide country is reiterated with vivid descriptions of the way the tide country people suffer from ecological related problems.

The destitution of the tide country was such as to remind them of the terrible famine that had devastated Bengal in 1942-except that in Lushibari hunger and catastrophe were a way of life. They learnt that after decades of settlement, the land had still not been wholly leached of its salt. The soil bore poor crops and couldn't be farmed all the year round.... No day seemed to pass without news of someone being killed by a tiger, a snake or a crocodile. (Ghosh, 2005)

The tide too is quickly rising. The nearby islands are sliding gradually beneath the water and soon, like icebergs in a polar sea ... a flock of herons can be seen heading across the water in preparation for the coming inundation. (Ghosh, 2005)

Here description is made about the peculiar nature of the tide country—islands are made and unmade in a few days.

In other places it took decades, even centuries for a river to change course; it took an epoch for an island to appear. But here in the tide country, transformation is the rule of life: rivers stray from week to week, and islands are made and unmade in days. In other places forests take centuries, even millennia, to regenerate, but mangroves can recolonize a denuded island in ten to fifteen years. (Ghosh, 2005)

Amrit Lal Vegad's "Narmada: River of Beauty" is about his parikrama (circumambulation) of river Narmada. He writes:

Meandering through mountains and valleys, the Narmada twists and turns her way through forest fringes, sculpting boulders, carving deep gorges and creating scenes of unsurpassed beauty and loveliness. Rich in history and mythology, she is India's fifth most longest river and most sacred after the Ganga. (Vegad, 2008)

He becomes reminiscent of R.L. Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey*. Stevenson is a famous author of *Treasure Island* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Like Stevenson's journey of Franch on foot, he is also undergoing journey around the Narmada but he regrets that nobody will be able to make another circumambulation around the Narmada like the woman writer did, hundred years after Stevenson as a mark to celebrate the centenary of Stevenson's book.

It will not be possible to repeat this journey of mine a hundred years later, or even before that. Within the next fifty years several dams will be constructed over the Narmada and long stretches of riverbank will be submerged. Neither villages nor footpaths will remain. The whole of Shulpan Jhari will be under water. In the next twenty five years, the geography of the Narmada valley will change more than it has in the last 25000 years. (Vegad, 2008)

Here Vegad is filled with mixed feelings as he understands that the dam will benefit Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh but along with it an ancient river will be ruined.

The most ancient river in our country is being reined in by the most modern dams. The vast water supply of the Narmada, which has so far been largely untapped or has caused damage by flooding, will be harnessed. Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat will be transformed. (Vegad, 2008)

Arundhati Roy, winner of Booker Prize, 1997, writes in *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* in the same vein as Vegad. Both of their concern is about the Sardar Sarover Dam over Narmada river. They are quite nostalgic of its ancient glory:

The Narmada wells up on the plateau of Amarkantak in the Shahdol district of Madhya Pradesh, then winds its way through 1,300 kilometres of beautiful broadleaved forest and perhaps the most fertile agricultural land in India. Twenty five million people live in the river valley, linked to the ecosystem and to each other by an ancient, intricate web of interdependence (and, no doubt, exploitation). (Roy, 2002)

Here Estha experiences that the ecology of the river has deteriorated drastically.

“Some days he walked along the banks of the river that smelled of... pesticides bought with World Bank loans. Most of the fish had died. The ones that survived suffered from fin-rot and had broken out in boils” (Roy, 1997)

And after twenty three years, when Rahel returns to Ayemenen the river has changed. The ecological concerns are vehement.

“Years later, when Rahel returned to the river, it greeted her with a ghostly skull’s smile....Downriver; a saltwater barrage had been built, in exchange for votes from the influential paddy-farmer lobby.... More rice, for the price of a river” (Roy, 1997).

The concerns are reiterated again here. Such are the ramifications of urbanization and growth of population that has culminated towards this ghastly state of affair.

The river is polluted by defecation by children living in huts on the other side of the river. The flow of unadulterated

factory waste and washing of clothes and pots by women pollutes the river. In summer “the smell of shit lifted off the river and hovered over Ayemenen like a hot” (Roy, 1997)

In this way, interdisciplinary studies have gained momentum and one cannot confine oneself to one field of studies only to gain complete information and knowledge. Literature not only mirrors the social, cultural and economic milieu of the authors, but also mirrors the author’s knowledge in the field of science, astronomy, mathematics, social sciences, etc. In this way all fields of studies become related and one has to expand the horizon of his/her knowledge to make his/her study more consolidated and extensive.

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**Delineation of Inner Space and Angst
in Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* and Bapsi
Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man*: A
Comparative Stance**

***Urwash Kumari**

Abstract

The recent women writers from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh exemplify the issue of gendered self-representation and feminist concern. Their works realize not only the diversity of women but the diversity within each woman. They are incorporating their experiences to make new, empowering image for women, instead of limiting the lives of woman to one ideal; they push the ideal towards the full expression of each woman's potential. Indian land is known for its unity and diversity. It has been a witness to the most horrific as well as terrible atrocities that have ever been committed in the history of humanity. The harrowing situation of women during partition has been quite popular among the literary writers. The present study tries to delineate the wounded soul of women during the partition of India in 1947. It has described the condition of women as depicted by Amrita Pritam in *Pinjar* and Bapsi Sidhwa in *Ice-Candy Man*. The paper aims to present a comparative study as to how both the writers share different perspectives of women during partition in their masterpieces—*Pinjar* and *Ice-Candy Man* respectively. In both the novels we get a clear glimpse of the atrocities of

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partition and the ultimate tragedy shattering the lives of women across the boundaries. Both the novelists have described the pangs of women's suffering in a realistic way. Amrita Pritam has tried to present an Indian identity in her description of Puro's journey of transformation from Puro to Hamida, her loss of identity and agony while on the contrary Bapsi Sidhwa has given her own description through the character of Ayah, who was kidnapped by the Ice-Candy man.

Though both the novels centre around the theme of partition and the plight of women, their struggle and suffering due to the perpetrators of violence either in the name of culture, religion or societal norms during partition, the writers have tried to analyse the situation in their own way. Of course in presenting the condition of women during and after the partition both the writers have the same views. However, Sidhwa has delved deeper by depicting the trauma in a more realistic way through her feminist lens. The present paper intends to present a comparative stance of both the characters-Puro on the one hand Ayah on the other in term of pangs and trauma they suffered in the hands of their near and dear one's against the background of partition.

Keywords: Partition; trauma; boundaries; atrocities; harrowing situation.

In the history of the twin nations, India and Pakistan the political act of partition remains a drastic event which still brings fears and tears into the eyes of people who recall it. The partition led to hostility, distrust, religious enmity attacks and counter-attacks culminating into wide spread massacre and rape. These all constitute the major parts of the subject matter of the partition novels. These novels depict not just the story of bloodshed but also delineate the anguished cry of helpless and hopeless multitude caught in the vortex of death and destruction which was based on insane and pseudo dogmatic religious practices and more inaudible afflictions of sensitive mind who suffered the most. The

novels like *Pinjar*, *Train to Pakistan*, *The Shadow Lines* and *Ice-Candy Man* record the ghastly tragedies of the partition and its impact on the common man on streets. These novels, moreover, present as to how the borders of India and Pakistan came to know violence that destroyed the very bond of brotherhood. As far as women writers are concerned they besides portraying the partition experience in general specifically record the women's experiences, thereby presenting a gendered perspective of Partition. The women writer like-Amrita Pritam in *Pinjar*, Bapsi Sidhwa in *Ice-Candy Man*, Jyotirmayee Devi in *The River Churning*, and many others seems to be propelled by an inner space to articulate the painful experiences of women during partition. They have delineated their characters in such a way as the people experience the situation as women perceive it. They not only portray the victimization of women but also their resilience.

The trauma of partition has been scripted with blackest letters on the darkest pages of human cruelty and bloodshed. Women have suffered violence within and without men's pre-structured security around them. The records show and history narrates that women were massacred inside and outside their homes. They were abducted and were forced to accept brutality were victimized in communal riots even were made easy prey of lynch-mob frenzy and psychologically traumatized to the extent of being driven to jump into wells and commit suicide to preserve their dignity as women.

Amrita Pritam is a renowned Punjabi poetess and novelist of the twentieth century. Her most of the works centres on the sufferings of women in the hell of communal violence. The novel *Pinjar* shows that communal hatred was mainly and deeply rooted in the minds of Hindus and Muslims. It is a story of a young girl, Puro who has been abducted by a man, Rashid in order to avenge of the family enmity and when she escaped back to her parents she is disowned.

The novel revolves around Puro and her happy family of two sisters and a brother. She unquestioningly accepts whatever her parents decide for her marriage. Her marriage has been fixed with Ramchand. Their wedding ceremony is going to be held very soon. But destiny has decided something different for her. The turning point of the story and Puro's life arrives when she is abducted by Rashid, a Muslim boy who wants to avenge for the similar act committed by her uncle. Rashid does not rape her though he traps her many days in his house. After struggling a lot manage to escape and goes home but there is no place for her in the family as she had been abducted which puts her chastity and fidelity to questionable:

You have lost your faith and birthright. If we dare to help you, we will be cut down and finished without a trace of blood left behind to tell our faith. (*Pinjar*, 23)

Being rejected by her family, she returns back to Rashid to lead an identity less life. He forces her to marry and changes her name from Puro to Hamida:

She becomes Hamida by day and turned back Puro by night. In reality, she was neither Hamida nor Puro; she was just a skeleton, without a shape or a name. (25)

Puro does not kill her memories of family, friends and fiancé but kept them intact in her subconscious mind and vented it in her dream only. Rashid repents for the crime of her abduction and seeks redemption he tries to provide love and care to her but she is unrelenting as the wounds inflicted by him are really unforgivable. She bitterly accepted the fact that now she has no family to go to but Rashid with whom she has to spend the rest of her life. Being a mother of a son made it easier for her to accept the tortured identity. Amrita Pritam highlights that women are considered merely body of violence nothing more than bodies. Puro's dilemma is repeated when Lajo is abducted by Muslims and kept in capture in her own house and Ramchand comes to Puro seeking her help to relieve Lajo. She depicts immense strength with the help of

Rashid in the hour of crisis to help Lajo to escape her from the clutches of abductions and handed over to Ramcharad at the Refugee camp for a fresh start. Hamida as a wife knew the agony through which Rashid has gone through these years and his repentance. This grew respect for him in her heart and she accepted him as her husband and she does not want to go through the same pain of separation through which she already been with Ramchand. She wanted to stay back to help all the helpless women who are left behind to reunite with their family. The anguished outcry of Amrita Pritam is remarkable:

It was a sin to be alive in a world so full of evil.....It was a crime to be born a girl. (87)

Delineation of the wretched lives of women in *Pinjar* may be compared to the condition of Sita in *the Ramayana* where women's miseries continue even in the present time. Puro's life is compared to Sita's as she is also abducted and later abandoned by the society but she emerged as a strong feminist when she decided to stay back to help other victim of partition.

Bapsi Sidhwa is one of the major writers writing on partition. She belongs to India, Pakistan and the United States simultaneously but she likes herself to be called as a Punjabi- Pakistani- Parsee woman. Her novel *Ice-Candy Man* examines the inexorable logic of partition as an offshoot of fundamentalism sparked by hardening communal attitudes. The novel captures the effects of communal frenzy that follows partition through the innocent eyes of Lenny, the child narrator of the novel. She is polio-ridden, precocious and a keen observer of the happening around. She is a raconteur. She is a polio-stricken girl. The novel presented from her point of view. She has a deformity in her foot. She is apprehensive that Dr. Bharucha may finally be able to correct her leg by repeatedly putting it in a cast. Her deformity imparts a special status to her. She is rather happy with her deformity. She uses it to gain sympathy and favour. She grows up in comfort and tranquility in her house on Warris road in Lahore. Col. Bharucha is being the

spokesman of the Parsee community in Lahore because of community against an active part in the politics of the day. He advises his people to hunt with the hounds and run with the hare to safeguard their interest. The Parsee paradox of whether to 'Swaraj' or to maintain their loyalty to the British Raj is also humorously delineated. A piquant touch is given to his dilemma. The Parsees in Lahore at a special meeting at their temple hall in Warris Road have an acrimonious debate on the political system. If India is divided and independence is achieved, political glory, fame and fortune will be acquired by the two major communities - Hindus and Muslims. Col. Bharucha says:

Hindus, Muslims and even Sikhs are going to jockey for power and if you jokers jump into the middle you will be mangled into chutney. (*Ice- Candy Man*, 36)

Shanta, the eighteen- year old Hindu Ayah of Lenny has a seductive appearance and attracts many admirers. When Ayah takes Lenny in the evening to the park, her several admirers mill around her. Among them are Falletities Hotel cook, the government house gardener. The head and the body Masseur, the Zoo attendant Sher Singh and Ice-Candy Man all vying for her attentions and her favours. Ayah has such stunning looks that she draws covetous glances from every one. Beggars, holy men, hawkers, cart-drivers, cooks, coolies and cyclists turn their heads as she passes and ogle at her. Of these Masseur and Ice- Candy Man are Ayah's most favourite. In an interview, Bapsi Sidhwa declared:

Part of my title Ice-Candy Man did reflect on Ice- Candy Men that is manipulative politicians who hold out false candies to people. (Interview)

Even the English men are not able to resist her magnetic charm. They are people of different faiths- Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs- yet they live together amicably in a spirit of oneness. Gradually things change and this change is depicted in the dwindling of the group around Ayah. Things start turning ugly and

violent. Houses are looted and burnt. There are riots – English soldiers being chased by Sikhs. Ayah moans at the horror of the scene and collapse but the violence excites many including the Ice-Candy Man. The entire area is set on fire. The Hindu and Sikh families leave Lahore as communal trouble brews. Ice-Candy man would like to avenge those deaths, those rapes and mutilations. He becomes a rabid communalist. He joins the gangs of Marauding hooligans in their looting and killing spree. He not only abducts Ayah but also throws her to the wolves of passion in a Kotha:

The men drag her in grotesque strides to the cart and their harsh hands supporting her with careless intimacy, lift her into it. Four men stand pressed against her, propping her body upright, their lips stretched in triumphant grimaces. (183)

Ayah is taken to Hira Mandi where she is transformed from Ayah to Mumtaz and forcibly married to him. Though she is afterwards rescued by Godmother, a departure from *The Bride* where the rescue of Zaitoon was affected by a man and was sent across the border. She is completely shattered and disillusioned. Lenny also gives an account of the village of Pir Pandas where she frequently visited. She helps the Hindus during riots and even donates blood. She very rightly comments on Ayah's situation:

That we fated, daughter. It can't be undone. But it can be forgiven... worse things are forgiven. Life goes on and business of living buries the debris of our pasts. Hurt, happiness... all fades impartially... to make way for fresh joy and new sorrow. That's the way of life. (262)

Bapsi Sidhwa represents those women who are kidnapped and raped then rejected by their families are relegated to rehabilitation centre where they are subjected to all kinds of inhuman treatment. Her expression of despair and hopelessness to some extent belongs to savage irony that suggests an existence without hope, warmth and humanness. The novel raises an issue that is always of serious concern for both the countries. Sidhwa's treatment

of the subject is so fresh and refreshing that this dark and sordid tale of partition turns into a powerful truth telling narrative.

The novels present Amrita Pritam and Bapsi Sidhwa as a feminist and an idealist who sees in her women characters the strength of passion, the tenderness of love and the courage of one's convictions. The protagonists, Puro and Ayah are portrayed not only as victims but also as saviours thereby highlighting their contribution as agency in redeeming the distressed. Generally in male narratives, it is men who embrace action, seeking to shape circumstances to their will. But in the partition discourses by women writers, roles of women emerge paramount. Moreover, they have presented women characters as stereotyped victims, drawing on the easy pathos of helpless suffering. They refuse to accept passively an imposition of suffering as destiny. The impact of partition is psychologically understood and narrated through the feelings of women. Despite both the writers being feminists the way of depicting the atrocities during partition period is different. Their approach to the treatment of the subject is dissimilar. Amrita Pritam has focused on the theme against the background of marriage whereas Bapsi Sidhwa has tried to highlight the incidents which took place with Ayah. However, both the writers have depicted the trauma and turbulence, especially in the context of women who became easy prey to violence during partition.

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CREATIVE SECTION

POEMS

Poems for IJES 2024

***Susheel Kumar Sharma**

A Bird Amidst A War

“Far be it from me! Those who honour me I will honour, but those who despise me will be disdained.” 1 Samuel 2:30

The loud wailing sound of the municipal siren was
Presumed to be a song of some crazy species by
The bird that lived in a cosy nest in the tree hollow.
It went on perching from one tree-top to another.

It thought life was all about getting up early and going
To bed early, singing songs to the babies, narrating
Stories to the little ones and to help them grow up,
To teach them how to collect their food and raise a family.

Swinging on the tree-top the bird could locate the
Morsels of food and the small larva crawling on the
Leaf and could catch a colourless moth flying in the air.
Holding the branch fast it moved its eyes and head quickly.

It could also see a crawling beetle from the tree top.
It could also mark the sly movement of the tiger.
It could also discern the stirrings of a slithering snake.
It could also note from a distance the tanks rolling slowly.

It caught the beetle and swallowed it up.
It cried at the top of its pitch at the tiger.
It shouted at the snake and bit its tail but
It did not raise any alarm to see a tank.

I know the bird could control its notes.
I know the bird could control its swings.
I know the bird could control the pitches.
Only a golden bird can control its hunger.

I know birds are ignorant of the plans being hatched
To bombard the buildings, to fire missiles to terrorise
People, to seize the city and turn the people slaves;
Birds are ignorant of patriotism, honour and slavery.

They are ignorant of the boundaries of the adjacent lands.
They are ignorant of the flashing speed a ballistic missile
They are ignorant that the children will weep when the
Targets are the multi-storeyed premises that house the trees.

They are sure that chickens will inherit the nest one day;
The chickens will be independent birds to scale the sky;
They'll share the branch with their parents who build a
New nest in a new tree, sing a new song and dance in rains.

From the Courtyard

There was a mango tree in our
Courtyard. It was planted when
My grandfather was born.
Many birds nested in it; mynas,
Sparrows, tailorbirds, pigeons,
Cuckoos, bulbuls, sunbirds, koels,
Parrots, doves. Some were first
Generation inhabitants, some
Quite old; no one kept a count
Some came as visitors, some
As friends and asked for food;
Some had water from the pot kept
For them: Some frequented us
Regularly some were occasional.
Some lizards also stayed in it.

My grandfather had his cot under
The tree and recited verses from
Bhagavad-Gita and Ramcharitmanas
To the tree regularly. When we children
Surrounded him he also gave some
Mangoes to savour, both unripe or ripe.

One day an owl sat in the tree
And hooted. Many birds and their
Chicken were scared. Even my

Grandfather started mumbling
As if cursing the day or the night.

Pigeons flew away, parrots flew
Away, crows flew away. Only the
Owl stayed; my grandfather
Mumbled even more. Soon a
Water emergency was declared.

Slowly the leaves started falling
And the branches turned dry.
The horticulturist's medicines
Did not work; daily watering
Was needed; my grandfather
Shared some of his water with
The tree. The frequency of
Reciting Gita increased with
Every passing day. One day
The tree was all dry. The owl
Flew away. My grand father
Left for his heavenly abode.

The tree was cut down to
Cremate him in the backyard.
A mango sapling was planted.
It is gaining ground and slowly
Spreading. The plant is of a
New variety. It fruits easily.

A cat now sits and purrs on it.

Kamad Giri and Skoda

I was looking for the huts,
Mud houses, goats, skinny
Scantily-clad women and
Dust clad black children
Who played on the road-side
But appeared to be suffering
From malnutrition. Many of
Them sat in a line to defecate
Yellow liquid by the road side
Making a pur-pur sound.

I stopped to have a cup of tea
Near a road shanty but made
Enquiries about the huts. The
Tea-vendor asked if I rode the
White Skoda parked opposite.

Without waiting for my answer
He exclaimed a Skoda needs a
Road; speed needs a bigger road;
All highways feed on nearby huts.

The children need to be pushed
To the riverside. I was making a
clockwise circumambulation
(Pradakshina) of Kamad Giri and

Wondering if I had committed a
Sin by riding a Skoda!

A Nationalist in Dilemma

My country is called
India that is Bharat.

Our constitution was made
By clever people; they knew
Every *dhaba* has one Chhotu
Or Bahadur who may be a
Suresh or Abbas in his home.

Some go to Delhi
And some others
To Dharavi to
Understand this.

I just take my son to a
Train in which a General
Coach is put behind the engine
To help it pull the coaches.

Between the General boggy and
The neat First AC compartment
With cozy coupe is a pantry car
Full with edibles and well-dressed staff.

My son notices the
Pantry opens only into
The AC coach and is
Curious. He pesters
Me for an answer.

I remember a class in early fifty's;
The Professor of Urban
Development was trying hard
To explain to the young
Architects, why a JJ Colony
Was needed just adjacent
To the new posh colony.

I don't know if India plans to
Go to the Moon or Bharat is to
Be sent the Mars. My worry is
Different — if both leave this
Country, what will it be called?

***Susheel Kumar Sharma**, Professor of English, University of
Allahabad, Prayagraj. Email: sksharma@allduniv.ac.in

Creative Section

Poems

R.K. Singh

1.. POLITICS OF DECEPTION

Roaring guns and flying bombs
pronounce total death on earth

the world withers away with
the suns of science, challenging

the universe and time with
cankorous creations

viral revolution
racial elimination

structures of deception
media and power traps

in the name of faith and past
bullying the masses, seek

fresh promises, renewed
enthusiasm wrapped in

a dream scroll mythologized
to spotlight a Trump, Modi

Putin, Xi, Netanyahu
tap national consciousness

for divine descent to make
life happen once again

2. War in Gaza

Unchanged human nature
eternity passed with each prophet
spirit's realms in rumbles...
how to search peace in depths of tunnels
through misery and degradation?

a sick generation
till elimination they won't stop
for lasting peace they say they kill
unaware they too may become dust
in the catastrophe they have wrought

cursed Gaza awaits
a miracle to rise a new phoenix

to exist with Israel
despite the devil's designs
for perpetual desolation

3. WEIRD CHAINS

They invent new lies with periodical distractions
repeat falsehood till truth turns doubtful
teach generations the ways of hating
the porn of discriminating, dividing, killing
the innocents that love their neighbors
value diversity, equality and peace
shunning the weird chains that lock the sun for roots to grow

4. TEN HAIKU

after the drone bomb
stuck between concrete rubbles
a mother and child

each sun aggravates
sadness moment by moment:
watching lonely street

splashing the eyes
for clearer vision:
faith in tension

feeling caged
ghetto existence
craven paths

fishing silver coins
in the depth of a bottle
a drunken veteran

in the clouds
reading his future:
late autumn

warblers fly back
seeing the soft-stepping cats
in the grassy yard

a long golden net
surges on the ocean tide—
fishing memories

in green flower pot
white magnolia fading—
end of the season

April sickness:
couldn't penetrate
the night's darkness

6. FIVE TANKA

Unquenched thirst
more and more indulgence:
momentary pleasure
she says it's enough now
rein the horse and seek the missed

Half-drunk women
on one side of the road
pimps on the other
ready to seize first-timers
to the tin box by street lamps

Standing on a cloud
look through an open doorway:
desires awakened
before I could step inside
the door closed, I missed my chance

God has become
a habit in helplessness:
faith a deception
when unable to enjoy
love, life and wonders of world

**Shake the silent soul
before the final beat**

**create symphony
merging truth and dream on
lips and eyes that're alive**

—R.K. Singh

***Ram Krishna Singh**, also known as R.K. Singh, is a retired Professor and widely published, anthologized, and translated Indian English poet, who has published in many journals including *IJES*. His latest poetry collections include *Against the Waves: Selected Poems* (Authors Press, 2021), *Covid-19 And Surge of Silence/Kovid-19 Hem Sessizlik Tolkn* (English/Tatar, 2021), *Áo: SILENCE: A WHITE DISTRUST* (English/Japanese, Kindle Edition/Paperback, 2022), *Poems and Micropoems* (Southern Arizona Press, 2023).

Creative Section

Noes and Ayes

***Shiv Kumar Yadav**

No, not a minus;
And Yes, not plus.
No may be a Yes,
Yes, may be a No.

When arrives at No
That rings an echo of Yes.
A stage also be there,
Nor accepts No, Yes neither.

No may collect dignity,
And brooms self- pity.
Yes may declare you doormat,
Fixing in an uneasy format.

How Yes is wrought ?
By the storm for the dirt.
Who controls your Yes or No ?
Are you sure? Do you know ?

Never listen to the lungful No;
Nor attend to the whispering Yes.
You destroy ; you protect
To keep yourself intact.

Sometimes you may be a moth or froth,
And a moment next : Yourself a threat.
Changes occur even without
Your refusal or consent.

When you trust, No sublimates
Being oblivious of fiction or facts.
You may be ditched or betrayed,
But not without being enriched.

Fog

***Shiv Kumar Yadav**

Always has been,
Always would be,
Why not always?
Dawn, Dusk, Twilight ;
Dim , Dull , Bright.
Is it a state of Nature ?

It is, perhaps !?
Do we know our nature?

Fog in nurture !
Fog in understanding !
Ice, water,dew, mist , fog ... !
Love it, live in it : with a guffaw.
Don't leave it,
As you cannot.
You can be friendly
Like a dog and hog.
Can you change it ?
With effort within your fort .
Rest is for the coming rest.
Like us they are guest ;
Let them guess but
Leave it not in a mess.

***Shiv Kumar Yadav**, Associate Professor, Head, Department of
English, College of Commerce, Arts and Science, Patna.

BOOK REVIEWS

Sanskrit Poetics and Western Criticism, ed. Rajnath, New Delhi: Doaba Publications, 2023, ISBN-9789391011541, pp. xi+163, ₹ 425.

Sanskrit Poetics, being an integral academic Indian contribution boasts of seminal critical works of Bharata, Anandwardhana, Abhinavgupta, Bhattalollata, Shankuka, Kuntaka, and Vamana among others. Although significant work exists in the area, it lacks systematic organization. Currently, a large group of academicians are trying to organize the available material in a systematic order. Western criticism, on the other hand, does not face this organizational challenge. There is no denying the fact due to colonization, both the Eastern and the Western traditions have influenced each other. Consequently, there is a dire need to trace parallels between both. *Sanskrit Poetics and Western Criticism*, a recently edited book by Prof. Rajnath is an attempt in that direction.

The book comprises 14 scholarly articles written by various critics both from India and abroad, lending it a polyphonic shape. While there is no clear division of sections, the book can be categorized into three sections in which the first section deals with criticism on drama, the second dwells upon the linguistic and aesthetic aspect, while the third section, an article by Sue-Ellen Case deliberates upon the politics of how language works in a hegemonic structure.

In the preface to the book, Rajnath, the editor, proposes that his book does not look at Sanskrit and Western traditions of

criticism in opposition to each other. Instead, he wants “to bridge the gap between the Western and Oriental Criticism” (Rajnath 7). As literary scholars belonging to a country like India, which prides on a rich literary and critical legacy even under a colonial past, people often take sides without truly analyzing their nuances. This particular prejudice leads to misjudgments regarding both Sanskrit poetics and Western criticism. In this direction, Professor Rajnath makes a bold endeavor to bridge the gap between both. He further elaborates in the preface:

When we compare Sanskrit poetics and Western criticism, we should not always attempt at privileging the former over the latter and thereby betray our nationalistic bias. If we approach Sanskrit and Western critics without any prejudice, we shall find that sometimes the Sanskrit critic is superior to his Western counterpart and sometimes it is the other way round. (viii)

The chapters by Rajnath, B.G. Tondon, M.S. Kushwaha and Shrikrishna Mishra emphasize the critical and cultural plurality of perspectives, exemplifying Bharata’s *Natyashastra*, Anandwardhan’s *Dhwanyaloka* and Aristotle’s *Poetics*. They argue that in an age of interdisciplinary literature, it is obvious that criticism will follow the same path. Therefore, one must look at both the critical traditions as supplementary to each other. This pluralistic approach provides a framework “which alone can lead to correct evaluation” (Rajnath 1). The aforesaid chapters delineate the similarities between the early European and Indian critics and show how both of them censored actions on the grounds of morality, taste, interest, stage and acting limitations. These critics demonstrate that both the Indian and the Western theories of drama have evolved and diversified. In the place of tradition, it is mostly occupied by individualization and experimentation. Western drama has moved far away from Aristotle through the plays of Beckett, Pinter and others, while in India, Bharata’s theory has also witnessed a decline. However, the enduring relevance of these theories lies in their ability to withstand the test of time.

Mishra's chapter contends that Aristotle's Catharsis and Bharata's *Guna* have many similarities: both are the effects produced by great poetry, being primarily the concept of mental purification, and are stages in the appreciation of aesthetic experience. Through examples, he underlines that Indian critics more convincingly explain how great poetry purifies the human mind. Devinder Mohan draws yet another important comparison between T.S. Eliot's Objective Correlative and the theory of *Rasa*. He posits that Eliot's progressive transformation of 'Piety' into destiny is not very different from *attava* principle through the progressive acts of Dharma. According to Mohan, Eliot's "Objective Correlative" stems from the comparative study of the aesthetics of *Rasa*.

The chapters by K.P.K. Nair, R.S. Pathak, Krishna Rayan, V.K. Chari, Leand Kapil Kapoor attempt to bridge the gap between modern stylistics and Sanskrit poetics. K.P.K. Nair investigates the historical significance of linguistic deviation, which accounts for stylistic beauty. He concludes that modern literary criticism is indebted to stylistic analysis for discovering the relationship between sound and sense as expressed by Kuntaka when the latter says "*Sabdardhasahitaukavyam*" (poetry is the unity of sound and sense).

R.S. Pathak extends the discussion by comparing I.A. Richards' theory of Poetic Language with Indian poetics. He proposes that Indian poetics can fill the gaps in Richards' poetic language theory. Similarly, in another chapter, Pathak again compares the concepts of *Svabhavokti* and Statement Poetry from the perspective of *rasa-dhvanitheory*. He contextualizes different meanings associated with the terms and how those multiple meanings transformed over time, especially in Indian context. This chapter covers a broad range of theorists from Bharata to Davie to provide a comprehensive picture of the developments in the reception and criticism of Statement Poetry across the globe.

Krishna Rayan addresses the dichotomy between "statement" and "suggestion" and their centrality in different literary and

critical traditions. He traces the long history of these terms from Anandwardhana to Paul de Man while creating an arch that covers Eliot, Saussure, Derrida, Jakobson, Pierre Macherey and Barthes. He differentiates between them through the analogy of literal meaning (apprehended rationally) and figurative meaning (apprehended intuitively). According to him, “The statement/suggestion antithesis thus is rooted in the binary nature of the human brain” (43). He further argues that the affective response of a piece of literature depends on the innate and acquired competence of the reader, which is influenced by his exposure as well as the cultural capital.

V.K. Chari, on the other hand, strongly rejects S.K De’s strictures on Sanskrit poetics as “unreasonable and unedifying” (Chari 11). He presents a well-structured comparison between the romantic idea of imagination and fancy and the Indian concepts of *Pratibha* (Poetic faculty) and *Prajna* (Reasoning). While comparing these theories, he accepts “*Rasa* doctrine as a principal definition and as a basis for a general theory of literature (Chari 10)”.

Recognizing the vitality of metaphor in both the Indian and the Western traditions, Kapil Kapoor introduces the status of metaphor in modern Western literary theory. He analyses its relative status in Sanskrit poetics and concludes his argument by asserting that Indian tradition would not accept the cognitive, creative claims about metaphor.

Lee T. Lemon in the article entitled “T.S. Eliot’s Other Tradition” reads Eliot against the grain through the lens of Sanskrit poetics. He attempts to explain the obliqueness in Eliot using an analogy from astronomy, where Neptune was theorized before its actual discovery to explain the irregularities of Uranus. In this context, Sanskrit poetic theory serves as the metaphorical Neptune. Lee argues that the deviations found in Eliot’s creative and critical corpus result from a keen awareness of India’s major literary traditions. He concludes, “Eliot learned his very special attitude towards poetry from the Sanskrit theoreticians...” (Lee 22).

The chapter by Sue-Ellen Case addresses the problems of the Eurocentric approach towards Sanskrit language and literature. She presents the argument by dividing it into four sections. The first section discusses how European scholars tried to connect Sanskrit with Germany, imbuing it with a spiritual angle to compete against Greece. Prominent writers and thinkers like, “Heine, Schiller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Goethe praised the recently translated Sanskrit play, *Shakuntala*” (Case 24) to fulfill the political agendas of Imperialistic powers. The second section deals with the politics of persuasion of the native population so that they identify with British values and accept colonial supremacy. This was done to achieve the goal of “creating a labour force for bureaucratic and administrative affairs (Case 27)”. The third section focuses on the 19th-century reception of the Sanskrit language and its literature as classics. The last section named “Contemporary Legacy” (Case 32) tries to find a solution in a balanced approach without relying on the binary opposition of the colonizer and the colonized.

Although the book is a remarkable contribution to the contemporary discourse of literature, criticism and theories, there remains one major concern with its structure. It would have been more impactful if the organization of chapters were better systematized. All the chapters dealing with the theories of drama could have been presented in a series and a similar approach could have been taken with the theories of poetry and figures of Speech. Additionally, three chapters are not mentioned in the contents of the book.

Despite this structural issue, the book provides a comprehensive understanding of Rasa, Dhavni, Vakrokti, and Metaphor while connecting these concepts with various Western theories. Serious readers of literary theory and criticism may be reminded of G.N. Devy’s idea of tripartite relation resurrecting Indian critical tradition in relation to modern Western critical thought. Such an effort is remarkable for the broad range it possesses and the

rigorous scrutiny that it does of both Indian and Western critical traditions. With gems of knowledge accommodated in *Sanskrit Poetics and Western Criticism*, Prof. Rajnath offers a rich literary feast at a very humble price. The book deserves a room not only in one's personal book self but also in the libraries of academic institutions.

Reviewers: Subhi Kumari and Dr. Binod Mishra, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India.

Pal, Dipanwita and Prasun Banerjee (eds.). *Ecofeminism and Allied Issues*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 2024. ISBN (10): 1-5275-6680-3 & ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-6680-4. Pp. 170. \$ 107.95.

Ecofeminism is an emerging interdisciplinary field of study which attempts to combine environmentalism and feminism for the purpose of looking into the different shades of intricate interrelation between the degradation of the environment caused by climate change/crisis and the oppression of women as depicted in (literary) discourses. The social inequalities coupled with gender inequality, exacerbated by climate change, have exercised a huge impact on the lives of women relating to their safety, health, education, and well-being. This critical literary theory thus seeks to explore how far women with their knowledge and labour play a crucial role in caring for nature and our communities even not having equitable access to socio-political and socio-economic rights.

The volume *Ecofeminism and Allied Issues* edited by Dipanwita Pal and Prasun Banerjee seeks to take a multi-disciplinary approach to address the issues and perspectives involving ecofeminism in the literary studies. It comprises of two

broad sections accommodating twelve (six each) essays ranging across fields such as disability studies, affect studies, sociological and cultural studies, and “offers a “prismatic reflection” on key ecofeminist issues” (p. viii, all quotes used here are from the book under review). The ‘Foreword’ to this book written by Amit Baishya of The University of Oklahoma, Norman, has added an extra dimension to this volume by highlighting the salient features of this theory and the importance and need of such multidimensional research articles incorporated in it. The Editorial by one of the editors Prasun Banerjee presents a thorough discussion on the growth and development of ecofeminism since 1970s. Banerjee has referred to the Indian scriptures of the *Vedas*, *Vedantas*, and the *Upanisadas*, in order to focus on “the idea of nature or environment being the mother figure, and the whole universe as begotten by the celestial intercourse of nature, the mother, and God, the father” (p. ix).

Machine-driven modern civilization is bent on destroying this connection and enforces a life which is divorced from the protective care of Mother Nature, the result of which is both spiritual and existential dereliction. Ecofeminism tends to address this issue of the essential

disconnection between urbanized life and natural existence. The first section, entitled “Concepts of Ecofeminism and Allied Issues” includes papers which add some newer perspectives to the concept of ecofeminism, and discusses them with reference to certain literary texts and social phenomena. Julia M. Puaschunder’s paper “Gender Inequality in the Global Warming Era: The Disparate Impact of Climate Change on the Female” presents how climate change generates inequality in terms of (re-)distribution of economic opportunities in the society affecting a disparate impact of sustainability on Women. This chapter, as the author claims, recommends the novel policy that “calls for more interpersonal research on climate change burden sharing and socio-psychological mechanisms such as trust, future orientation,

compassion and social responsibility— all powerful female attributes that can drive climate leadership-in-action.” (p. 2)

Rossella Marzullo’s paper “Ecofeminism, Patriarchy and Female Subordination in Criminal Organizations” aims at investigating “the links between the culture of oppression, which also passes through the brutalization of the territory, and the taking root of criminal culture that imposes submission, blind and uncritical obedience, and silence, on women” (p. 17). To experience democracy as a force capable of breaking down barriers, overcoming contradictions, transforming relations of domination and allowing the full expression of sociality, it is necessary for men and women to understand the value of difference and the importance of solidarity. (p. 28). Jai Singh in his paper “The Ecology of Being Woman: Understanding Ecofeminism in the Age of Transnational Capitalism” has attempted to show that ecofeminism advanced the philosophers across time and space has shifted the focus from merely the nature of trees and plants to the ecology of mindsets (p. 33) round the world. It concludes with a caution that “Under these circumstances, the only solution is that eco-critics in general, and ecofeminists in particular, can seek is to work towards rebuilding human relations at every level. [. . .] The destructive influence of capitalism can be controlled by reshaping the objectives of production of both material and immaterial assets” (p. 43). David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder’s “Precarity and the Global Dispossession of Indigeneity through Representations of Disability” has attempted “to map some ways in which disability offers ‘alternative ethical maps of living’ in works of indigeneity opposed to the imposition of Euro-American sovereignty, and the rendering of native lives ‘ungrievable’” (p. 45). It has analyzed how globalization has been ransacking the “Earth of resources for expansive practices of human consumption” (p. 60) having impact on disabled people.

In “Re-Constructing the Concept of Androgyny: Protest Against the ‘Sexual Politics’ in Libby Sommer’s *Henry*”, Dipanwita

Pal has embarked on relooking into the concept androgyny and navigated exactly what Libby Sommer tries to disseminate within the story *Henry*, and how she executes it. The critical analysis reveals that society is very uncomfortable with patriarchy and the protagonist of the story finally is able to break out of the shackles of the oppressive society. Jaouad Achitah's "Bad Affects, Women, and the Environment" has studied how women experience annoying affective intensities under environmental change which has an intense affective influence on women due to "environmental change, including biological and chemical change, conditions the affects women experience" (p. 77), understood in terms of inter-subjective connections and interplay of different socio-cultural factors.

The second section, entitled "Ecofeminist Orientations in Women Writers" accommodates six articles that chiefly explore ecofeminist principles used by contemporary women writers. Nicholas Birns's "Deinstrumentalizing the Premodern: Lauren Groff and Marie de France" aims to historicize ecofeminism to find out how the polemical agenda thoroughly forms the changes in the conceptions of gender and identity along with its inflection in the larger domain of interpretations of the nonhuman world from the premodern and early modern eras. How multiple forces shape "the dystopia of hierarchical visions of gender, power, and land" (p. 89) – is investigated by diving into the premodern texts by Birns to widen the scope of the ecofeministic horizon and to recognize its root. The extended mind of the female writers relies on the interaction between gender and nature to resist patriarchal suppression and exploitation. In his words, "Ecofeminism is part of the reservoir of humanity, and not simply the product of particular trend or a particular moment of postmodern awareness" (p. 99). The scientific investigation of the texts probes into the patriarchal instrumentalisation to show how the limits of an agency concerning nature, i.e. disruptive anachronism (p. 101) interplay its role in an ecofeminist frame.

Esperanza González Moreno's paper "Bonding with the 'Other' through Abjection: Analysis of Maggie Siebert's Representation of the Abject in the Fourth Stage of the Process of Colonization" introduces readers to the domain of *abjection* in the stories of Siebert where horror and black humor play the significant roles and abjection is measured as 'the human reaction'. The writer has categorically stated that she has chosen three stories in order to project "the body and the abject play an important role in the disruption of the rationalist system" (p. 105) and instrumentalization of the oppressed 'otherness' is achieved through "hyperseparation and objectification" (p. 107).

"Ecology and Nativism in Language: An Ecolinguistic Study of Mamang Dai's Poetry" is an article written by Susanta Kumar Bardhan explores the world-views shared by the Adi tribal community of Arunachal Pradesh from the perspective of ecological and ecolinguistic consciousness. The propinquity to the nature develops the psyche of the tribal people differently and it is clearly and distinctly different from the scholarly ecofeminism. Present writing investigates the drizzling effect of sound memory of Mamang Dai's life-world with "her poetic perception of the existence of life and soul in the river, and the minute observation of its differences during summer and rainy seasons" (p. 120). As an introduction of Mamang Dai's world of verbal representation of physical and mental nature, the writing also paves the way to understand the struggles and hazards (socio-political, natural) faced by the tribal people and their way of being and becoming with praxis following their very own traditions developed through years.

Tanbir Shahnawaz's "Rereading Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer* from an Ecofeminist Perspective: A Novel Reintegrating Humankind and the Environment" is concerned with the fundamental claim of the movement of ecofeminism. Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer* is a novel centered on the life, struggle and challenges of three women protagonists through three intertwined segments.

Shahnawaz articulates his arguments by finding the key point of these three women, i.e. ethical consciousness although they are eager to protect nature (including animals, insects, weeds, etc.) subscribing to different ideologies. Patriarchal oppression along with the exploitation of nature makes room for the environmentally sensitive persons to engage in the discourse of racial, social, political, and gender inequality in the larger context of feminism. He also cites that how this novel shows the pragmatic and critical value of Arne Naess's Deep Ecology and Aldo Leopold's Land Ethics by storytelling. *Prodigal Summer* is also presented as a period of tension when the previous value system is challenged by the new tablet. The institutions, economic independence, long agony of oppression along with hegemony and coercion, and the domestic space are the principle remarks by Shahnawaz's interpretative effort.

In his "Ecofeminism and Understanding the Biological Problem and the Power Problem in Rossetti's "Goblin Market"" Debojyoti Dan explores how the biopolitics of the Victorian era subdued and exploited the female subject "through the lens of toxic masculinity" (p. 137). Embedded in the deep philosophical discourse of Foucault, Heidegger, Derrida, Lacan, and Vandana Shiva's ideologies, the present article tries to show how Rossetti criticizes the Victorian gender roles and expectations attuned to the exploration of female agency and sisterhood. Following the line of hyper-masculinity and male biopolitics Dan uncovers the meaning structures that interplay significant roles projected by Lizzie, Laura, and Goblins in his writing. Based on the story of Great Fall, *Goblin Market* shows how the human (woman) body becomes the field of hegemonic fetishism.

Arnab Kumar Sinha's "Water, Mother and Igbo Spirituality: The Interface between Ecofeminism and Religion in Flora Nwapa's The Lake Goddess" investigates the representation of the Nigerian Society where Igbo deity Ogbuide (Woman of the Lake) and her priestess Water deity Ona occupy central roles regarding the

validity of the feminist standpoint. However, Ona fails to break the chains of patriarchy, yet the novel inspires the ignited minds and voices to enkindle the flame against authority. Citing Karen J. Warren's theoretical framework, Sinha argues that Ona tries to use her ecofeminist outlook "to counter the repressive measures adopted by the colonial missionaries to subjugate Igbo women. Also important is how she attempts to challenge the patriarchal gaze of Igbo men. Despite assuming a powerful position in her society, Ona...fails to attain the status of a goddess who can liberate women from the shackles of patriarchy" (p. 149). This chapter not only paves the way to look within the ecofeminist spiritualities of the Igbo community but also examines the complex strategically constructed relations implicitly flowed in the sublimity of any patriarchal culture. How women themselves are the epitome to carry forward patriarchy in that society, how Nwapa's *The Lake Goddess* questions the custom of polygamy in the Igbo Community which is nothing but a tool of oppression, the novel also directly shouts out against the worshipping husbands as 'little gods' and Ona leaves her husband to move forward in her goal (as she feels the intimate identical bonding with the Ogbuide from the childhood) – the authoritarian, oppressive chains are challenged by the protagonists again and again in the novel, and Sinha presents this in a very lucid manner. At last, the deconstructive reading of the novel shows how the nuances of Nwapa's very own geo-political location conceptualise her subject (psyche).

Truly speaking, the present work has opened up several vistas of ecofeminism and has brought the readers to the forefront of crises ecological imbalances affecting directly or indirectly all components of the Earth. In the history of the 21st century philosophy and literature, ecofeminism has heavily expanded its realm in theory as well as in practice. The study of ecofeminism widens the deconstructive or reconstructive interpretation of texts and cultures, and at the same time, it expands its inflection to change the world. Demanding justice or equality in the face of

patriarchy is not only the thing anymore, as ecofeminism makes humans more sensitive to their ecosystem. The gendered nature of the human psyche may be threatened by the ontological exploration of ecofeminism. The present volume contributes to the question of long-standing male views not only for females but also for the LGBTQ+ community. The denigratory views must be questioned again and again, especially from the feminist standpoint, in several ways, either through the protest march on the road or in academics. The otherized state must be demolished to re-own the subject's self and being, and it is a perpetual struggle. Simone de Beauvoir once rightly points out that a state of war is generated by oppression.

Hence it can undoubtedly be claimed the papers incorporated in this volume are expected to make the readers and scholars think critically and constructively for further research works in the field of ecofeminism and its allied issues. Thanks should go to the editors who strove rigorously and wholeheartedly to bring out this volume, as evidenced by the arrangement of the highly reflectivity-rich papers, analytical editorial, and above all use of well-knit linguistic discourse.

Reviewer: Snigdha Bardhan, Visva-Bharati

Sharma, Vikas. *Media Revolution 2030*. New Delhi : Diamond Pocket Books (P) Ltd., 2024. ISBN : 978-93-5964-282-6, Pp 176.

Dr. Vikas Sharma's tenth novel *Media Revolution 2030* highlights the role of Media Channels in Indian democracy through Dr. Ujjawala and her team. It belongs to the genre of Campus fiction which discusses the working of University system. Professor Sharma is a well-known writer having a number of books, both Hindi and English novels to his credit. It intricately weaves a narrative that not only forecasts the trajectory of media evolution but also delves deep into the psychological ramifications of trauma

and the human psyche's labyrinth. The characters of the novel embody the complex interplay of psychological resilience and vulnerability, offering a mirror to the real world challenges faced by individuals grappling with psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression.

Trauma can originate from myriad events that rupture the fabric of what we perceive as normalcy, leaving scars that are both visible and invisible. Trauma disrupts the continuity of our lives, leaving a labyrinth of emotional and psychological challenges in its wake. The narrative of Ketki's harrowing experiences encapsulates this disruption, offering a vivid portrayal of the individual struggle with trauma and the complex journey towards healing. She boldly faces her ordeals, thus making her story a powerful testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of profound adversity. The narrative also touches upon the importance of social support in the healing process. Indeed, recovery from trauma is a complex and dynamic process that encompasses a range of therapeutic approaches and support systems. Dr. Sharma has not only presented the effects of trauma on different characters but he has also talked about the ways of recovery from it. The journey from trauma to recovery is as individual as the people who walk in path. Amongst the approaches in the healing journey are psychotherapy, particularly trauma - focused cognitive-behavioural therapy, role of social support, mindfulness and body-based practices which include meditation, yoga etc., narrative therapy and the integration of existential and humanistic therapy. All these can offer a deeper and more philosophical perspective on trauma recovery. The writer's views not only highlight the potential for healing and growth in the aftermath of trauma but also underscore the importance of compassionate, holistic support in navigating the journey towards recovery. However, Dr. Sharma's narrative serves as a critical reminder of the therapeutic power of understanding, empathy and human connection. It champions the significance of supportive

networks and professional intervention in the journey towards psychological healing and well-being.

The book is the proof of Dr. Vikas Sharma's deep knowledge of human psychology. His critical appraisal of the variety of themes is worth appreciating. His critical insight, acumen, objectivity, rationality deserve praise. The book is undoubtedly worth reading by the lovers of Indian English fiction. It deserves a place on the shelf of all the libraries of the Universities. The writer deserves kudos for his excellent effort.

Reviewer – Dr. Neeraj Kumar, Professor, P.G. Department of English, Magadh University, Bodh Gaya, Bihar

Shaheen, Iffat. *Negotiating Cultures in the Major Novels of Bharati Mukherjee.* New Delhi: Authors Press, 2024. ISBN: 978-93-6095-317-1, pp. 134, ₹ 895.

In her debut critical book captioned "Negotiating Cultures in the Major Novels of Bharati Mukherjee," Dr. Iffat Shaheen demonstrates her extensive grasp of contemporary critical theories. Advancement in science and technology, better education, better job prospects and aspirations for material pleasures are the root causes behind globalization, migration, brain drain, hybridism, alienation, cultural clash, diaspora etc. This work paves the way for understanding complexities of contemporary critical theories viz. feminism, diaspora, hybridized cultures and other in general and major novels of Bharati Mukherjee in particular. She has critically analyzed major novels of Bharati Mukherjee to highlight the varied issues of postmodern era namely dislocation, alienation, cultural angst, identity crisis, immigration, feminism, mundane desires, frustration, ambiguities and discontentment. She has explored the modern mindset which oscillates between beliefs of the past and

the realities of the present through the characters of Bharati Mukherjee. Dr Iffat's hard efforts have created a new perspective on the problems people face as they navigate various existential crises while residing in alien soil. Obviously enough this critical book is highly beneficial for teachers and students of English Literature. The writer deals with various issues of postmodern era in a crystal clear manner by dividing this book into seven chapters.

The author is of the view that nomadic trait man forces them to migrate for better prospects of life. This migration forces the person to adapt the culture, food, habits, language of that foreign land i.e. the reconstruction of an individual's identity. It is compulsion for a person to build his 'new identity' to face the challenges of 'new land'. Dejection, depression, disillusionment, disappointment and self fragmentation are the byproducts of immigration. Consequently people swing between two entirely different cultures. The writer is of the opinion that :

“Diasporic literature thus merges as a counter discourse which fictionalizes 'otherness' and 'difference' in the context of self and environment. It straddles between two cultures and reflects the experimental reality”.

The cross cultural conflict, feeling of immigration and expatriate, alienation, psychological conflict, hybridization, cultural starvation, uprootedness and homelessness are the central concerns of all Diasporic writers in general and Indian diasporic Writers in particular. Really speaking these writers want to regain what they have lost because of immigration through their writings. Alienation, adaptation and assimilation are varied experiences which immigrants have to undergo in an alien land. Bharati Mukherjee's main concern in her novels is not merely the rendering of lost roots, but also the intense trauma suffered by Indian migrants. Her novels deal not only with geographical dislocation but also a socio-cultural sense of displacement.

To tell the truth migration is an in born nature found in all human beings came from Adam and Eve who were exiled from Heaven after their first disobedience, By instinct we people also always ready to

migrate for better prospects. As time progressed people started to migrate for different reasons i.e. for trade, religious or business purposes but after the colonization and the beginning of the Industrial Revolution the slavery system emerged and such migrations changed to forced migration. However, today migration is totally different from the previous ones. Today, people migrate for better opportunities as per their desires. They enjoy and celebrate their arrival in the new world. Today the word 'diaspora' is used for all expatriates, refugees, exiled and immigrants. Diasporic literature is an echo of "double vision" i.e. swinging between glory and desires of the past and new vista for the future. It appears that they have no solution to their issues. The themes that recur frequently in the writings the diaspora are alienation, frustration, and occasionally the difficulty of adjusting. A recurring motif in their literature has been the sense of alienation, uprooting, and outcast status.

The author also highlights different techniques and styles adopted by different diasporic writers to explore the horizon of human psyche. V.S. Naipaul expressed his immigrant feelings and emotions by writing novels and travelogues. Salman Rushdie also articulates his own migratory experiences by devising the tool of in his fictions. According to the author Bharti Mukherjee believes that assimilation to the host culture is the only solution to all diasporic dilemmas. All her protagonists went through the ordeal of expatriation, immigration and acculturation in the multicultural modern world. This shows the author's command over cotemporary literary theories and crystal clear understanding of psyche of Bharti Mukherjee. To tell the truth that the person who changes his native land and adapts new land has to face different odds for the sake of his survival. It is essential for them to overcome the feelings of nostalgia and fully adjust to the new land. In the course of adaptation and survival one builds new identity and slowly makes him alien to his native taste and touch. And thus the emergence of split personality and cultural conflict develop as a

new human instinct. The author analyses these diasporic themes through the character of Tara of Bharti Mukherjee. She (Tara) finds herself misfit among the American, and returns to her homeland because she has not been able to forget her mother land. She is an example of split personality. She is torn between New York and Calcutta, between David and her family, her relatives and friends.

The author tries to prove *Wife*, the second novel of Bharati Mukherjee is a painful saga of displacement and alienation through her critical acumen. The novel portrays the psychological claustrophobia and the result antdestructive tendencies developed in Dimple Dasgupta, the protagonist. The dilemma of an Indian wife, divided between the desire to conform to social expectations and the urge for personal expression, is the main theme of this novel. Her situation as an Indian immigrant wife in North America, where she finds it difficult to connect with others and communicate her feelings of alienation, is another motif in this novel. In human existence, one's perspective is prime thing. Really speaking the environment and background in which a one grows up has a great impact on their thinking which molds one's temperament and behaviour. One's background is very crucial because it shapes a one's entire outlook. Life can be fruitful or miserable depending on one's attitude. Through the persona of Dimple, Bharati Mukherjee has aptly explored the multifaceted intricacies of the experiences of immigrants. The author of this book does a great job of examining the contradiction between assimilation and lifestyle.

Further the author of this book has critically examined Jasmine, who not only confronts and overcomes the problems in her life, but also emerges a transformed being on alien soil. Fractured by deeply rooted custom of widowhood in India she becomes an independent, free woman who is destined to negotiate a new life for herself on her own terms. She reinvents herself in order to adapt to the new environment. Really speaking Mukherjee's

portrayal of Jasmine proves that mingling into a foreign culture is not entirely dependent on changing one's attire, diet, or way of life, rather true transformation comes from a change in one's outlook.

It is crucial for analyzing and comprehending contemporary issues viz. feminism, hybrid identity development, and displacement on a national and international scale. The construction of one's personality and identity is a continual process. It is evident that one can never totally or completely transform themselves. During the course of assimilation, one will always be connected to one's roots in some manner. Women in particular struggle with the push-and-pull of two competing cultures in their daily lives. It makes difficult for them to create their identities because of various situations. A woman's identity is not nationalistic and need not be uniform. It is a concrete truth that this global village allows everyone the chance to frame their personality or identity themselves in the new environment. People can identify themselves in diverse ways and get over the rigidity of cultural conflicts.

Dr. Iffat has very aptly dealt Bharati Mukherjee "Diasporal Dilemma" in different chapters of this book. She also highlights the flashback technique used by the novelist to bring the past and present together. She tries to capture innovative style, symbols and imagery of this distinguished diasporic novelist in her critical work "Negotiating Cultures in the Major Novels of Bharati Mukherjee". This book is the culmination of the author's hard work and wide range of study. This book will prove a milestone among students and teachers of literature while unfolding the multi-layers of Bharati Mukherjee's inner conflicts and contemporary literary theories in a broader canvas.

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